

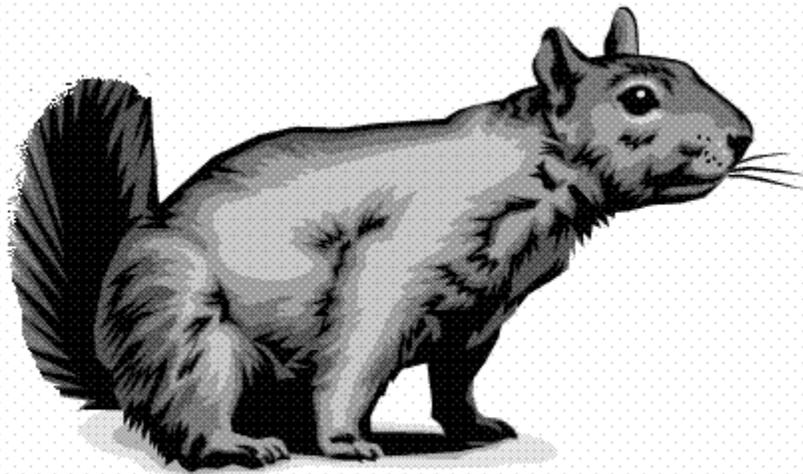
# The Perkins Reunite

By  
Kenneth Pierce

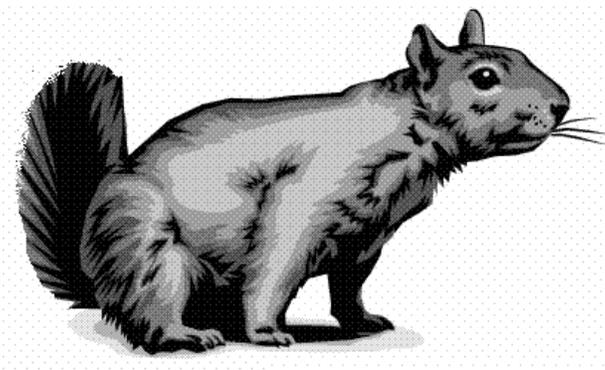
This book is dedicated to  
my son, Brennan.

*Once upon a time, in a small patch of woods in the Osaple forest, lived a beautiful family of squierces. What are squierces, you ask? You see, a squierce is a unique little animal, cute as can be. Squierces look a lot like squirrels, but with shorter tails. Squierces have long been known as the smartest and most amazing animals in the forest.*

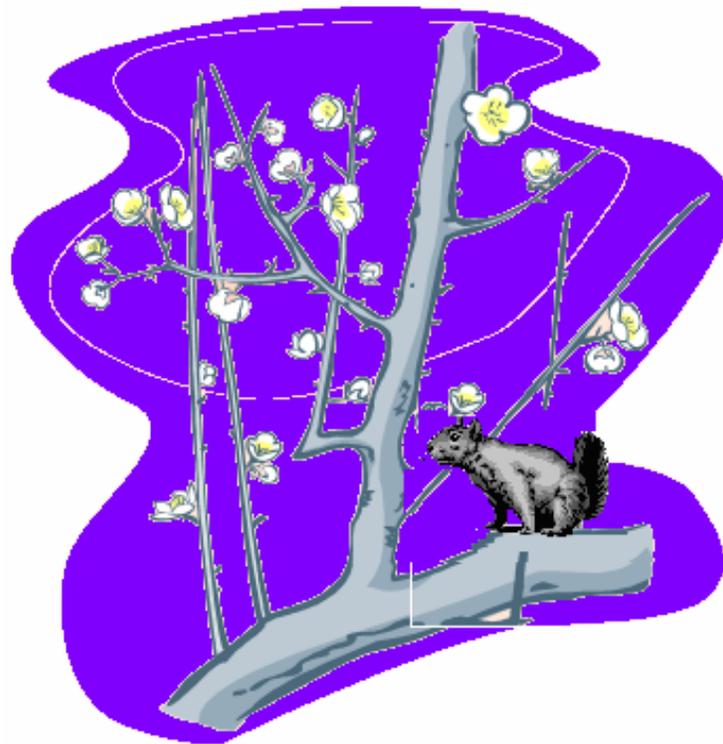
*Squierces can only be found in a small part of the forest, and have lived there for many, many years. One particular family, the Perkins, have lived there together for over three years.*



*The Perkins family was one of the most unique families in the squierce community. There is Papa Perkins, Mama Perkins, baby Millie Perkins, and the smallest of the Perkins family, baby Benny.*



*Baby Benny was only one and a half years old, which is nearly eight years of age in human years. Benny loved to play outside and do exciting things like balance on small branches that have fallen from the trees. One of his favorite things to do is to find items such as leaves, moss, and other things in the forest and use them to make a costume that makes him look like other animals, such as an armadillo or a snake. One time he even found some cotton and made himself look like a rabbit!*



*Very different from baby Benny was little Miss Millie Perkins. Millie was older than Benny, but still quite young. While you would probably find Benny out in the forest playing (or getting into mischief), you would probably find Millie snuggled up under a bush reading one of her favorite books. My how Millie loved to read! Every week Papa and Mama Perkins would take Millie to the library to change out her books because she read them so fast!*



*One day, on the way to the Library, which was at least an hour stroll through the forest from the Perkins' house, a terrible tragedy happened. As the clouds rolled in over the forest, it began to get dark very quickly. Soon, it was raining very hard, making the dirt on their pathway turn to mud. Papa Perkins was leading the family down the path, looking for shelter from the storm, when he slipped in the mud and slid uncontrollably down a hill, which had now become a dangerous mudslide.*



*Papa Perkins slid down the hill, which seemed to be the size of a mountain to him. When he reached the bottom of the hill, he hit his head on a rock and knocked him out cold. At the top of the hill, Mama Perkins was screaming for him, but he did not answer. It was too dark for her to see him at the bottom of the hill. Fearing that she and the kids too might fall, she took the kids a bit farther down the path until she found shelter for them.*

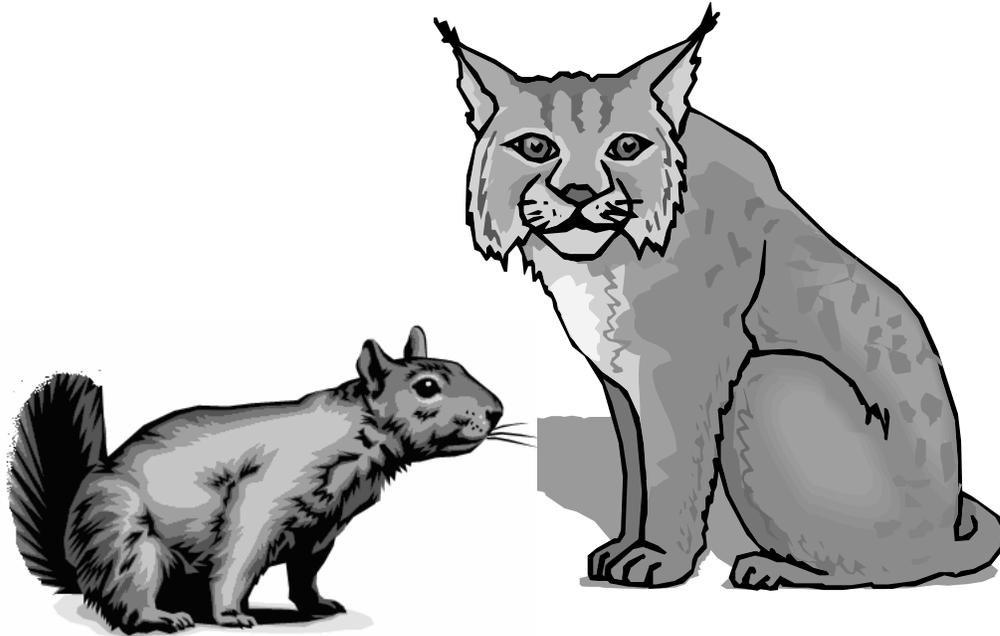


*The rain did not stop that night, and Mama Perkins and the children stayed together until it was once again safe for them to come out. By that time, a small fox had been wondering around in the rain and had found Papa Perkins lying unconscious. He picked him up in his mouth and carried him back to his small cave, shielding him from the rain.*



*Not knowing what had happened to Papa Perkins, Mama Perkins and the children looked for him for hours, but could not find him. Sad and distraught, the three of them headed back to their home without Papa. They hoped and hoped that he was okay, and wondered each day where he might be.*

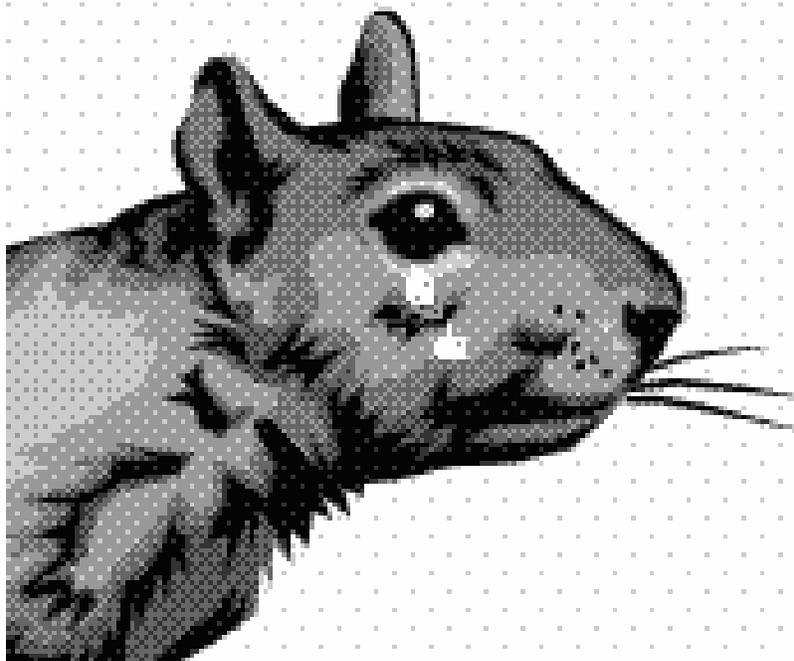
*Back in the cave, the fox that had found Papa Perkins took good care of him, and nurtured him back to health. However, there was one thing wrong with him that the fox could not fix – he had lost his memory and really did not know who he was or how he had gotten there.*



*Mama Perkins and the kids were very sad without Papa. They had been a family together since they could remember. They loved each other very much, and with one of them not there anymore, the Perkins family was not complete. Papa Perkins had always tried to take care of the family, and now he was not there.*

*Papa Perkins, now healthy, tried very hard to figure out who he was and how he had ended up in the fox's cave. The fox had told him that he found him at the bottom of the muddy hill and rescued him. But Papa Perkins knew in his heart that he was not alone in life, and he had an emptiness inside his heart. He wondered who the emptiness was for, and where they were.*

*A long time had passed since the dreadful night that separated Papa Perkins from the rest of the family. Mama Perkins and the kids were doing their best to take care of themselves without Papa Perkins around, but they missed him very much and wished that he would come back some day. Papa Perkins, although he could not remember who he was, still felt empty and lonely inside, and was still searching for the answers to his questions.*



*One day, Papa Perkins was out in the woods looking for sticks to repair the entrance to the cave he lived in, and he spotted something under a nearby bush. He walked over to the bush, and leaned over and picked up a rain-damaged book. Next to the book, he found some pieces of cotton that were stuck to the bush's branches. All at once, his memory started to return, and he realized that the book was the one that Millie had been reading, and the cotton Benny had been using to pretend he was a rabbit. He remembered his family and who he was!*



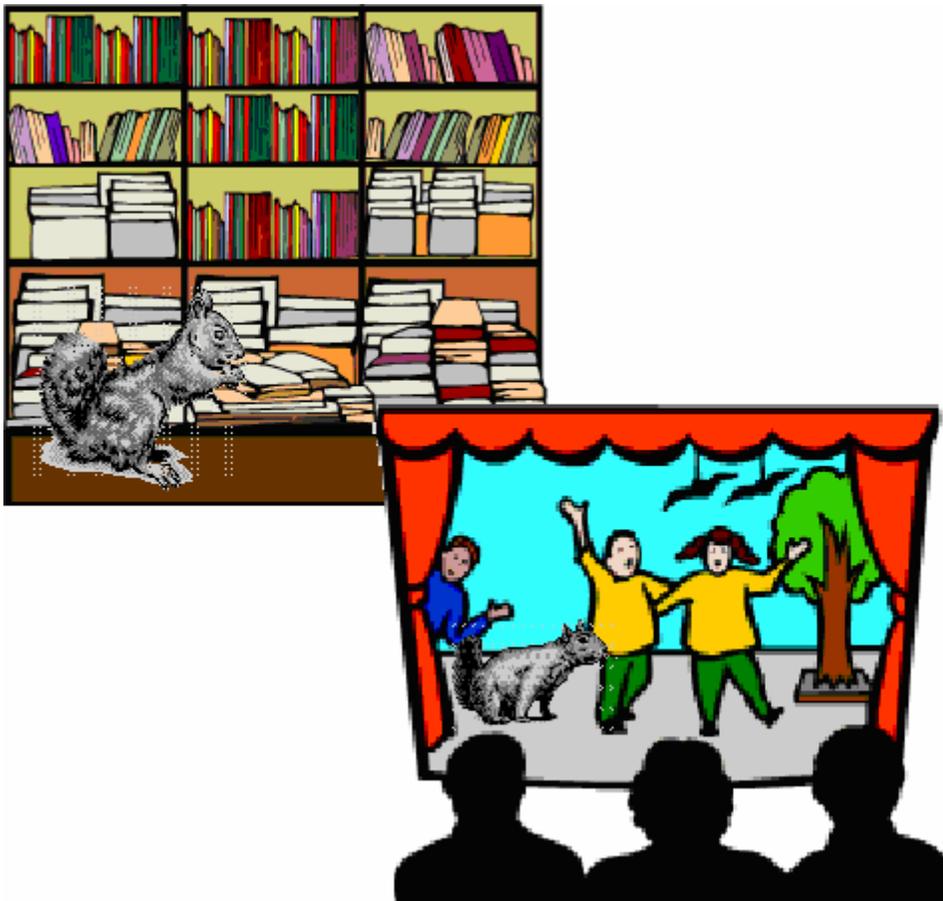
*Now knowing who he was, and where he lived, Papa Perkins darted down the path to his home. When he got there, he ran into the house, and there they all were: Mama Perkins, Millie, and Benny. They were all so happy to see each other, and Papa Perkins cried tears of joy at being reunited with his family.*



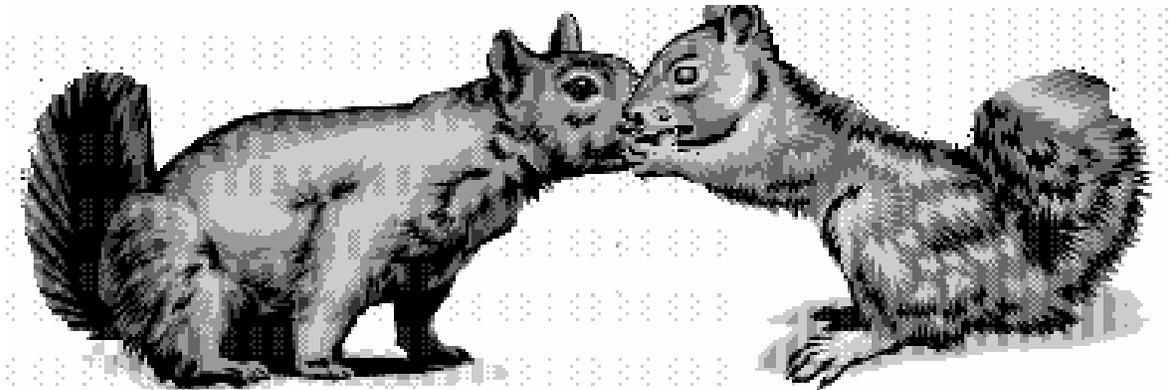
*The Perkins family was so happy to be back together. They all never realized how important every member of their family was, and how losing a member of the family created an emptiness in their hearts.*

*From that point on, the Perkins family stayed ever so close to one another. On trips, they made sure that each other was safe, and that no one was ever separated from the rest of the family. Realizing their love for one another, they never wasted a single moment that they spent together. They were the envy of all of the other squierce families in the forest.*

*Many years past, and Millie and Benny had grown up to be adults, and now had their own families. Millie had become the head librarian at the library where she used to check out books, and Benny became an actor, playing many roles in the plays at the local forest theatre.*



*As for Mama and Papa Perkins, they were so very happy for their children. They were thankful that they had found each other once again after being separated during the storm, and were wonderful parents to Millie and Benny. They loved each other for the rest of their years, became loving grandparents, and their lives became the most told fairy tale in the forest.*



**THE END**