

A Child's Book of the Seasons by Arthur Ransome

In summer we go quietly and softly through the little wood at the back of the house, wait at the other side of it and peep over the hedge. There is a steep bank on the other side and then a row of little trees, the remains of an old hedge and then another bank. The other bank is full of holes and the holes are full of rabbits. On summer evenings we go there and watch the little rabbits skipping about and nibbling the grass.

Of course, as the summer goes on, the grass grows very high and, when we walk through it, we can sometimes see nothing but the ears of the little rabbits peeping up above it. You can't imagine how funny they look. Once, Sally fell right over the top of one of them that was hidden in the grass. It jumped out under her feet and she was so startled that she fell forward. She felt something warm and furry wriggling in her hands and found that she had caught a baby rabbit. Sally stroked it until it was not frightened anymore and then she put it on the ground and let it go. It hopped joyfully away through the grass and disappeared into its burrow in the bank.

Besides the rabbits we find all sorts of other charming things in the long grass that swishes so happily around our ankles. Buttercups are there which send a golden light over your chin if you hold them near enough. The fields are full of buttercups, dandelions, purple thistles and wild orchids.



In another bank, not so very far from the home of the rabbits, another little furry creature lives; a pretty, little brown-coated, long-tailed person, who is a great hunter and much feared by the rabbits. He has a long, thin body, a pointy, little head, and a wavy tail. He is a weasel. His bank is just by the side of a pleasant trickling stream and not very far from the wood where the pheasants live. There are plenty of stories about him among the country people. They say that if you whistle near his hole he will come running out to see what is the matter and, if you go on whistling, he will come nearer and nearer until you can catch him with your hands.

1. Find and copy two adverbs from the first paragraph.

2. Why do you think that the rabbit felt frightened when Sally tripped over it?

3. Find and copy the phrase which shows what Sally did to make the rabbit feel better.

4. In the fourth paragraph, the author gives clues about the animal before revealing its name. Why do you think he does that?

Answers

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1. Find and copy two adverbs from the first paragraph.

Accept the following answers:

- quietly
- softly

2. Why do you think that the rabbit felt frightened when Sally tripped over it?

Accept any reasonable answer relating to the size of Sally compared to the rabbit, or the threat of getting hurt, e.g.

- Because Sally was much bigger than the rabbit.
- Because he did not see her coming and wasn't expecting her to be there.
- Because he thought Sally was going to hurt him.

3. Find and copy the phrase which shows what Sally did to make the rabbit feel better.

Accept: 'Sally stroked it (until it was not frightened anymore)'.

4. In the fourth paragraph, the author gives clues about the animal before revealing its name. Why do you think he does that?

Accept any reasonable answer pertaining to interesting or engaging the reader, e.g.

- To make the reader think.
- To entertain the reader with a quiz.
- To build suspense in the text.