

Flatfoot Fox

and the Case of the Nosy Otter

The Puppet Characters

FLATFOOT FOX	(The smartest detective in the whole world)
RELIABLY EFFICIENT RACCOON	(The most efficient raccoon in the whole world)
MRS. CHATTERBOX OTTER	(The mother of the kidnap victim)
CRABBY CROW	(Air scout)
TERRIBLY WORRIED WOODCHUCK	(A terribly nervous kind of guy)
LAME-BRAIN SWAN	(Not the smartest bird on the lake)
MOTHERLY MOUSE	(A mouse with an attitude)
NOSY OTTER	(A guy who follows his instincts)
NARRATOR	(Keeps everything flowing right along)

ACT ONE

Narrator	Knock! Knock! <i>(Make a knocking sound on the table or desk)</i> Someone was knocking at Flatfoot Fox's door.
Reliably Efficient Raccoon	"Someone is knocking at the door"
Flatfoot Fox	"I know that. I am the smartest detective in the whole world. I know when someone is knocking at my door!"
Reliably Efficient Raccoon	"Who is there?"
Narrator	The door opened. In came Mrs. Chatterbox Otter. <i>Enter Mrs. Chatterbox Otter</i>
Mrs. Chatterbox Otter	"Which one of you is the smartest detective in the whole world? <i>Mrs. Chatterbox Otter is very upset. Act as if you're just about ready to cry, speaking loudly</i>
Flatfoot Fox	"I am. Who are you? And why do you need a detective?"
Mrs. Chatterbox Otter	"I am Mrs. Chatterbox Otter. I need a detective because I am desperate!"
Reliably Efficient Raccoon	"Desperate?"
Flatfoot Fox	"Desperate."
Narrator	Flatfoot Fox is very pleased. He always is pleased when he is about to start a new case.

Mrs. Chatterbox Otter ***Nod her head. “Desperate and furious! Furious and miserable! Miserable and scared!” She sniffs and cries and sniffs. Finally she loudly blows her nose on a handkerchief. Both Flatfoot Fox and Reliably Efficient Raccoon pull away from her, acting disgusted.***

Mrs. Chatterbox Otter ***“Someone has kidnapped my poor baby. He’s gone, and I can’t find him anywhere. My poor Nosy. He’s been kidnapped. I want you to find the kidnapper. I want the monster who kidnapped Nosy to go to jail forever!”***

Reliably Efficient Raccoon ***Act surprised. “Monster? I didn’t know we had monsters around here!”***

Narrator ***Reliably Efficient Raccoon had never seen a monster. But she was afraid of them just the same.***

Flatfoot Fox ***“There are no monsters around here. But monster is a good word for anyone who is a kidnapper.” He turns to look at Mrs. Chatterbox Otter. “Where was your baby the last time you saw him?”***

Mrs. Chatterbox Otter ***“Swimming in the river. No. Wait. He was going up and down the mud slide on the river bank. It’s such fun. Have you ever tried a mud slide?”***

Flatfoot Fox and Reliably Efficient Raccoon both shake their heads. While they’re shaking their heads Mrs. Chatterbox Otter keeps talking!

Mrs. Chatterbox Otter ***“I only turned my back on Nosy a minute to talk to Crabby Crow. Well, not to talk. I just wanted to ask him something. When I turned back, my darling Nosy Otter was gone. Stolen almost from my arms, you might say. Kidnapped.***

Flatfoot Fox looks at Reliably Efficient Raccoon. Reliably Efficient Raccoon looks at Flatfoot Fox

Reliably Efficient Raccoon ***Whisper. “Do you think she ever stops talking?”***

Flatfoot Fox ***Whisper. “Never.” He stares at Mrs Chatterbox Otter, who is still talking and shouts, “STOP!”***

Mrs. Chatterbox Otter’s mouth stays wide open.

Flatfoot Fox "I want you to take me to the place where you last saw little Nosy. I'm sure I can pick up the trail of the kidnapper."

Reliably Efficient Raccoon "Why do you call him Nosy?"

Mrs. Chatterbox Otter "Don't you know? Otters are very curious. Baby otters are especially curious. Nosy is curious about everything. He...."

Narrator She was still talking as she led the way through the door. Next came Reliably Efficient Raccoon, then Flatfoot Fox. Mrs. Chatterbox still chattered. Reliably Efficient Raccoon held her head up so high the words wouldn't reach her. Flatfoot Fox wore earmuffs left over from another case he had solved.

The three characters walk a distance to the river.

Mrs. Chatterbox Otter "Here we are. There's the river we swim in. And here's the mud slide. Are you sure you don't want to try it? Not even once?"

Reliably Efficient Raccoon "NO!"

Flatfoot Fox "Not ever"

Mrs. Chatterbox Otter "Oh, my poor Nosy. He was so happy on that slide." *Mrs. Chatterbox Otter starts to sniff and cry again.* "My darling little Nosy. So beautiful. So clever. So...."

Crabby Crow *Use an angry voice.* "Babble, babble, babble!" *He is sitting on a branch just above the other characters.* "Babble all day long. That one can talk till your ears fall off!"

Flatfoot Fox is looking carefully at the ground

Reliably Efficient Raccoon *Whisper.* "What are you looking for? What do you see?"

Flatfoot Fox "Footprints. Lots of them."

Reliably Efficient Raccoon *Looking here, there and everywhere. Act scared.* "Are they monster footprints?"

Flatfoot Fox "No. These are not monster footprints."

Reliably Efficient Racoon “Then whose footprints are they?”

Flatfoot Fox “Everyone comes to the river. It is a busy place. Now these footprints were made by little Nosy Otter.” *Flatfoot Fox looks up at Crabby Crow and asks, “ Would you like to be my air scout?”*

Crabby Crow “Air scout? What do I have to do?”

Flatfoot Fox “You can see things up high I can’t see down here. You might spot Nosy Otter and his kidnapper.”

Crabby Crow “All right. I’ll do it. But only if I get a promise from Mrs. Chatterbox Otter.”

Mrs. Chatterbox Otter “What promise? I think making a promise is very important. I think you have to be sure you can keep a promise. I think...”

Crabby Crow *Use a crabby voice.* “There she goes again. I’ll be you air scout if she promises not to talk for one whole day.”

Mrs. Chatterbox Otter “Stop talking? For one whole day?”

Crabby Crow “One whole day. And night. Not one single word for twenty-four hours.”

Mrs. Chatterbox Otter “I’ll explode if I can’t talk!”

Crabby Crow *Flap his wings.* “Yes or no? Do I go or stay?”

Mrs. Chatterbox Otter “Go. Please. Please go.”

Narrator So Crabby Crow flew away to start looking for Nosy Otter and the kidnapper.

Flatfoot Fox “Mrs. Otter, I’m going to follow the trail of these footprints. You wait here in case the kidnapper returns little Nosy.”

Mrs. Chatterbox Otter opens her mouth.

Reliably Efficient Racoon “SHHHH! Remember. No talking for twenty-four hours!”

Reliably Efficient Racoon and Flatfoot Fox leave to follow the trail. As they go they are talking to each other.....

Reliably Efficient Raccoon

“Do you think she can keep quiet for a whole day and night?”

Flatfoot Fox

“Maybe she’ll find out how wonderful silence can be and she’ll be able to hear the wonderful sounds of the river flowing and the birds singing. Now let’s follow this trail quickly. There isn’t a moment to lose!”

Terribly Worried "How can you ask? Do you have to come up from your underground home every year to look for your shadow?"

Flatfoot Fox "No. I don't have to look for my shadow. I always know where it is."

Terribly Worried *He grabs Flatfoot Fox's tie.* "I toss and turn in my sleep all winter. I worry whether I will see my shadow when I come out. If I do, there will be six more weeks of winter. Everyone will say it's my fault." *He lets go of the tie.*

Reliably Efficient Racoon "That's so silly. You're just a woodchuck. Don't you know the groundhog is supposed to do that? That's why we have Groundhog Day."

Flatfoot Fox *Shaking his head.* "He's the groundhog. A groundhog is a woodchuck. A woodchuck is a groundhog."

Terribly Worried "I hate being called a hog. It isn't dignified. I am a very dignified woodchuck."

Reliably Efficient Racoon "What happens if you don't see your shadow?"

Terribly Worried "Then spring comes early, of course. Then everyone likes me."

Flatfoot Fox "This doesn't help us find little Nosy Otter. And we still don't know whether you are the kidnapper. Don't forget that the footprints near yours were made by little Nosy Otter. Where have you hidden him?"

Terribly Worried "He may have followed me. Otters are very curious, you know."

Flatfoot Fox "Curious about what?"

Terribly Worried "Everything!"

Reliably Efficient Racoon "Do you mean you haven't seen him?"

Terribly Worried "No. I haven't seen him. I don't want to see him. I have no time for curious baby otters. *Look at his watch and start walking away.*

Reliably Efficient Racoon "What do we do now?"

Flatfoot Fox "We'll keep on doing what we've been doing."

Reliably Efficient Raccoon "You mean follow Nosy Otter's footprints?"

Flatfoot Fox "Of course!"

Narrator Behind them they could hear Terribly Worried Woodchuck wailing.....

Terribly Worried "Why me? Why my shadow? It isn't fair!"

Flatfoot Fox "There's a pond up ahead. And Nosy Otter's footprints lead right to it."

Reliably Efficient Raccoon "But there are other footprints, too. They must belong to the kidnapper."

Narrator Reliably Efficient Raccoon was very proud of herself for spotting the clues. She thought she as a very good detective too. Maybe she'll be the smartest detective in the whole world someday! Just then Crabby Crow flew down and landed on a branch.

Crabby Crow "There's a house in a group of cattails...."

Reliably Efficient Raccoon "Not now! Can't you see we're hot on the trail of the kidnapper? We're sure we'll find him at the pond!"

Crabby Crow "A house would be a good hiding place."

Narrator But Flatfoot Fox didn't listen. Reliably Efficient Raccoon didn't listen. They hurried to the pond. Crabby Crow flies along with them and lands beside Reliably Efficient Raccoon. The footprints ended at the edge of the water, but there was no sign of Nosy Otter or anyone else, except for a swan. He was staring at his reflection in the water.

Lame-Brain Swan "How handsome I am. Is there anyone in the world as handsome as I am?"

Crabby Crow "That's Lame-Brain Swan. You won't learn anything from him. He never makes any sense at all. Of course, someone that handsome doesn't have to make sense."

Lame-Brain Swan looks up and sees everyone at the edge of the pond. He swims over to talk with them.

Flatfoot Fox "I want to ask you a question."

Lame-Brain Swan "A penny saved is a penny earned." *Lame-Brain Swan gazes in the hand mirror.*

Flatfoot Fox "What?"

Lame-Brain Swan "An apple a day keeps the doctor away."

Reliably Efficient Racoon "Which doctor?"

Lame-Brain Swan "Witches fly only at night."

Flatfoot Fox *Angry.* "Stop that nonsense this minute! Nosy Otter was here. These are his footprints. There are other footprints, too. Who came here with Nosy Otter?"

Lame-Brain Swan *Drifting away.* "A search is not over until it's over."

Flatfoot Fox "Let's circle the pond. Maybe we will pick up Nosy Otter's footprints again."

Crabby Crow "I say let's go to the house. I'll fly ahead and keep watch." *He flies away.*

Flatfoot Fox. *Study the ground.* "Aha! I knew it. Here are more of Nosy Otter's footprints."

Reliably Efficient Racoon "What about these other footprints next to his? They look very small."

Flatfoot Fox "We'll soon find out whose they are. Let's see where they lead us."

Narrator So Flatfoot Fox and Reliably Efficient Racoon follow the footprints into the cattail plants that lined the pond's banks. They came upon a house and Crabby Crow sitting on a cattail plant, waiting on them.

Reliably Efficient Racoon "Crabby Crow was right. The footprints have led us right to the house."

Flatfoot Fox "I knew they would. But I didn't guess. I made sure. That's why I'm the smartest detective in the whole world."

Crabby Crow “No one is home. I haven’t seen Nosy Otter. I haven’t seen anybody.”

Flatfoot Fox “There is someone in the house. That someone is peeking out at us from behind the curtain. Follow me.”

Narrator Crabby Crow waited on a cattail plant while Flatfoot Fox and Reliably Efficient Racoon went up to the front door.

Flatfoot Fox *Knock on the table or desk.* “Open up! I know you’re in there.”

Reliably Efficient Racoon “Look! The door is opening. Who are you?”

Motherly Mouse “I’m Motherly Mouse. How nice of you to come for some mint tea. You’re just in time. No, no, no! First wipe your feet on the mat. I don’t allow muddy, dirty feet in my house. There. That’s better.”

Nosy Otter “Hi!”

Reliably Efficient Racoon and Flatfoot Fox act surprised.

Nosy Otter “Are you hungry? I’m starved. When do we eat?”

Motherly Mouse “Manners, manners. We do not shout at the table. We talk nicely, and say please and thank you.”

Narrator Motherly Mouse made Flatfoot Fox and Reliably Efficient Racoon sit down at the table and then she tied bibs on them.

Motherly Mouse “No sloppy eaters wanted here. Isn’t that right, son?”

Flatfoot Fox “Son?”

Motherly Mouse “I found this poor lost baby..” *Motherly Mouse holds a plate of cookies.*

Nosy Otter “I wasn’t lost. I knew where I was all the time.”

Flatfoot Fox “But your mother didn’t know. She thought you were kidnapped!”

Nosy Otter “She did?! I’m sorry. I just wanted to see the world. The world is a very interesting place.”

Motherly Mouse

“I took him in. This place has always been so lonely. But now I have a son. He was lost and I found him. Finders, keepers. Everyone knows that. Here son, have some more cookies.”

Nosy Otter

“I can’t have more because I haven’t had any yet.”

Flatfoot Fox

“Finders are not keepers. A son belongs to his mother - they live at the river, you live at the pond. He has to go home. Come along Nosy Otter, I’m taking you home.”

Motherly Mouse

“Do come back for a visit sometime.”

Narrator

Reliably Efficient Raccoon walked in front of Nosy Otter. Flatfoot Fox walked behind him. Crabby Crow flew overhead. Nosy Otter would not be allowed to go exploring again today.

ACT THREE

- Reliably Efficient Racoon "Well, I'm glad the case of the nosy otter is over. Mrs. Chatterbox Otter was so happy, she almost forgot to talk."
- Flatfoot Fox "Yes. I'm happy we finally found her son."
- Reliably Efficient Racoon "Why are otters so curious, do you think?"
- Flatfoot Fox "It's just the way they are. They can't help it. Aren't you ever curious?"
- Reliably Efficient Racoon "Curious about what?"
- Flatfoot Fox "Anything"
- Reliably Efficient Racoon *Thinking carefully.* "No. I am never curious. I don't have a curious bone in my body."
- Flatfoot Fox *Laughing.* "Now that's curious!"
- Reliably Efficient Racoon *Laughing too.* "I guess all's well that ends well."
- Flatfoot Fox "Don't say that! You sounded just like Lame-Brain Swan!"
- Reliably Efficient Racoon "But isn't all well that ends well?"
- Flatfoot Fox "Never mind!"
- Narrator Both were quiet for a long time. Flatfoot Fox kept watching the door, wishing someone would knock. Reliably Efficient Racoon noticed him looking at the door and came up with an idea.
- Reliably Efficient Racoon "I've noticed that you keep looking at the door."
- Flatfoot Fox *Sighing.* "Yes. There must be somebody who needs my help. How can I be the smartest detective in the whole world if I don't have a mystery to solve?"
- Reliably Efficient Racoon "We could put a sign up outside the door that says, 'Mysteries Wanted.'"

Flatfoot Fox

“Hey what a great idea! Why don’t we go for a walk, first, down by the river and make sure all’s well there! Then we’ll come back and make a sign for the door!”

Reliably Efficient Raccoon

“Ok. Let’s go.”

Narrator

Flatfoot Fox and Reliably Efficient Raccoon got up and headed for the door. Flatfoot Fox reached out to open the door. It was pulled open so hard from the other side he almost fell over. But he wasn’t angry - in fact, he was smiling because the next case had just arrived!

Props

(provided)

Earmuffs for Flatfoot Fox

Hand Mirror for Lame-Brained Swan

Bibs for Flatfoot Fox and Reliably Efficient Raccoon

Plate of Cookies for Motherly Mouse

Additional props (not provided)

Wetlands scenery created by class

Trunk decorated to look like Motherly Mouse's house

Cardboard box decorated to look like a detective office

Tree for Crabby Crow to sit on