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### EARL THE FIGHTING SQUIRREL

Earl the fighting squirrel lived in a small park with many trees and many more squirrels.

Earl would not share the trees with the other squirrels. He chased them back and forth on the branches and up and down the tree trunks. Sometimes, he would get into a real fight. He boxed with his paws and bared his teeth and chided, "Ch-ch-ch! Ch-ch-ch!" to scare another squirrel away.

The other squirrels did not like Earl the fighting squirrel.

"You have to leave," said one squirrel. "This park is not big enough for all of us."

Earl the fighting squirrel did not care much about leaving because he had not made any squirrel friends in the park. He scampered off, with his tail arched proudly.

He went to the next park over, which was a dog park. It had a large field but not

trees, just some bushes around the sides. The dogs ran free, without leashes. The dogs sniffed Earl.

“Woof, woof, woof!”

“Yap, yap, yap!”

“Arf, arf, arf!”

The dogs chased Earl and wouldn't stop. Earl was out of breath from running. He tried to hide in the bushes but the dogs sniffed him out and off he went running again.

To make things worse, a bee in a bush stung his nose.

There was no other squirrel to soothe him. When it rained, he had no one to huddle with. When he slept, he had no one to cuddle with. There was no one to care. Earl the fighting squirrel had no more fight left in him.

“Maybe I should go back to my old park,” he said. He was sorry that he had been so mean. “Maybe they'll take me back if I say I'm sorry.”

Earl went back to his old park. He sat at the edge and watched the squirrels play in the trees and scamper through the grass.

Then a squirrel saw him. He told everyone, “Look, it's Earl the fighting squirrel.”

The squirrels gathered together and watched Earl.

“I’m sorry I was mean,” he said. “Please take me back. I’ll do better.”

The squirrels chattered among themselves. The littlest squirrel said, “Maybe we should give him a chance.”

“Please?” said Earl. “I won’t chase anyone. And I won’t fight with anyone. I learned my lesson.”

The oldest, wisest squirrel said to Earl, “Alright. Everyone deserves a second chance.”

“Thank you,” said Earl, and he scampered over to the group. He was true to his word. He didn’t chase anyone, and he didn’t fight with anyone.

Instead, when it rained, he offered the others to huddle with him. And when it came time to sleep, he offered the others to cuddle with him. When the littlest squirrel was stung by a bee, Earl soothed her.

He was no longer Earl the fighting squirrel, but Earl the humble squirrel. At last, he made friends. THE END