

Nuts

Kacy Cook

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This book my Kacy Cook is about an eleven-year-old girl who lives with her father, mother, two brothers, and many pets. Her name is Nell, her brothers are Jack and Charlie, and she has two hamsters named Gus and Harry, along with Dotty Dimples, a black-brown-white cocker spaniel. Nell lives in Ohio and is home-schooled.

One day, she finds a newborn squirrel that has fallen from its nest. Nell and her brothers decide to watch over the fallen squirrel in case that its mother comes back, but after a neighbor's cat comes too close, they decide to take care of the squirrel to protect it. To learn more about caring for squirrels, Nell looks on the internet, and emails a woman named Libby who has created a website for caring for squirrels. Soon after the family gets used to caring for the squirrel, who they named Samantha or Mantha for short, another squirrel falls out of the tree. This squirrel, named Jess is cared for by the family as well.

The middle of this book is where the family and Nell's friends care for the squirrels, with details about food and how the squirrels act. However, since Jess and Mantha are kept in a small bathroom, the family discovers that Jess and Mantha were both in the toilet bowl, in the water. Mantha has survived, but by staying on top of Jess, who drowned. This loss greatly saddens Nell, and her parents start to think that keeping the squirrels was a bad idea. After the incident, Nell learns that the time has come for Mantha to be released into the wild. At first, Nell tries to delay the squirrel's departure. However, a nosy neighbor tells her that owning wildlife is illegal in Ohio and would result in the squirrel being killed by the animal control. Fearing this, Mantha lets the squirrel out into the wild.

This book is great for elementary or middle school girls who like reading about nature. I liked how the book contained many facts about wildlife and how baby squirrels and caterpillars grow, but I like books containing more actions.

Other books I would recommend are any books for young children about the environment, such as books by Tim Winton, *An Open Swimmer* and *Shallows*. The books that I recommended may be for an age group that is slightly older than the reader of *Nuts*, but the Tim Winton is a famous writer about nature.