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**COLLEGE RE-OPENS** September 12, 1918.

The  
**Jolly Animals' Club**  
 By LILLIAN LEVERIDGE

I.  
 IN THE CAVE OF FIREFLIES

"GOOD morning, brother! Have you heard the news?" Rennie Red Fox pricked up his ears and peered sharply through the leafy limbs. There on a bass-wood bough, with the morning sunlight shining on his handsome coat, sat a blue jay.

"What news?" asked Rennie. "A great meeting is to be held to-night at nine o'clock in the Cave of Fireflies. Professor Owl will be chairman, and every one in the Merry Forest is invited. Pass the news along."

"What is the meeting for?" asked Rennie; but Mr. Blue Jay was off already. Rennie Red Fox sat down and thought the matter over, and then away he ran through the dew-wet woods to spread the news.

Presently he ran plump into a Mother Partridge with her little brood. His mind was so busy with the wonderful tidings he had just heard that he quite forgot he had not yet eaten his breakfast. Mother Partridge, it seemed, had happened with an accident. One wing trailed on the ground, and she was crying pitifully.

"What's the matter with you?" Rennie asked. "Cheer up! I have a great piece of news."

The Partridge looked at him with such anxious eyes that he hastened to explain about the meeting. Having delivered his message, he was off like a shot.

Mother Partridge wiped the cold sweat of fear from her forehead and tried to still her wildly beating heart. This was the narrowest escape she had ever had. "You could have knocked me down with a feather," she said to her eldest son, two days old, who was cautiously peeping at her from under a May-apple umbrella. "I thought it was all up with us. I wonder what this great meeting is about. Would you like to go?"

"Yes, yes, yes," came in a chorus from nine little fluffy balls that in-

stantly came out from as many hiding-places.

"Would it be safe?" tremblingly asked the tenth, a delicate child who had been the last to chip the shell.

"It will be quite safe," the Mother replied. "The Cave of Fireflies is a common meeting ground for all the folk of the Merry Forest, whether friends or foes. I have spent the night there myself during a thunder-storm, and slept quite safely between a wild cat and a wolf. It rests with you, children. Shall we go?"

"Yes, yes, yes," came, this time, from ten little balls of fluff.

"All right," Mother Partridge replied. "We had better set out at once, for it is a long way there, and we cannot travel fast."

So the little family turned their heads toward the Cave of Fireflies, Mother Partridge keeping her weather eye open, and passing the news on to every traveller they met.

In this way the wonderful tidings, before sunset, had reached every nook and corner of the Merry Forest.

Professor Owl expected a large crowd, and had chosen five helpers to assist him in receiving the guests. These were Rennie Red Fox, Frisky Squirrel, Mr. Black Bear, Blue-Wing the Swallow and Silver-Wing, the White Pigeon. Half a dozen Soldier Birds in splendid scarlet and black uniforms, were also marching up and down to keep order in case of any disturbance arising.

As soon as the last ray of sunlight had disappeared from the highest tree-top, the five hundred firefly lanterns were lit in the cave. Never had there been such an illumination; for all the fireflies in the forest were there.

The audience began to arrive at once, and by nine o'clock there wasn't an inch of space to spare. Professor Owl mounted the platform near the entrance and thus addressed his audience:—

"My beloved friends and brothers,—I have called you together this evening for a good and worthy purpose, and it is extremely gratifying to me to see so many intelligent faces before me. (Hear, hear! and much flapping of wings among the audience.) I am filled with a glad assurance that such strength of muscle, such brain power, such good and brotherly feeling as this audience represents will, if properly organized, result in some great and honorable achievement that shall be of lasting benefit to all the inhabitants of the Merry Forest, the land we are justly proud to call our own."

Again the Professor was interrupted by a burst of applause. Half the audience didn't understand his meaning in the least, but were tickled by the big and learned sounding words and artful flattery—for wood-folk are like human-folk the world over.

"I purpose to form a society," he proceeded, "called the 'Jolly Animals' Club.' All the members will meet here once a week to discuss plans for the common good of all, thus encouraging peace and brotherly love among us. A special committee will also provide entertainment for each evening. Membership in this charmed circle must be bought by the performance of some generous or heroic deed, which must be told for the good of all, before admittance will be granted.

"Now, friends and brothers, I think you understand me. All who wish to join the Jolly Animals' Club, you know the price—a noble deed. Now, if our friends, the thrushes, the robins and the warblers, will favor us with a musical selection, we will be dismissed."

Very loud clapping and flapping followed the Professor's speech, and the music was given with much heartiness. Then, while a new thought and a new purpose thrilled in many a breast, the large and strangely varied audience went their several ways.

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