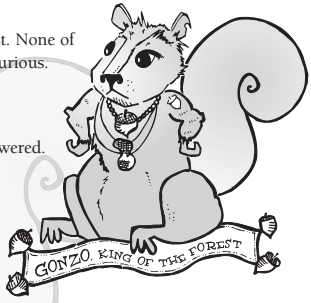




All by himself

Gonzo, a grey squirrel, lived in a small forest on the edge of a suburban neighbourhood. He was born there three years ago. Before he was even six months old, his father and mother were killed by a car. Unlike other squirrels, Gonzo did not have any brothers or sisters. He was all alone. Gonzo had to very quickly learn how to fend for himself. Before long, he was able to run up and down large trees and across power lines. He spent his days collecting and storing food. Sometimes, he would even sneak into other squirrels' hiding places to steal their food. His swiftness and attitude made other squirrels afraid of him.

Time for a change



One day, Gonzo decided that he wanted to be king of the forest. None of the other animals had ever seen a king before. Everyone was curious. They all attended Gonzo's meeting.

"What is a king, Mommy?" a young chipmunk asked.

"I don't know, but it must be someone important," she answered.

As king, Gonzo gave his first speech:

"I am your king. I will rule over the entire forest. I will protect you from predators."

"What is a predator, Daddy?" a young chipmunk asked.

"I don't know. But don't worry, the king will protect us from them," the father answered.

There were no predators in the forest. All the animals lived in harmony.

"Like all kings," Gonzo continued, "I shall live in the biggest home of our territory."

The largest tree of the forest was a red oak. A family of thirteen squirrels had built their nest there. Upon hearing that they would have to move, the father spoke.

"Excuse me, King, my wife, eleven children and I live in the red oak. Where will we go?"

"You can settle in my hickory tree," Gonzo answered. "I am sure that you will find it quite cozy."

And so, the family of thirteen moved to the small hickory tree. As for the new king, he moved to the majestic red oak. Gonzo was proud of himself. With his wit and strong attitude, he was able to control the other animals.

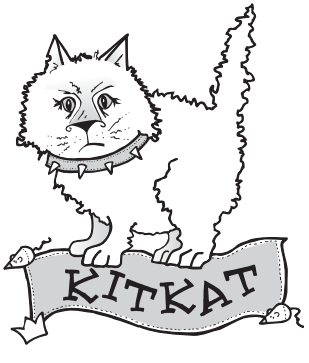
An interesting meeting

One day, Gonzo decided to collect seeds and nuts in a yard near the forest. Just as he was climbing down a maple tree, he noticed a huge ball of white fur in the grass. Feeling unafraid, Gonzo went up closer to see what it was. He did not get very far before the white cat, for it was a cat, woke up from his nap. The cat jumped up and his tail suddenly became twice as big. With his back arched and his fur standing on end, the cat looked big and ferocious. Without warning, he attacked Gonzo. The squirrel quickly turned and darted up the maple tree. By the time he got to the top, the cat had dug his claws into the tree and was hissing and yowling. Gonzo jumped from the top of the tree onto the power line. He ran all the way back home.

Long after his unfortunate meeting with the cat, Gonzo was still trembling with fear. He was a pitiful-looking king because he could not forget that the cat lived near the forest. He was in a state of panic. For days, Gonzo hid in his royal red oak. He could not eat. He could barely sleep.

A challenge

A few days later, the cat wandered into the forest. He was not hunting or chasing anyone. He just wanted to know if a rumour he had heard was true. The first animal he met was a rabbit.



"Hello Mr. Rabbit. My name is KitKat. I live nearby. Do you live in this forest?"

"Yes, Mr. KitKat," the rabbit answered politely.

"Good!" KitKat continued. "I heard that there is a king in this forest. Is that true?"

"Yes, there is a king," the rabbit replied. "His name is Gonzo. He is a big grey squirrel."

"Can you tell me where he lives?" KitKat asked.

"Oh, yes!" the rabbit answered quickly. "He lives in the biggest red oak of the forest."

"Thank you, Mr. Rabbit." And the cat walked away.

KitKat quickly found his way to the red oak. It was indeed a very big tree. Upon arriving, he shouted out his demand.

"I want to meet with the king. Is anyone there?"

There was only silence. Gonzo was trembling in his nest.

"Oh! Great Gonzo, please come out," KitKat added, a little louder.

Still, there was only silence. KitKat decided to climb the tree. As he started his way up, he heard a weak voice.

"Yes, I am here," Gonzo said, "but I am very sick. I cannot come out to greet you."

"Oh well, do not worry about that," the cat replied. "I will come up and greet you!"

"No, no," Gonzo replied quickly. "I am very contagious. You should not come up."

The cat laughed.

"I am sorry to hear that you are sick, great king. I came to challenge you to a duel. Although I am not a lion, like my cousin the king of the jungle, I too am a feline. The title of king belongs to felines. I will be back in seven days to fight you for it."

KitKat strutted out of the forest and back into his yard. He was quite proud of himself for defending a title that had belonged to felines for generations.

Long live the king

Gonzo felt helpless and alone. He had been the bully of the forest and had taken advantage of the other animals. He would not find anyone who would help him. His own behaviour had brought about this mess. Was it too late to change? He set up a meeting for all the animals of the forest.

"I do not want to be the king of the forest any longer," Gonzo started. "I want to live among you as your friend."

"Does this have anything to do with KitKat's challenge?" Mr. Rabbit asked.

Gonzo did not want to fool the animals anymore. He thought to himself that if he wanted to become their friend, he would have to behave like one himself.

"You are right, this is mainly because of the cat," Gonzo answered. "He wants to be king and I do not want to fight him."

"I thought you would protect us," a chipmunk said.

"I will," Gonzo answered, "but I need your help. Will you please help me?"

The animals did not want to see Gonzo get hurt. They all agreed to help him. The chipmunks made a crown out of acorns. Several rabbits agreed to deliver it to KitKat. They all headed toward his home. They met KitKat on the front steps. He greeted them politely.

"Hello KitKat! We have come to crown you the new king of the forest," Mr. Rabbit said as he placed the acorn crown on KitKat's head.



"What about Gonzo?" KitKat asked.

"Gonzo is our friend and we will protect him if you try to hurt him," Mr. Rabbit answered.

"I don't want to hurt anyone. I only wanted to defend the title," KitKat replied.

"Well, it's yours now," Mr. Rabbit concluded. "Long live the king!"

After that day, Gonzo lived happily for many more years. He gave up his nest in the big red oak to move into a maple tree, along with his new mate. KitKat did not visit the forest again. He was quite content to nap in his yard.