

Dear Brave Volunteer,

This is a sweet story with a hint of nostalgia. I like the way you contrast rules vs. no rules, and there is plenty of conflict in this story.

I also like the retro feel of the manuscript. Personally I would love to see this worked into a throwback spoof (ala Jon Scieszka, Mac Barnett, and Matthew Myers' BATTLE BUNNY).

However, the problem I see is that right now it feels accidentally retro. The alliteration names (like, Bunky Bear), the length, and the lesson driven nature are similar to books more popular 30+ years ago. It might lead editors to the wrong conclusion: that you aren't well versed in modern picture book literature. If you keep the story as it is, I recommend throwing in something that lets them know the longer storybook style of this story serves a modern purpose (and will attract today's children because \_\_\_\_\_.)

If you don't want to keep the retro feel, I recommend the following:

-Get the word count down. Aim for 500 words or less. Cut everything that could be shown in illustration (Do we need to know Bunky is brown? Do we need statements, like "She stood in the middle of Bunky's mess" if her dialog also describes the mess? Cut descriptions and redundancies without mercy.)

-Consider changing the title to something that doesn't imply a lesson and it's outcome. From the title, I can guess that Bunky is going to learn about sharing. If you are going to teach me a lesson, try to cloak it a little. "A spoonful of sugar..."

-Cut every scene that doesn't serve your main storyline. Life meanders. Picture books can't. Does Bunky riding his skateboard serve your main theme? Does Bunky getting hungry move us towards the climax?

-Also try to pick only one main theme. Right now there are several potential themes in this story: cleaning up toys, getting along with siblings, learning to appreciate rules, giving to the less fortunate... You cover so much that it's hard for me to tell what is most important. I'm not quite sure if it was all tied up together in the end. Fewer theme will make it easier to come to a more satisfying ending.

But you know your story best and you'll know the right direction to take it. I hope my comments below simply provide you with ideas for future revisions.

Thank you for sharing this with me! All the best!

-Hannah Holt

Volunteer/Bunky

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**BUNKY BEAR DOESN'T LIKE TO SHARE** **The ending is implied in the title?**  
**Consider focusing on the adventure rather than the moral for title ideas.**  
by Brave Volunteer

~~Bunky, the little brown bear, left his toys scattered across the floor and went outside to play. He zigzagged across the yard kicking his soccer ball, zipped up and down the sidewalk on his skateboard, and chased butterflies with his net. Gurgle, grumble, gurgle, growled his stomach. He went in and slammed the door, "Momma! I'm hungry!"~~

Just as an example, I cut everything in your first paragraph that didn't directly serve your main storyline. Let the illustrator decide what Bunky does outside, unless what he does outside becomes important to the ending. Soccer is never mentioned again, nor chasing butterflies. If you can cut it without changing the ending, it might not need to be there.

Momma called from the playroom, **Do we need to know she's in the playroom? I think the illustrations could show this.** "Bunky, come in here please." She stood in the middle of Bunky's mess, **Again this is description not action. You could probably take**

Volunteer/Bunky

out this sentence. "This is your last warning. If you don't start taking care of your toys, we're going to give them to a less fortunate little bear." I found the mention of the less fortunate bear distraction. Is this a story about gratitude or sharing?

I feel like Bunky needs to react to his mother here. Instead his brother is introduced. "Err, errrrr, errrrrrrr," Bunky's younger brother, Clyde, screeched as he pushed a fire truck around the playroom. Bunky jerked the truck away. "This is my fire truck!" he shouted. Now this is a scene that serves the storyline of sharing. The sibling conflict sounds real and intense.

"That's it!" Momma said. "Tomorrow, we're taking that toy to a little bear that doesn't have many toys."

"I don't care!" Bunky shouted before stomping up the stairs to his bedroom and slamming the door. This statement "I don't care" is a common thing for children to say when they are disappointed and powerless. Is there a way to give Bunky more power in this story?

The next morning, he shuffled into the kitchen for breakfast. His shiny red fire truck glistened in the middle of the table between a cereal box and plate of pancakes.

"Why is my fire truck on the table?" he asked.

"I told you last night. We're going to give it away," Momma replied. I like that his Mom sticks to her resolve. Unfortunately right now I like Momma more than Bunky. I suggest putting yourself in children's shoes and see if you can't make it the other way around. Maybe it was a misunderstanding. Maybe Bunky was trying to share but the baby did something that Momma didn't see.

"But it's mine," Bunky whined.

## Volunteer/Bunky

Momma said, "I've warned you many times about taking care of your things. And throwing your toys is unacceptable." *I'm confused. Is this story about taking care of toys, or sharing?*

After breakfast, they took the fire truck across town and gave it to another little bear. *How does Bunky feel about this? Is there a way to show his feelings? This feels almost like the end. The fire truck is gone. Did Bunky learn to share? A new story begins in the next paragraph.*

That evening, Momma sent Bunky to his room to think about how fortunate he was to have so many nice things. He grumbled as he climbed the stairs, "I wish I lived in a home without rules. I hate rules! I'm going to runaway and find a new home." *I feel like the story really begins here. (Or maybe a new story starts here.) Is there a way to get her faster? He spent a short time in his room before he sneaked into the bathroom. Standing on a chair, he raised the window and climbed out into the cold night. I cut the words that could be shown in an illustration.*

~~Bunky shivered as shadows and strange, creepy sounds followed him in the dark. Frightened, he walked along until he grew tired and began searching for a safe place to rest.~~ *Description. Scene setting. I recommend cutting this.* He found a big oak tree and climbed to the top. Just as he fell asleep, a loud *WHOOSH, FLUTTER, SWOOSH, I like the sounds* woke him. He jumped up, lost his balance, and fell out of the tree.

An owl called, "Hoo, hoo, hoooo." :) And with a *whoosh-flutter* and a *swoosh*, he swooped down to greet Bunky. "What were you doing in my tree?" he asked.

"I'm looking for a new home - one without rules," Bunky responded. *The story is now about not wanting rules (not about sharing).*

## Volunteer/Bunky

"Well, you can't live in a tree," Owl said. "As you can see it is not safe for a bear that can't fly. Now, move on. This is my home."

Bunky moved on and soon came upon a white wooden porch. *Maybe I can make a home under this porch*, he thought. He crawled through a hole in the lattice below the porch. Stones crunched beneath his paws. He heard something else stirring in the gravel and followed the sound. A skunk vigorously pounded its front feet on the ground. It growled and hissed loudly, lifted its tail high, and sprayed its stinky perfume. **This is a funny scene.** "This is my porch! Go away!" the skunk shouted. **In this story, Bunky appears to be the only animal with a real home. Are the rest of the animals wild? Do other animals in this story have houses with playrooms and bedrooms. Who lives in the house with the porch that the skunk lives under? Another animal? A person?**

Bunky scrambled out from under the porch. He coughed and sneezed. Tears spilled down his cheeks. With a runny nose and blurry eyes, he staggered into the woods.

He walked along until he spotted a raspberry bush and stopped for a snack. ~~Red juice dribbled down his chin and over his paws as he munched.~~

Leaves rustled, *whish, whish, whish*. **More fun sounds! :)** Bunky stopped eating. His eyes opened wider.

"That's our raspberry bush," someone grumbled. A huge raccoon and his family stepped out of the woods.

Bunky said, "Can't we share? I'm hungry." **I like how the tables turn on him.**

"Absolutely not," said Father Raccoon.

Bunky said, "That's not very nice. No one in these woods wants to share." **Ha!**

## Volunteer/Bunky

Father Raccoon said, "I'm just following the rules. Try the blackberry bush on the hill, and leave us to our dinner."

Bunky started up the hill mumbling, "What kind of rule is *no sharing*?" Too tired, cold, and hungry to keep going, he turned to go home.

"Hoooooo's there?" called Owl. [I like that you come back to the owl.](#)

Bunky slumped, "It's me again."

"Haven't you found a home yet?" Owl asked.

"I'm done looking," Bunky said. "I miss my things. I'm going home where it's safe and warm. I like Momma's rules better than your mean rules. Who ever heard of a *no sharing* rule?" [Bunky makes this sound like it's the Owl's rule, but it's not. It's the racoon's rule. Be careful not to combine characters.](#)

Owl pointed his wing toward the path, "Well then, be on your way."

Once home, Bunky climbed through the bathroom window and sneaked into his room.

Soon, Momma called, "Bunky, are you ready to come down?" [Is it morning?](#)

He flung open his bedroom door, dashed down the stairs, and went straight to his toys. He pushed his dump truck over to Clyde and said, "Do you want to play with my truck?" [This seems a little too good to be true. He didn't learn the importance of sharing overnight so much as that he liked home better than the wild. Loving the comforts of home isn't the same thing as loving his brother.](#)

Bunky's pleasant behavior surprised Momma [Here you switch POV to Momma because you are showing her feelings. I recommend sticking to one POV \(Bunky's\). so](#)

Volunteer/Bunky

much that she gave him a big hug and said, "I'm proud of you, Sweetheart." She scrunched up her nose and said, "P.U. you need a bath!"

Bunky happily picked up his toys while Momma ran a nice, warm bubble bath. A soothing ending. :) So Bucky has learned to share and clean up his toys. I'm still wondering if he learned to be grateful and appreciate rules because those were two other themes you started.