

JUST ENOUGH BILLY

The trouble began when Rabbit Billy decided he wanted more of everything.

"Dad," said Billy one day at the breakfast table, "I'd like another bicycle."

Father looked up from the newspaper he had been reading. "Oh? And what about the bicycle you received last year for your birthday?"

"Well," said Billy, "that was last year's bicycle, and it's blue. This year my favorite color is red." Getting another bicycle felt very important to Billy. After all, two is better than one. Billy was sure his father had told him that once upon a time.

Father looked thoughtfully at Billy. A moment passed, then Billy's father replied, "If you would like another bicycle, you'll need to earn the money for it."

"But how will I do that?" asked Billy. He had never done anything like that before.

"You could ask to help collect nuts for Squirrel Sven, or mow Banker Badger's lawn. There are any number of things you could do."

"Alright then, I will," agreed Billy.

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Billy got a job mowing Banker Badger's lawn, as well as collecting nuts for Squirrel Sven. He would skip playing with his friends after school to have enough time to fit in these extra jobs. Soon he had saved up enough money to buy a second bicycle—a shiny, red 250 Triple-X Racer.



Billy's two bicycles were the talk of the school. Hedgehog Alex, his best friend, asked Billy if he could come over and ride one of his bicycles. "Maybe tomorrow," replied Billy. Billy enjoyed the attention he received over having the two bicycles, and in no time he began to think about what other things he could get next.

Billy didn't just want one of something—he had discovered that he liked having more of everything.

He talked his grandmother into buying extra muffs for his ears, even though it was in the middle of summer. At the school cafeteria he asked Chef Clarisse for a double serving of fries. And when he went down to the general store, he asked for double of everything on his mother's shopping list.

He came home that day with two sacks of potatoes, two baskets of carrots, two bags of sugar, and two bags of flour. He had to borrow Grocer Harry's shopping cart to bring it all home.

"Dearie me!" cried Billy's mother. "What were you thinking?"

"It's better to have more," quipped Billy. Billy was quite sure that more of everything was better than less. Besides he liked potatoes, carrots, and sugar, so he thought that making sure they wouldn't run out was a good thing.





"I'll keep the extra food in my room," Billy offered.

"Quite right," agreed Billy's mother, "seeing as there's not enough space in the pantry."

As Billy entered his room after evening supper, he noticed that the room seemed smaller and smaller. He felt small inside too. The sacks of food, and all the "more" that he had begun to acquire was taking up so much of his room that he had to wiggle and squeeze between piles of stuff to reach his bed. *Perhaps it's time to get a second room*, thought Billy as he drifted off to sleep.

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Billy was cross. He had not slept well at all! Sharing his bed with a sack of potatoes and his double sets of stuffed toys had put him in a grumpy mood.

At lunch time he went to sit next to his best friend Alex, because he knew Alex would always do his best to cheer him up whenever he was down.

"Oh hello, Billy," said Alex, who looked up from his sandwich with surprise.

Billy flopped down on the only stump next to Alex. "Boy, am I ever in a mood!"

Just then Pheasant Fisk arrived. "Excuse me, Billy, Alex said I could eat lunch with him," said Fisk looking perplexed.

"What?" asked Billy, turning to Alex. "But we always eat lunch together."

"Not really," said Alex quietly. "You haven't eaten with me for a few weeks now, and I was lonely, so I invited Fisk to have lunch with me."

Alex continued. "You never seem to have time for me anymore. All you can think about are additional things you can get. I began to think that I was not enough for you either."

Billy stormed away in a huff. Alex didn't understand anything!

Billy made his way home, but as he neared the Rabbit family's burrow, something didn't seem right. Constable Connor and Fireman Fergus were standing at the door of their home with Father and Mother.

As Billy neared his home, his father walked up to him and laid a hand on his shoulder. "Son," he said in a kind but serious tone, "your room has collapsed into the pantry underneath. The floor was sufficient for a bedroom floor, but it wasn't strong enough to hold up under the weight of all the stuff you had stored in there. It will take a while to repair the pantry and fix the floor of your room, so you'll have to share a room with your brother for now."

Billy opened his mouth to say something, but no sounds came out. He tried to think, but the only thing that came to mind was that he had lost his best friend, all for a bunch of stupid things that had destroyed the floor of his bedroom.

"I've been watching you collect all your treasures," Billy's father said, "and I was wondering if I should say something. But first I wanted you to experience for yourself that acquiring more things won't make you happy. Just like the floor of your bedroom wasn't built for all that extra stuff, your life and your heart can only fit so much. If you fill it up with stuff that you don't really need, then you won't have room for the things in life that you do need."

Billy thought of Alex. "Like best friends?"

"Yes, like time better spent with friends."

"Is it ever good to have extra?" asked Billy.

"Having extra is good if it's to share with others, or if it's to give to those who need it. But otherwise, just enough is best."

Billy looked at his dad. "May I go see Alex? I haven't played with him in quite awhile, and I miss him."

"Yes, Son," said his father, after giving Billy a hug.

Billy set off at a run. He had lost most of his things when his floor collapsed, but he knew that if he had Alex as a friend, that would be just enough.

The End

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