



**Rosie the Resourceful Squirrel is a good questioner.** Rosie tries to find out things for herself. Rosie the Resourceful Squirrel loves to 'Google' and an encyclopaedia is a treasure to her. She watches T.V. to store up information and if she cannot find out for herself, she is confident to ask others. Rosie takes a step-by-step approach to learning.

Rosie the Resourceful Squirrel had a secret.

You see, Rosie loved knowing things. Rosie's parents used to say that if they had an acorn for every time she asked, 'but, why?' they'd have enough to open a shop and feed all of the squirrels in Malvern.

That was the problem with being a squirrel. Knowledge was hard to come by. Rosie's mum and dad would never be able to collect enough money to buy an iPhone, and it didn't take an owl to work out that a computer would never fit on Rosie's tree branch.

Every day, when Mr and Mrs Squirrel went foraging for acorns and nuts, Rosie visited a house on Manby Road. The owners, distracted by the jobs of the day, often forgot to close the bathroom window on the second floor. The gap was just enough for a small squirrel to fit through.

Once inside, there was only one room Rosie was interested in. The study. The Master of the house didn't have a password on his computer, and Rosie spent countless hours googling away and filling her brain with facts of the world. Did you know, for example, that the earth is 4.54 billion years old and that there are more than 200 different types of squirrel?

On one cold winter's morning, Rosie sat on the study desk and taught herself Spanish with Google Translator.

'Emma, run and get your homework quickly or you'll be late for school again!'

The front door shut with a bang and voices from the hall startled Rosie.

'But, Mum! It's lost and I can't remember where I left it...'

'Well when did you have it last? It can't have just disappeared into thin air.'

'Errrr, I guess the kitchen? Or maybe the living room, or maybe' –

'For goodness sake. What about Dad's study? Maybe he picked it up with his work papers by accident.'

An alarmed Rosie looked down to see that she was indeed standing on little Emma's homework. The residents of Malvern didn't know about the talking animals that they pass by every day. Her parents would definitely ban her from ever leaving the tree again if she was responsible for alerting the humans to their existence! To make things even worse, this grown-up seemed particularly angry...

With so many thoughts whirling around her head, Rosie wasn't quick enough. The study door flew open, and a scream erupted from Emma's mouth.

'MUMMMMMMM! There's a squirrel on Dad's desk!'

'Emma Derby, don't be so ridiculous. Get your homework and let's go! You don't want to be told off by Mrs Parker, do you?'

'Mum, come quickly, I'm telling the truth! Quick - come and look!'

Mrs Derby came into view and Rosie, still frozen in shock and still perched on Emma's English homework, looked up at the mother and daughter.

'Argghhh! What is this?! Emma, what are you playing at? Did you put that squirrel there? Why is the computer on? Why is it speaking Spanish?'

'No, of course not! Mum, I've never seen it before in my life!'

'Well, it didn't get there by itself now, did it? You'd better have an explanation for this young lady...'

Rosie composed herself, coughed and, seeing no other alternative, squeaked out an apology; 'I'm terribly sorry; I just wanted to learn things...'

Even louder screams erupted from Mrs Derby and Emma.

'A talking squirrel? I'm going mad...'

'This is SO cool! Wait until everyone at school hears about this! Mum, let's keep him!'

Emma, unlike a very shocked and pale Mrs Derby, couldn't contain her excitement at having a talking squirrel in her house.

'We can't keep him! We'll be the talk of the hills; everyone will think we've gone crazy! I'll never be able to show my face around town again. This cannot be real...'

Rosie, outraged at being called 'him' (she brushed her fur every morning without fail), found her voice.

'Please, my name is actually Rosie and I'm a girl. I'll go without a fuss. I'm so sorry, there's just so much to learn about the world and I can't access a computer and you have one and your window is open and I promise I've never taken anything, no food or anything, I just wanted to learn. I know it was wrong and...'

'Shush, shush, please stop talking,' interrupted Mrs Derby. 'I need to think.'

Minutes passed. Rosie nervously awaited her verdict, Emma stared intently at the talking squirrel, and Mrs Derby pinched herself several times to make sure she was awake.

Mrs Derby, like Rosie, loved knowledge. As head librarian at Malvern Library, she had never come across a creature clearly so desperate to learn. After coming to terms with the fact, there was actually a talking squirrel in her home she thought of a solution. A solution that helped the small animal but also stopped it from breaking into her house each day.

'Now, there's nothing wrong with wanting to learn, little one. A thirst for knowledge is a wonderful, wonderful thing, but you cannot enter someone else's house uninvited.'

Mrs Derby reached for a book. 'Why don't you take this? It's an encyclopaedia. It has lots of information inside, and you can read it at your own home. You can have it, and

we will promise to never tell anyone about you – shush, Emma – as long as you promise to not break in again.’

Rosie was amazed. She never knew people could be so nice. Others she came across bothered her in her tree and tried to tempt her with nuts so they could take pictures of her. No one had ever given her such a treasure before and if this person would keep the talking animals’ secret, then it was a trade she was happy to make.

So, after many thanks and apologies, Rosie left the house on Manby Road, her heart full of gratitude, and in her hands, a book full of knowledge now she could find out anything she wanted for herself.