

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

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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

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The Fumblebuster

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

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him? At least he had to try.

"G-g-g-good morning, Mr. Ocelot." Agouti trembled. "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?"

"A present?" Ocelot liked getting presents almost as much as he liked feasting on agoutis! "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

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