

## Chapter 7

## Jack Sprout Meets Oliver Otter

My ears were coming in handy. Everyone knew me and I've been learning a lot just by listening.

“You must be here for some river rock,” said Oliver. “Pierre always sends me the new builders when they start out. That red fox is a smart one; you should listen to him.”

“I do. I thought you'd be patrolling today. Looks like you're just having fun.”

“I am having fun, but I'm also patrolling. We otters have fun when we work. Our job is to warn the sea coral, crawfish, shrimp, oysters, lobsters and other sea critters when Big River gets muddy so they can hide. Sometimes Beaver Creek Meadow gets more rain than it can hold. The mud runs into the streams and rivers that feed Big River and it flows down here to the ocean.”

“I can walk up on dry land, but our ocean friends can't. Some swim out to cleaner water and some hide under the rocks. The ocean's waves usually take the muddy water away, but it's bad for awhile.”

“We're working with Fred Beaver, Sawdust Miller and Pierre Le Tru to help stop the flooding. We sure can't stop the rain. We also help whales or seals get

free if they're washed ashore. We've saved swimmers from undertow currents and surfers that got knocked off rogue waves. It's pretty busy down here.”

“Anyway, the last bend in the river before you got here has the best rock. The river slows down to turn there and the rocks drop to the bottom. Those rocks have been rocked and rolled for so long they've become round and smooth. I'd help you, but I don't throw river rock. Besides, I have to keep patrolling. I'll be there when it's time to build your farm.”

“Thanks, Oliver; it's good to know that work can be fun.”