



Squirrely Economics

Clifford Armstrong Iii

Animals, Fable

Two squirrels (one the others senior by the average lifetime of a squirrel) were talking about wealth management. “You see,” started the Elder Squirrel, “there exists a ‘more nuts, more problems’ paradox.” The Young Squirrel (confused as to how more nuts could ever be a problem) asked, “But isn’t the point to gather as much as possible, while possible?”

The Elder Squirrel shook its head and said, “That is a perfectly reasonable philosophy to adopt while you find yourself in a situation of poverty. However, should the trees be more bountiful than usual, as they have been this year, or you find yourself in a new place with more nuts than are usually available here, I would recommend assessing your situation before taking more than you need.”

The Young Squirrel (believing the Elder to be an old and lazy fool) did not heed the advice. Throughout autumn, the Young Squirrel worked tirelessly. So much so, that by winter’s arrival, the Young Squirrel had gathered, hid, and stored more nuts than anyone in the neighborhood. It had so much food, in fact, that after exhausting its burying spaces, it began storing nuts in its home.

By the first snow of winter, the Young Squirrel could no longer fit into its own home and had to quickly find a temporary one in the neighborhood. As it happened, one Enterprising Squirrel had a room in its house. It offered the Young Squirrel a room, if it would bring enough food for the Enterprising Squirrel’s family every day. The Young Squirrel accepted the proposition.

For two days, the Young Squirrel would awaken, run to its home full of food, and bring it back to the family. It was also true that for two days, a Patient Owl watched the Young Squirrel go through this process.

On the third day, the Young Squirrel left the home of the Enterprising Squirrel, ran through the snow, and just as it jumped to climb the tree in which its home was built, the Patient Owl snatched the Young Squirrel with its claws and flew to its nest at the top of a nearby tree.

The Elder Squirrel (who saw the entire scene play out from the comfort of its den) sadly reminded itself, “You can bury an acorn, but you can’t make it grow.”

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