

Junkyard Tales

All Story Descriptions by Season

Benjamin Thompson is an unusual name for a cat. But then Ben is an unusual cat. Whether by fate or by folly, he finds a home in an unusual place – a Junkyard. And there he finds his place in a community of delightfully unusual friends: a steadfast watchdog, a refined rat, a silly skunk, a wise old possum, and a host of helpful mice. Junkyard Tales delights in the joys, challenges, and adventures of friendship, community, and doing good in the world.

Autumn Season:



This is a collection of 13 autumn stories, for the 13 weeks of autumn.

Courage

Ben Thompson is determined to show his junkyard friends that he is strong and brave and unafraid. He decides to prove himself by venturing into the forest in the dark of night, despite the bobcat that lives there. And when he does in fact encounter “Spots”, the polite but very hungry bobcat, Ben realizes the true meaning of courage.

The Train

One morning the junkyard begins to shake, and all the animals are alarmed — is it an earthquake? A hurricane? A dragon? Sally the chipmunk is the only one who actually sees the source of the shaking and noise: a big, long, metal truck-like creature that rides along the iron tracks outside the junkyard fence. What could it be? And will everyone have a chance to see the creature for themselves?

The China Cabinet

Ben Thompson needs a new place to lay his head at night. The autumn rains have made his couch too soggy for sleep. But he doesn’t realize this until after the sun has set and most of the Junkyard is asleep! It takes some of his night-loving Junkyard friends, with a series of crazy ideas, to find just the right place for him to settle down for the rest of the fall.

The Guardian of the Junkyard

Ben knows all about knights: they are brave, they protect the weak, they have swords and shields, and they ride horses. But what he doesn’t know is that two of his junkyard friends are also knights! Junkyard knights! Once a year they “battle” it out to decide who shall be the next “Guardian of the Junkyard.”

Busy Rabbit’s Trick

The Junkyard has an autumn festival that involves disguises, intricate plans and surprises — and Lil Mamma, the busy rabbit, is the master. Ben Thompson, clever cat, learns to watch his step and question everything he sees — could it be a trick? Could it be a busy rabbit in disguise?

A Visit from Cowboy

One autumn night, a voice calls from below Ben Thompson's china cabinet bed. Is it the Rowlands, that feisty raccoon family? Is it Lil' Mamma, the busy rabbit? No, it's his friend from the open world, Cowboy, a black cat who is looking to lay low for the night. Ben welcomes him, and the next day introduces his charming friend to the Junkyard crew. But when Cowboy talks of making this his new home, Ben starts to wonder — is there room for two cats in the Junkyard?

Curiosity and the Cat

A series of odd coincidences leads Ben Thompson, curious cat, to the suspicion that his best friend Sergeant, the steadfast watchdog, will be returning back to his puppyhood farm and leaving the Junkyard. Ben then concocts a far-fetched plan to keep his friend here — not realizing that he has made the entire scenario up!

Zippy and the Worry Charm

Porcupines aren't afraid of anything. Or so says Zippy, the dreamy porcupine, to his friends. But once he's alone with Ben Thompson, clever cat, Zippy confides that he is in fact afraid of something — going to bed. You see, he has lost his Worry Charm — a charm that chases away the worries so he can sleep. He doesn't know what to do at first, and then he realizes the answer lies deep in the forest.

The Geese

The Junkyard Pond in Autumn is a busy place, as many migrating birds make it a popular rest stop on their way south. Of all the various birds that stop for a drink and a chat, none are as loud and brash as the geese. The junkyard animals are used to this and understand that geese are geese and their teasing is not to be taken personally — but Ben is surprised to find that one of the geese seems to have forgotten that important fact.

The Forgetful Turkey

Sergeant and Ben Thompson hear a strange sound one morning. There's a lost turkey in the Junkyard! They allow the turkey to come in so long as he honors the Junkyard rules — most importantly, stay out of sight of the Warden. This would be easy for the turkey if it wasn't for his terrible memory. His forgetfulness puts the Junkyard animals in a very difficult position, but their cleverness saves the day.

On Leave

Ben Thompson, clever cat, has always been curious about his friend Sergeant. Sergeant is so serious and so dedicated to his work, and he works all the time. Ben wonders what it would be like to be the steadfast watchdog of the Junkyard. One day, when Sergeant comes to the Junkyard with a bandaged

foot, Ben gets to experience first hand what it is like to be the watchdog — with all its responsibility and reward!

The Gift

One morning, a pair of curious mice find a perfectly wrapped present sitting in an old boot. They are not sure what to do, and first seek the advice of the kindly rat, and then the fun-loving skunk, and then the old possum. Only Sergeant, the steadfast watchdog, knows whose it is — but that doesn't solve the full mystery. Where did it come from?

Traditions

One morning Ben Thompson, clever cat, wakes to the sound of small scuffling feet. What could it be? Turns out it's three small mice, hunting for hidden glass stars. Glass stars? Ben later discovers that hiding colorful glass stars for the mice to find is one of the many holiday traditions in the Junkyard. There's also storytelling and gift-giving among others! It all sounds great to Ben; he wants to hide stars and tell stories and make gifts! But how can he possibly do it all? Sergeant, the steadfast watchdog, helps Ben realize what is truly important about holiday traditions.

Winter Season:



This collection consists of 13 winter stories, one for each of the 13 weeks of winter.

Mitzie Niegel

Mr. Flinch, the old possum, is missing something very important. The Junkyard animals believe it may have been moved to the far side of the Junkyard — an area considered “off limits” to all of the animals. Ben Thompson, clever cat, bravely offers to go and find it, but watchdog Sergeant suggests he enlist the help of the ever-mysterious mouse — Mitzie Niegel.

First Snow

Ben Thompson, a most unusual cat, wakes one morning to a disappointing sight: snow. He does not like snow - it is sticky, cold and confusing. But the day turns around when he follows a long line of mice headed for some surprising winter fun.

Sergeant's Rounds

Ben is curious about what Sergeant the Junkyard Watchdog does all day — so he follows him one morning on his rounds. What a busy day Sergeant has! Ben realizes why all of Sergeant's “rules” are so important when he accidentally ends up toe-to-toe with the Junkyard Warden.

Harriet the Hawk

This week in Junkyard Tales, a very big and adventurous hawk visits the Junkyard. And strangely, she seems to recognize Ben Thompson, clever cat! Harriet tells a story of a litter of kittens and the one that remained with an old woman - the one with a most unusual name.

The Winter Robins

Ben Thompson, clever cat, is surprised one morning to find himself surrounded in a flock of robins. A flock of robins? In winter? Yes! And they are in search of food. With the help of Spiro the fun loving skunk, they realize they have the perfect wintertime food for hungry robins. But the only problem is: it is stored under the Warden's office!

Midwinter Thaw

One midwinter morning, Ben wakes to the sights and smells of spring. "But it is not spring", reminds Sergeant the steadfast watchdog - who is worried that one of the Junkyard animals might catch spring fever and accidentally attract the Warden's attention. Ben and Sergeant work together to keep all the springy enthusiasm in check, but soon the warm sunny weather inspires a game of catch between the two friends that has unexpected results!

A Time for Play

Dawn breaks and the Junkyard is covered in balls of ice. Ben Thompson learns all about "hail", and that it can lead to a lot of fun. Everyone joins in the fun, except the steadfast watchdog Sergeant. Can they entice him to play?

Star Gazing

After a busy day helping his junkyard friends, Ben is ready for a long night's sleep. But then there's an invitation from the Rowlands, the family of raccoons, to do a little stargazing. Always up for an adventure, Ben joins the growing party on the hill for star sighting and more.

Ben's New Home

Ben wakes to find the mysterious and wise mouse Mitzie Niegle on his cozy shelf cubby. She has important news: his home is to be taken away, and in hours! The Junkyard team joins together to save his precious bell collection and to find him his dream home.

Mr. Flinch's Birthday

It is Mr. Flinch's birthday! How will they celebrate him? The old possum loves nothing more than a good story, so Georgia Bean, the kindly rat, suggests that everyone tell him a story in celebration. And wouldn't you know, Ben Thompson's story contains a "jewel" of information that surprises them all!

Mr. Blinch

Mr. Flinch makes his birthday wish - he wants to visit his brother Mr. Blinch who lives under a dumpster in town. But how will they get the old possum all the way to town? Ben Thompson has a plan, and it involves a children's wagon and the only Junkyard friend strong enough to pull it!

The Visitors

There is a buzz in the Junkyard this week. It's holiday time, and everyone seems to be expecting visitors: Li'l Mamma the busy rabbit is preparing for her children and grandchildren; Sally the chipmunk can't wait for her brother to arrive; and Zippy the porcupine's mother may appear at any minute. But no one is coming to see Ben Thompson, the clever Junkyard cat. When he realizes this, he finds he no longer feels quite so festive. But a quiet voice in the dusk wakes him from his loneliness, and reminds Ben about what he loves best about life in the Junkyard.

Twelfth Night

One windy night, Mr. Flinch tells his Junkyard friends about the days after Christmas when he was just a young possum, and the townspeople would ring bells and gather in the park to sing songs, drink cider and eat fruit cake. His enticing story sparks the curiosity of both Spiro, the fun loving skunk, and Ben Thompson, the clever cat. "Do you think it's still happening?" asks Ben. The unstoppable pair venture out into the weather to see if they can find the reveling townsfolk and sneak some cake. The cold wind and rain nearly dampen their spirits, until they come across an opportunity to discover the true meaning of the Twelfth Night of Christmas.

Spring Season:



This is a collection of 13 spring stories, for the 13 weeks of spring.

Mudball

The Junkyard has thawed and that means one thing — mud. Sergeant, the steadfast watchdog, gets so muddy that there's no way he's going to be allowed in the Warden's car for a weekend at the Warden's home. Instead, Sergeant stays to discover the sort of muddy fun one can have in the Junkyard during Spring.

Flower Petals

The Junkyard is bursting with spring flowers. All of the animals are excitedly decorating the piles of Junk with strings of daffodils and tulips, in preparation for the flower parade. This year, however, their decorations are discovered by the Warden! They have precious little time to come up with a plan to clean up all the spring decorations without the Warden knowing. What will they do?

Buster: A Story about Bullying

Zippy, the porcupine, has a secret. It's a secret he doesn't want to share. He finally entrusts his secret to his feline friend, Ben Thompson: Zippy is being teased by a badger that lives in the field outside of the junkyard. Ben thinks they should teach that badger a lesson, but Sergeant knows how to discover the true source of the teasing and transform it with understanding and kindness.

The Spring Festival

It is time for the Junkyard Spring Festival, and all the animals are doing their part. Ben is given the responsibility of hiding the egg treats for the mice. But while he is hiding them, he finds a mysteriously-decorated egg with a most curious image on it. What could it mean? Who hid it? When the other animals find similar eggs, the true egg hunt begins.

The Band

It's a warm afternoon at the Junkyard. The Warden's car windows are down, and the sound of the radio is carried through the spring air. Ben can't help but be inspired — could the Junkyard friends make their own music? They all agree to meet at the mounds of Mice Central at sundown, and bring their own unique instrument for a little Junkyard Jam!

Sally

It is time for Sally the chipmunk and Lil' Mamma, the busy rabbit, to move out of the old maple tree and into their warm weather homes. When Ben Thompson, clever cat, sees an opportunity to help Sally find her new home, he realizes he doesn't know much about her. In fact, he's not sure she likes him much. How can he win her friendship?

The Turtle Shell

One morning a call spreads through the Junkyard, "The pond is draining!" Ben and other Junkyard animals come to the rescue, patching a mysterious hole. While they figure out how to plug the hole, and how it came to be there, they uncover a pair of turtle shells — and accidentally wake the two turtles inside!

Harriet Hawk and the Big News

Harriet Hawk returns one afternoon with news! It's news that Ben Thompson is at once excited and nervous about: she has found the home in which he was born! His friends all think he should go out and find the house, and so they make him a map. Ben's hesitation dissolves when his friend Sergeant, the steadfast watchdog, volunteers to go along.

Ben's Big Surprise

Ben and Sergeant plan a big adventure into town. They have a map and an important destination: the home where Ben was born and raised. With the help of a number of in-town animal friends, they find their way. But when they arrive, they meet something totally unexpected!

Strawberries

In a few days it will be the birthday of Georgia Bean, the kindly rat, and none of the Junkyard animals know what to give her. Some suggest a cake, others suggest a craft project. But Ben, clever cat, with the help of those ever-entertaining raccoons, the Rowlands, comes up with the ideal gift. It just so happens they are growing in the neighboring farmer's field, guarded by a not-so-friendly canine. How will they gather the perfect present?

The Birds that Didn't Listen

A pair of birds have moved into the old filing cabinet at the front end of the Junkyard. The birds would be a welcome addition to the Junkyard crew, except that they meet any visitor with a hearty dive-bombing. And dive-bombing birds are not good for anyone in the Junkyard. Can Ben Thompson, clever cat, figure out how to tell them that the Junkyard animals mean only peace?

A Dip in the Pond

Cats don't swim. This is what Ben Thompson, clever cat, says to his junkyard friends when they propose a dip in the junkyard pond. But then Mr. Flinch, the old possum, accidentally falls into the pond, and Ben quickly realizes he might be wrong.

Sally and the Squirrel Circus

Sally the chipmunk brings exciting news to the Junkyard: the Squirrel Circus is coming to town! And, more than that, Sally admits that it is her dream to perform in the circus! Ben Thompson — clever cat — and Rebecca Rowland — the mother raccoon — teach her all that they know about balance and climbing. And in the process, they discover they have their own show-stopping moves.

Summer Season:



This is a collection of 13 summer stories, for the 13 weeks of summer.

The Squirrel Circus is Here!

After great anticipation, the Squirrel Circus finally comes to the Junkyard. Everyone is excited except Sergeant, the steadfast watchdog, who is entrusted with keeping the Junkyard safe and sound. He is extra vigilant, making sure everything is in its place and all are accounted for. But he is caught unprepared when seven frisky acrobats come bounding over the Junkyard fence.

Fredland the Moose

It is summer, and the Junkyard is hot, too hot to stay home. So on the steamiest summer mornings, the Junkyard animals take a 'holiday' visit to the nearby lake with its hills of blueberry bushes. One such morning, the unfortunate happens: Ben Thompson gets lost in the woods. It takes the kindness of a friendly and rather large forest animal to help the town cat find his way back to his friends.

Moving Mouse

The mice must move! This urgent news is discovered in the early morning hours one summer day. The excavator is coming, and their dirt pile homes will be no more! Sargent, the junkyard watchdog, and Ben Thompson, the adventurous cat, know this sudden shift will be rather hard on the mice. How can they move the mice crew both quickly and gently? Georgia Bean, the kindly rat, concocts the perfect strategy to find new lodgings while allowing the mice to say goodbye to their longtime home.

Spiro's Secret

Where is Spiro the skunk? He has been late or absent to the junkyard meetings and food collections lately. Ben Thompson, the Junkyard cat, is wondering what is up. Ben suspects that Spiro has been visiting a secret new friend outside the Junkyard fence; but what delight awaits him when Ben, and the rest of the Junkyard animals, discover the truth!

The Pie Festival

Ben Thompson, clever cat, wakes to a buzz of activity in the Junkyard: today is the day of the Pie Festival! On this eventful day, each of the junkyard animals makes their own particular pie, and at the end of the day, the pies are judged. And, the identity of the judge is a secret! But what kind of pie should Ben Thompson make? The diets and tastes of all the junkyard animals are so different! In the end, Ben makes an original pie that will win the attention of at least one junkyard animal.

The Lost and Lonely Owl

What is that strange sound? Ben Thompson, clever cat, suspects it is an owl and hides. This hooting, however, is very small and very sad. Ben inspects to find that the source is a lost and lonely owlet. How can a cat help a baby owl find his way home? With the help of his Junkyard friends!

The Cool House

It is hot in the Junkyard, and the animals are worried about Mr. Flinch, the old possum. They know that the intense heat is not good for him, so they devise a plan to create a cool house under the Junkyard Warden's air-conditioned office. But how will they construct this space without the Warden knowing? And how will they sneak in Mr. Flinch? And what happens when all the other animals hear about this deliciously cool house?

Brothers and Sisters

A heat wave has swept through the Junkyard and the neighboring areas. Mr. Flinch, the old possum, wants help bringing his older brother, Mr. Blinch, from town to the Junkyard, where he can enjoy the "cool house" under the Warden's office. When Ben Thompson, clever cat, and his friends go to retrieve Mr. Blinch, they are shocked to find, not an old gentleman possum, but a striped cat that looks an awful lot like Ben!

How She Does It

How does Mitzie Niegel, the mysterious mouse from the far side of the Junkyard, know the secret and surprising things she knows? This is a question that Ben Thompson, clever cat, means to answer. But when he is finally able to ask Mitzie face to face, he is inspired by her answer.

Beaver Days

The Junkyard animals don't know what to do. It is the All Clear Common, when no one works and the animals do things that are fun and relaxing. But no one has any good ideas. Not until Fredland the Moose arrives with an exciting invitation: come to "Beaver Days," where the forest animals meet at the

lake to play games, run races, and eat all sorts of yummy food! The Junkyard Animals have an adventure they could never have imagined on their own.

Connections

It is Ben Thompson's birthday, and the clever cat has a surprising wish: he'd like to get closer to the Junkyard Warden. But there's a problem: Ben is not allowed to show himself to the warden or to any of the workers. It's a hard-and-fast rule. But when the sound of a jingling bell sends both him and the warden on a magical treasure hunt through the junkyard, Ben discovers a connection with the warden that he never would have dreamed possible.

The Open World

Ben Thompson, clever cat, is asked to lead a group of young mice into town for their weekly lessons with their mouse teacher. With this invitation, he realizes he will have a chance to have a little adventure in the open world! When he encounters an old friend from his days on the streets — once a rough-and-tumble alley cat who has surprisingly become a plump-and-happy house cat — Ben gains a new perspective: life in the open world, life in a house and life in the Junkyard are all seen through new eyes.

The Diamond

The Rowlands, an industrious family of raccoons, find a golden necklace buried in the most recent pile of trash. As Rebecca Rowland teases out the chain, she discovers at its end — what's this — a diamond! Her son's aching belly then distracts her from the find and so begins the diamond's journey from raccoon to skunk to mice to turtle and onward. Will it find its true owner again?

Sample Pack:



The Cat's New Home

This is a story about a cat. The cat's name is Benjamin Thompson and in this story, Ben accidentally discovers his new home - a most unusual place.

The Rowlands

Ben Thompson, clever cat, has just found himself plopped into the new and mysterious world of the Junkyard, where he has been introduced to the remarkable animal friends that call the Junkyard home. Not all of the Junkyard creatures are day lovers however! On his first night there, Ben is surprised to encounter the Rowlands, a family of French Canadian raccoons that first shock and then delight him. And oh la la! How the Raccoon family is tickled by this new and curious cat!

Mr. Flinch

Things can change quickly in the Junkyard. This one of the lessons that Ben Thompson, clever cat and newcomer, learns on his first full day in this new world. But the Junkyard friends know just how to join together and prepare for any change. Ben meets the entire menagerie of Junkyard critters, including the

grandfatherly possum Mr. Flinch, as they prepare for the abrupt removal of Mr. Flinch's much-loved home!

The House of Chairs

Mr. Flinch, the Junkyard's grandfatherly possum, has lost his Junkyard home. The pile of cars — that he once called his own — has been hauled off. The Junkyard friends must find him a new house! But it won't be easy. Mr. Flinch needs his home to be just-so. Ben Thompson, clever cat, is new to the Junkyard; but that doesn't stop his determination to help his new friend by discovering just the right spot. And it's a place that no one else could possibly imagine!