

Kelley Hernandez
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The Squirrel Who Dealt It

double space, please.

It was only ten days until winter would commence. The entire fall was spent gathering the acorns from the mighty oaks that lined the hills of Madison County. For the squirrels, it was only a matter of time before they would seek refuge in their trunks and begin a seasonal feast. For the squirrels of Madison County, acorns were as valuable as gold. This year, the end-of-season town gathering would take place on the east riverbank.

Mayor Joseph Squirrel took center stage at the town gathering, "My fellow squirrels, I have some horrible news. I must inform you that I took count of the acorns today and found three hundred to be missing! I ask that whoever took the acorns report to me by tomorrow at this time. If you do, no recourse will be taken." The squirrels began to talk amongst themselves, everyone wondering who took the acorns.

The next day, Mayor Squirrel addressed the town, "My fellow squirrels, I am sad to inform you that nobody took responsibility for the missing acorns. Furthermore, today I took count and found that five hundred more acorns are missing. We must look at our neighbors and ask them if they are responsible for the stolen acorns." The squirrels began to look at each other with accusing eyes.

The mood in Madison County changed over the next couple of days. Distrust and fear filled the air. One by one the squirrels visited Mayor Squirrel and told him a name of a squirrel they believed to be the thief. Soon, the Mayor narrowed it down to one man, the only man not from their neck of the woods, the foreigner, Boris Squirrel.

"Mayor, it must be Boris Squirrel. He is a shady foreigner and new to our town this year. It must be Boris. He even prays to a different Acorn God."

Mayor Squirrel assured each town member they were most likely right. He explained how he was weary to accept Boris and his family into the community when they arrived. There were rumors that Russian squirrels were not to be trusted. He alerted the squirrels not to confront Boris or his wife Mishka because they could be dangerous.

"Who knows what they are capable of doing. They have slyly stolen our protected acorns and are clearly plotting their next move in their silence," Mayor Squirrel surmised. Boris and

Mishka Squirrel had not been present at the town meetings. They had no idea what was about to transpire.

Bang Bang Bang.

"Let us in Boris, we know you are in there!" the town's squirrelmen showed up to Boris's front door to confront him. Startled by the loud knock, Mishka peeked through the door.

"How can I help you?"

"We know you have the acorns, open the door and come out!"

"I don't know what you are talking about." Mishka opened the door and asked them to come in.

"Listen, ma'am, we know Boris stole our community acorns, we want them back, and we want you to leave our town." Just then, Boris wheeled himself in on a wheelchair. The squirrelmen were shocked at what they saw. Boris was a wounded veteran who had lost his legs.

"He lost his legs in a battle over ten years ago," Mishka said softly.

"You see, I could not have stolen your acorns. I cannot climb a tree. Perhaps you are looking in the wrong place for your thief." The squirrelman were not sure what Boris was getting at. "I learned a long time ago, my friends, that most of the time what you are looking for is right under your nose, or in this case, right under your tree."

The squirrelmen retreated from Boris's home with their tails between their legs. They thought long and hard about what he and Mishka had told them.

The next day, Stanley and Stumpy Squirrel were sitting on a log eating their lunch when Sam Skunk scattered up to them, "I sense there is a problem here?" They explained what Mayor Squirrel had said about Boris, and what they discovered when they visited him at his home.

"Don't you see?" Sam Skunk asked. "In my crowd we have a saying, 'the person who smelt it dealt it.'" The squirrels looked at each other and knew exactly who was stealing the town's acorns!

Bang, Bang, Bang.

"Let us in, we know you are in there." The town's squirrelmen were an angry crowd as they stood under the mighty oak tree banging on the Mayor Squirrels door.

Let's talk about this sentence. A minor tweak in a number of directions could help improve.

Awesome!
You're a wonderful, creative young writer. I love the way you set up and carried out the story. It grabbed my attention and kept me guessing. A few minor tweaks - specifically ending with a sentence when needed. Overall - really strong work.

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Parable Reflection

For my parable I chose to use the Just War Theory *jus in bello* principle. More specifically, my parable deals with internal *jus in bello*, the need for a country or state to protect the human rights of its citizens the best it can during wartime. In 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin made a speech claiming he knew of people within the community and government who were spies and traitors to the United States. The U.S. was in a cold war with Russia at the time and McCarthy played on the fears of his country's citizens, got them in an anti-communism frenzy, and falsely accused people of being something they were not making them outcasts.

In my parable, Mayor Squirrel represents the likes of Senator McCarthy and creates a panic in his town for his own benefit and accuses an innocent squirrel of wrongdoing. I started the story by creating a feeling of trust and respect for the Mayor. Through dialogue, Mayor Squirrel appears to be caring, concerned, and forgiving, "If you do, no recourse will be taken." The reader likes the Mayor, even though he is clearly causing an atmosphere of distrust and animosity. Furthermore, the Mayor eagerly agrees to accuse the foreigner without just cause. He is the person who substantiates the accusation, and he knew everyone would listen to him because he was the squirrel in charge. How can we be so blind in a time of crisis? Sadly, we cannot trust our leaders to do the right thing all the time.