

It Rumbles Beneath the Ground

Gruddel had lived his whole life underground. He knew every tunnel, every turn, and every secret of his underworld. His home had soft root walls, sparkling stones that glowed in the dark, and a ceiling where earthworms sometimes slid by, which Gruddel always greeted politely.

Bear, whose head was still stuck in a hole, hung there awkwardly while his legs waved in the air.

“Gruddel,” Bear mumbled, “I think this hole is getting smaller.”

Gruddel looked up as tiny stones began to fall. First one, then two, then a handful.

“That is not a good sign,” said Gruddel seriously. “It means the ground is getting angry.”

Suddenly, the tunnel trembled. Dust filled the air.

From the shadows came strange insects. Their bodies glowed. Some had too many legs. Others had glowing eyes.

“Are they friendly?” Bear whispered.

Gruddel swallowed. “No. They are Bromcreepers. And Stingwhiskers. And that one... is a Mudmumbler.”

The insects hissed.

Just then, the Flutterflash Beetle flashed bright yellow and blue light. The insects shrieked and stumbled.

Gruddel dug quickly around Bear's head.

Stone by stone came loose.

With a final pop, Bear was free.

"I've never been so happy to have mud in my ears," Bear said.

But more rumbling came.

"This is only the beginning," Gruddel said. "The underworld has awakened."

Bear gulped.

"Next time," said the Flutterflash Beetle, "choose a snail."

And as the ground trembled and the insects crept closer, Gruddel and Bear knew their adventure had only just begun.