

STORYBOOK



A BRAMBLE STORY

Bramble's
**Three-Check
Creek**

THE STORYBOOK PIPELINE



Bramble's Three-Check Creek

A PUDDLEBEND PICTURE BOOK



Morning warms the near bank. Bramble arrives with picnic baskets at his wide feet. Across the stepping stones the sweet meadow waits in tall soft grass.



The picnic must stay gathered close. Bramble lowers and widens. He pins the baskets tight to his haunches. "Steady. Stay where I can see you." His raised paw hangs above the first wet stone.



Bramble plants wide on the first flat stone. Cool water slips around his paws. He presses down and begins. "One." A pause like shifting earth. "Two." Another long pause. "Three. Steady." Baskets stay tight to his side.



He will not leave this stone. Not before three full checks. Bramble's haunches plant wider mid-count. "One. Two—" Rope-sash clenched hard. Behind him the waiting begins to stack. Extra baskets nudge close. Tiny trail friends pad up soft and hush. They press to his back. The pile grows. A second basket.

"Three. Steady." Done at last. Bramble gathers every basket and every tiny trail friend. He steps the whole beginning-stack onto the second stone. Cool spray kisses his fur. "Steady," he rumbles low. Rope-sash pulls taut across his chest. The pile rides safe with him toward the meadow.



The stones will not stay true. Creek water slides the just-checked stone sideways under Bramble's planted paw. He freezes mid-restart. "One. Two—" His body lowers and widens full. The stack wobbles hard against his back. Rope-sash gripped in one paw. Tiny trail friends hold their breath. Baskets.





Mid-creek. Bramble fully lowered and widened. The tallest stack presses to his haunches. Rope-sash clenched. Water whispers. Heavier now. Stiller. No count. Only weight.





A downstream stone tilts hard in the current ahead. At the same moment the maximum stack leans the opposite way against his braced shoulder. Bramble's heavy brow stays low. One paw still pressed mid-check. Path and pile both threaten to fail. Tiny friends scramble. Baskets creak soft. "Steady.



Then Bramble gathers them all. He sweeps a wide foreleg arc back and hugs the entire stack firm to his back. His free paw wraps the loose rope-sash around the whole load. Body still low. Eyes lift toward the meadow light. "Steady," he rumbles. "We go together." The wait becomes one body with him.

The gathered wait can cross at last. Bound as one, Bramble plants on the next stone. Brighter light warms them all. The rope-bound stack rides steady on his haunches. Baskets snug. Tiny trail friends quiet and safe. "Steady. We go together." One last dark stone sits between him and the grass.





Almost across. Bramble lands on the final creek stone beside the bank. Full stack hugged tight by the rope-sash. Body still wide but brow lifts high. Sunlit meadow grass waits one step ahead. "Steady," he says, soft and warm.



Far bank at last. Bramble stands soft in sunlit grass. Rope-sash loose. The stack unspools around him. Baskets open by his feet. Tiny friends settle close. Sun holds them.