



**Dedicated to Julia and Benjamin, my
inspiration, may your kindness and
light forever change the world.**

**Special Thanks to Nicole Abi-Kheirs,
Jaymie Stuart Wolfe and Ben Lew for
your help in bringing my story to life
and to children everywhere.**

- K. S.

To Boris Blinks.

- B. L.

SOMETHING

STINKS

AROUND HERE!

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For Grown-Ups

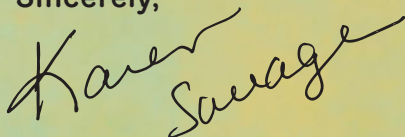
Dear Parents, Grandparents, Teachers, and Caregivers,

We all hope to share the benefits of our experience with the children in our lives. That can be tricky, however, when we learn valuable lessons from negative experiences. This children's book was born out of challenging life experiences throughout my life and the wisdom I gained as a result.

This story explores themes related to exclusion, bigotry, and being left out. While we all wish that such difficulties were not a part of childhood, we know that children struggle with these realities daily. But this is also a story about determination, finding your voice, and learning to see things in a new way. These types of opportunities accompany the challenge of building a society open to all, one in which every person—especially every child—has a place.

Our world needs more people like Little Squirrel. I believe that if we can teach our children to be aware and conscious of situations that involve exclusion, we can begin to solve them as a community. And isn't that what we all hope for?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Savage". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

**Mama Squirrel waved goodbye to
Little Squirrel as she left for the day.**





Little Squirrel loved following the Raccoon Garbage Company truck. She dreamed that one day she could collect garbage, too—but only raccoons did that.

Walking along, Little Squirrel noticed a terrible smell. “Something stinks around here!” she said.

“It sure does!” Butterfly said.





“The Racoon Garbage Company should be taking your old cocoons!” said Little Squirrel.

Butterfly shrugged. They don’t take our garbage away. Now our garden is super stinky!”

**“I’ll help you get
rid of it,” said
Little Squirrel.
She put the old
cocoons in a pile.**





**“Thank you!” said Butterfly.
“I can smell the flowers again!”**

As Little Squirrel continued after the raccoons, she smelled something stinky again. “Hello, Woodchuck, Little Squirrel said. “Something stinks around here!”

“It sure does!” Woodchuck agreed.





“The Raccoon Garbage Company should be taking your smelly apple cores away!” said Little Squirrel.

“They don’t!” Woodchuck exclaimed, “And my nose can’t take it anymore! Ahh-choo!”

**“I’ll help you get rid of them,”
Little Squirrel said.**

**She gathered
Woodchuck’s apple
cores and added
them to the pile.**





“Thank you, Squirrel!” Woodchuck shouted.

Little Squirrel heard the garbage truck roaring when she smelled something stinky again.

“Something stinks around here, Robin!” exclaimed Little Squirrel.





“The Raccoon Garbage Company doesn’t take my old eggshells away — and now they’re rotting!” Robin replied.

Little Squirrel helped Robin. The pile was starting to look like a hill.

This problem was serious, but Little Squirrel wasn't sure what to do about it.





**Then, the grossest,
ickiest, smelliest
odor filled her nose.**

“Snake!” Little Squirrel called out. “Something really stinks around here!” Snake felt embarrassed.

“I can’t dump my old snakeskins all by myself! I don’t even have hands!”

“That’s the Racoon Garbage Company’s job!” Little Squirrel said.





“They don’t take my garbage away. I guess they just don’t care about an old snake,” he said.

Little Squirrel decided that someone had to do something, so she hopped over to the Raccoon Garbage Company.

“What do you want?” one of the raccoons asked rudely.

**“Something’s wrong and I need to see the boss,”
Little Squirrel replied.**





“What’s this I hear?” a gruff voice said.

A tall racoon entered the room.

“Something stinks around here, Sir. There’s smelly garbage everywhere!” said Little Squirrel, bravely.

“What would a squirrel know? We raccoons know everything there is to know about garbage,” Boss Raccoon said.



“Then why did you leave so much garbage behind?” Little Squirrel asked, hopping out the door. “I’ll show you!”

Boss Raccoon and his racoon workers followed her.



**As Boss Raccoon walked
down the street, he said,
“Something really stinks
around here,
Little Squirrel!”**

**“See?” she said pointing
to the hill of garbage.**





“What’s all this?” shouted Boss Raccoon.

**“The raccoons didn’t pick up all the
garbage, so I did,” Little Squirrel said.**



“Raccoons have been picking up garbage for a hundred years! How could we miss so many houses?” Boss Raccoon said.

“Well?” he asked his workers.

“Sorry, Boss,” they said together.

**“I didn’t know butterflies and birds had garbage,”
said one of the raccoons.**

**“There aren’t any woodchucks on our list!”
said another.**

“I’m afraid of snakes,” a third admitted.



“Skipping houses makes the whole neighborhood stink!” Little Squirrel said.

“Yes, it does!” Boss Raccoon said. Then, he got an idea.

“Would you like to join the Raccoon Garbage Company team, Little Squirrel? You can make sure we include everyone’s garbage on our route.”





“Even though I’m a squirrel? Even though I haven’t been collecting garbage for a hundred years?” Little Squirrel asked.

Boss Raccoon laughed. “Yes, especially because you’re a squirrel!”

Little Squirrel jumped up and down with joy.

Everyone helped put the garbage into the garbage truck. All the neighbors came out to watch.



**“Look! Little Squirrel
is working with the
raccoons!” hissed Snake.**



“Will I see you tomorrow, squirrel?” Boss Raccoon asked.

“Yes, you will!” Little Squirrel replied.

The raccoons drove away.



Mama Squirrel beamed. The two squirrels smiled, flicked their tails, and sniffed the air.

**“You know what stinks around here?”
Mama Squirrel whispered.**

“Nothing!” said Little Squirrel. “Nothing at all!”



Reflect and Discuss

Here are a few questions to think about or discuss:

1. Little Squirrel was told she couldn't do the raccoons' work because she was a squirrel. Have you been told that you can't do something because of who you are? How did that make you feel? Describe what you did.
2. Butterfly, Woodchuck, Robin, and Snake were excluded from the raccoon garbage collection. Have you felt left out or excluded? If so, describe the situation. Were you able to do anything about it?
3. What reasons did the raccoons give for excluding Squirrel? Have you ever left someone out? Was it on purpose or just an accident?

- 4. Boss Raccoon ran the Raccoon Garbage Company the way it had been run for a hundred years. Is the way something has always been done the best way of doing it? Why or why not? What does it take to change how things are done?**
- 5. How we see things isn't the only way of seeing them. The raccoons didn't know anything about the challenges Butterfly, Robin, Woodchuck, or Snake faced. How can we learn new ways of seeing things from another's perspective? What does it take for people to change how they see things?**
- 6. Have you observed others being left out? Describe the situation and how you could have helped.**
- 7. Who can you talk with if you or other kids are being excluded or left out?**



RACCOON GARBAGE CO.
and ↑ Squirrel