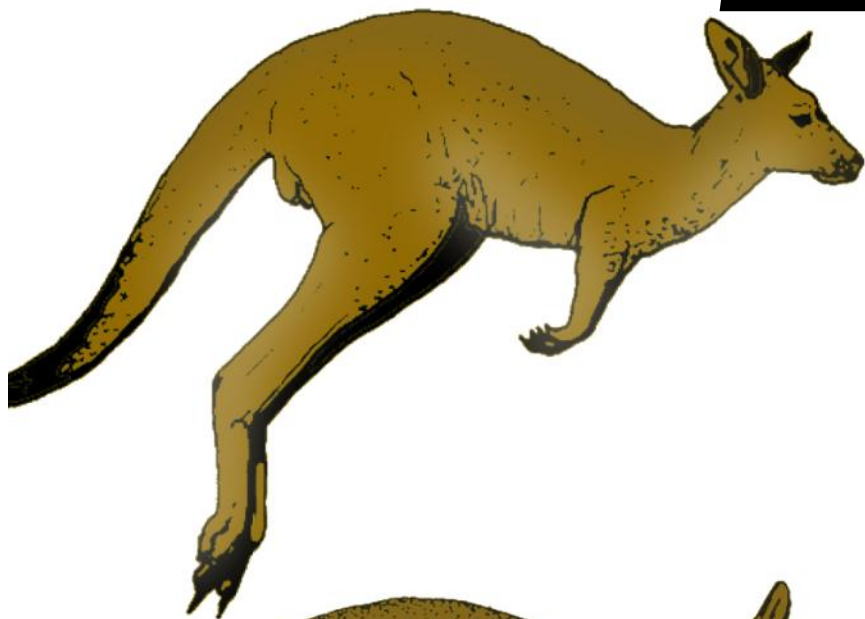


**Little Joey
Likes to Learn
and Jump**

08



Creatures with Character

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Character**



—Imaginary Story—

**Little Joey
Likes to Learn
and Jump**

Written by: Chariane Quille
Illustrated by: John Greene

www.nurture-inspire-teach.com

“Grab! Reach and grab! And again! I know I can climb up to the top of this furry wall!”

Little Joey, the baby kangaroo—so small you might not have even seen him as he struggled with all this might. He was hardly bigger than a bean, and had just been born.

If Joey was to survive at all, he must make this heroic climb and reach the place of warmth and safety, and most of all food to drink.

“There, at last! Now down into the pouch I go! Ah! I’ve made it.”

Joey had earned himself a long and wonderful sleep, while drinking his mother’s milk whenever he needed it.

He wouldn’t have to climb out for some time, but could now just take the time to grow.

How this little joey knew, when freshly born and with a brain of a very tiny size, where it was meant to go and how it was meant to get there, is a fascinating mystery of the animal kingdom.

There are some secrets that haven’t been fully discovered.

With the baby kangaroo now safely tucked away, off and away mother kangaroo hopped. Her large feet and even larger tail aided her to make the grand leaps that she and those of her kind are famous for.

Months passed and Little Joey, now much bigger, could peek out and over the edge of his mother's pouch. Quite a view he got of the world around.

It was in here that he got used to the idea of jumping, and he hoped for the day that he would be old enough to take large leaps as well.

One day mother kangaroo was nibbling on some grass near a picnic site when she saw something curious.

“Why, look at that! They must like our Creator's invention—a baby-carrying pouch.”

Walking not too far away was a human mother with a baby in a carrying pouch that was strapped on.

The mother was patting her baby, as he was curled up snug and warm, being held securely to his mother. It felt good to be so close.

It was a big change for the human baby to be now on the outside, when it was so close and wet and warm while inside of mother, surrounded by soft walls.

But when the human baby was born, then could they feel cold and heat, and heard sounds much louder than before. The baby had to learn to breathe and swallow—learning to do both, yet only to be doing one at a time.

The unborn baby had grown accustomed to hearing the sound of his mother’s heart beating, during all those long months of growing and waiting.

When he was now held close on her chest, that familiar “pom-pom” sound could be heard a little; the sound of her heart still beating in almost musical rhythm.

The baby-carrier and blankets, along with mother’s arms around him, helped him to feel almost as snug as he used to.

It was nice that now, while outside in the world around him, he could hear the voice of his mother and father much more clearly. This too was something he had gotten accustomed to hearing while yet unborn.

The sound of their voices were dear to him, and very familiar. So when mother talked lovingly and soothingly, the little baby felt at peace.

It was the voice of his mother, and he knew it. No one else on the earth had a voice just the same.

It was the voice of the one that had housed him all those months, and the one he wanted to be around, for he knew that the person with that voice was the special one who cared for him and loved him dearly. And someone he loved, too.

One day, while mother was feeding on grass, Little Joey discovered that he was now big enough to reach his little face out and nibble a piece of grass as well.

Mother had reached far enough over, and Joey's face was met with something he was now able to eat.

He was big enough, actually, to climb out and hop around a bit too, but he wouldn't stay out for long. He liked his safe happy nook, and that way he would always be where his mother was.

He knew he needed to stay real close, until he was too big to fit inside this pouch and could jump fast with his strong legs.

When the sun was starting to go down each day, and the heat of the sun passed, and there weren't as many people around, that is when mother would venture out to more exposed areas of grass to feed along with the other kangaroos.

One thing they had to watch out for was cars! What used to be grassland, was now striped through with a wide black surface—a road.

The time of day when the kangaroos liked to feed, was also the time when it was hard for drivers to see animals crossing the road, as it was getting darker.

The kangaroos had a meeting about it, joined by their growing young ones.

“If I try to cross over there, where the feed is good, there's a risk, a sorry risk, that I won't make it back—due to getting hit by a car,” said one kangaroo to the others.

“Well, there is only one thing to do—well two, really. Stay here, and don't venture over, or watch the speed that these vehicles have and try to be faster than they are, to make it over before they get you,” one wise, kangaroo, who obviously had lived a long time, said to the others.

With the those younger than him listening, he continued to offer his advice:

“With the way this land is today, with so many others trying to occupy and operate in the same piece of land, you really can’t make sudden moves.”

“You can’t jump to conclusions?” said a witty, bright youngster.

“You’re starting to get the idea,” he added. “Yes, you can’t assume something is right or good and make a fast decision. When you have made your decisions, then you sometimes do need to move very quickly, or there will be trouble if you don’t.

“But weigh out the pros and the cons before leaping to get something new and tasty to fill your belly.”

“You mean, look before you leap?” said Joey, who was taking this class on road safety very seriously. He would need to be wise if he was going to survive.

“Exactly!” Replied the wise kangaroo.

“Look, ponder, and consider if it is worth the risk, and worth your time to do something. Will there be draw backs to doing it?”

“Will you regret going to get something you feel you really want? Will getting what you want take away from you something you’d much rather—like your ability to hop around alive and free?”

Joey did want to be able to keep hopping around free and well, for a very long time. He wanted to keep on growing until his feet were just as big as Papa’s, and could take leaps as big as him.

So Joey decided to start practicing now! Even though he wasn’t going to cross the road, still there were some choices he could make right where he was.

Joey could learn to stop and think and decide what was the best thing to do, and not make a sudden move to do something just because he felt like it.

When he got a thought,

“Oh, I wonder what is over there, and what that grass tastes like?” he could stop himself, and think these three things:

*Is it safe?

*Do I even need it, or do I already have what I need right here?

*Does my mother think it’s good?”

After he would decide that something was safe, and a need, and good to do, then he would hop over and do or eat what he had wished to.

This wise way of acting came in handy one time especially, and he was glad he was doing his best to be watchful.

He had gotten a sudden interest in hoping a bit further away, but because there was no real need to, and the food was plentifully where he was, he thought about the other two things:

Is it safe? Does my mother think it's good?

Well, going too far from mother, while he was still young and growing, wasn't usually a good idea. He looked up to ask his mother about it, just in case she thought it was fine this time.

He was glad he checked.

Since she was taller and could see further she noticed something slithering in the grass behind a rock that was obstructing little Joey's view from the danger. A venomous snake was just where Joey had thought to leap over to.

It was good he checked first, and was saved from the danger.

If he had suddenly landed on it, it might have quickly bit him, not knowing what was going on, and in an attempt to get this creature off of him. Joey would have been very sorry for such to have happened, as would his mother have been.

Mother smiled to see that her young one was growing bigger in body, and was able feed himself better, and get around.

She was glad to see that he was also growing in wisdom and knowledge, too. Joey was being watchful, careful.

He learned that finding out helpful information from those who might know things he didn't, is part of growing up smart.

Joey was learning that it was best to not react and do things because of feelings only, or to only make decisions because of desires. Instead, to pause to make sure it really was best, and right, and good.



**Little babies like to be
snug and warm and fed.
But when Little Joey is
ready to jump about,
he learns it's best to
pause and ponder, and to
look before he leaps.**