

The Saucy Squirrels

by Jean McIntosh

Do tell me a true story, auntie," said Maggie one evening.

"Very well," answered auntie. "It is just half an hour before bed-time. Now what shall I tell you?"

"It must be a true story," said Maggie, "because, you know, we agreed that bed-time stories must be true. Do you know anything about squirrels?"

"Yes, I do," answered auntie, "and I will tell you about them.

"One day, not very long ago, Auntie Jessie and I went for a walk in Regent's Park.

"Now you may remember that this park is quite near to the Zoo, and as you walk along you can hear the roaring of the lions and the shrieking of the different animals in their cages not far away.

"It was a beautiful spring day, and Auntie Jessie and I were sauntering along one of the walks, when suddenly she said,—

"Look, look! there is one of the squirrels out of the Zoo! It must have escaped.'

"And there, sitting in the middle of the path before us was a lovely gray squirrel, with its bushy tail curled up its back.

"Ah, how pretty it is,' I cried. 'See, it is not a bit afraid!'

"Auntie Jessie threw some biscuit to it, and it came close up to us.

"Why,' I cried, 'I do believe there are some more coming to us.'

"And down the trees they came, helter-skelter, along the grass as fast as they could.

"Well,' said Auntie Jessie, 'I had no idea there were squirrels here.'

"Nor I,' I said. 'Let us go and buy some nuts and buns for them to eat.'

"Yes, do,' said Auntie Jessie, and off we went.

"We came back in a very short time, and when the squirrels saw us they came scampering along once more.

"I stood with my back to the railings, and one bold little squirrel climbed up my back. Then it ran along my arm as I held it out, and took nuts out of my hand.

"Then some would climb up my dress, and when I looked up I saw one saucy little squirrel

sitting on Auntie Jessie's shoulder.

"Another one who was not very hungry took a nut and ran along the grass, scratched away some leaves with his foot, made a little hole, dropped the nut inside, covered it all up again with the earth and leaves, and then came back for more.

"Oh, he was a funny little fellow! You see that was his cupboard, and he kept all his food there until he was hungry enough to eat it."

"How pretty they must have been!" said Maggie.

"Yes, they were indeed," answered auntie, "and some day I shall take you there, and you can then feed them yourself.

"After we had fed the squirrels, it was time for us to come home. As we were coming along the lane I found something awfully nice. Can you guess what it was?"

"A purse," answered Maggie.

"Wrong," said auntie. "Try again."

"A bracelet."

"Wrong again," said auntie. "I will tell you.

"Just as Auntie Jessie and I were coming past the orchard we spied a black-looking object in the path before us. As we got nearer to it we found it was a tiny young blackbird. It had flown down from its nest in the tree, and now it was too afraid to move.

"I took it in my hand, and how its little heart did beat! It was very much afraid. Then I went into the orchard, and put it in a place of safety, and it fluttered away.

"We had not gone very far along the road again when Auntie Jessie gave a squeal and jumped back.

"Just then down dropped a young thrush from another tree. But just as I was going to pick it up it flew across the road. So I left it there, as it was quite able to take care of itself.

"And now there is not time to tell you any more to-night, for it is time to go to bed."

Source:

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