

“The Attack”

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Foreword: Beware of Squirrels. *sites of actual squirrel attacks from 2002-2011; all were non-lethal, except for Russia, where, in 2005, a group of squirrels killed a dog

Chapter 1

Rogue squirrels. That’s what they call them. Whenever a squirrel asserts itself and demands its God-given right to find food unhindered by humans, they call it a rogue squirrel. Brundi the squirrel has heard that word used to describe her comrades-in arms across the globe. That’s what the humans call them. The squirrel community prefers to call them “Freedom Fighters”. The humans have expanded their

territory into virgin forests, forcing the animals to adapt; forcing them to eat trash; addicting them to human food. Even the once proud grizzly bear is hooked on crunchy human snacks. Brundi knows their malevolence.

Brundi is packed into an oak tree hollow with twenty other “rogue” squirrels near a human domicile, waiting for the target to approach. The stink of fear and hate emanates from the bristly fur of her compatriots. Her fur is bristling too. It’s high time the humans received a message: they are not the most powerful species on the planet. They exist because squirrels, like Brundi, permit it.

This target is the big one, Brundi knows. When the humans hear about this assault, they will know that squirrels are to be feared. Her squirrels-in-arms across the globe have been busy striking against the human oppressors, but the targets have been small and barely above the humans’ notice. Strikes were carried out in Cresta Park, California and Bennington, Vermont, even as far away as Barnsley in Yorkshire, part of the United Kingdom and also Russia*, but the targets were mostly children, small and, apparently, insignificant. Brundi tastes bile in her throat. Their children were attacked and still they ignored the squirrels. What kind of creature allows harm to come to its own children?

Tonight’s target is not a child. Brundi and her squirrel brethren are tired of playing games with the humans. Tonight, the target is a full-grown male, but not just any male. The target is an obese human male. Brundi’s whiskers twitch and her eyes glisten. The humans will have no choice but to take squirrels seriously. They will finally learn their lesson: always feed the local squirrels. If the humans are going to addict animals to their delicious snacks, the least they can do is bring a steady supply of chips, cookies, and salty nuts. Yet they tease the squirrels by giving them snacks one day and then showing

up empty-handed the next. The humans don't need those snacks like the squirrels do. Brundi can feel the craving for corn chips even now. It is an awful thing to take a life, but it's worse to be a snack addict. If bloodshed will bring snacks, then the fat man shall bleed.

As if on cue, the wind shifts, bringing the scent of grease and perspiration. The fat man is approaching. The look-out gives the signal. The fat man always walks on this narrow, black-top path that passes under this oak tree. The lookout can see him, but the plump target is not yet in position. Brundi has seen the target before. He has straggly fur on top of his head and his lower jaw. His eyes are a striking blue. His size is immense, and the squirrels know this is a sign of his great power. In nature, only the strong or the smart grow fat. If the squirrels can take down such a strong and cunning human, humans will realize that they are all vulnerable to the power of squirrels.

This oak tree has a special significance to Brundi. This is the tree where her cousin, Chippu, was kidnapped by humans months ago. His honour will be restored this night. The domicile near this tree is well-lighted and humans are gathered on the front porch. The stench of alcohol is in the air. The smaller, more muscular humans are waiting for the fat one to bring food this night. The fat one is obviously their leader. The humans will probably miss their portly master. They begin to yell with joy as they see the fat one approaching. The squirrel commander, Manck, gives the ready signal. The squirrels swarm out of the hollow and into the branches overlooking the walkway. The fat man passes under the oak tree.

Chapter 2

Reddish-brown bodies fall from the branches. Teeth bury into human flesh. Blood bursts forth, as do screams. The fat man flails his arms

as rodents infests his clothing. The drunkard humans never leave the porch. All they do is watch. Watch their friend. Watch the freedom fighters. Watch them liberate his flesh by the mouthful. Finally, one of the humans has the idea of clubbing these rogue squirrels with a broom. He charges into battle, swatting at the squirrels. The swipes barely miss Brundi. Manck jumps on the drunkard's face and rips out an eye. Now the humans are sober and in full attack mode.

They knock their massive friend down, crushing a dozen squirrels. The humans begin stomping and kicking at the rogue squirrels. They endure rodent bites and many more scratches. Brundi bites off a fingertip. The drunkards tear off the fat man's clothes, looking for more squirrels. They are met with the sight of writhing, bristly fur. Manck gives the order and the freedom fighters, these rogue squirrels, disperse into the night. The writhing, bristly fur disperses, revealing a not-so-fat man with a hollowed-out stomach. For Brundi, victory tastes like blood, the sweetest blood she has ever tasted.

In the morning, the glades and clearings are filled with squirrels. Brundi and her teammates are there, so are many other squirrels from around the area. They have gathered to reap the harvest of last night's strike. The humans should be arriving soon with their tribute of crunchy human snacks. Brundi can almost taste the corn chips and salted nuts. One of the squirrel's squeaks loudly. The humans are coming. They're coming from their dormitories and their domiciles. They are grouped in a strange formation, walking shoulder to shoulder. Some of them have black, metal-looking things in their hands. Are those new crunchy snacks?

Brundi hears a loud pop, and something hot goes past her head. She looks behind her to see a squirrel leaking blood from its chest. Another pop is heard. Manck's been hit. His left front leg has disintegrated. Brundi sees a severed paw land on the ground six inches away from Manck's body. There are more pops and more dismembered squirrels. Brundi instinctively runs from the danger.

The humans are gathered all around, blocking her escape. How did this happen? Where are the snacks? Why won't the humans lay down their arms and surrender? Brundi scampers this way and that, dodging lethal lead pellets. Then she feels a sharp pain in her lower back. Numbness sets in. Brundi looks to the sky. Did the plan work? Do the humans fear squirrels? Why aren't they paying tribute? Brundi's eyes close. She always thought that fear and respect were the same thing.....