

A Tale of Two Critters

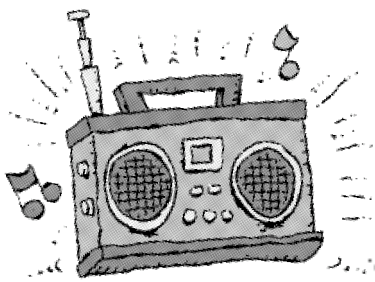
Deep in the woods of Maine, our log cabin is a quiet, peaceful haven from our busy lives. My family and I drove up here for a long, relaxing weekend.

We were unpacking when I heard strange noises coming from the fireplace. Scratching. Squeaking. Cautiously, I shined a flashlight up the chimney. I couldn't see anything. I banged on the flue. The scratching stopped, but it started up again within a few minutes.

I called Larry, the guy down the road. He lives here year-round and knows a lot about animals. He came over right away, got up on the roof, and peered down the chimney.

Climbing down, he said with a grin, "Congratulations. A raccoon family has made a home inside your chimney flue!" He explained that the young raccoons (and their mother) were old enough to leave. We just had to convince them to move.

On Larry's advice, we put a radio, blasting rock music, in the chimney. Hopefully, this will encourage the critters to leave—and look for a new home. In the meantime, the loud music is irritating. So is the fact that we can't use the fireplace. (So much for toasting marshmallows!) We hardly ever get to use our cabin, and now we're stuck sharing it with uninvited guests.



Before I had my babies, I searched high and low for the best place to raise them. I'm a little picky, but I finally found the perfect place: a cozy cabin on the lake. Nobody lives here, so it's nice and quiet.

The cabin has a brick tower on top of it. Inside it is a sturdy shelf. Nestling inside, we are safe and snug. We're also out of sight (and reach!) of foxes.

So, life was great. My two babies and I loved our new home. But then everything changed. People showed up! We could hear them talking and raising a ruckus in the cabin. Somebody even began banging on our den! We were terribly frightened and held still. But you know how kids are—my babies soon started making a racket again.

We thought things were getting back to normal. Then we heard someone stomping around on the roof. All of a sudden, light flooded our den. I saw a man glaring down at us. Luckily, he quickly left.

Now there is a terrible sound blasting beneath us, day and night. It's hard to even think straight! Looks like the kiddos and I are going to have to look for a new home. I'll miss this place, though. Darn people. Could they be any louder?

