

TALES FROM THE OTHER PLACE
E1: SQUIRRELLAND

Written by

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EXT. A DESOLATE CITYSCAPE, AFTERNOON

Empty streets and empty buildings. Where there should be people, there are none.

NARRATOR

(VO)

Hello. This will be the last time in a long while you'll hear from me, but I'll get straight to the point. I'm tired of being here. I'm moving out of the city. I'm moving to Squirrelland.

Beat.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

How should I explain Squirrelland? It's so much, yet so little, like squirrels. So small, yet so big, like squirrels. It's a sovereign nation populated by squirrels located in the middle of Kansas. You need a squirrel ID and squirrel passport to get through the squirrel border. I would buy a car, but Squirrelland is small enough for me to walk comfortably through, and squirrel cars are also very, very small, considering that they were built for squirrels. If you've heard this information already, I apologize, and if you haven't, I don't blame you.

An empty highway. In the far distance, the sounds of a more populated highway.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

No one really knows the history of this place, seeing as squirrels have more an interest in gathering nuts and food for the winter rather than documenting their history. In fact, I'm not really sure if they understand the concept of history, or how Squirrelland came into existence, or why it's in Kansas. I have as many questions as you do, but I won't try to find answers. That's not the squirrel way.

A diner on the side of a highway. No cars in the lot. Lights are on inside, small shapes moving about.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

There's a lot more I want to write here, but I can't. The mayor of Squirreland, Squirrel McSquirreltail, has placed a paper ration. After all, they're squirrels, not beavers. There isn't a ration for acorns, however. I'll write as soon as I can. Love.

The seasons pass. Winter. Snowfall outside the diner. The lights seem livelier. Plastic Christmas trees outside.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

Hi. Has some time passed? I can't tell.

The cityscape. Chimneys work full time on top of the rooftops of populated apartment buildings. It is quiet and still outside.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

Life is hard but rewarding here. So far I have managed to earn enough promotions to be the owner of the local acorn cannery. In a typical work week, I have about two hours of free time, spread out over seven days. But I've earned enough to get a lifetime supply of acorns. So at least I'm eating well.

The interior of the acorn cannery. Lots of acorn shells lie strewn about.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

I would assume my longer lifespan compared to my neighbors' is the explanation for this rapid rise in positions, but the CEO assures me that it's because I'm a rapid worker. He (or she?) tells me that in time (which in squirrel talk means a few days) I'll be replacing them as the CEO of the entire company.

A robotic hand in an empty supermarket stacks shelves full of acorn cans.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

I don't regret moving away. In fact, I feel more vitalized and energetic than ever. For the first time in a very, very long time, I actually feel like I am accomplishing something. Like I'm doing something meaningful. Squirrels are getting their food because of me. I have installed myself as a vital link in their community.

An oven in a squirrel home. It bakes acorns.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

Oh, and before I forget, I have found me a squirrel wife and am raising five squirrel children. I wish you could see them. I will try to attach photographs but it is more than likely that the post office will recycle that paper, as wood is in short supply. We are squirrels, after all, not beavers.

The star atop a Christmas tree in a home.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

Okay, I'm reaching my page limit now. I am sorry if these letters become shorter. This paper shortage really is no joke. I will keep you updated. Love.

Seasons pass. The star is replaced with an Easter Bunny, but instead of a bunny it is a squirrel. Obviously.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Hey. It's me, again. I'm not sure if you still remember me. I know I don't. A week ago, I checked myself in the mirror since... since I first got here. I'm still me, but...

The interior of a squirrel bathroom.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

It's not that I'm turning into a squirrel. No, nothing that drastic. But I'm a different person now. Just last week, Squirrel McSquirrelface the third tried to apply for a promotion. The same promotion that I was going for. I...

Dark piano notes. An alleyway at night.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

I didn't want to. I just wanted to show it a little, show it what would happen if you crossed me or my path. I deserved that promotion. But... damn it, squirrels are so small. You have to believe me when I say I didn't mean to kill the poor thing.

Cars parked outside an elegant town hall.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

And just last night, I was at the annual ball- you know, the one- with my squirrel wife and the squirrel kids, and I just couldn't shake the feeling that everyone knew I did something. Not even anything horrible, just... something. They even asked me how I was. The mayor, too! I had to leave early. I walked home.

A small suburban street. Lights on in homes.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

On the way back, I had to pass by the place- Mcsquirrelface's home. And I've been there a couple of times, for dinners. And its wife was just standing in the doorway, and said "Have you seen him?" I couldn't even reply with anything.

A house, its lights off.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

I may not write for a very, very long time. I considered killing Mcsquirrelface's family, but I just can't- there's lots of squirrel babies in there. So many babies. So many squirrels. Tomorrow, I have decided I will run into the forest, away from this godforsaken place, away from everything. Love.

The night passes. The sun rises.

A light turns on on the second floor. Then a light in another room. More lights. The pacing grows more frantic.

A hunched FIGURE covering their body with a robe peeks its head out of the house. It looks left and right.

POV FIGURE: An empty street.

The figure, breathing heavily, returns into the house.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

Hello.

INT. NARRATOR'S HOUSE

The figure quickly packs a bag full of belongings. We see several photos of a happy guy and squirrel, with several small squirrel children.

NARRATOR

(VO)

This will be the last message I send to you, but something has happened.

EXT. NARRATOR'S HOUSE

The figure walks out of the house, then proceeds down the street.

NARRATOR

(VO)

I woke up this morning, and my wife was not beside me. The children were also missing.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

I considered calling the police,
when I looked outside and saw that
the entire street was also devoid
of life.

EXT. CITY, MAIN STREET

The figure looks beneath them at a set of paw prints heading
in a direction. There are some tiny wheel marks as well.

NARRATOR

(VO)

I have concluded, using expert
detective skills, that the
squirrels have up and migrated to
another place.

The figure bends down, picks up a note. It reads: AT OHIO.

The figure places the note back down and looks at the ground
again, where their shoe mark lies next to all the paw prints.
They cover the shoe mark with their shoe.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

I hear that political negotiations
are already underway in the
squirrels' new home. It's fine.
They should get their land. They
don't take up that much anyway. And
they don't bother anyone but
themselves.

The figure gets into a car too cramped for them. They search
around for a key. There is none. They think.

CUT TO:

The figure pulls along the small car with some string. Inside
we see the figure's belongings.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

I write because I have decided to
leave too, and I don't think I will
go into the forest. Instead, I
think I will go back to the city,
back home.

They walk towards the horizon, where the sun is setting and a
highway is present. Cars move along it. At its edge, the
figure holds their thumb out for a hitchhike.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

Maybe they will remember their place in Kansas. Maybe they will remember me. But I doubt they will. There are a lot of squirrels. What is just one? That is the squirrel way, after all. And the squirrel way stays in Squirrelland.

Fade to black.

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