

The Fumblebuster (For FOUR Tandem Tellers)

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Four people may tell this story (with the optional photos of Ocelot and Agouti, if desired). One may tell the lines in BLUE (Ocelot), one PINK (Agouti), one YELLOW, and one not marked (both are narrators). *Slight wording changes have been made in this tandem version.*

Adapt as needed or desired. Either teller may give an introduction from the information provided in another section.

Ocelot was hungry. Food had been scarce for too long, and his unsuccessful night of searching for food had left his stomach growling. Just ahead he spied Agouti—the tastiest morsel in the forest—and he knew his luck had changed.

Agouti was also hungry. Clutched tightly in his paw was the only remaining Brazil nut he could find from the last season's crop. There were more, but he couldn't recall just where he had buried them. He looked high in the sky at the tall Brazil nut tree just above him and noticed that a large dangling pod was almost ready to drop. He closed his eyes and drooled at the thought of the delicious delicacies inside that pod, and he dreamed of gnawing though that thick, tough shell protecting the savory cluster of nourishment. Ten, fifteen, maybe even twenty Brazil nuts would soon be his! More pods would drop later, but this first one of the season would be special.

When he finally opened his eyes, he was staring right at Ocelot—Agouti's worst enemy. Agouti knew he was trapped. Escape was impossible. *Or was it? Although Agouti couldn't outrun Ocelot, could he outsmart him? At least he had to try.*

"G-g-g-good morning, Mr. Ocelot. I-i-i-t's a beautiful day, isn't it?"

"I don't care if the day is pretty or not. I'm hungry, and you are going to be my dinner."

"Uh... that's fine, Mr. Ocelot. I'm happy to be

your dinner. But you wouldn't want to eat before... uh... before I give you a *present*, now would you?"

Agouti knew that Ocelot liked getting presents almost as much as he liked feasting on agoutis!

"A present? What's my present?"

Agouti thought fast—and it's a good thing, too, for he didn't really have a present to give. But he only needed to stall long enough to plan an escape. Then he felt the Brazil nut still in his paw, and he had an idea.

"Your present is ... is ... *a fumblebuster!*"

"A fumblebuster? I've never heard of such a thing. You're just trying to delay my dinner."

"Oh, no, Mr. Ocelot. A fumblebuster is a very *special* present. It's given *only* to the fastest and mightiest creature in the whole forest."

"Well, let me see it!!!"

Agouti held up the Brazil nut for Ocelot to see.

"There's nothing special about that!"

"Oh, yes there is! When I toss *this* fumblebuster into the air and you run to catch it, then everyone in the forest will admire your speed and strength as you sail through the air in your grand and glorious style. All will be in awe of your magnificent prowess. Every forest creature..."

"Quiet! I won't fall for such foolish flattery.

Besides, do you think I'd let a silly thing like that distract me long enough to let you get away? No! I'm hungry and I'm ready for my dinner."

Agouti knew that Ocelot *did* enjoy the thought of all the forest creatures adoring him. “You’re right, Mr. Ocelot. You should have your dinner. I... I was just being selfish. I so much wanted to enjoy, one last time, the sensational vision of seeing you sail through the air, so graceful, so strong. What an incredible memory to carry with me into Agouti heaven! You do have me trapped, and I know it. But pleeeeeease let me pitch this fumblebuster to you, so I can savor the wondrous sight of your muscles, your grace, the wind brushing back your beautiful golden hair as you leap and glide through the air. Then I’ll gladly be your dinner.”

Ocelot thought about it for a moment. *Why not* show off his prowess to yet another forest creature? He basked in all of the flattering remarks. Besides, he knew that he could quickly catch that silly fumblebuster before Agouti could possibly escape.

“OK, I will grant your request—just to show you what a good sport I am and how generous I can be—heh, heh. I will not deprive you of the pleasure of seeing how gracefully I sail through the air. *And then I’ll gobble you up.*”

“Oh, thank you, Mr. Ocelot. On your mark! Get set! Watch for the fumblebuster!”

With amazing precision, Agouti took careful aim and paused the exact number of seconds needed before the toss. He knew the ways of the Brazil nut trees. At just the right moment, he sailed that fumblebuster high into the air, and Ocelot raced toward it. And at that precise second, that large, mighty Brazil nut pod snapped from its branch and began its fierce plunge toward the earth.

Several pounds of hard-shelled pod zoomed furiously toward the rainforest floor.

As if in slow motion, Agouti watched the body of Ocelot, the arc of the fumblebuster, and the heavy pod—as each one approached the exact same spot at the exact same time.

Ocelot... Fumblebuster... Pod... Ocelot... Fumblebuster... Pod...

In the very moment that Ocelot caught the nut with his front paws, that giant pod plunged... right onto... Ocelot’s tail... almost burying it as the fallen pod made a deep crater in the ground. He dropped the fumblebuster and was powerless to retrieve it. The swift and mighty Ocelot had been halted.

Halted by a pod containing several of the nuts like the one he had just caught.

Halted, but fortunate—for that mighty pod possessed the strength to crush any animal’s skull, but it had only snagged Ocelot’s tail.

Halted long enough for Agouti to escape.

And if Ocelot had listened closely, he might have heard clever Agouti deep in the rainforest chuckling to himself, “*It was good to see you fumble, Buster!*”

Perhaps Ocelot was lucky, though, for he had quickly learned his lesson about the impact of idle flattery. However, it took much longer for his tail to heal. And now this tale is over.

Or is it? After Ocelot fumbled, that nut started to “bust,” and it had to have a few stitches and a couple of band-aids. Here’s how it looks now: (Show “bandaged” nut/football.) Do you know some “nuts” today who sit for hours and watch people chase something that looks like a fumblebuster? Think about it!