

Happy New Deer 2
Sciurus: The magic forest squirrel diaries
By Curious4Ever
Illustrations by Chica

Although my first name is Charles, almost everyone calls me Chip. And like most ten-year-olds my age I'm in the fifth grade. I'm pretty mature for my age and unlike all those other kids I have my own podcast. It's called Chip's Unexplained Phenomenon and I go out and explore things that are strange and mystifying. And that is why I decided to spend a weekend in an abandoned school. The school building was built in 1899 and it was abandoned over twenty years ago when the new school was built. Many people in the area believe that it is haunted and that is why I am camped out inside. Normally I am not a big fan of being in school. I wish that I could be done with school and start living my life. Why can't I already know all of the things that I need in life? It doesn't seem fair that I still have more years of school ahead of me.

All of my supplies are in the basement where I have my sleeping bag. The most important thing that I brought with me is my Smart Watch. In addition to telling time it also is a recorder where I can record my podcast and also play it back and listen to it. It does several other things but the most important one is that it is a recorder. It's so important that I keep another one nearby in case something goes wrong with that one and I need a backup.

The room I was in was once an old storeroom. There wasn't anything of value left in the room. There were a few empty wire racks, some broken sports equipment as well as some old fashioned school desks and outdated textbooks.

One thing that did catch my attention was a large wooden frame that was leaning up against a far wall. Looking on the other side I saw that it was actually an old mirror. Flipping it around the first thing I noticed was how dirty the mirror was. I looked around and found something to clean it with.

"Maybe there might be something about this mirror that might be interesting to tell my listeners. So far I haven't really uncovered anything weird or unexplained."

I was feeling a little despondent and was beginning to worry that I wouldn't find anything that would appeal to my listeners. There was one kid who was my most ardent listener. I've been in contact with him a few times and he is very interested in my podcasts. His name is Jace and he is also ten years old, but unlike me he is usually stuck inside his house because of his severe allergies. I feel a little sorry for him and one day I plan on visiting him. Maybe we can even get to be friends. I hope that he is okay because I haven't heard from him in awhile.

As I continued to clean the mirror I noticed something very odd. Instead of seeing my reflection in the storeroom, I was looking at an outdoor scene. At first I thought it was

just a large photo under the glass but then I noticed that a few limbs on the smaller trees were moving. Whatever it was that I was looking at it was very real.

“Alright! Now this is definitely something that is unexplained. This must be some kind of magic mirror.”

It was at that point that I realized that I hadn’t started to record anything on my watch. It took a few seconds to start recording.

“Okay, time for another episode of Chip’s Unexplained Phenomenon. I would like to dedicate this podcast to Jace. I hope you are okay and please contact me when you have the chance. As I mentioned in my last podcast I have spent most of the day exploring this abandoned school. But now I have finally found something of great interest. Even though it is now nighttime, I am looking into a mirror and on the other side I see a wooded glen. And it is daytime there. I have found a mirror to another world. At least that is what I think it is. I need to do a little more investigating.”

I continued to look at the mirror and I noticed a small red furry squirrel slowly making its way towards the mirror. I quickly walked back to the area where I kept my supplies and I ripped open a package of peanuts. I was a huge fan of peanuts and I always took several small packages with me on every investigation. I raced back to the mirror and the squirrel was still there. He had a funny look on his face and I wondered if he could see me like I could see him. I wasn’t sure if what I was about to try was going to work but I figured that I had nothing to lose. I threw the few peanuts at the mirror and instead of bouncing off the glass they passed through and landed on the other side about a foot away from the squirrel. That must have scared him because he quickly dashed away. A few seconds later he slowly moved towards the peanuts and then he stopped and grabbed it in his little paws. I watched as he started to eat it.

“Success! I have just thrown some peanuts at the mirror and they arrived on the other side. So in another minute I will try to walk through the mirror and see if I will be able to go there. I will continue to record my status as I do some further investigations.”

The squirrel had already finished the first peanut and was now almost done with the second. He was a cute little fellow and the most interesting thing about him is that he had red hair on the top of his head. And it looked to be the same color hair that I had.

“I’ve never seen a squirrel with red hair before. Actually I don’t think I’ve ever seen a squirrel with hair before. I wonder if he is some kind of mutant squirrel. Hopefully I will find out when, or if, I get to the other side.”

By that time the squirrel had finished with the last peanut and he was looking around on the ground for more. I figured that I would be a nice guy and bring some with me, so I grabbed the open bag of peanuts and shoved it into my pocket.

“Okay, here I go. I’m going to try and walk through this mirror.”

I placed my hand on the glass and was a little disappointed when it didn't go through. All I felt was the hard dirty surface of the mirror. I was about to pull it away when I suddenly felt no resistance to my hand and it just went through the glass. I could feel a cool breeze on my hand and I quickly stepped through the mirror.

I was now standing outside and a cool breeze was blowing past me. I turned around and saw the mirror. It looked so out of place in the middle of this open glen. On the other side I could see the storeroom that I had just been in. I looked around on the ground but I didn't see the small squirrel.

"Hmm, that's funny, he's not here.

I took one more look at the mirror and for a minute I thought I saw something scurrying around on the storeroom floor.

"Could that be the squirrel? Did he go through the mirror the same time I did?"

I stepped closer to the mirror but I didn't see anything moving around. I placed my hand on the mirror and it didn't go through. It was now just a solid piece of glass.

"That's odd. Why was I able to go through it before but not now. And I also can't hear the music that was playing when I left. It's very possible that sound can't go through the mirror. Well first I think I should do some exploring before I try to figure out a way to get back home. Maybe I will find someone who knows how this mirror works."

I turned away from the mirror and started to walk. After awhile I noticed that I hadn't seen any other people. It was a very nice and serene place and I was beginning to wonder if I would ever run into anyone. I don't know how far I had walked before I decided to stop and rest for a few minutes. I sat on the ground and leaned against the trunk of the tree. I pulled a peanut out of my pocket and started to eat it.

"Too bad that squirrel ran away before I could give him the rest of these nuts. Boy, they really are tasty."

My feet started to feel very uncomfortable and so I leaned forward and removed my sneakers. They still felt a little funny and so I took my socks off as well. It actually felt pretty nice to have my feet exposed like this. Then I noticed something peculiar.

"That's strange, look how long and sharp my toenails are. No wonder my sneakers felt so uncomfortable. I will have to cut those when I get back home. Until then I will just walk around barefoot."

At that moment my nose started to tingle and it almost felt like my nose was beginning to push out of my face a little bit. It felt a little odd but before I could investigate it I noticed

a sweet aroma in the air. I looked around and spotted a small field of flowers a few yards away.

“Those flowers do have a nice scent and that isn’t the only nice thing that I smell.”

I reached into my pocket and pulled out some more peanuts.

“I never noticed what a nice tasty scent these things have. They smell so good they almost make my mouth water.”

My fingers began to tingle and at that moment I suddenly stopped and began to nervously look around.

“That’s funny, I thought I was being watched. I hope it isn’t someone who wants to steal my peanuts.”

I looked around a few more times and also began to sniff the air.

“No, I don’t see or smell anyone. But maybe I should hide these peanuts just to be on the safe side.”

I placed the peanuts on the ground. Then I began to scratch at the dirt until I made a nice size hole and then I placed the peanuts inside of the hole before covering it back up with dirt again. I patted the top of the covered hole and smiled.

“There, that should keep them safe until I’m ready to eat some more.”

I stopped and started to think about what I had just done.

“Wait a minute. Why did I feel the need to bury my nuts in the ground like that? And how did I dig that hole so easily?”

I looked down at my hands and noticed that I had tiny little claws coming out of the end of my fingers.

“Are those claws? Where did they come from?”

I suddenly felt my ears begin to tingle and I reached up and started to scratch them. They felt a little longer than I remembered.

“And now my ears feel funny. They feel longer and it feels like something is growing on them. It feels like they have tiny little hairs growing all over them. I will have to find a place where I can get a better look at them.”

I got up and started to head back to the mirror and then I remembered that the mirror didn't reflect the person who was looking into it. It just showed what was on the other side. So I continued in the direction that I was originally headed.

As I walked I barely even noticed that I was walking around barefoot. I was too distracted by all the various things that I was smelling. In addition to my ears feeling itchy I was also feeling somewhat itchy on most of my face. When I tried to scratch it I could feel those tiny little hairs wherever I touched.

“This is a very weird place. So far I haven't run across a single person and I can smell things that are a far distance away from me. And then there are these little claws at the end of my fingers.”

I looked down at my hands and noticed that they looked different.

“What the heck is going on? What's that all over my hands? It almost looks like they are covered in red fur.”

Before I could look any further I heard something moving in the wooded glen a short distance away.

“Oh boy, it's about time. I'm finally going to meet someone who lives on this strange world.”

I raced towards the area where I heard the noise and I came to a stop when I encountered a deer on the meadow. The thing that caught my attention about this deer was that he was standing upright on his hind two legs.

“I've never seen a deer stand on two legs before. Or one that had brown hair on the top of his head. This might be an interesting addition to my podcast. I'm going to start recording now.”

My legs began to feel odd and I was starting to have a difficult time walking. I wasn't sure why they were giving me trouble but it was just as well because I needed to slowly walk up to him in order not to scare him. He gave me a puzzled look as I slowly stepped closer to him.

“Are you injured?” he asked. “Why are you walking so slowly?”

When I heard him speak my mouth opened wide in surprise.

“Oh, uh, you can talk. That's amazing. I'm sure my listeners have never heard a talking deer before.”

“Of course I can talk,” he said. “You can speak so why shouldn't I be able to?”

“Well I can speak because I’m a human, but you’re a deer. And everyone knows that deer can’t talk.”

“Every deer that I know can talk.”

“This is so fantastic,” I said as I tried to contain my excitement. “Is it okay if I interview you for my podcast? That would really increase my number of listeners.”

“I guess it would be okay. Can I ask you a question first?”

“Sure, what is it?”

“What does that mean?”

“What does what mean?” I asked as my nose started to tingle. It felt very itchy and I had that same feeling that I felt earlier when it felt like my nose was pushing out of my face. I was too busy talking to the deer to worry about it and so I reached up and scratched it a few times and it felt better.

“Those funny words you spoke about. There was uh pudcast, interview and listen airs.”

“Those aren’t funny words. I don’t think I can explain what a podcast is to someone who lives in a forest. Let’s just say that I want to talk to you so I can get more followers.”

He smiled and nodded his head.

“Oh that I can understand. I know what followers are. We have those in the new game I created. It’s called Follow the Lead Deer. It’s where one deer will run and jump around the forest and the other deer have to follow him and do what he does. It’s a very fun game.”

“Yeah, I know, I’ve heard of it. And it’s called Follow the Leader.”

“Yup, that’s what I said, Follow the Lead Deer. Oh I just thought of something. Didn’t you say that you were a who-mum? Ah no wonder you look so strange. I was once a who-mum too, but that was before I changed into a deer. My name is Tupper.”

“It’s pronounced human. And you were once a human? I find that hard to believe. You look nothing like a human.”

“I told you that I changed. It happened shortly after I got here. I came here originally through a... a... oh what was that thing called again?”

He stuck out his tongue and licked his muzzle.

“I always get a little confused when I try to remember those funny words. It was that big flat thing that I stepped through. And Tupper stepped through it too.”

“I thought you said that your name was Tupper.”

“Now it is. But before I came here I had a different name. A who-mum one. I don’t remember what that name was. I think it might have been something like Prancer or Dancer or Rudolph or maybe even Toaster.”

I started to laugh and it was almost a minute before I could stop laughing.

“Silly deer. Most of those are the names of Santa’s reindeer, they aren’t boys’ names. And toaster isn’t the name of someone, a toaster is a thing that you make toast in.”

“Oh, I didn’t know that,” he said. “So what is toast?”

“Oh that’s easy. Toast is what you get when you put a slice of... a slice... of... a slice... into the uh... the uh... uh...”

I had to stop and think for a moment. I remembered putting something into a toaster but I couldn’t remember what the thing was that I put into it. And now that I tried to remember what a toaster was or looked like I found that I couldn’t remember anything about it. It was so strange, I could remember the word but I didn’t know a thing about it.

“Well it’s a slice of something that you put into that thing,” I said as I tried not to show him that I wasn’t very sure of what toast was either.

“Oh, okay,” he said. “I’ve forgotten a lot of stuff that I knew before coming here. But it is okay because now I know a lot of important things. Like the names of all the different kinds of berries, and the best kind of grass to graze on and all the various scents.”

“Wow, this is so amazing. I sure hope that you aren’t lying to me.”

“Lying? What does that word mean?”

“Lying? Everyone knows what that is. Lying is when you don’t tell the truth.”

“But why would you not speak the truth? We deer always speak the truth.”

“Amazing. So none of you knows how to lie?”

He slowly shook his head and then he smiled and snorted.

“A mirror!” he exclaimed.

“What about a mirror?”

“That is the name of the thing that I stepped through to come here. It was a mirror.”

Then I knew that he was telling the truth. How would a silly deer in a forest know about a mirror unless he was once a human.

“So you really were a human. And now you are a deer. That’s so amazing.”

He smiled and nodded his head. Then he gave me a funny look.

“Are you sure that you are a who-mum? I feel like I have seen something that looks like you but it wasn’t a who-mum.”

“Of course I’m a human. But we aren’t here to talk about me. I want to know more about you. Now you say that you changed into a deer, so how did that happen? Was it something that you ate or drank? Did it happen all at once?”

“No, it wasn’t anything that I ate or drank. It just happened gradually. The longer I stayed here the more I became like Tupper and at the same time he was becoming like me.”

“So then this is your real tail and you can feel it if I pulled on it like this?”

I reached over and grabbed his little bushy tail and yanked it. He let out a loud grunt.

“Yes, I can feel that. Why would you do that to my tail? That hurt.”

“I’m sorry, I just wanted to prove to my listeners that you really are a deer.”

I started to get an itchy feeling on my butt and when I started to scratch it I thought I felt a small bump back there.

“Of course I’m a deer. Don’t I look like a deer to you?”

“Well yeah you look like one to me, but my listeners can’t see you. So then once you turned into a deer then what happened? Why are you still here? Why didn’t you go back home?”

“Oh well I did try to do that. Because if I was to go back through the mirror then all the changes that happened to me would go away and I would be back in my old body again. But the old Tupper didn’t want to go back to being a deer. He liked being in my old body and knowing all the things that I once knew.”

“Wait a minute, are you saying that the changes weren’t just to your body but they also affected your mind too?”

“That’s right, I gained more and more of Tupper’s knowledge the longer I stayed here, and at the same time he gained a lot of mine.”

“So if you look and think like a deer then there really isn’t anything human left in you.”

“There is still some of the old me left. Even though I look and sound and smell like Tupper, I still don’t act anything like him.”

I felt an itchy feeling on my chest and back and I started to scratch those areas. After I was done scratching I looked down at my hands and there was something a little odd about them.

“That’s strange, my hands and four fingers seem a little smaller than I remember. Hold on, did I just say my four fingers? Shouldn’t I have five fingers on each hand?”

“I don’t know anything about hands or fingers,” Tupper said as he shook his head. “I’m just all hooves just like all the other deer.”

“Well you still didn’t answer my question about why you didn’t return home.”

“Oh, but I did try to return home but the old Tupper broke the mirror on his side and so that broke off all contact between that place and this one. He thought I would be upset about staying here and living the rest of my life as a deer, but I think that being a deer is the best thing to be.”

As he spoke I was too busy looking at my hands. They were all covered in red fur and I was still trying to remember whether I was supposed to have four fingers or five.

“Huh? Oh sorry, I was distracted for a moment. So uh, what do you do all day?”

“Oh, I like to play games with the other deer in my herd. They are all great. We are like brothers without being real brothers.”

“That must be nice,” I said as he talked about the first thing I could relate to. “I don’t have any siblings but I always wanted a brother. One who was real close in age to me so that we could do a lot of stuff together.”

“Me and the other deer do lots of things together. We play games all day and we also like to graze on the grass together and then at night we go visit the herd of girl deer. That’s where Fauna lives. One day the two of us are going to become mates. But until then I like playing games with the other deer. That’s what I was doing when you came by. I had just finished a game of Bonk Bonk.”

“Bonk Bonk? That’s a funny sounding game.”

“Oh it is just about the best game ever. When I first came I didn’t know how to play but now I am an expert at it. In fact playing Bonk Bonk always makes me hungry,” he said as he stuck out his tongue and licked his muzzle. “Would you like to come with me to a nearby bush and have some berries with me? Berries are my most favorite things to eat.”

When he spoke about eating I suddenly realized that it had been awhile since I had eaten anything. All of my food was back at my camp but as he mentioned berries I got very excited.

“Oh you know where there are some tasty berries?” I inquired. “I also enjoy eating berries. I love to nibble on them, especially in the morning.”

My knowledge and interest in fruits and vegetables seemed to be very good. I hadn’t realized up to now just how much I knew about those tasty things.

I followed him to a bush and once again I had to take baby steps since I was still having problems walking. When I finally got there I saw that it was filled with the most beautiful blue berries I had ever seen. I quickly grabbed a berry and started to nibble on it. As I nibbled on the delectable fruit Tupper leaned over and grabbed a bunch in his mouth.

“Yes, this is a very tender and sweet berry,” I said. “Are berries the only thing you eat?”

“No,” he said as he shook his head. “I also enjoy eating the leaves of the bush and I also love to graze on the grass. In fact every night I go to visit Fauna and we graze on the grass together. One day we will become mates and then we will spend all of our time together. She is the most beautiful doe I have ever met.”

“Yes, I know, you already told me that you two were going to be mates. So how did you know that the two would become mates? Was it love at first sight?”

“Well I did find that I was attracted to her scent but it wasn’t until we went to the Fa-La-La bush and ate some of its berries that we knew that we would become mates. The berries always tell a deer who they should mate.”

“So you listen to what a bush has to tell you?” I asked as I had to stop myself from laughing. “That is the silliest thing that I’ve ever heard. I would never let a bush tell me who I was supposed to mate with.”

“Really? Then how do you know who you are supposed to be with?”

“Well that’s simple we just ah uhm... we just... just...”

That was odd. When I tried to think about how a boy and a girl got together I was having a difficult time remembering. Then all of a sudden I started to remember something.

“Oh yeah, sure that’s an easy one. A boy always goes with the girl who has the nicest selection of nuts. It isn’t based on anything as silly as a bush, we rely on something important, like nuts.”

I started to develop an intense desire to nibble on a nut the more I continued to speak about them.

“That is interesting,” he said. “And what other things do you like to eat?”

That was a very good question and as I thought about it a large variety of things began to pop into my brain.

“Well like you I eat berries and also other fruits and vegetables.”

As I spoke about eating I continued to acquire a lot more knowledge about various things to eat.

“And in addition to that there is also seeds, those are very tasty. And I also love to eat fungi.”

“Fungi?” he said with a puzzled look. “What is that?”

“Oh that is stuff that grows a lot in the forest. The best kind of fungi to eat is mushrooms. They give off a very tasty scent. And I will also eat small insects, those are very easy to catch and they taste good. But my most favorite thing of all to eat is nuts. I’m just nuts about nuts. I know an awful lot about nuts.”

And it was true. A large amount of the knowledge that I had seemed to center around nuts. Not only did I know which ones were the tastiest but I also knew which ones were the best for hiding in the ground and which ones should be eaten first.

“In addition to eating nuts I also know a lot of good hiding spots to bury them.”

“Why do you bury your food?”

I shook my head and laughed and as I laughed it almost sounded like my voice was getting higher in pitch. .

“For someone who was once huhu-man there is a lot about being huhu-man that you don’t know. We bury our food in the ground so we can dig it up later and eat it when there is a shortage of nuts. But you have to be very careful and make sure that nobody sees where you bury them because if they spot you then they will dig up your nuts and eat them. I have to bury a lot of nuts because I sometimes forget where I have buried them.”

When I spoke it definitely sounded like it was now in a higher pitch than before. But it didn't seem to bother me. I was just so excited to show off to the deer all the things that I knew.

"It sounds like you know an awful lot about nuts."

"Of course I do, of course I do, silly deer. Nuts are the most important thing for humans to know about. That's why I have my nut cast. That's where I talk to others about nuts. We don't have time to play silly deer games. We are constantly on the hunt for nuts."

I felt very proud about my knowledge of nuts. I felt like there might have been a few other things that I once was knowledgeable about but now it seemed like the thing that mattered most to me were nuts. And why shouldn't I know a lot about them? They were the most important thing in my life. As I grabbed another berry to eat I noticed that I was grabbing it from the lower half of the bush while Tupper was eating them from the top. I looked up at him.

"You do seem to be quite a lot taller than I remember. Have you always been that tall?"

He looked down at me and nodded his head.

"Yes, as far back as I can remember I have always been this tall. I'm the same height as all the other deer in my herd."

I couldn't understand why he looked so tall. Was it possible that I had shrunk? I looked around and I did seem to be a lot closer to the ground than I remembered. And I was fairly certain that when I started to eat from the bush that I was eating from the top. But now that was much too high for me to reach. I must have shrunk while we were talking but I was too busy eating and talking to notice.

"Well I am done eating and I need to go back to my games," he said as he started to walk away. "It has really been nice talking to you and I've really learned a lot."

I was about to follow him but I found that I was entangled in a large pile of clothing. Lying on the ground around my feet was a huge pair of pants. In addition to that I was encircled in a very large shirt. I crawled through the large opening and I was free of that obstruction. I looked back at the very large pile of clothes on the ground and wondered where it had come from. Now that I was no longer trapped within them I felt a whole lot freer now. I could feel the cool breeze as it tickled the fur on my body.

"Wait a minute. Did I just think about the breeze hitting my fur? What fur?"

I looked down again at my body I noticed that I was completely naked. But even more puzzling was the fact that I was covered in a reddish fur.

“Where did all this red fur come from? Has my body always been covered in fur?”

I tried to remember what I looked like before I started talking to the deer. All knowledge that I had about wearing clothes was now gone and all I could remember was having a furry body. There was still something that didn't seem right but I couldn't seem to remember what it was. I went back to the pile of colorful items on the ground that I had just crawled out of. I jumped and landed on top of them.

“Golly, these things feel very soft. I wonder if I can use them to line my nest with.”

That felt like a good idea but when I tried to remember where my nest was I was having a hard time remembering. Then I looked up and saw that Tupper was now further away. I got down on all fours and scurried after him.

“Hey! Wait for me!”

He stopped for a moment and then turned and looked down at me.

“It's been very nice talking to you,” he said. “But I really need to play some more games. You're the first squirrel that I've ever spoken to and it has been very interesting. I've learned a lot about squirrels.”

“Squirrels? What a silly deer. I told you that I am a huhu-man, not a squirrel.”

“Well you sure look like a squirrel to me. I thought you looked a little familiar when we started to talk but now I know what you are. You not only look like a squirrel but you have a squirrel scent too.”

I looked back down at my body again.

“Hmm, I guess I can see where you might mistake me for a squirrel. I am covered in red fur and I also have sharp claws at the end of my fingers and toes.”

I reached up and touched my face. Like the rest of my body it was covered in fur. And I felt something else strange up there. I went a little further and felt a pair of long furry ears. Then I felt something odd around my nose and when I touched that area I came across something very odd.

“What is this growing out of my face? Are these whiskers? Yes, they are. I have long thick whiskers.”

As I continued to feel the long whiskers I was suddenly filled with a lot of knowledge about them. I knew that they were very important and also very useful in searching for food. They could be used to feel around the dirt and leaves. And if they found something that felt like a good source of food then that meant that it was a good time to start digging for it.

“I sure do know a lot about digging in the ground for food. In fact most of the stuff that I do know about is hunting and searching for food. I even know where a large group of nuts is buried in the ground. These are all things that a squirrel would know. I know that I should be a huhu-man but I feel more like I’m a squirrel. When did that happen? Oh no, that silly deer has walked away again. I need to go after him.”

I got back down on all fours and scurried after him. I was able to move a lot faster when I scurried around on all fours I kept thinking that I should be walking around on my two hind legs like the deer does, but this felt more natural to me.

.”Wait, did I just think about having hind legs?” I said as I suddenly stopped and looked down at my four legs.

“Yes, I did. I have four legs, just like a squirrel. Why am I transforming into a squirrel? It doesn’t make any sense. Wait a minute, I remember seeing a red squirrel on this side of the mirror. And he must have gone through the mirror the same time I did. I thought I saw something moving around on the other side after I went through. How could I have forgotten about that? I seem to be forgetting a lot of things lately.”

The more I looked at my body the more I started to remember about that squirrel.

“That squirrel had red hair and red fur just like I do. Tupper said that he started to change into a deer the longer he was here, and now the same thing has happened to me, but instead of a deer I’m turning into that squirrel. And I’m not just changing into him physically but I also seem to know a lot of the stuff that he knows. I know everything about what a squirrel eats and how to search for food. So if I’m turning into him, then that means that he’s turning into me. And so he must know a lot of the things that I once knew. I’ll bet that’s it. I’m sure that I used to know about a lot more stuff. But now all I can think about is eating nuts and searching for food and those are both squirrel things. There must be a way to stop this.”

I scurried a little bit further until I spotted something on the ground. I recognized it as the thing that I used to wear around my wrist. Looking at the large object and my tiny wrist I can only imagine that it must have slipped off at some point when my body started to shrink in size. But I was too preoccupied with stuff to notice. I continued to look at it and even though I remembered that I once wore it on my wrist, I couldn’t seem to remember what it was called or what it was used for.

“Oh no, this is terrible. I’ve found something that I came here with and now I can’t remember what it is. It seems the more squirrel information that I acquire the less I am able to remember as a huhu-man.”

I pressed my tiny nose against it but I didn’t recognize the scent. I tried licking it a few times but it didn’t have an appealing taste. I figured that maybe it is like a nut and it needs to be cracked open before eating it and so I opened my mouth and tried taking a

bite of it. Whatever it was it was very hard and I was unable to crack it open with my teeth.

“Well it’s not food, that is for sure. But if it’s not something to eat then what good is it? I’m only interested in finding things that I can eat.”

It was true, if something couldn’t be eaten then I didn’t see the sense in finding out more about it. Food was the highest priority to me. Then I remembered something else that I had been interested in.

“Oh yes, the deer. It was important that I go after him and report about him for my nut cast.”

I quickly scurried until I spotted the deer. He was back to the open area where he started to play another game. I decided to narrate what I saw for my next nut cast.

"It's fascinating watching these large deer as they spend most of their day playing silly games. I need to get a better view of them so I can describe them better for you. As I look up at them they do seem taller than I remember. Luckily there is a nearby tree that I can scurry up and get a better view."

I wasn't sure why I needed to narrate all the things that I saw or who I was even doing it for. It was just something that I instinctively felt like doing even though I couldn't remember why I was doing it. I got down on all fours and scurried across the field. Then I jumped onto the side of the tree and used my sharp claws to scurry up it. I made it to a large branch and scurried onto it.

"Wow, I'm pretty impressed at how well I was able to climb the side of that tree. I'm standing on a small limb overlooking the deer down below. He doesn't seem to have noticed that I have left or that I am now above him. Deer are very silly and waste a lot of the day doing useless stuff. Oh, excuse me, I see a nut growing on a branch, I will just grab it and eat it while I continue to report."

I grabbed the nearby nut and started to nibble on it. As tasty as the berries had been this nut was even tastier.

"Yum, this is tasty. Those silly deer seem to eat mostly berries and leaves and grass, while there are all these tasty nuts growing all over the place. Another strange fact about that deer is the small bushy tails that he has. If you ask me there is nothing nicer than having a big bushy tail like I've got. It's way more impressive than the.. the.. wait, did I just say that I have a big bushy tail?"

I looked behind and saw a big red bushy tail coming out of my rump.

"Look at that. I do have a tail. It's so big and long and bushy. I feel like that is something new to my life but also I feel as if it is perfectly normal thing to have. Which feeling is accurate I wonder."

I nibbled a few more times on the tasty nut.

"Oh wait, that's right, I have a big bushy tail because I'm turning into a squirrel. It seems the longer I hang around this place the more I turn into one. If I don't find my way back home I might end up spending the rest of my life living in a tree and hunting all day for food."

As I mentioned food I could feel my stomach beginning to rumble and I was sad to see that I had finished eating the nut and still felt hungry. I needed to forget about food and focus on getting back home. I turned around and was about to descend the tree when I smelled something. I looked around and spotted a squirrel heading down the tree from higher up. It stopped when it got to my branch and I could tell by its scent that it was a girl squirrel.

"Well Chipper, I see that you've come back," she said. "Does that mean that you have come to a decision yet?"

"Wait a second. Do you know me?"

"Of course I know you Chipper. I've known you since we were very little."

"Oh wait, it's not me that you know. You just know the squirrel whose body I am in. You see, I'm not the squirrel you know. My name is Chipper. Hold on, why did I just say that? That's not my name, my name is really Chipper. Oh no, I said it again. The only name that I can remember having is Chipper, but that's a squirrel's name, and I'm really a boy that has turned into a squirrel. This isn't what I really am."

As I continued rambling on she just stood there on the branch and shook her head.

"Is this another one of the silly games you like to play? You know that I don't like to play games. Since you came back to my tree I thought you had finally decided to become my mate."

"Your tree? Are you saying that this big tree and all these nuts belong to you?"

"Yes, my family has lived in this tree for a very long time. And I told you that I would share the tree and all its nuts if you became my mate."

"Your mate? Does that mean that we have to live together?"

She moved in closer and started to rub her nose against mine. Her nose felt very nice and I was really enjoying her scent. I could feel my tail begin to twitch as she rubbed her nose against mine.

“Yes, if you are my mate then we will live together and raise a family.”

“But I’m not old enough to raise a family.”

“You are the perfect age to get mated and start a family.”

As I continued to smell her scent I suddenly started to gain some knowledge about her. I remembered seeing her many times before and smelling her scent.

“Wait, I do know you. Your name is Petal. Yes, that’s it.”

Once again I had acquired more squirrel knowledge. And it wasn’t just any squirrel’s knowledge it was the stuff known by Chipper. I now knew that Chipper was the name of the red squirrel who had gone through the mirror and it now seemed to be my name as well. Since I now had his body and was acquiring his knowledge, I was becoming just like him. Well not completely like him. Based on what Petal told me, he seemed to enjoy playing games. And I was not a big fan of game playing. I was more the practical type.

I also knew from Chipper’s knowledge that he was very familiar with Petal but he wasn’t very interested in becoming her mate. It was probably because he was too interested in playing games just like those silly deer.

For some reason I was actually beginning to think that becoming her mate might be a very good idea. I could live in this giant tree with all of these nuts. I wouldn’t have to spend all of my time hunting and scurrying about for food. And it might actually be pretty nice raising a family and being a dad to a few cute little squirrels. The more I thought about it the more the idea appealed to me. This tree certainly had a large number of nuts growing on it. And I was getting tired of spending every day searching for food.

“Wait, what am I thinking? I keep thinking that my life has been nothing but scurrying around searching for food. But that is Chipper’s life. I need to remember that my life is different. But it’s getting harder to tell what is his life and what is mine. I think my squirrel knowledge is stronger than my huhu-man one. I can’t even remember where I live back home. Was it a big tree or a small one? Did I even live in a tree back home? Most of what I know is living most of my life in a tree. So I must have lived in one back home.”

I turned and looked at Petal. She seemed to get prettier every time I looked at her. She had such a cute little nose and a really beautiful tail. I liked how it would twitch when she talked to me.

“I’m sorry, I think I would really enjoy living in this tree and being your mate but I think I should try to get home first. I have a feeling that if I don’t then I will be a squirrel for the rest of my life.”

“But you are a squirrel,” she said looking a bit confused.

“Yes, I know I am. But I once used to be huhu-man and the longer I stay here the harder it is for me to remember what that was like. Did I always have this big bushy tail or did I have a smaller one when I was a huhu-man. I’m having a hard time remembering what huhu-mans look like. When I think of them I just think of tall squirrels. Are huhu-mans just like squirrels but bigger? I’m not sure. That’s why I need to go back and find out for sure.”

She rubbed noses with me one more time.

“I don’t understand what you are saying but if you decide that you do want to be my mate then just come back to my tree. I will be waiting for you. But don’t take too long or I might choose another squirrel. You are not the only cute squirrel in the forest.”

She said that I was cute, that must mean that she really likes me. And I found her to be very cute too. Part of me really wanted to stay and become her mate. But it was more important to follow the part of me that needed to find that mirror and return home.

I scurried down the tree and when I got to the ground I started to scurry away on all fours. I suddenly came to a stop and I stood up on my hind legs.

“I keep running around on all fours just like a squirrel. I should try and walk on my hind two legs.”

I tried to stand fully upright but I was only able to stand on my hind legs in a crouching position. When I tried to take a step forward I became very unsteady and I fell back down on all fours. I tried several times to walk on my hind legs like I had seen the deer do, but I couldn’t do it. I was able to stand on my hind legs but I could only walk on all fours.

“My body isn’t built for walking on my hind legs. I can only walk around like all the other squirrels.”

I continued to scurry on my four legs and it felt like a very natural thing to do. I was starting to wonder why I wanted to walk on my hind two legs. Four legs was a much faster and easier way of getting around.

“I just need to concentrate on getting to that mirror. I seem to get distracted very easily when something catches my attention.”

That's when I remembered that I was still hungry. Fortunately I knew where a big tasty nut was buried and so I quickly dashed over to its location and I started to dig at the ground until I found where it was buried. In almost no time at all the nut was gone.

"That was very tasty, now what was I doing before I started to eat? Oh yes, I need to keep reminding myself about all the things that I remember from back home. Let's me think, hmm, my name is Chipper and I'm a huhu-man boy. I live in a tree and I have a daily nut cast. Hmm, I'm pretty sure that is correct but what is a nut cast? Wasn't it called something else? Was it something like a p... p.... podcast?"

I shook my head as I thought about the strange sounding word.

"No, that can't be it. What is a pod? I don't remember that word. It must be nut. A nut cast. But what is a nut cast? Did I throw down nuts from my tree? Was it to scare away anyone that wanted to steal my food from me? I guess that could be it. It does seem to make some sense. I guess some things aren't too different back home as they are here. Squirrels and huhu-mans both live in trees and we both like to eat nuts. I feel pretty good that I can remember all that. Let me think, what else to huhu-mans do."

I thought and thought but I couldn't seem to remember anything else.

"I think that's it. Huhu-mans are just big furry squirrels that live in trees."

I stopped for a moment to think. As I stood up on my hind legs I reached behind and grabbed my tail with my tiny paws. I felt a little comforted as I pulled it towards me and held it tight to my furry body.

"But what if I have forgotten most of my huhu-man knowledge and everything I now know is just squirrel stuff. Maybe I only think that huhu-mans have big bushy tails because that is the only thing that I remember. I think I would really miss not having my tail. It's such a beautiful red furry tail. But I do have to admit that Petal has a very pretty tail too. For some reason I just can't seem to get Petal out of my mind. Even though we just recently met I feel like I've known her all my life. And with all this stuff that I know about her maybe I have known her that long. I wonder if there are any nice girls back home as pretty as her. I don't seem to have any knowledge of any girls back home."

As I thought about Petal I saw another red squirrel coming towards me. He seemed a little familiar but I couldn't remember where I knew him from. Finally he came to a stop and then gave me a puzzled look.

"What's the matter Chipper? You didn't even say greetings when you saw me."

"Oh, uh greetings," I said. "I guess I didn't notice you. I was too busy thinking about someone."

"Really? Well that is no surprise. Let me guess, was it Petal?"

“Yes, how did you know?”

“I should know. I’ve known you all my life.”

“You have? Where do I know you from?”

He started to laugh and then he shook his head.

“That is a funny one Chipper. Trying to pretend that you don’t even remember your own brother.”

“My brother? I have a brother? Since when?”

“Since the day we were born of course. I was born first and then you were born. We both grew up in the same nest. What kind of joke is this?”

He reached over and rubbed the top of my head.

“Are you so busy thinking about Petal that you forgot about your only brother?”

As he rubbed my head I started to acquire some more of Chipper’s knowledge and memories. I remembered being in a nest in a large tree and lying next to me was a red squirrel. The very squirrel I was looking at. And not only that but I suddenly knew his name.

“Oh, yeah, now I know you, your name is Nibbles, and we are brothers.”

The memories about Nibbles continued to enter my brain. As they did I was unaware of the memories that were also leaving my brain. All of the memories that I had of him were ones of us growing up in the same nest together. The more I thought of the nest the more natural it felt. Of course I grew up in a nest. I can’t imagine living anywhere else. It’s just like the old squirrelly saying, Home Sweet Nest.

“What are you doing around here?” I asked.

“Oh I was just hoping to find someone to play a quick game of Nutsy with. But everyone seems to be too busy.”

“Nutsy? I don’t know if I’ve heard of that one before,” I replied.

“Oh you must have. Every squirrel in the forest knows that game.”

“Well if you can’t find anyone to play with you then I would like to play.”

He had a dumbfounded look on his face.

“You? Really? Wow, that would be great. You never wanted to play any games with me before.”

“Oh? I don’t remember that. But I would like to try out this game if you don’t mind.”

“No, not at all. I would love it. Well there are a couple of ways of playing Nutsy but I prefer the version where we start off by tossing a nut to see who can throw it the furthest and then rolling the nut with our nose to the finish line.”

He pointed to a small stream.

“The finish line will be right before that stream. Does that sound okay to you?”

I nodded my head. The more I thought about the game the more excited I became.

“Yeah, that sounds like fun. Let’s start.”

I couldn’t get over how excited I felt. I didn’t know if it was because we were going to play a game or that I had a brother to play with.

Since Nibbles found the two nuts he got to throw his nut first and I was really impressed at how far it went.

“Wow, that was a very good throw. I hope that I’m as good as you,” I said as I watched the nut come to a landing.

“Gee, thanks, I’m not used to you giving me compliments.”

Then it came my turn and I picked up the nut and then threw it as hard as I could. I watched in anticipation as it soared through the air.

“Oh well, it wasn’t as good as mine,” Nibbles said. “But it was still a pretty good throw.”

“Thanks.”

It finally came to a rest just a short distance behind the other one. After it stopped moving we both scurried towards our nut. I got to mine first and then I started pushing it with my nose. I was moving closer to the finish line but I could see out of the corner of my eye that Nibbles was starting to gain on me. I pushed even harder and tried to keep ahead of him. He started to advance and soon we were nose to nose. Then in the final few seconds he pushed ahead of me and got it over the finish line first. Even though I came in second I still had a fun time. Once I was over the finish line he turned towards me.

“Nutsy!” he shouted and then he jumped on me. He knocked me off my feet and the two of us rolled around on the ground. After we were done rolling I found that I was on my back and he was sitting on my belly. He was smiling as he looked down at me.

“Good game little brother.”

“Yes, it was a good game, and maybe next time I can try to beat you.”

I couldn't remember the last time I had so much fun. And it seemed like the more time that I spent with Nibbles the stronger our bond became.

He got off of me and it took me a few seconds before I was back on my hind legs again. He leaned over and rubbed cheeks with me.

“Well it has been a lot of fun but I have to be heading back to my nest,” he said. “I'm sure my mate is wondering where I've been all this time. I was just supposed to go out and find a couple of nuts for us to eat.”

“You have a mate? Aren't you kinda young to have one of those?”

“I am the same age that our father was when he mated with our mother. And it is time that you also found a mate and settled down. You must come to our nest and visit us. You know that you've never come over for a visit. The kids have been asking when they are going to meet their uncle Chipper.”

“Wow, you have kids? That's really awesome. I can't wait to come over and meet them.”

“Really? Well you've always been welcome to come over for a visit but you never accepted any of my invitations.”

“Well that is going to change. I can't wait to meet your mate, and also your kids. And maybe when I come to visit we can play another game of Nutsy.”

He rubbed his cheek against mine again.

“I would love it,” he said. “Gee Chipper, you sure aren't acting like yourself. You haven't played games with me in a long time.”

“Really? I wonder why.”

“Well I always thought that it was because you hated to lose and I used to win all the time.”

“No, that can't be right,” I replied

“Everyone knows how much you hate to lose,” he said as he slowly nodded his head. “You always have to win and so you give nuts to everyone that you play with so they will let you have your way and make you the winner.”

Now that he said that I started to remember a bit more and I suddenly remembered giving nuts to the other squirrels so I could win. But winning wasn't that important to me.

“Okay, I guess I did bribe a few squirrels into letting me win. But you never would accept any of my bribes and that is why I stopped playing with you. Gee, I'm sorry for being like that. I'm not like that anymore. Winning isn't really that important to me. Now I just feel so happy and so lucky to have a brother. I'm really glad to have you as a part of my life.”

I leaned over and rubbed cheeks with him. He seemed very surprised by this action but also very happy.

“Gee, I don't know what caused this change in you but I like it,” he said as he rubbed my cheek even harder. “I'm going home and give everyone the good news.”

I watched as started to scurry away. Eventually he stopped at a particular tree and he ran up the side.

“Well it was really nice running into Nibbles. He's really such a great brother. I'm so glad that I got the chance to apologize to him. It's really a shame that we haven't been very close just because I was such a sore loser. But I see things a lot differently now. I'm so excited about having a brother. I've always wanted a sibling.”

Then I started to think about some of the other things that he said to me.

“Hmm, it seems like squirrels mature and find mates earlier than I thought. But now that I think about that I suddenly remembered that I am one of the few squirrels our age that still hasn't found a mate yet.”

As I said that my mind started to remember the names and faces and scents of all the other squirrels that lived in the forest.

“Golly whiskers!” I exclaimed as a newly familiar expression entered my vocabulary. “I seem to know every squirrel that lives around here. Oh no, more of Chipper's knowledge has entered my head. Wow, I can't get over how many squirrels I know. There's Pixie and Squeaky and Spinner and Binky and Ziggy. Gee, it's amazing how much I know about them. I know which ones are most likely to try and steal my nuts and which ones are nice and will share with me if I'm hungry.”

I reached up and started to scratch my head.

“That’s funny, I was just thinking of all the squirrels that I know and I seem to have forgotten what I was doing.”

I was unaware that my small squirrel brain was not able to think of a lot of things at the same time. Nor did it have the room to store all the knowledge that I once had.

“Was it about Petal? Or Nibbles? Oh I can’t wait to visit him and his family. Maybe it was about those silly deer. Or maybe I was going to go hunting for some food. I need to find as many nuts as possible before nighttime comes. I need to find them before the other squirrels find all the good ones.”

I sat motionless for a few moments as I tried to remember where I was going and what I was supposed to be doing. Then an image of something entered my mind. It took me a few seconds to remember what it was.

“Oh yes, now I remember. I was heading to the mirror. I need to return home before I keep forgetting that I haven’t always been a squirrel. But how am I going to find it? I’m not sure that I remember how to get back to it. I wasn’t paying attention to where I was going when I left it.”

I scurried around in different directions trying to figure out which was the best way to go. Eventually I came to a stop and I sat up and looked around feeling very perplexed.

“This isn’t working. I can’t remember where that mirror is. I hope this doesn’t mean that I’m doomed to spend the rest of my life as a squirrel.”

At that moment a small object scurried past me at a very fast pace. When it came to a stop a short distance away I saw that it was a chipmunk boy. He was about half my size and his bushy tail wasn’t as full as mine. He smiled when he saw me.

“Oh there you are Chipper. I’ve been looking for you.”

“Uh, do I know you?”

“Do you know me? Te-he-he,” he said as he started to laugh. “You don’t have to pretend that you don’t know me. I’m not here to collect the nuts that you owe me.”

“I owe you nuts? For what?”

“Because we let you win that last race we had,” he said. “You promised me and my brothers each a nut if we let you win.”

“Your brothers?” I asked still feeling a little confused.

“Yes, my brothers, Simon and Theodore,” he replied.

“Simon? Theodore? That’s so funny,” I said as I started to laugh. “And let me guess, your name is Alvin.”

The little chipmunk squeaked and nodded his head.

“Yes, that’s my name, but I don’t know what is so funny about it.”

I knew that I was familiar with a trio of chipmunks named Alvin, Simon and Theodore but I was suddenly having a hard time remembering where I knew them from. Then I started to remember the tiny chipmunk and his brothers. They were ones that I used to bribe with nuts in order to win at races. Although I was still acquiring more of Chipper’s memories that didn’t mean that I felt the same way about things that he did. I still didn’t care about winning any games or races and I certainly didn’t see the need to bribe anyone to let me win.

“Oh, I’m sorry, I guess it really isn’t very funny. I don’t know why I was laughing. For a minute I thought you were three other chipmunks that I knew, but they could sing.”

“Singing chipmunks?” Alvin said. “Now that is funny. Chipmunks don’t sing. Birds do.”

“Yeah I guess it is kinda funny for chipmunks to sing. So what are you doing around here?”

“My mate is going to have a litter soon and so I am looking for something nice to put in our nest so the little ones will be comfortable. Since you know the forest a lot better than I do, I thought I would ask if you knew about anything that we can use.”

“Hmm, something nice and soft to make your nest more comfortable,” I said as I tried to think of something that he could use.

“Golly whiskers, I just thought of something,” I said as an image popped into my head. “Follow me.”

I led him over to the large pile of clothes that were lying on the ground.

“Here is something that would make for a very comfortable nest,” I said. “All you have to do is to chew off a few pieces and use it to line your nest.”

He cautiously moved towards it.

“What is it? And why does it have that strange scent?”

“It isn’t anything harmful. It is just something that I found and I am sharing it with you.”

“Sharing it? For free? You mean I don’t have to do anything for you to get it?”

“No, you don’t have to do a thing. It’s a gift from me. And don’t worry about the strange scent, it will go away in time.”

“Gee, I have never known you to give anything away for free before. Thanks!”

“Well if you can use something that I have then I am happy to share it with you.”

“I don’t know what caused this change in you but please don’t change back.”

He was very happy and he immediately went to fast work as he chewed off a few small pieces which he quickly carried away. A minute later I was standing alone next to the pile of clothes.

“Hmm, he is right. This thing does smell very funny but it also smells a little familiar. Wait, I remember what that smell is now. That’s my old scent. That’s what I used to smell like when I was a huhu-man. Golly whiskers! I can’t believe that I once used to smell like that. I think I smell much nicer now. It’s such a nice smell, almost like a cross between a pine nut and an acorn.”

As I stood there looking at the smelly pile of clothes I suddenly had a great idea.

“Golly whiskers! I just thought of something. If I can follow my old scent then I should be able to find my way back to the mirror.”

I took a deep sniff of the clothes and then scurried around until I was able to detect the scent in another location. As I followed the scent I felt so proud that I had been able to think of an answer to my problem.

I continued to follow my old scent. I don’t know how much time had passed since I first arrived but the scent was becoming fainter. A few times I thought I had lost it but then I found it again and I continued onward.

“I wonder what I’m going to do first once I get back home? Maybe I will dig up a few nuts and celebrate. Or maybe I will just go back to my nest and relax. It has been a very busy day. I hope nobody has stolen my nest while I’ve been gone.”

Finally I made it to my destination. I stopped before I got too close to the mirror. As I looked up at it the mirror seemed a lot bigger than I remembered.

“Golly whiskers!” I exclaimed. “Just look how big it is. It’s even taller than Tupper.”

I smiled as I thought about the silly deer.

“It’s too bad he can’t be here with me. I think he would really enjoy seeing this. I really did have a nice time with him. I think that we could be friends some day. That would be

nice. And if that happens I would be the first squirrel in the forest to make friends with a deer.”

The scene on the other side of the mirror was very unusual looking. Instead of a forest it looked some kind of enclosed area.

“That’s not a cave, but I feel like I should know what that is. I think it is called a school but I don’t remember what that word means.”

Then a large figure stepped into view. It’s pretty hard to describe the strange looking creature on the other side. The first thing I noticed was how very big it was. Up until now the deer were the largest creatures that I had ever seen but this thing was bigger than any deer I’ve seen. But unlike a deer or squirrels this creature didn’t have any fur. Although I wanted to get closer to the mirror, fear of the creature kept me a safe distance away from it.

“I don’t remember anything that looked like that living on the other side. It looks so strange, it doesn’t even have any fur or even a tail.”

I reached back and grabbed my tail.

“What kind of creature doesn’t have a tail? It looks like it is trying to say something but I can’t hear anything. And I also can’t smell it either. What kind of creature doesn’t have a scent?”

I stood there for several minutes just gazing at the unusual creature and trying to figure out what it could be. Then I watched as he removed an object from his body and he threw it towards me. The object went through the mirror and landed on the ground a short distance away. Then the object started to talk.

“Hello and welcome to the final podcast of Chip’s Unexplained Phenomenon,” it said in a somewhat familiar voice. “This podcast is being recorded and broadcast for the benefit of one very special listener, a red squirrel named Chipper.”

I was surprised when I heard it say my name.

“Chipper? That’s me. How does it know me?”

“I’m pretty certain that Chipper has no memory of what I am about to tell him. Or if he does he only remembers bits and pieces. To start off with Chipper wasn’t always a red furry squirrel. He was once a human boy named Chip. But recently he traveled through a magic mirror and entered another world. At the same time he went to that world, a small red squirrel named Chipper came to this world. As time progressed the boy and the squirrel began to transform into each others bodies. As Chip started to transform into a red squirrel, the red squirrel began to turn into a human. In addition to acquiring each

others bodies, they also started to acquire the knowledge and some of the memories that each other had.”

At that moment another item came through the mirror. It was much bigger than the last item, and I quickly climbed on top of it to give it a better look. Something inside of me told me that this was a sack and that it was used to hold something. Whatever was inside of it smelled very tasty and so I started to chew a hole in the sack. Inside I saw a large number of brown oblong shaped items. I picked up one and brought it closer to my nose. It smelled so yummy that I took a bite of it. The taste was familiar even though I couldn't remember ever seeing it before. I took another bite and it was just as yummy as the first one had been. I continued to nibble on the items in the sack as I continued to listen to the other strange object.

“Now for the squirrel who had transformed into a boy this was a very good thing. Because now that he was in a larger body and that meant that he had a bigger brain. With this brain he was able to retain all of that newly acquired knowledge. However for the boy who was now a squirrel that was not such a good thing. Now that he was in a much smaller body that meant that his brain was very small and so the amount of stuff that he knew was very limited. So I'm afraid that this means that the former boy is now only as smart as an average squirrel, which isn't very smart.”

“Hey he is talking about me. So that's why I can't seem to remember a lot of things. I've only got a very small brain. But I do know some things. I know all the squirrels in the forest and where some very tasty nuts are buried. And I know that I have the bestest brother in the forest. ”

“He probably doesn't even realize all the amazing things that he's forgotten. But with the all the squirrely things that he now knows he should feel more like a squirrel than he does a human. I bet that he doesn't even remember what a human is or what it looks like. Since there are no humans on that world he has no knowledge about them.”

“Oh so that's why I can't remember anything about huhu-mans. He may be very strange looking but he's really smart.”

“Now that I am a human boy I feel very comfortable in this body and this world. And it is a very safe bet that Chipper feels the same way about his squirrel body. I can't get over all of the things I now know and all of the amazing things that are here. I can't wait to go to the bathroom and relax in a nice tub. I never dreamed any of these things existed until I gained your knowledge. I can't wait to actually use a toilet. Up until now I've only done it in the forest but now that I know a lot of stuff, it feels very gross that I used to do it there instead of in a bathroom.”

Even though I could hear what he was saying that didn't mean that I understood it all.

“What is he talking about? What is a bathroom? Or a tub or even a toilet? And what did he do in the forest that was so gross, whatever that word means. I can't think of a single

thing that I wouldn't do in the forest. I love the forest. It's my most favorite place to be. For a creature that is very smart he sure says a lot of things that make no sense."

"I shall now throw some peanuts through the mirror as a gift for him," he continued. "These were his favorite when he was a boy and I'm sure that he will still enjoy them now that he's a squirrel. It's a shame that they don't exist in that world."

I nodded my head as I nibbled on another nut. "Oh so this is called a peanut. Yes, he is right, I do like them a lot. That was very nice of him to give them to me. He must have lots and lots of nuts if he is just giving them away."

"I found out through experimentation that inanimate objects can easily go through the mirror but things that are alive can only go through when a being from each world goes through at the same time. So as long as we don't touch the mirror at the same time then neither of us can pass through to our own world."

I picked up another peanut and started to nibble on it. A few brain cells activated and I slowly began to understand what that meant. "Wait, so does that mean that I can't go back there?"

"As soon as I am done here I will be leaving this place never to return. In fact this building will be completely boarded up tomorrow and it will be demolished by the end of the month. Once that happens the mirror and this building will be in thousands of little pieces. So what that means, my cute little squirrely friend, is that you will have to spend the rest of your life there as a squirrel. But since all the stuff you know is all about the life of a squirrel, you should feel right at home there."

"He's right. All of the stuff that I know are all squirrely things. He knows so much about me and I know so little about him. Why is that? Oh yes, that's right, he told me. It's because I've got a little squirrel brain and I can't remember much."

"Now I'm not doing this to be mean. I sincerely believe that both of us are happier in our new bodies. And to prove that I am right I am going to give you the chance to return home. All you have to do is to touch the mirror. If I see you do that then I will know that you want to come home and I will touch it too. Then we will exchange places one last time. It is up to you my little squirrel friend. Do you choose this world, or the one you are in? But before you decide I hope to entice you with a special offer. If you decide not to come back and allow me to stay here then I shall reward you with an extra supply of peanuts. How does that sound? Some nice juicy tasty nuts all for you and all you have to do is to allow me to win and let me stay here."

I finished eating the peanut and I slowly started to head towards the mirror. After a short distance I came to a stop and then looked up again at the large being. He had a nervous look on his face and he was dangling a bag of nuts in front of him.

“Wait, before I do this I need to think about it,” I said as I started to scratch my furry head.

“I really don’t know anything about the place where he is. But I do know a lot about this place. It feels more like home to me than that one does. And just look at his very big body. It doesn’t have any fur or even a tail. I am very fond of my bushy tail. And if I went back to that place I wouldn’t be able to watch the silly deer when they play their games. I really do enjoy watching them play. And what about Petal? If I go back there I won’t be able to see Petal again and I have been thinking about becoming her mate. She is a very pretty squirrel and her tree has lots of tasty nuts. And I did promise to visit Nibbles and his family. I’m really excited about visiting them in their nest.”

I continued to sit there and think as I looked at the large creature on the other side of the mirror.

“Hmm, maybe once I did have a reason for being there but now this is my life. And I’m very happy being a squirrel. It’s the only thing I know how to be. And most important of all, I know all of the things that I need to know in life.”

It was true. Pretty much all the knowledge that I had were all about things that a squirrel should know. I knew how to search for food and how to hide it and then later dig it up again. I was also very good at climbing trees and jumping from branch to branch. It was very likely that my old self knew a lot more things but those things didn’t seem very important to me anymore.

“This is the place where I belong, not the place where he is. It is very nice of him to offer to trade places with me but I like being who I am. I know all the memories that I have are ones that belong to Chipper but Chipper is now who I am. And I’m very happy being Chipper. I don’t remember the reason that I had in coming to this place but I’m very glad that I did. I have a new friend who is a deer and I’ve also got a great brother. And there is also a very pretty girl squirrel who will soon be my mate. And once we mate we can start to have a family just like my brother has. What more could a squirrel ask for?”

I looked at the being on the other side of the mirror and shook my head. He nodded his head and smiled. Then he threw the sack of nuts through the mirror.

“He probably thinks that I decided to stay so I could get the nuts. But I had a lot more important reasons for staying. But even though he is in a new body it seems like he hasn’t changed much. He still likes to bribe others to get his way. I would never do anything like that. I guess that even though we are in each other’s bodies and have the memories that go with it, that we are still who we were on the inside.”

He said something that I couldn’t hear and then he waved at me. I couldn’t tell if he was saying thank you or goodbye. I watched as he turned and walked away. I knew that this would be the last time that I would ever see my old body but I wasn’t sad about it. As far as I was concerned he could keep that body. I was in a body that I truly loved and I was

glad that I was a squirrel. And with the memories of Chipper that I possessed I even remembered being born a squirrel and growing up as one. I remembered more of Chipper's life than I did of my old one. That one I only remembered bits and pieces and most of them didn't make any sense.

I turned away from the mirror and quickly dug a large hole in the ground. I grabbed some peanuts and threw them into the hole. I covered up the hole and smiled.

"There, now I have a nice collection of peanuts stored away for another time. I think I will share the rest of these peanuts with Nibbles and his family. And I will give some to Petal as a mating gift. I don't understand why the old Chipper wasn't interested in Petal but I think she is the prettiest squirrel I have ever seen and she will be the perfect mate for me. But before I go and ask her to be my mate, I will visit Nibbles and his family."

I felt extremely happy and I started to scurry back to the tree where Nibbles' family lived.

"Tupper said that he was a much better Tupper than the old Tupper was, and I think that I'm a much better Chipper than the old one was. He didn't have a close relationship with his brother and he was too busy playing games to even notice how beautiful Petal is. But even though I have a lot of his memories I do not plan on making the same mistakes he did. I'm going to be a much better and nicer squirrel than he ever was."

Before I got to his tree I came to Petal's tree. I could tell by her scent that she was home. My heart began to beat faster as I thought about her. And there was something about her scent that made me want to see her.

"Maybe before I visit Nibbles I should go up and see Petal. And I think now would be a very good time to ask her to be my mate. And if she says yes, then we can both visit Nibbles and his family and give them the good news."

As soon as I climbed the side of the tree and entered her nest I proposed to Petal and she said yes. After a few fun and very intimate moments together we both knew that we were meant for each other. The old Chipper enjoyed playing games with his friends, but I think that the game that I just played with Petal was better than any of those silly games. And in this game there were no losers. We quickly headed towards Nibbles tree to give him the good news. I never dreamed when I woke up that morning that so many amazing things would happen to me and that it would turn out to be the most happiest day of my life. I had a beautiful mate and a wonderful brother and a large supply of nuts. And if all went as planned we would soon have a few little baby squirrels to share our nest with. What more could any squirrel ask for? As far as I was concerned I was the luckiest squirrel in the forest and I couldn't be happier.

The End

Coming soon

Happy New Deer 3

Good Boy: The magic forest doggy diaries