

THE INCREDIBLE SIEGE

Being pushed away by my one and only love, Laura, was beyond painful. But painful as it may be, I had to endure it.

I walked away from my love sad and dilapidated. I only knew felt one urge; I had to get out of there fast. There was no room for turning around and making an additional attempt at getting Laura back.

I walked for roughly an hour before I departed the other dimension and entered the real world. Surprisingly, everything seemed so different. It was like I'd been catapulted hundreds of miles away in a sudden flash.

I fell onto the ground, thankfully, not head first. I remember having convulsions, then full-blown seizures. I was frothing at the mouth too.

When I regained consciousness everything around me appeared blurry. Shortly thereafter, my vision began to return, from fuzzy to clear.

It took a bit longer for my mental state to return to normal, however, along the way back to normalcy I couldn't help but notice that there was something unusual about myself.

I felt different; my body and senses, even my cravings and general feel.

I stayed put until I was certain that I'd be able to stand up without falling to the ground and was able to walk correctly.

Thirty minutes later I decided to stand up, scan the entire area, and then begin to walk. Being an animal, I knew that appearing weak or sickly was a recipe for disaster; being mugged or robbed by another animal, attacked or eaten by a dangerous predator, or worse yet; crossing the path of a deranged and dangerous animal-hating human could result.

I scanned the entire area around me, taking keen notice of what now became familiar surroundings. I knew very well that I'd been in this particular place, a public park, before.

It was a very pleasant day, blue sky, no breeze, and was relatively quiet.

Judging from the traffic on the nearest street and the behaviour of the patrons in the park I deduced that it was a Sunday; a beautiful and calm Sunday afternoon.

Eureka! I figured out exactly where I was; I was home in Westmount Park. I considered the greater Metropolitan area the nucleus of my home, especially the parks on the west and northwest side of town.

I began to stroll through the park, noticing something odd in the process. The human patrons were looking at me funny. Humans, whether they are cat lovers or cat haters look at my people in a certain way.

I shrugged it off as a residual effect of my convulsions and seizures. 'Be patient, it'll go away', I said to myself.

I strolled in and out of grassy areas, and onto the walk paths. Soon, I'd criss-crossed the park a total of twenty times.

Up ahead, beside a beautiful tree was a drinking fountain. I dashed to it, but quickly noticed that my body was bouncing differently. Furthermore, my running style was off. I stopped, glanced at a tree, and then scaled it with lightening speed.

By the time I reached the branch I became certain that there was something quite unusual about my body.

"Hey Squirrel-Face, come over to my branch. Don't you want any company? My-oh-my did you scale our tree with lightening fast speed. And your muscles are so streamlined."

My gaze followed the sound. To my surprise, the speaker was a squirrel. Although she was fairly attractive, I preferred my own kind (a cat) to a squirrel.

"Miss, please don't insult me by calling me 'Squirrel Face'. I'm not Squirrel Face! I'm a proud cat!"

"Gosh Squirrel Face, stop it! What's come over you? Why are you behaving that way? Don't you know me, damn it! I'm your girl!

Squirrel Face, I demand that you stop this nonsense immediately!"

I was literally shocked by the utter insanity of this young, beautiful squirrel.

"Listen, Miss, I don't know what kind of game you're trying to play, but please, oh please, keep me out of it. I'm too tired and anxious to play games at this time."

But then, something strange happened. My heart started to melt. I couldn't help it. How could I, a very proud cat, who had once been a skunk, fall in love with a squirrel?

Curiously, instead of slowly walking to a nearby branch, I reflexively leaped onto it. I was side-by-side with the beautiful squirrel.

More puzzling, I could smell her like I could never have smelled a squirrel. Then, I noticed her pheromones kick in.

That was all I could take! I had to get down to business; to find out what was happening to me.

As soon as I took a step towards the squirrel, a beam of sunlight struck my left eye, causing me some discomfort. There was a slight opening within the tree branches allowing for a thin streak of sunlight to pass through. Normally, it's rain that gets through those tiny openings.

To evade eye irritation I took an additional step towards the squirrel. Now, we were practically smothering each other.

Not only did I feel some love for the beautiful squirrel, but I was also quite attracted to her.

"Miss who are you? Am I supposed to know you?"

"Pretty Boy, are you serious? You really don't know who you are, or who I am?"

"Why do you keep calling me Pretty Boy?"

"Wow, you really don't remember anything. Oh umm you and I are a couple actually, we're married. And umm, before you lost your memory, you told me that you wanted me to have your babies. We were madly in love with each other."

"Miss, please! You're over-whelming me! Take it easy. Now, tell me about my family, and what is my real name?"

"Your real name is Squirrel-Face Bambino. Nobody addresses you by that name though. You're known by everyone as Pretty Boy. You have a squirrel brother named Rocky, a skunk brother named Timmy, and a cat sister named Laura, named like me.

Even your siblings and I, your beloved wife, call you Pretty Boy."

Somehow, I felt that my wife wasn't being totally honest with me. Also, I wondered what her family name is.

"Okay, you're my beloved wife. Now, tell me your name please."

"Pretty Boy, my name is Laura Costello."

Oh gosh, I was totally over-whelmed by all of this. Me, in love, attached, and wanting little babies! Something was terribly wrong. However, there was a more pressing problem at hand.

The way I stood, gazed, scanned the park, and craved for the taste of walnuts and peanuts. That's not normal for a cat. Maybe, I thought, I'd slowly recover.

Laura and I conversed for an hour, talking about various topics, including, but not limited to my 'past'.

As the park began to fill with picnic goers and patrons I began to have aggressive thoughts; thoughts that most cats shouldn't have.

"Pretty Boy, let's do what we've done many times before. Let's take food from some humans."

Surprisingly, Laura's statement gave me goose-bumps all over my body. Why did I enjoy the thought of taking food from humans so much? I wondered.

"Just one thing, Pretty Boy, honey, you lead and I'll follow, like always."

I nodded in approval and then scanned the immediate area. Westmount Park was dotted with families and individuals enjoying themselves. Under this circumstance I had to be extra careful about choosing a target. Though the targets were plentiful, so were the witnesses and potential 'saviours'.

Even while I was deciding what target to choose I felt kind of weird. I'd lost my feline instincts; they were replaced with more sinister instincts, the instincts of a rodent-like animal.

After intense studying and observing I found a target. An unaccompanied elderly woman had just sat down on a nearby bench. I noticed that she was holding a bag of fast food in her left hand and an extra large pop in her right hand. I instinctively raised my head to 'scent' my upcoming meal.

I nodded at Laura and then began to descend the tree. Surprisingly, I did so head first. Most cats don't like descending head first. Considering my important mission, I had no time to ponder about this issue.

As soon as we descended onto the ground Laura and I casually strolled on the walkway, heading straight and then taking a left on a slightly uphill trail.

The elderly woman was alone; that was a bonus. She appeared to be pre-occupied with her food and enjoying the trees and pond in front of her. Thankfully, the remaining three benches in her area were vacant. Most of the park patrons were scattered elsewhere.

"Laura, just follow me and do as I do unless told otherwise."

"Oh, honey, I love you so dearly!"

"Wait a sec! Please, Laura, don't call me honey, baby, or anything of the sort. And one more thing, I don't appreciate all this lovey-dovey stuff. I'm an incredible cat; our breed doesn't like that."

Instead of the expected confrontation, Laura looked at me with puzzlement. Again, I had no time to ponder about it. Nor did I have time to ask Laura any questions. The business at hand involved snatching a freebie meal. This is the law of the jungle. If you don't like it, then get out!

As soon as we were within a few feet of the elderly woman, I paused for a moment to study her. This is an instinctive act performed by many predators before a kill. In our case, it would be a snatch and eat.

Instead of leaping onto the bench I scaled it. Laura and I were now standing beside the elderly woman's left thigh.

The elderly woman's hair was straight, soft, and long, silvery-gray coloured, her clothing was clean and very elegant. She had incredibly beautiful sky blue eyes. Her milk white skin must've been an incredible sight back in her prime. And her freckles were something else. What a shame, now she was an old prune.

"All right lady! Listen up, okay? I don't want any mouth from you, nor do I want any delays.

My wife and I want a paw-full of those delicious fries, and umm ... we want a couple of large bites each from that juicy fully garnished cheeseburger. And we want our fill from your pop. Wait one more thing; don't try to hide anything, especially that giant chocolate chip cookie that's in your goodies bag. I could've smelled that baby from a mile away."

"Oh gosh you guys are a bunch of sewer rats, aren't you? You must've escaped from one of Montreal's sewers. Please, don't take my food money!"

"What, money, we don't want your freaking money!" I shouted.

"Wait, yes we do!" shouted Laura.

I turned my gaze to Laura, looking directly in her eyes. Then, I glared at her. There was no way we were going to snatch money from a park patron. It was too much trouble to deal with.

(I returned my gaze to the elderly woman and then spoke);
"All right lady, just wait and be still until we have our fill, and you better not scream or call the cops, breathe through your nose and don't you dare even sneeze. I've got many friends in this park and elsewhere. You got it?"

"Yes sir. I promise I won't say a single word."

Laura and I were so pre-occupied with the food and drink at our disposal, we didn't notice the elderly woman's getting up and walking away from the bench.

"Laura, how can I enjoy my meal without ketchup on my cheeseburger hamburger and fries?"

"Pretty Boy, look, inside the bag, you see, three packets of ketchup, two of mustard, and two of mayo."

"Wait, what about black pepper on my fries, I mean, our fries!"

"Pretty Boy, look deeper, five packets of black pepper, please why don't you take it easy. No one's going to snatch our food away. We're tough-looking squirrels."

I couldn't help it. I was low on sugar, stressed out, and just wanted to have my fill. The incredible scent of the food and drink was too much for me. Although I understood my general physiological and mental responses, my craving was off. It had changed. It was almost like I was another person. Everything that was unusual occurred after I had my seizure and convulsions. Be it as it may be, I wasn't in the mood to ponder about this particular subject matter for the time being. The meal before me was too sweet to ignore.

Laura and I chomped down on our food and drink, sharing it equally and loveably. One thing that irritated me a bit though, was Laura's blowing me kisses. Every so-often during our meal she grinned at me and blew me a kiss. Lovey-dovey stuff wasn't my cup of tea.

Laura and I descended the bench immediately following our meal. We walked to the north end of Westmount Park choosing to sit on a bench in the children's playground section, near Sherbrooke Street.

Normally, cats love to take a nap following a large meal. I didn't have that feeling. Maybe, I wondered, it was because I was with my wife, a full-blooded squirrel.

We watched the children playing and running around, having the time of their lives. I noticed that Laura shed a few tears while we were watching the children. She glanced at me several times too, indicating that she wanted kids of her own.

I decided not to respond. The last thing I wanted was to make a scene.

A short while later, Laura and I decided to take a nice stroll through the park, enjoying everything from viewing the trees and grass, to the ponds and the beautiful blue sky. The squirrels and birds added to our delight.

By sunset Laura and I were pooped. Still yet, I didn't crave a cat-like nap. Laura and I scaled a beautiful tree behind the park restrooms. It was a large tree located in a specially

carved out place for people to sit and relax. By then many of the park goers had left.

Cat or squirrel, we had to be on the lookout for animal hating humans, especially teens. This particular 'criminal cohort' enjoys harming and even killing innocent animals. Although Laura was getting on my nerves, she was still my wife. I wasn't going to let anyone harm her. I, her husband, was the only person who had a right to hurt her feelings, but certainly not to hurt her physically. I'm no wife beater!

Laura and I rested on the tree branch for a couple of hours. To tell you the truth I'd had it with her bickering me about having babies.

To escape Laura's pestering, I peered down at the people and animals in the area. My favourites were the friendly humans who were walking their dogs. Some dogs instinctively lunge at smaller animals like cats and squirrels.

Although a few of the dogs stared me down, it was quite unusual because their stare-downs weren't the kind for cats. I was quite puzzled by this.

By 11:00 P.M. Westmount Park had just about emptied. Technically, humans weren't supposed to walk through the park after this late hour. But I could hear a few pockets of humans conversing with each other. I guess if you don't cause trouble security will look the other way, unless, it's very late in the night; that's understandable.

"Pretty Boy, it's getting late and I have to say something, umm ... in a straightforward blunt manner. I want you to redirect your gaze from the walkway to me. Look me in the eye, and remember this, I expect you to smile at me and to nod your head immediately after I make my important statement. If you don't I'm going to throw a fit and a horrendous temper tantrum; believe me, you don't want that!"

As I was about to turn my gaze to Laura a little shrimp-squirrel cautiously approached our tree.

This tiny squirrel was as cute as they come. But I couldn't help but notice that he had a very serious expression on his face.

"Get away from us, now! I'll swallow you whole if you don't!" shouted Laura.

"Wait a minute Laura! C'mon, this fellow wants to tell me something very important. It shows on his cute face."

The little squirrel turned and then ran on the walking trail as fast as he could to the other side of the pond, easily scaling the same bench where Laura and I had lunch.

Over Laura's staunch objections, I descended the tree and then ran onto the walking trail, reaching the bench in no time.

After taking a deep breath I scaled the bench then shifted my position until I was standing beside the little squirrel.

"Excuse me, Mr. Squirrel. What is your name?" asked the little squirrel.

I wondered why he referred to me as a squirrel. Well, under the circumstances, I didn't want to waste any time. I knew this fellow had something very important to tell me. So, I waited it out.

"My name is Pretty Boy. Now tell me what your name is, and why have you induced me to leave my wife, Laura, to listen to you?"

"Pretty Boy, my name is Rocky Marconi. I'm Italian."

"Wait a sec you know something; gosh I'm Italian too! And guess what, so is my wife!"

"Awesome! Are you Sicilian?" asked Rocky.

"Probably umm ... I mean, of course. Can't you see the Mediterranean aura around me?" I asked.

"Of course, and I've got my own Mediterranean aura," Rocky responded.

I got really close to Rocky, gave him a nice Italian embrace, kissing him twice on each cheek. He followed suit with his own Italian kisses.

"All right, Rocky, now that we've proven to each other that we're compatible, tell me the story."

"Pretty Boy, everyone's talking about you and crazy Laura. I mean everyone, including, the pigeons, little birdies, gulls, squirrels like us, and other animals, park residents and patrons, and passersby.

Pretty Boy, what the heck are you doing with Crazy Laura?"

"Wait a second Rocky! Now, c'mon, you must know that she's my wife, right?"

"Pretty Boy, have you suffered from a recent head injury, or maybe a grand mal seizure or convulsions of sorts?"

"Rocky, how did you know?"

"Because, Pretty Boy, that crazy squirrel is not your wife, nor was she ever your wife! She's dangerous and outright crazy. No guy has ever fallen in love with her."

"What, c'mon, what's the gig here? Then why did she tell me that she was my wife?"

"Pretty Boy, you're a big shot; I mean I love ... I mean, I like you a lot."

I took notice of Rocky almost saying the 'L' word to me. Now, he's got me worried. How could anyone love another person that quickly?

"Listen, Rocky, if you're dead serious and honest about what you've just told me, I might dump that wench, and I'll take

heed of your warning. I strongly suspect that she has the potential to be a danger to me."

"Wait, Pretty Boy, there's more; you don't have any siblings. Please believe me, okay?"

How the did you find out about my conversation with Laura?"

"Pretty Boy, word travels fast the grapevine in Westmount Park is a real fast-track. Remember, there's almost always some kind of an animal nearby. All it takes is one big mouth for whatever you say in private, or in public, to spread throughout the park like a wildfire. And, who knows how far the secret will spread from here."

"All right, now. You appear to want to tell me more bad news. I assume it concerns Laura, right?"

"You're right, Pretty Boy. Listen up, and please believe me, okay?"

Laura's what you call a 'run-around Sue', and not only had you never married to her (as I'd previously told you), you were never befriended her either.

I have deduced from your predicament that Laura saw you when during your dazed state, likely following a seizure or series of convulsions. Naturally, she took advantage of you."

I clenched my paws and flexed every single muscle in my body. I was intent on bitching out Laura face-to-face. However, Rocky convinced me to bitch her out from our current position.

"Pretty Boy, I gave you some very precious information, right?"

"Yes, you certainly did. I guess you could say I owe you one," I responded.

"Pretty Boy, that's awesome. Now, I want to call in my favour. I demand it!"

"Huh, umm, Rocky what and, why are you behaving like that?"

"Pretty Boy, I just am. Now, I need you to be my big brother forever. I don't want you to dump me for that wench, nor for anyone else. I demand that you love me as though I was your kid brother, unconditionally."

I had no choice in the matter. I nodded my head in approval.

Rocky agreed to coach me regarding how to properly dump that crazy squirrel named Laura. He gave me word-for-word instructions and body language too.

"Come back to your lovey-dovey wife, dear!" shouted Laura.

"Hey, I'm not married to you! You're a psycho case! Now, leave me alone and get the hell out of my life, or else, I'll call the police!"

"Pretty Boy, I know that you love me. It's that little ugly squirt who's feeding you all that B.S. about me."

Rocky, come here, baby, please make love to me and, umm ... I want to have your babies."

I couldn't help it but the 'making love' part of her statement caused my entire body to shake. Laura took notice of it and began to laugh.

"Pretty Boy, don't go back to that little wench. I'm your kid brother. I absolutely demand that you love me more than anyone else in this whole world, including Laura! Remember, you owe me one."

"Pretty Boy, I'm Italian. You're Italian. Even that little shrimp is Italian doesn't that mean anything to you?"

For a moment I felt overwhelmed by Laura's statements. I lowered my gaze to the ground preparing myself for a descent from the bench. Rocky took keen notice of my body language.

He hugged me really tightly and then whispered to me what my response to Laura was to be.

"What the hell; there are millions of Italians in North America. What am I supposed to do, love all of them?"

"Pretty Boy, you bastard, I hate you! I hate you! I hate you! You took advantage of me! One of these days, you're going to get back exactly what you did to me; what goes around comes around!" shouted Laura.

"Pretty Boy, don't get soft on me. Just let that little wench go away. If you don't, I mean, if you take her back even once, or show any remorse or regret, she'll become extremely possessive. You'll never be able to shoo her away."

"You're right, Rocky."

Rocky and I waited until Laura left the park before deciding to hit the sack. We slept on a nearby tree branch overlooking the pond.

Upon awakening we took notice of the rising sun. It was a beautiful dawn. The pond, trees, grass, tennis courts, ball field, and library looked beautiful too.

Too bad, the swimming pool was being worked on. There was a lot more work to be done. Rocky and I were very excited about taking a dip into the new swimming pool once the renovation was done. The ponds in the park were too filthy and full of microbes. Swimming therein was out of the question.

"Pretty Boy, every time I make mention of the fact that you're a squirrel you cringe. Why is this so?"

"Because, I'm a cat, why else would I cringe?"

"You're not a cat! You're a squirrel! Pretty Boy, I think that your memory has been distorted. Your seizure and convulsions were the likely culprits.

Just take a real hard and careful look at your body. Begin with your claws then proceed upwards."

I did as Rocky requested. And to my utter shock, I realized that he was being honest with me.

"I'm a freaking squirrel!"

"Take it easy, Pretty Boy. Please, calm down and get back to your senses. Listen, every bad thing that you ever heard about squirrels is an outright lie. We're good people.

Squirrels are proud rodents. We're related to mice and rats. Isn't that a great consolation?"

"Hah, Rocky, you mean I'm related to those filthy sewer rats' that people stay away from?"

"Pretty Boy, why are you so downtrodden? Squirrels are incredible animals. In fact, in Montreal and the greater metropolitan area, every single public park has been conquered by us."

"You mean, umm, squirrels rule the parks. We're that tough?"

"Yes, squirrels in Eastern Canada are super-tough. We take and snatch food and drinks from human patrons, even babies. Though some humans are nice to us; they give us free food and drink.

Pretty Boy, many of the animals around these parts consider you a big shot?"

"Yes, I certainly know."

Pretty Boy, your long-term memory has been butchered and brutalized. I shall try my hardest to help you regain your memory."

"Rocky, thanks. Hereafter, I'll refer to you as my kid brother. You can refer to me as your older brother, how about that?"

"That's fantastic! Jeepers, thanks a million!"

Rocky and I closed our eyes and then slept the entire night, fully awakening at 9:00 A.M.

Unless it's a holiday, Monday is usually the saddest day of the week. More specifically, early Monday morning when it's time to go to work or school.

We enjoyed watching people going to work, rush hour means more buses. We were thankful to have our own work schedule which in a nutshell entailed getting food, playing, evading enemies, and sleeping.

Rocky and I descended the tree then took a stroll through the park. Following one full stroll we decided to go to the baseball bleachers. We sat therein for a couple of hours chatting away about life and other things.

Joggers, cyclists, and walkers strolled past us on the bike path. No one bothered us. Every-so-often a 'squirrel friendly' human said hi, waved at us, or gave us a big smile. Rocky and I tried to return the favour whenever we could.

We took two breaks to drink water at a nearby drinking fountain. Not being in the mood to chatter with anyone else we waited until the water fountain was vacant.

"Pretty Boy, what do you think about all that 'garbage' that the premier is firing at us squirrels?"

"Rocky, that lady's a first class witch. She wants to remove just about every vestige of sanity in this province. She wants almost no religion, and a French only province; and what about her not so kind stance regarding multiculturalism? Sane people like us will never tolerate this kind of insanity.

Rocky, don't you ever forget; we're white ethnics by race and Anglophone by language."

"Go for it, Pretty Boy. Maybe, you should be our next premier?"

"You know something, Rocky, I don't like to show off or anything, but ... I think I can do a very good job at that. In fact, I think I deserve a run for the prime ministerial post. Unfortunately, Canada's not that open yet. Squirrels will likely have to wait countless decades before this comes to pass."

Rocky and I continued talking until after 1:00 P.M. but then something horrifying caught our eyes. A Westmount security officer, a police officer, and an RCMP officer exited a dark, unmarked van. They looked like they were pissed off at something, and we took notice of an elderly woman being escorted by them.

"Yikes! Pretty Boy, do you recognize that elderly woman!"

"What are you talking about?"

"Pretty Boy, I saw what you and Laura did to an elderly woman yesterday afternoon on that bench over there, due west of us. Well, that's her!"

I felt like a semi tire had been shoved deep into my mouth and now I was trying to swallow it.

Rocky and I were so terrified we both pooped onto the grass. We made certain not to poop on the bleachers.

"Rocky, leaped onto the grass and hide underneath the bleachers, right now, I mean, the elderly woman."

We hid underneath the bleachers in a flash, but not before we pooped on the upper level of the bleachers.

The four individuals passed us heading due west. They stopped in front of the bench that Laura and I snatched the elderly woman's meal from.

"Madam, I really do feel terrible about this. I'm not just blowing hot air out of my mouth. As an RCMP officer I take this case and others like it personally.

On the national level, we've had an increase in reported cases of extremely aggressive park squirrels staring down,

outright threatening, or snatching food from people if they didn't give them a portion of, or all of their food and drink."

"Madam, be assured I also take this kind of victimization personally. Toronto and Montreal, especially the latter, have been hit quite hard by this hoodlum-like behaviour. As a Montreal Police Officer, I have a sworn duty to help protect the innocent citizens of this city. And that includes park goers who are trying to enjoy a meal or a snack. It's my job to apprehend any aggressive animal/s, in this particular case, a squirrel, that terrorizes a human park patron."

"Don't forget me. Although I'm only a Westmount Security Officer, I also have a very important job to do. Our park, though nowhere near as dangerous as La Fontaine Park, needs protection from aggressive squirrels."

The elderly woman used a purple handkerchief to wipe the tears from her eyes then she spoke; "Gentlemen, I have never been terrorized as I was by those two giant menacing rodents. They were ugly, and extremely aggressive. The larger one, a male and certainly the alpha squirrel, got rough with me. He even threatened to kill me if I didn't hand over all of my food and drink.

If you catch the perpetrators, I demand nothing short of true justice. I demand the death penalty. I am a human being, and those two rodents are wild animals."

The worst thing that anyone can call an animal, including a squirrel, is a 'wild animal'. All animal species hate that phrase.

That was all that Rocky and I could swallow. Although we were quite anxious and afraid to be spotted, we had to leave. But not before we heard an additional statement from the RCMP officer.

"Guys, listen up. I've been assured by my superiors that this 'rodent problem' will be solved soon. The authorities on the local, provincial, and federal level are presently devising a plan for the total eradication, I mean, the total defeat of these aggressive rodents, or, maybe under the circumstances I can refer to them as pests. We know who the 'Big Bosses' are. If I was one of them, leaving Canada would be the best thing to do."

Rocky and I slithered away from the bleachers ending up in the nearest gazebo. We decided not to go to the other side of the park; it would be better to keep a keen eye on our enemies until they left the park.

Our enemies left a half an hour later. The elderly woman practically had to be carried back to the van. What a show. As with most squirrel-to-human aggressive encounters, the human

always performs a hyperbolic-like show, truly exaggerating the aggression level of the squirrel.

Rocky and I spent the following six weeks together. We'd become best friends in the whole world to each other. In fact, the animals at Westmount Park considered 'Pretty Boy' and 'Rocky' to be 'biological brothers'.

Rocky and I were enjoying a pizza dinner we'd snatched from an elderly fat man who looked like he desperately needed to go on a diet and exercise regimen.

This guy was greasy-haired and panting ever so hard. Rocky and I sensed that he was on multiple medications. In order not to scare him to death we went easy on him, snatching the pizza box right out of his hand in mid-air, diving onto the ground, and then running away as fast as we could.

The act was committed on the walkway just west of a nearby church. Rocky and I took both held the pizza box with our teeth and then ran in perfect unison until we reached a secluded area behind the tennis courts.

The elderly man shook his cane at us then shouted his head off, all for nothing. We had no time to worry about his anger; we were worried about our hunger.

"Hey, give me back my freaking pizza! I'm calling the police! I heard about you guys, you're wanted by the authorities for terrorizing Westmount Park patrons and passersby!"

The run and carry routine was so exhausting upon reaching our destination we fell onto the ground, panting like cheetahs after a kill. It took fifteen minutes for us to catch our breath. There was no time to worry about what the elderly man said or the police for that matter. But as time would later teach us, we'd committed an additional mistake in a series of numerous mistakes.

"Rocky, you know, let's be honest okay. We did that big fat old man a favour, right. A man in his deteriorating health and age is in no position to eat an extra large pizza, fully-dressed, with thick crust and extra sauce; you and I are squirrels. Unlike humans, we can scent and sense the toppings and thickness of a pizza before lifting the lid.

And, umm, that's not all. I can smell six different cheeses on this pizza. This is a high cholesterol meal for humans."

"Pretty Boy, can I be the one who lifts the lid?"

"Yes, go ahead, to your delight."

As soon as Rocky lifted the lid of the pizza carton the first thing that I noticed, after the body of the pizza of course, was a very thick and stringy thread of mozzarella cheese that was stuck to the under-side of the lid. Anyone who's ever eaten pizza knows what I'm talking about. But let me tell you something, the stringy cheese was as beautiful as can be.

"Pretty Boy, do you mind if I scoop this stringy cheese for myself?"

I had to hold back my animal instincts, but in the end I grinned at Rocky then nodded my head indicating a 'yes' answer.

"Wow, Pretty Boy, yummy, this pizza is so awesome. Listen, one of these days I'll have to call in for a pizza just like it, but with drinks, salad, and dessert too. It'll be my treat."

We ate our pizza ignoring the police sirens that were going off, during our meal. We couldn't have cared less.

Following our meal Rocky and I cautiously walked to a nearby drinking fountain and had our fill. Then, we waited for a while before walking to the public restroom building and then scaling a drain pipe. We slept on the roof of the building for several hours. All that pizza made us quite groggy.

The month passed like a jolt of lightning, very fast indeed. We began to call in for most of our meals, relying less on brute force, trickery, and bluntness and more on 'temporary honesty'.

On a late Friday afternoon while Rocky and I were watching a couple of guys playing tennis I received an urgent call from a squirrel friend named Mickey.

Mickey was one of the coolest squirrels in the whole world. And, umm, I really mean it!

Mickey could pick the watch off of a human's wrist in broad daylight while the target was wide awake. Never mind Mickey's food snatching abilities. He was a champion at that, indeed.

"Hello, who is this?"

"Hey, this is your pal Mickey. How's everything going?"

"Fine, Mickey, and thanks for asking. Just one moment, I'm with Rocky. I'll turn on my speaker mode so he can hear our conversation. Is that okay, I mean, umm, do you mind?"

"Of course not, and say hi to him. In fact I might need his help too."

"Mickey, go ahead and spill your problems on us."

"Guys, listen up, pleas. I'm in an incredible bind. You see umm, I snatched a cookie from a baby but in the process an ambulance siren from a couple of blocks away jolted the baby into the waking world, both occurred at the exact same moment.

The baby caught me off guard. As soon as he saw me and noticed that his cookie was no longer in his hand he threw a fit. Gosh, he was crying and screaming his brains out.

His mother was roughly twenty yards away feeding some pigeons. I panicked. Instead of dropping the cookie on the baby's abdomen I stuck it in my mouth and then fled the scene.

The baby's mother ran to her baby screaming her guts out. Later, she tried to direct her gaze towards me; thankfully, I was able to run fast enough to reach a building in the area.

Right now I'm looking right at the spastic woman. She's still freaking out.

Worse yet a crowd formed around her. Another witness, an attractive young woman is notifying the police about what ensued.

"I know that I've probably got a minute or two to make up my mind about what to do. Guys, please give me some feedback."

"Mickey, where exactly are you, I mean what part of town?"

"I'm on Maisonneuve Street between the National Public Library and Saint Laurent Metro. Precisely, I'm across the street from Toussaint L'Overture Park."

"Mickey, you're across the street on the south side, right?"

"Yes southward. I'm peeking at the crowd from behind a building. The crowd is now quite large and still growing. I have to do something right now. People east of my position are beginning to walk towards the crowd. They'll see me on their way. I don't want anyone to see me."

"Okay, Mickey, don't worry. Your friend Pretty Boy shall help you.

First, DO NOT scale any tree, period! That's one of the first places the cops will search through. Mickey, do you see any onlookers from any of the apartments in the area?"

"No, I don't, Pretty Boy."

"Mickey, you must act fast. Do you see a drainpipe anywhere near you?"

"Yes, Pretty Boy, I do. It's only about ten feet away from me."

"Mickey, make sure that no one is watching you. If the coast is clear, scale the drain pipe immediately and as fast as you can without jeopardizing your own safety. As soon as you reach the roof tell me."

Following a brief pause in communication, Mickey continued speaking.

"Guys, I'm on the roof. What's next?"

"Okay, Mickey, do you see anything on the roof that you can hide in or under?"

"Yes, I see a black tarmac about fifty feet away. I can hide underneath it."

"Do it right now. And one last thing, don't make a move afterwards until at least an hour after sunset. There's a chance the police will call in for choppers. Also, you never know what kind of bird is flying overhead, perhaps a snitch that desperately needs money or birdseeds."

Something nerve racking happened. Mickey started crying like a baby. This was certainly not the time to cry.

"Mommy, mommy, where's my mommy! Mommy, come here please!"

"Mickey, forgive me for being blunt and crass; shut the f_ck up, right now! This is not the time to be a cry-baby! You're life may be in jeopardy. At the very least your personal freedom may be at stake.

Squirrels who snatch food, any kind of food from a human baby risk the wrath of Canadian law."

That was enough to bring Mickey back to his senses.

"Pretty Boy, Rocky, thanks a lot. You guys are the best."

"Mickey, keep in mind that the police are receiving too many complaints about squirrels snatching food from babies' hands."

Mickey said his final goodbyes and then turned off his cell phone.

Rocky and I resumed watching the tennis match. A short while later we decided to go to the Westmount Public Library.

Simply put, we got sick of watching tennis; a small, round, light greenish-coloured ball being hit by two grown men, back and forth. There's only so much boredom and monotony a squirrel can take.

"Pretty Boy, can I call my friend Carmen Delgado? He's a real nice guy. He's small like me, and he's Italian like us."

"Okay, but no trouble. Tell Carmen to meet us in front of the library. It's getting late, so he'll have to come now."

Sunset was near, making the sky and the area shine with beauty. There was a light southerly breeze, making the leaves look like giant butterfly wings. The light rustling of leaves is enjoyed by squirrels, birds, and other city animals.

Rocky and I slowly walked to the library passing by several youngsters on the way. Thankfully, no one noticed us. I wasn't in the mood to square off with anyone. I was tired. I needed to relax in the library.

At 7:30 P.M. I noticed a squirrel approaching us from a nearby hill. Rocky winked at me indicating that it was Carmen. Carmen was a small guy, cute, and smiley faced.

As soon as the three of us were together, Rocky formally introduced me to Carmen.

"Pretty Boy, this precious guy is Carmen Delgado. I've known him since we were little 'babies'. Our mothers were best friends in the whole world to each other."

"I'm glad to meet you Carmen."

Carmen grinned at me and then nodded his head indicating that the feeling was mutual.

We entered the library then headed to the elevator. There was no time to waste.

After reaching the elevator Rocky pressed the up button and then we waited for the elevator door to open. Thankfully, it opened almost instantly.

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