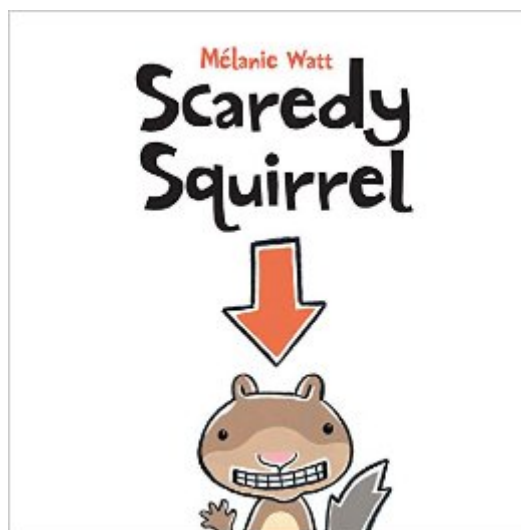


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# Scaredy Squirrel



## Synopsis

Scaredy Squirrel never leaves his nut tree. It's way too dangerous out there. He could encounter tarantulas, green Martians or killer bees. But in his tree, every day is the same and if danger comes along, he's well-prepared. Scaredy Squirrel's emergency kit includes antibacterial soap, Band-Aids and a parachute. Day after day he watches and waits, and waits and watches, until one day ... his worst nightmare comes true! Scaredy suddenly finds himself out of his tree, where germs, poison ivy and sharks lurk. But as Scaredy Squirrel leaps into the unknown, he discovers something really uplifting ...

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 560L (What's this?)

Series: Scaredy Squirrel

Paperback: 40 pages

Publisher: Kids Can Press; Reprint edition (March 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1554530237

ISBN-13: 978-1554530236

Product Dimensions: 8 x 0.2 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (159 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #5,949 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #25 in [Books > Children's Books > Animals > Mice, Hamsters, Guinea Pigs & Squirrels](#) #38 in [Books > Business & Money > Education & Reference](#) #69 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Self-Esteem & Self-Respect](#)

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

Step with me into the wayback machine as we travel to early 2006 and the publication of Melanie Watt's, "Scaredy Squirrel". Watt's latest is by no means her first book, but it distinguishes itself from the pack. Thick black lines, simple images, and humorous repetition mean that this puppy's a tidy little gem. For those kids that know fear all too well, this book will speak to them directly. As for parents, I present to you a title your offspring can be read time after time after time without you having to fight the urge to rip out your hair in large chunks. Scaredy Squirrel's world is

straightforward and easy to navigate. His tree is safe and comforting whereas everything else on the planet is "the unknown" and therefore worthy of fear. I mean, consider how dangerous everything is. There's poison ivy and martians and sharks and germs and all kinds of stuff to watch out for. Scaredy Squirrel, therefore, sees no good reason why he should do anything other than eat, sleep, and look at the view from his tree's verdant branches all day. He even has an emergency kit near at hand. Then... one day... the unthinkable occurs. Out of nowhere a "killer" bee startles our hero and causes him to drop his kit. Down plunges Scaredy (before remembering the whole don't-leave-the-tree plan) but rather than crash to the ground he finds that he is capable of something entirely new: gliding. Turns out that Scaredy has been a flying squirrel all along and never knew it. Now Scaredy makes exactly one leap into the unknown every day before playing dead for two hours and going home. And for this little squirrel, that's a mighty big step to take. I liked the straightforward nature of the book. The book limits its words, making it easily comprehensible to its intended audience, but also manages to carry with it a rather grand message. If you stay in your tree all day and never leave you might be missing out. You might also be bored. And by and large, kids understand the concept of "bored" very very well. Then there's the fact that young readers will be able to relate to the hero of this tale. Children, it is generally assumed, like repetition. They like the comfort of an ordered routine. Change is not a small child's friend. So in a sense, many children are Scaredy Squirrels. Consider him the ideal protagonist for such little `uns then. The pictures are undeniably charming as well. Rendered in "charcoal pencil and acrylic" the thick black lines of the story evoke a slightly more detailed style akin to Mo Willems. Watt knows how to milk a visual gag for all it's worth too. The repeated images of what Scaredy's average day looks like are more than funny. They manage to tread that difficult line between cute and cute-SY. And best of all, Watt brings in good design elements that not only look good but will actually draw the children deeper into the book. For example, there's a passage that covers the advantages of never leaving one's own tree vs. the disadvantages. Each box has a circle where Scaredy is either looking elated or offering a thumbs down sign. Below, each of the bullet points have a cute little picture to illustrate their individual points. It sounds trite, but it works very well indeed. I can't express just how happy I was when I discovered that this book's message did not render everything ootsy-cutesy. When Scaredy is startled out of his tree by an adorable "killer" bee, he doesn't befriend that same bee by the story's end. There are no long drawn out passages about friendship and why it's a bad idea to jump to conclusions about people. Leave such proselytizing for another picture book. Or, better yet, the sequel, "Scaredy Squirrel Makes a Friend". The simplicity of this tale (i.e. a little adventure can do the heart good) is worth the price of admission alone. I commend, by the way, the first use that I

have seen in a young picture book of the term "killer bee". Just don't be too surprised if your kidlets start asking for child-friendly books on that topic as well. Consider pairing this book with the similarly charming "Wallace's Lists" by Barbara Bottner about an equally neurotic rodent. You could have an entire small-furry-creature's-fears storytime, if you had half a mind to. If you have to read at least one book by a Quebec-native author, this might be the one to grab. And hey, if you have TV-obsessed kids who need a television tie-in to get them interested in a book, just tell them that Scaredy looks like a distant cousin of Sandy from "Spongebob Squarepants". Whatever it takes to get them to read the book, man. It's worth it.

Scaredy Squirrel, by MÃ©lanie Watt, is a deceptively simply but tremendously funny story. Scaredy Squirrel lives a quiet, routine life in his nut tree. He never leaves the tree because he's afraid of the perils that lie in wait in the outside world: germs, sharks, poison ivy, and green martians, to name a few (would blue martians be less scary, I wonder?). He has a handy little emergency kit, and he spends most of his time on the lookout for danger (when he's not eating nuts, and looking at the view, anyway). But when danger invades his sanctuary, Scaredy Squirrel finds that the best laid plans can crumble. You'll have to read the book yourself to discover how he copes with, and is changed by, his experience. From the very start, from picture of a nervously grinning Scaredy Squirrel on the cover, this book is irresistible. MÃ©lanie Watt (author and illustrator) is a graphic artist, and her background comes through, decidedly to the book's advantage. Items introduced on one page often repeat later, in smaller format, as icons. My favorite are the killer bees, sparsely drawn, but with menacing brows. The germs are also simple, but unmistakable. The bold lines of pictures and fonts are sure to appeal to kids of all ages, drawing the reader forward, eager to see more. The humor in the book will appeal to adults and kids, too. Watt pokes fun at people who are afraid of everything, but it's a sympathetic sort of fun. We can tell that she's been there, too. We know what to expect from the warning on the very first page: "Warning! Scaredy Squirrel insists that everyone wash their hands with antibacterial soap before reading this book." I also like the way that the vocabulary in the book doesn't talk down to kids. For instance: "He'd rather stay in his safe and familiar tree than risk venturing out into the unknown." Venturing. Excellent. Kids ought to know what venturing is. Venturing is the basis for adventure, after all (and not coincidentally, I'm sure). All in all, this is a thoroughly appealing book, deserving of its Cybils award. I look forward to reading the sequel, Scaredy Squirrel Makes a Friend. I already consider him a friend of mine, with his timid, toothy smile, but I'll be happy to see him make more. Highly recommended for children and adults, ages 3 and up. This book review was originally published on my blog, Jen Robinson's Book Page,

on March 10, 2007.

Wow. If ever there was a book about facing your fears of change, this is it! Not just for kids, Scaredy Squirrel has a poignant (and hilarious!) lesson for all of us about trying new things and experiencing the world in new ways. A great gift for those going through life changes: new school, new job, new city, new relationship--and definitely a more unique (and did I mention hilarious?) gift for new graduates than the old "Oh the Places You'll Go." And the illustrations are pretty much the cutest thing I've seen since the Toot and Puddle series.

I laughed my head off when I read my 4 year old this book! She thought it was pretty funny too. I relate soooo much to Scaredy Squirrel as I worry about everything and try to be prepared for everything. The message in this story is fantastic. Because I'm over-the-top like Scaredy, I call the killer bees "Scarey Bees" and playing dead is "Playing Asleep" don't want to scare my 4 year old too much ;) This is a great book for children AND adults. That germaphobe, worrier, non-risk taker in your life can use this book!

The art in the book is great, and the story and message are very reasonable and appropriate. Unfortunately, it's a non-narrative book--much of it is in tables and isolated "labels" for pictures. If you have the kids that really prefer narrative stories and plot, this will be a tough go. Our kids just weren't prepared for this kind of "webbish" presentation of material in grids and labels, from which a plot must be intuited.

After reading all three Chester books dozens of times each, I am so relieved to find that Melanie Watt has another series! So simple and such great illustrations. My 5-year-old loves to "read" it to me! Will be looking for others in the series too!

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