

THE LIFE OF NORMAN NUSS



TYLER BEAUMAN

The Human

Norman **Nuss** had not always led a life controlled by fear. As a boy, Norman loved to splash around in mud puddles and play “space ranger” in his tree house and if he saw a grasshopper on the lawn, he’d capture it and put it in a jar, watching it for hours before letting it go. His mother worked as a school nurse and frowned upon his activities. “You’re going to get dirty! You’re going to fall! You’re going to catch a virus!”, she’d always say while his father would just laugh it off and encourage him to explore. Norman looked up to his father. The man was always traveling around the world, but always brought home a little trinket for Norman. “Someday I’m going to show you the world, Norman. But for now I need you to be the man of the house and look after your momma.”

The night his father was suppose to get back from India, Norman sat in his treehouse, working on a trinket for his dad. Using a nut he’d found, some twine, and scraps from his mother’s old blouse, he made his father a space ranger of his own to play with. When car

Movie 1.1 The Human



headlights turned into his driveway, Norman hopped out of the tree and ran for his father.

But the man who stepped out of the car wasn't his dad, it was the father of his friend, Michael Perkins, the sheriff of the town. The sheriff sat Norman and his mom down in the kitchen. It had been stormy out to sea that night, and no one had heard from the plane in hours.

Norman stood at his father's grave. The funeral had been a month earlier, but the boy still couldn't believe it. He rode his bike over everyday after school, hoping to find his father waiting for him.

On this occasion, a pile of leaves had gathered in front of the tombstone, blocking the scripture. As Norman bent to scoop them away, he noticed movement, a steady up and down of the leaves. He had heard of ghost stories, about people being buried alive and trying to dig their way out of the ground. With excitement and fear, Norman slowly moved the leaves away, half expecting to see the tips of his father's fingers wiggling out of the ground. Suddenly, a creature burst from the leaves, going several meters before stopping to look back. It hadn't been his father under the leaves, just a sleeping squirrel. Norman sat down and cried.

Norman stood at his father's grave. Twenty-six years had passed since he last saw the man. He visited every few years, taking a detour on the way home from work. A passerby would never realize this was the deceased son as he showed no emotion, just standing there in the cold.

By the time, Norman was adult, he had become a completely different person. To many, he seemed like a hard worker and great co-worker, but really he was just cautious. He got up at 4am, showered, shaved, ate breakfast alone, went to the gym to swim for an hour, showered again, went to work, got home at 6, ate dinner alone, showered, and went to bed. Day after day, 364 days a year, Christmases off. When asked to travel for business, he would always decline, volunteering someone else 'better suited' for the trip. And if anyone needed extra work done, Norman would always accept.

This was his life, no children, no wife, no adventure, no dreams. Work, work, work, work, work, until one day, death. His casket sat there on the table for hours. No one came. No one cried. The Norman Nuss that the world knew was gone, at least, that was the plan anyway.

The Owl

Norman awoke to the music of the night, the harmonic lullaby of the crickets, a gentle breeze blowing through the leaves of the trees, and most boisterous, the squeaking of some small mammals. He pawed around above him, feeling for a window. The chatter of the animals grew louder, cutting into his “beauty” sleep. His search for the window became more frantic and the noise rose in sync. Admitting defeat, he opened his eyes ruining any chance of getting back to sleep within the half hour.

Towering over him were several shadows with bright eyes reflecting the moon light. Moon light? He was outside. But things were different. Was this a nightmare? A kidnapping? ALIEN ABDUCTION? He let out a scream, but even his voice had off, more of a high pitched squeak.

As his eyes adjusted, Norman noticed his captors’ features. They had gigantic heads ill proportioned to their bodies. Some sort of material dangled between their arms and legs. Perhaps capes? And then there was

Movie 2.1 The Owl



the hair, oh the hair... Every square inch of their bodies had hair, right up to their bushy...tails? They were squirrels! Giant squirrels. A quick look around with his new sight confirmed that the squirrels weren't the only giants. Trees, grass, insects, all monstrous. The squirrels just stood there, staring at him, making quick movements all the while conversing in their quick squeaks.

A flicker of the light, caught his attention. A shadow moving in front of the moon. The squirrels had apparently seen it too, now dead silent. The entire forrest was silent. Norman slowly inched his way away from the squirrels, crawling to avoid attention, but ready to get up and run in a flash. He eyed them closely, but they seemed to be very distracted by the shadow they had seen. Then a snap as Norman accidentally crunched a dry leaf under his hand.

Instantly a great flying figure loomed out of the darkness, an owl of some sort. It soared straight for Norman and the squirrels. Hysteria broke out with the squirrels going every which way trying to get to a tree. The bird singled out the remaining motionless Norman and let out a screech. *Move! Move! MOVE!* He sprung up and bolted for his own tree. The owl was closing in as Norman found it difficult to run. He continuously felt top heavy, like he was going to trip and fall over. Luckily, he managed to make it to the tree and

scurry behind it. The owl had to fly by, not able to make the tight turn, but it quickly turned itself around and headed back.

A stream of squeaks came from above. Norman looked up to see a few of the squirrels looking down at him. He knew he had to get out of there before the owl landed next to his tree, but he felt like he needed to listen to the squirrels, he felt like they were trying to tell him something.

Squeak squeak squeak squeak Squeak squeak squeak Squeak squeak squeak squeak squeak SQUEAK squeak squeak squeak!

Gibberish. And then something happened. A mental flash of sorts. Images of the animals and the forrest flew by in his mind's eye. The gibberish became a jumble of recognizable words and nonsense.

“Chipper squeak up here! He squeak squeak squeak you! Climb squeak squeak! Get to squeak fence!”

Putting the crazy idea that he could now kind of speak Squirrel. He looked for the fence. It stood what seemed like a half-mile away in the forrest and the owl was approaching very fast. He took off for it, once again feeling the odd top heaviness and feeling the intense gaze of the bird.

But then yet another flash occurred. More random images of the forrest and its critters, maybe even a human or

two. A brief movie also played. It seemed to be a third person view of someone watching a squirrel run away from a raccoon. The squirrel ran on all fours, using its increased stability to greatly increase its speed. Norman dropped down on all fours and flew. It felt so natural, much easier than when he had run like this as a kid.

Leaping over a puddle, he noticed the reflection of a squirrel.

At least I'm not being chased alone, he thought.

He zigzagged and rounded a tree every so often to throw off his follower, making it to the fence with a generous gap between him and the owl. But this only presented him with another problem, the fence was much too tall to get over. To a normal sized person it would probably be 6 feet, but to him it was a mini skyscraper. He looked around, but it looked like the squirrel that had been running with him was gone.

The other squirrels called down to him from above. "Climb squeak tree, Chipper! Climb squeak tree and glide over!"

Climb a tree? He looked at the monstrosity above him. The tree absolutely dwarfed the fence. He hadn't climbed normal size tree since he was a boy and this was no normal

size tree. He stood there staring at it. The owl let out another screech. It was right on top of him, he had no choice but to run again.

He followed the fence, hoping for another way over, maybe a very convenient staircase. After a couple minutes of running with owl talons swiping at the hair on his head, salvation finally came in the form of a hole. Formed by two of the fence's boards askew to one another, he would just barely be able to make it through. With a last burst of energy, Norman evaded the predator and dove into a new unknown territory.

The Dog

The fence shook as the owl pecked and scratched at the hole its dinner had just gone through. Norman backed away slowly, his eyes focused on the top of the fence. When the pecking stopped and no great shadows flew overhead, he was confident that the owl had accepted defeat and spun around... straight into a slimy wall.

Well it had felt like a wall, but the mass rose quickly after taking the hit. Its owner shook his head, letting out a sneeze that knocked Norman off his feet. It was a dog. A real life Clifford. Norman hadn't been much of a dog person, but he recognized it to be a beagle. Playful dogs at a normal size, probably not so much as a giant.

The monster let out a few barks and got back into pouncing mode, tail wagging. Norman was once again the prey, diving behind the dog's equally humungous water bowl. A couple more barks and then silence. The dog hadn't followed him. Seconds passed. Had he too given up on chasing Norman.

Movie 3.1 The Dog



Norman peaked out from behind the bowl. The Beast was still there, head cocked, looking directly at Norman. Seeing Norman again, the dog gave a bark with a whine. He then looked at a tree near the fence and then back at Norman, then back at the tree, then back to Norman. The barking continued. Was this a challenge from the mutt? Like he was saying “Let’s see if you can make it to that tree before I get you”?

Flash time. Norman saw a dog park from a perspective up in a tree. Dogs barking all over. Then memories of running away from a dog and climbing a tree.

The memories had once again acted as a translator, the barks of the beagle coming out with meaning.

“Woof woof! Play! woof! Why aren’t woof playing? What’s wrong with you? Haven’t you played ‘Trapped in a Tree’ before?”

Seeing no other way out, Norman attempted to talk back.

“No, I haven’t played before..”

“What squirrel hasn’t played that before?!?”

Squirrel? This dog doesn’t know a little man when he sees one?

But when Norman went to explain, he noticed something he hadn’t a moment ago. He hadn’t spoken with Eng-

lish words. No. Instead squeaks had been used as his language of choice.

...Squirrel?

He had been in such a panic mode from waking up to giant squirrels that he hadn’t notice what had been under his nose this whole night. His hands were little paws, same as his feet. Instead of clothes, he found fur all over. He slowly turned his head around. A big, bushy squirrel tail.

“A SQUIRREL?!”

Ignoring the threat of the beagle, Norman pulled himself up over the side of the water bowl to get look at his reflection in the moonlight. There, staring back at him, was his new, squirrel face complete with big dark eyes and whiskers.

“No..”, Norman whimpered. The beagle cocked his head again.

“Hey buddy, is everything all right? I just wanted to have some fun. If you don’t want to then--”

“I’m a squirrel! I am a squirrel!”

“A flying squirrel.”

“Ha! Great, a *flying squirrel*, who’s sick joke was that?”

The beagles head cocked in the other direction.

“I’m not suppose to be a squirrel, I’m suppose to be a human!”

“A human?”

“A human. Walks on two legs, sleep in houses, give you food and water?”

“Oh... a master?”

“Sure, yeah, whatever.”

“How come you look like a squirrel then?”

Norman paused.

Those other squirrels, they called me Chipper. They thought they knew me. All of those memories, are they...mine? Have I been a squirrel for awhile?

“I think I was reincarnated...”

“Does that turn masters into squirrels?”

“It can. If it exists. It can turn them into any living thing.”

“Why did you become a squirrel then?”

“I...I don’t know”

This question angered Norman most. Why *was* he a squirrel? The almighty could have made him anything, even another man. A rich man. Yeah, why not a rich man? He

had been good his whole life. Never broke a law, never put anyone down, rinsed AND repeated.

“Why?”, sighed Norman as he dropped to the ground, covering his face with his paws. “I’m suppose to be a human!”

“Well if you want to be a human go see the doctor.”

“A doctor can’t help me. This isn’t a scientific injury.”

“No, no the doctor in the box can help anyone. He talks and helps animals all the time.”

Norman sat up.

“This doctor talks to animals?”

The dog nodded.

“Where can I find him?”

“I only ever see him in the box, but my master once pointed out the building where he lives in the city?”

“You’ve been there! You can take me!”

“My master won’t be happy if I leave...”

“Listen. Listen to me, whatever your name is. I was chased by an owl tonight, I’m suppose to be like 18 times taller without a tail. If I stay like this, I’ll die.”

The dog seemed to think it over.

“Okay, I can’t have my new friend getting hurt. I’ll take you to see the doctor.”

The beagle walked over the gate and looked at the latch.

“Do you think you could get this unlocked for me?”

Norman scurried over and Rosco kneeled down. He imagined the the view as they rose was much like that of the glass elevator his office building had. He was not sure though, as he had always taken the stairs. It was strange knowing that even though he was only a couple feet off the ground, he felt the vertigo kicking in.

Norman grabbed the latch with his little paws and pushed it aside cuing Rosco to jump up on his hind legs and push the heavy door open. Norman clung on for dear life.

I hope we get there before this dog kills me.

“Also, all of my friends call me Rosco.”

“You can call me Norman.”

The moon sat on the horizon as the two began following the street down the hill, the bright lights of the distant city winking at them.

The Mouse

A far off bell rang six times as the two finally found themselves at the building. Rosco was absolutely beat having to carry Norman the whole and taking extra long detours through alleyways to avoid people. The two had spent most of the day making their way from the suburbs to the center of the city. before arriving at the small, one story structure. The grass hadn't been cut in awhile and the surrounding bushes could have used a good trim. It had been along time since Norman had read english words, but he could make out that a few of the building's windows had "Available for Rent" signs.

In the parking lot, sat a rusting Volkswagen. By the looks of it, someone could have abandoned the vehicle here months ago. On the backside, a novelty plate just barely hung on, reading "SH4UMAN". As they traversed the parking lot, a short balding man in a hand-me-down business suit emerged from the building and made his way to the car.

"That's him, that's the doctor!" barked Rosco.

Movie 4.1 The Mouse



This guy, thought Norman. Not the most magical or powerful looking person.... but I guess expect the unexpected.

Rosco hurried over to the man who upon hearing the footsteps turned around to see the “ferocious” beast charging after him. In a panic the man hopped into his car, accidentally dropping his car keys outside before he slammed the door shut and locked it. The doctor screamed in panic as he searched all over his person for the keys soon realizing that he must have dropped them.

Norman climbed up onto the hood of the car and began explaining his situation to the man, but the man seemed uninterested. Instead he had taken out a cellphone straight out of the 90s and was making a frightened phone call to someone. Norman was still having trouble remember all of the english language, only understanding bits of what the guy was shouting into his phone. Something about being “attacked again” and not being “paid enough for this”.

As the man screamed in horror, Norman starting panicking himself as the pieces of the puzzle began to come together. Rosco had called him “the doctor in the box”, could it be possible that Rosco didn’t realize what a TV was and that it often broadcast fiction. By the sounds of it, the man had been visited by multiple animals, probably all confused by the reality of what they saw on TV. Norman fell on the

windshield feeling defeated. He didn’t want to be a squirrel forever, he couldn’t. He banged on the window out of angry shouting at the man to not be a fake.

A van squealed into the parking lot and a hefty man with thick glasses and a pencil thin mustache jumped out. In his hand was a stick with a loop at the end. Norman was too busy begging the man in the car to be real to notice the man jog over to him. Suddenly, he was hanging upside down by his tail, face to face with the overweight man.

“Yous a ugly little thing, ain’t ya? Kids would like ya though, think I’ll get ya stuffed and give--YEOW!”

Norman was dropped back onto the hood of the “doctor’s” car. Rosco had grabbed ahold of the man’s leg and was shaking furiously. The apparent dog catcher quickly regained his composure, however, reaching for the dogs collar. Rosco refused to give up and the collar came undone. The only other solution was for the man to throw his own punches, kicking the dog off with his other leg. He then proceeded to get the noose of his contraption around Rosco’s neck and drag him to the van.

In all of the commotion the fake doctor had cracked open the door and grabbed his keys. When the engine revved to life, Norman quickly jumped in the shrubbery surrounding the building. A wave was exchanged between the

two men before the “doctor” peeled out of the parking lot and shot down the road. The van followed shortly after, leaving Norman all alone.

He scurried out into the middle of the parking lot, finding the torn off collar, complete with Rosco’s name tags. No one knew where Rosco had gone and now no one was going to find him. And now there was no one to save Norman either.

The sun was on the verge of disappearing completely as Norman wandered aimlessly down yet another alley. While Chipper’s memories had made him one with nature, he had no idea how to navigate, let alone survive the human world as a flying squirrel. The lights blinded him, the scents nauseated him, and he had to tip toe through the rubble of the forgotten.

Sirens were the lullaby of the city tonight. A bottle was smashed a couple alleys over followed by a feline’s hiss and drunk man’s laughter. The buildings periodically creaked and their tenants would yell and Norman jumped each and every time.

Suddenly a voice only feet away. Norman turned to a homeless boy sitting against the wall. He was young must have been 13 or 14 and by the looks of it, homeless for awhile. His black hair was unkempt and his shirt torn. Norman froze, partially afraid that the boy was looking to dine on squirrel tonight. The child looked into Norman’s eyes and again spoke. Overwhelmed, it took Norman a moment to realize what the child was saying.

“Norman.”

Norman was taken aback. How did a human know his name? Was he so distressed that he was now hallucinating? Was the boy even there?

The child smiled.

“No, Norman, I’m not a hallucination.”

Yep, definitely a hallucination.

“Still not convinced?”

The boy leaned forward and held out his hand for Norman to climb into. The streets were chaos in this city at night. If Norman ran off, he may find himself the prey to another owl or attacked by some drunk. He needed someone to protect him and this boy might have been his answer. Reluctantly, Norman clambered into the child’s hand and was pulled closer to the boy’s face.

“I have been watching you, Norman. I’ve been watching you since your rebirth. You are not happy with your new form? The squirrel is quick, stealthy, and prepared. I would think that you’d appreciate that last.”

How did the boy know so much about him? Was this another piece to the puzzle of “What happens after we die”? Was he a wizard? An angel? A god?

“Normally, one must wait til death to be reborn again. However, you did lead a pure life Norman Nuss and you have shown that you are determined to become a human again. So. I have decided to help you, Norman. If you are not happy with the form bestowed upon you, I suppose we can skip that whole process and get you reborn as your desired species.”

Norman suddenly became attentive. *And then I’ll be able to get Rosco from the pound!*

“I’m afraid not my friend. Just like before, you will be reborn with no memory of who you were, you could be born at any moment in time, and you will arrive like any other creature in this world, as a baby.”

Norman pondered the possible outcomes of the situation. On one hand, he was just a squirrel. Even if he denied the offer, how would he help Rosco? Most likely he would

just die trying to make it to the pound. At least if he were reborn, one of them could walk away with a good life.

But on the other hand, Rosco had been there for him when he had no reason to be. He had traveled with Norman to the concrete jungle and been taken because of him. Without his tag, his family may never find him. He may just live out his day in a small, cold cell wondering everyday why his friend, Norman, hadn’t come for him yet.

“Norman, it is time to make your decision.”

The Squirrel

Rosco was afraid. There must have been 20 other dogs in this room with him and every one of them was whining and barking, calling for their masters or begging for food. Rosco called out too, crying for Norman and his masters, though he knew they wouldn't have been able to hear him even if he didn't have a muzzle on.

He looked though the cracked windows above. The moon had come back. Seeing the old friend briefly filled him with a calmness as he felt the slight breeze blowing through. He hoped Norman was doing okay in the big city alone.

Suddenly, the sound of a door slamming came from the end of the room, out of Rosco's view. All of the canines became silent. Rosco could hear heavy breathing coming from down there, then the grunt of the man and slow walking. A clinking sound joined in keeping a steady rhythm before the dog catcher stopped outside of Rosco's cage, moving a foul smelling bottle across the bars.

"You got me pretty good today, mutt. Broke the

Movie 5.1 The Squirrel



skin.”

The dog catcher raised his pant leg and showed off his bandaged leg. He momentarily stared at the dog through his coke bottle glasses before sticking the bottle between the bars and pouring the remainder on the dog.

“Drink up boy. It won’t be too long before I return the favor. Lucky for you, I don’t kill dogs off the clock. I’ll be seeing ya in seven hours, 10AM sharp.”

The man turned around, struggling to maintain his balance. He reached for his key chain that he would need to lock up the building, but a sudden shadow moving across the floor caused him to lose his grip, dropping them to the floor which was looking pretty far away at the moment. A quick scan above revealed nothing.

“I really need to lay off this stuff”, he said as he tossed the bottle and began the ordeal of retrieving his keys. Hunched over, he suddenly felt a tickle on his back and threw his arm back to scratch himself. Once satisfied, his efforts to pick up the keys continued. And once again, the tickling occurred this time a little further up. Then movement from above and another shadow on the ground. As he tried to scratch at the other itch, he looked for the sources of the new movement. He could still find nothing out of place up above. No movement among the hanging lights, no move-

ment outside the windows. He scratched his back vigorously now just wanting to hurry up and get out of there.

He pulled his arm back and went to grab the the keys. To his surprise, there was a squirrel hanging from the sleeve of his coveralls and when he tried to smack it off, he found another one clinging to the other arm. He gave up trying to balance and fell on his back side.

Up above it seemed as if the air was filled with the flying vermin. They glided to the latches of each cage and slid the pins over with all of their strength. Once the door was unlocked, the dog would give a bark of thanks, burst out of their cell and head for the exit, making sure to trample the dog catcher on the way over. One of the dogs manages to twist the door knob in his mouth wriggling his body to pull the door open.

Norman looked down from one of the cracked windows above. So far, his plan was working. The squirrels from his dray seemed to have no issues gliding down and opening all of the cages. Meanwhile, he felt much better just watching from up here.

One of the squirrels finally made it to Rosco’s cage. Norman looked to the dog catcher who was still freaking out on the ground. *Excellent.* The door was unlocked and Rosco barreled out. The exit was just 30 - 40ft away, then it would

be a run all the way home to his masters. He bolted for the door, but as he went to jump over the dog catcher, the man shot his arm up and grabbed Rosco's tail and pulled the dog to the ground with a high pitch yelp. Unable to use his teeth, Rosco pawed at the man, but his nails just didn't have the same effect. The dog catcher soon managed to grab the muzzle and got Rosco under control.

Norman watched in horror. The most important part of his plan was about to fail, the man was going to take his friend away for good. The dog catch began forcibly Rosco to the door at the opposite end, away from the exit. This is where the animals went to be euthanized. Norman could no longer be a bystander, he had to do something this time, something that was rooted to all of his fears. Norman backed away from the window and then ran for it full speed.

He thought of when he was younger and played in his tree house everyday. He thought about his dad flying him around on his shoulders. He thought about his father's promise to take him flying on his own adventures.

And as Norman left of the ledge into the room, his mind filled with one final flash. In an instant, his mind was filled with all of Chipper's remaining memories. Norman was now both Norman and Chipper. A flying squirrel and a man all in one.

Though scared to death, he flew down effortlessly and landed directly on his target's face. The dog catcher grasped at his face before stumbled backwards into one of the open cages. Dodging the flailing hands, Norman was able to launch himself off and glide outside of the cage where Rosco pushed the door closed at once. Norman then flew back around and grabbed onto the latch, locking the cage before hopping down onto Rosco's back.

The man cursed and shook the door of his cage as he tried to reach his fat fingers through the bars, but he was no longer part of the life of Norman Nuss. The squirrel then released his friend's restraint. The muzzle fell to the floor and the two were gone.

Norman explained what had happened with the with homeless boy earlier, about the opportunity he been given.

"I knew I couldn't leave you behind, Rosco. ..So instead I got his help getting back to the woods behind

your house and found my dray. They would do anything to help Chipper.”

When they finally made it back to Rosco’s neighborhood they were greeted by one of Rosco’s teenage owners. Norman jumped down from the dogs back as the young, blonde woman rushed over to them and gave Rosco a hug.

“Where have you been, Rosco? I was so worried, Michael and I have been looking all over for you! How did you lose your collar? Good thing you didn’t go too far!... I see you’ve made a new friend..hopefully not rabid....”. She stood up and turned around to shout to her friend. “Michael, I found him over here!”.

A boy of the same age came out from behind one of the houses. Norman stood in amazement, it was the same child as before. A teenager with unkempt black hair and the same clothes, though they were now magically mended and clean.

“Ah, there you are Rosco.”, said the boy as he ran his hand through the beagle’s fur and then winked at Norman, “How did you get out?”.

“Come on, buddy. Let’s go home.”, said the girl, patting her thigh as she walked down the street.

Michael stayed back and knelt down next to Norman.

“That was a brave thing you did, Norman Nuss. Not everyone would do the righteous thing, so close to the finish line of their own goal.”

“How are you here? I mean are you really just a boy who can talk to animals or... or something more?”

The boy laughed. “I’m just a friend, Norman. I’m there when I’m needed and do my best to help those who deserve it.”, he looked down the street at the girl and Rosco. “Speaking of which...”. He flicked his finger in Rosco’s direction. The dog stopped walking and turned back to face Norman. In that instant, Norman realized that the boy had unlocked something in Rosco. Looking in the beagle’s eyes, Norman some-

how knew he was looking at his father. Norman looked up at Michael for confirmation. The boy smiled and gave a nod.

Norman dashed down the road towards his father's reincarnated form, while Rosco had also suddenly taken off towards Norman. The two collided and bounced around with excitement.

“Is it really you?”

“I think so, I remember all of Rosco's life, but I remember my life too! I've missed you for so long, Norman, even though I forgot who I was, a part of me always missed you.”

Norman hugged his father for the first time in decades. He no longer had to be afraid of the world. He no longer had to worry about all of his responsibilities. He had found his long lost friend and now had a new life to spend with him, uninterrupted.

“Hey Chipper! Get up here! Chester's gonna see how many acorns he can fit in his mouth.”, came a squeak from the trees above.

“Roooooscooo! Get over here boy! I don't want to lose you twice in one day!”, called the teenage girl.

While they had waited a lifetime for this moment, they were living for two now. The newly reunited father and son smiled at each other and headed off to resume their new lives, knowing the other was just a hole in the fence away.

NUSS

German for “nut”.

Throughout the story, you’ll find bits of animal symbolism to serve as a bit of foreshadowing and references to the past. **K**ee an eye out and see how many you can find.

Related Glossary Terms

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Chapter 1 - The Human

THE DOG

Man's best friend, the always loyal companion. Many say the reason why we love these animals so much is because of how human they can be. Somehow our furry friends always seem to know what's needed, from cuddling with us when we're sad to attack someone twice their size who's attacking their friend.

Spiritually, our canine friends represent fidelity, obedience, and communication.

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Chapter 3 - The Dog

THE HUMAN

Since the dawn of man, people have always wondered, “What happens to things when they die?”. We’ve come up with many possible theories ranging from heavenly peace to hellish nightmares to absolutely nothing. The most interesting I’ve ever come across is the idea of reincarnation. I remember thinking it up when I was younger before I had ever heard about it outside of my thoughts. Whether this supports or eliminates its existence remains to be seen, but it’s always stuck with me.

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Chapter 1 - The Human

THE MOUSE

It's said that those possessing the mouse totem are more aware of world than others allowing them to tiptoe around the danger to give and take what they want.

Spiritually, the mouse represents both fear and stealth.

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Chapter 4 - The Mouse

THE OWL

Predators of the flying squirrel include barred, great horned, northern spotted, and screech owls. While they are more dangerous than ground dwelling predators, one of the reasons flying squirrels are nocturnal is because they are better suited for dealing with nocturnal flying predators rather than day time birds of prey.

Spiritually, the owl often associated with wisdom, guidance, and observation.

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Chapter 2 - The Owl

THE SQUIRREL

The flying squirrel is one of the smaller mammals on this planet which as one can imagine would be fairly frightening. Luckily, time has given them some tricks to deal with the world and all of its dangers. Not only are they able to hide, climb and glide, but they are quick thinking and prepared.

Flying squirrels can be found all over the world, from the US to Pakistan to Borneo. They are nocturnal to avoid messing with the faster daytime birds of prey and look for food at night. They are omnivores eating nuts(of course), berries, insects, and the occasional bird egg. Sometimes multiple squirrels will distract a predator, while another collects food in the area for the dray(a group of squirrels, also known as a scurry.)

Spiritually, flying squirrels are innocent, prepared and resourceful.

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Chapter 5 - The Squirrel