



Swivel Cafe & Bakery

BRAND STORY

Most tales and mysterious stories in this life begin with a new event...

But your story began with an old giant hazelnut tree. The trunk of this tree was so wide that even if five tall men encircled it, their hands couldn't touch.

Early in our marriage, your grandfather and I decided to start our family away from the dangers of the forest, right on that hazelnut tree, which stood in a human's yard. Then, gradually, our family grew bigger and bigger in what became known as Nora's home. Among the squirrels, we were a peculiar family because we had chosen to live close to humans. But you, oh, you were the strangest of us all.

We lived there happily for many years. Every branch of the tree became a home for a small part of our big family. We tried our best to maintain peace with Nora. Four seasons a year, we would filled our bellies with the hazelnuts from the tree. I made sure the children knew never to sneak into Nora's kitchen, so she wouldn't get upset with us. But, it wasn't enough. Our large family and our consumption of all the hazelnuts on the tree were enough for Nora to scheme against us.

Little did we know what was going to happen.
Oh, dear little one...

To be honest, we never imagined Nora could become so exasperated with us that she would use something we detested to drive us away.

Yes, coffee grounds, the nightmare of every squirrel!

One by one, our family members grew restless. Some packed their things and left immediately; others held out a little longer but eventually gave up.

We couldn't leave, though, not with you still in your mother's belly, ready to be born at any moment. On top of that, your siblings had become quite ill.

We decided to send the children away with your father to join the rest of the family while your mother and I stayed behind, waiting for your birth. Those were hard days. The smell of coffee filled every corner of our home, and your mother's health worsened frequently.

Finally, the day we had been waiting for arrived. We were expecting several little squirrels, but only you came into the world. You were so plump; it seemed you had taken up all the room meant for the others in your mother's belly.

I'll never forget the moment I handed you to your mother.

With tears of joy in her eyes, she looked at you, and you calmed in her arms.

That's when the great secret of your life began.

Grandma said this and drifted off to sleep.

Lately, she tired easily and needed a short rest in the middle of her stories.

Sonya adored her grandmother and the tales she told, so she sat quietly, waiting for her to wake up and continue.

The strange bond between Sonya and her grandmother, Sophia, worried everyone.

Since leaving Nora's home, no one wanted to spend much time with Grandma.

She had grown quite old, and ever since their departure, the scent of that place seemed to cling to her, bothering everyone, everyone except Sonya.

"You must leave, Sonya..."

Lost in beautiful thoughts, waiting for her grandmother to awaken, Sonya snapped back to reality.

"Leave? Where, Grandma?"

"To a place where you can truly be yourself and you won't be strange to anyone. It's time you learned some things."

"Learn what, Grandma? Please tell me, I love your stories."

"A long time ago, in a place called Transylvania, there was a little girl your age.

She was full of life, loved her family dearly, and brimmed with energy. It was a place much like Nora's home, where you were born.

Squirrels and humans lived together, and the air was filled with the scent of delicious treats, especially chimney cakes. That sweet pastry was a creation of a close friendship between a human and a squirrel. Believe it or not, humans would make the dough, and squirrels would wrap it around wooden rods to bake the most delightful treat in the world. But, as with every beautiful story, this one also came to an end. And from that end, a new story began, with coffee, a drink that the people in Transylvania started pairing with their chimney cakes.

That's where the enmity between squirrels and humans began. The town was divided into two parts, and the squirrels built a colony of their own. Our little squirrel girl was the only one who didn't understand her kind's hatred for coffee. But as the saying goes, 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do,' so she kept quiet and went along with things. Still, she deeply missed her human friend..."

Grandma fell asleep again while saying this, and Sonya, too eager to wait, gently shook her and said:

“Grandma, please tell me the rest! I can’t wait. I need to know what happened next!”

Grandma yawned and continued:

“The little squirrel had a human friend whose home had become a gathering spot for all the townsfolk to drink coffee together. They called it a café! Outside stood a hazelnut tree in front of it, just like the one in Nora’s home. One day, the little squirrel decided to sneak out and see her friend. She put on a cloak and left. She waited on the hazelnut tree until everyone left and her friend was alone. Then, she approached her. The café smelled coffee everywhere, even her friend smelled like coffee, but the squirrel didn’t mind. In fact, she loved her friend’s scent. She climbed on her shoulder. Her friend was overjoyed to see her but knew it might be their last meeting. So, she gave the squirrel a handful of coffee beans and said:

‘You were always different, my dear squirrel, and you’ll always be my favorite, even if we never meet again. Take these beans as a keepsake to remind you of how much I love you.’

Tears welled up in both their eyes. The little squirrel filled her cheeks with the coffee beans and left that house for good and went back to other squirrels. . On her way home, she wondered how to hide the beans so no one would find them out. But when she arrived, her parents saw the beans. Her mother cried, ‘They’ve cursed our child!’ The scent of coffee spread throughout the colony, drawing the other squirrels. The squirrels stared to yell and wanted to find where the smell was from. They all believed the little squirrel was no longer herself, that she had been bewitched.

So her family, along with the other squirrels, chased her out of town with their torches. Alone, in the dark of night, not knowing anywhere else but Transylvania, the poor little squirrel had nowhere to go except a place she had only heard of, Budapest, where her ancestors came from.

She journeyed to Budapest tirelessly in search of a safe home. That little squirrel, Sonya, was me.

I was cast out for being different and had to flee. For years, I struggled, learning to hide my secret to find peace. I had to spend a recluse life, but when you were born amidst the scent of coffee, I had a strange feeling. You were different from my other children, you were like me. Now, looking back, I see how you’ve always stayed apart from others your age. You never told me, but I know they leave you out.

Don’t fear loneliness, Sonya. I was afraid, too, but being alone in a crowd is far harder than true solitude. So go, go but tell no one, and find squirrels like you and humans who love squirrels. You don’t belong here. You can have a better life.”

Then, she stood up, opened the trunk, and took out an embroidered napkin wrapped around something. She handed it to Sonya, who was staring in astonishment, frozen in place.

“This is the only coffee seed I managed to keep from my friend’s mementos. It symbolizes the love and affection between us and humans. From now on, it’s yours so you won’t lose hope wherever you feel troubled.”

“But Granny, where should I go? I’m scared I won’t be able to handle it.”

“Once you start moving, your fear will disappear. Just go; the path will reveal itself to you. Keep going until you find a place where you can love yourself just as you are. I would say between yourself and others, choose yourself. Now, the decision is yours.”

That day, nothing else happened.

At least nothing as significant as the revolution inside Sonya! But it took her a few days to make her final decision.

Eventually, Sonya's adventurous spirit led her onto a new and unknown path.

One night, she said goodbye to her big family and set off for a place she didn't even know herself.

She traveled for days and nights, moving through cities, forests, mountains, and plains. Her life had changed as in a movie.

"Once you start moving, your fear will disappear."

In the city streets, she ran quickly from behind one wall to another. The streetlights reflected on the wet streets, making the night as bright as a day. People rushed back and forth, and Sonya tried her best not to get trampled. She climbed a tree and sat on one of its branches.

Cut.

The sound of an eagle circling the sky in search of prey woke her up. She ran down from the branch of the only tree on the hill and hid under the shadow of a big rock.

Cut.

The shadow of a large, dark cloud covering the plains made the air even colder. She struggled to walk against the wind.

Cut.

"A place where the people in the city came to drink coffee together and they called it a café!"

The breeze on her face carried a familiar scent. She followed it to a house in the middle of the city, a house with large windows full of happy people. They were talking and holding steaming cups in their hands.

Cut.

She jumped out of the house's chimney and perched on the rooftop. A man came out of the house, carrying the same pleasant smell. Sonya followed the man, drawn by the scent.

Cut.

The man held a woman's hands, looked into her eyes, and kissed her. Sonya was reminded of her parents, who were deeply in love, and an intense longing filled her heart. The man and the woman said goodbye on the pier, and the woman walked away.

Cut.

The smell of the sea and fish was everywhere. Even the fabrics between which Sonya was hiding carried the scent of the sea. Suddenly, the same pleasant smell appeared. She followed it to a man holding a cup. It was just like the cups she had seen in that house, and steam was rising from it. Yes, the scent was coming from the cup.

Cut.

After the man finished his coffee, he boarded a boat, and Sonya quietly followed him. The coffee cup was in a corner of the boat. Sonya crept over and drank the last few drops left at the bottom of the cup. Wow! It was the first time she truly felt the smell she loved so much coursing through her whole body.

Cut.

"Keep going until you find a place where you can love yourself just as you are."

The joy she felt overwhelmed her. She realized she was in the middle of the sea. Terrified, she ran into the holes of the boat and fell asleep.

Cut.

A heavy rain hit her face. Water had pooled under her feet. She couldn't tell whether the thunder was scarier or the men on the boat desperately trying to survive the storm. Suddenly, everything was filled with water and darkness.

Cut.

The warmth of the sun falling on her body made her feel as if she were back in her mother's womb. She opened her eyes and found herself lying on a beach. She quickly ran and hid beside a nearby cabin. Her heart was racing. She tried to calm herself and think about her journey.

A journey where every step reminded her of her grandmother's words. Oh, how much she wished she could be with her now and ask her what to do. Then she remembered the coffee seed. She reached into her bag and took out the napkin Sophia had given her. Opening it, she stared at the coffee seed, then closed her eyes and smelled it.

"You were always different. You were my beloved squirrel, and you always will be, even if I never see you again."

She had to keep going. She had to find a friend like her grandmother or a place that felt like home, a place where she could have a family that loved her just the way she was. She packed her belongings and set off again.

After several days of traveling nonstop, she arrived at a house with a warm chimney and fell asleep there out of sheer exhaustion. When she woke up, she couldn't remember how she had arrived there or how long she had been asleep. She was starving. She looked around the house and her eyes landed on a tray full of sweets. Making sure no one saw her. She quickly grabbed some food and darted back to her spot.

A few days passed, and Sonya finally felt rested and well-fed. This place felt different, safe, even. But she only left the chimney when she needed food. At night, she would look up at the sky through the chimney, and the moon and stars reminded her of home. She loved the night sky and would fall asleep peacefully after gazing at the most beautiful view in the world.

As time passed, Sonya's curiosity grew. She'd been living there for some time, stealing food, yet no one had bothered her. So, she decided to explore her surroundings.

She stepped out of the chimney and sat on the roof edge. Looking down, she saw a man feeding the cats below. The man stood up and calmly said:

"Don't think I haven't noticed you! I know you're there. I've left a bowl of hazelnuts for you. You can help yourself whenever you like."

Sonya panicked, scampered back into the chimney, and cautiously peeked out to look inside the house. The man was not there yet, and there it was, a bowl full of hazelnuts. Still unsure, Sonya glanced around and noticed the photo frames above the bowl. The first photo was of a squirrel with a note beneath it that read: You'll always be my best friend, even if you're no longer here and there was another photo of the man and the same squirrel next to it.

Feeling a strange sense of reassurance, Sonya slowly approached the bowl of hazelnuts. As she stuffed her cheeks with nuts, she looked more closely at the photos.

“Squirrels and humans lived together, and there were delicious treats everywhere,”

She whispered, “this place looks so much like the place grandma told me.” recalling stories her grandmother had told her.

She looked around further and spotted a bowl of dough. Suddenly, the sound of footsteps made her dash back into the chimney. She heard the man’s voice:

“No need to be afraid of me...”

Then he muttered to himself, “If only I could come up with a new recipe, something delicious.”

Curious, Sonya peered out of the chimney and saw the man standing by the bowl of dough. She retreated to her spot, deep in thought.

Could this really be the home she had been searching for all along?

The next morning, she woke up to a familiar scent. Could it be the smell of coffee? All the good things in the same place? Sonya heard the door close.

She explored the house again and found no one inside, just the aroma of coffee filling the air. Overjoyed, she began dancing and dancing until her eyes caught sight of a red cloth with a moon and stars printed on it. Instantly, she remembered all those nights staring at the night sky and thinking of home. Now she was certain, this was the place she could stay forever.

Her eyes wandered back to the bowl of dough, and she remembered her grandmother’s stories.

Chimney cakes, the sweet, delicious treat born from the friendship between a human and a squirrel. You might not believe it, but humans made the dough, and squirrels wrapped it around wooden rods to bake the most delightful treat in the world.

Sonya remembered asking her grandmother for the recipe of the Chimney. What luck!

She rolled up her sleeves, determined to help her new friend create something special, Chimney cakes!

She grabbed a small piece of dough with her tiny hands and pondered how to shape it. Nearby, she spotted a rolling pin. She needed more dough, but her small hands couldn’t carry it all.

As she struggled, the door opened, startling her. She fell into the bowl of dough. Then she scrambled up the rolling pin. Somehow, the dough clung to her and wrapped around the rod like a Chimney cake.

And so, it seemed that this delightful treat would once again forge a bond of friendship between a squirrel and a human, only this time, coffee was part of the mix!

From that day on, that house became a home for everyone who cherished friendship, loved new, twisted treats, and couldn’t resist a good cup of coffee.

They named it Swivel.

Swivel[©]

C a f é & B a k e r y

