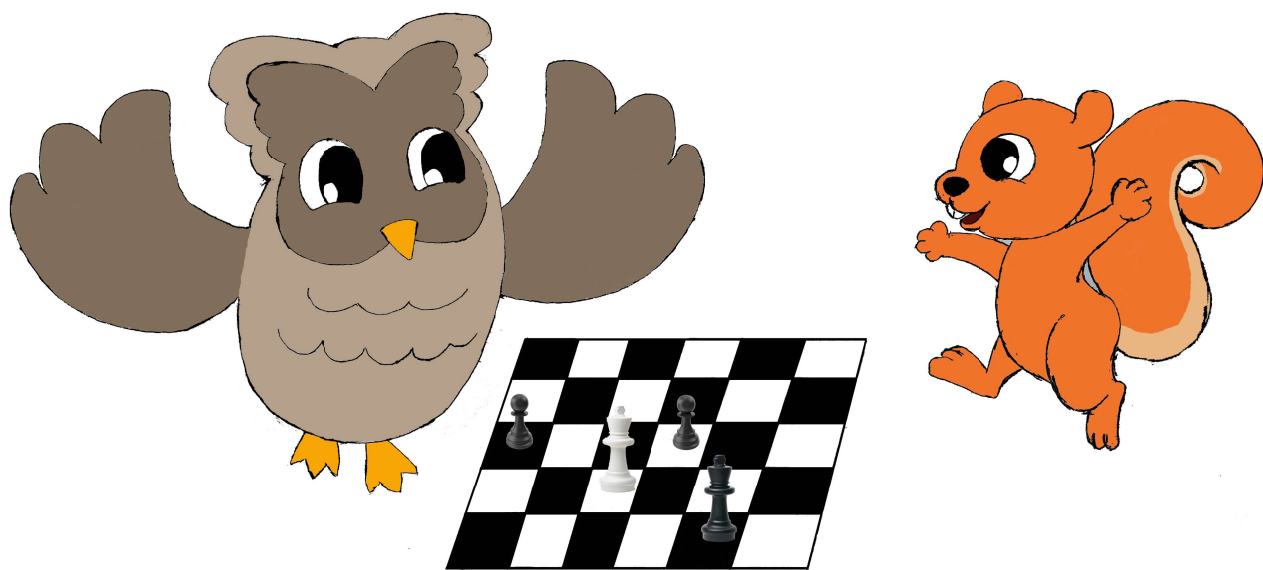


Spencer Squirrel Learns Chess

小松鼠斯宾塞学下棋



作者 Caine 大牛老师

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Spencer squirrel was very careful about where he hid the acorns he collected. He looked around for a long time to find a perfect spot. He wanted to make sure that they would be safe, and that no one else would be able to find them.

He didn't hide them too deep in the ground, or too shallow. He didn't hide them too close to his house, or too far away. He didn't hide them anywhere that was too easy to reach, or anywhere too difficult. It took a long time for Spencer to find good hiding places, but he felt that it was worth it.

The only problem was, the hiding places were so good, that quite often Spencer couldn't find the acorns once he'd hidden them! Spencer was very good at hiding acorns, but unfortunately he was also quite forgetful.

Spencer could often be seen, running around the forest, saying to himself “where did I put them!? I know I buried them somewhere near here. Why can't I find them!?”



One day a group of young rabbits saw Spencer running around and looking for his acorns. They thought it was very funny that a squirrel could forget where he had hidden his own acorns

One of the bigger rabbits shouted to Spencer “Hey, I know where your acorns are”.

Spencer ran over to the rabbits and said “really!? That's great, can you tell me please?”

But then, all the other rabbits started to laugh and point at him. “Of course we don't know where they are” the rabbits said, “they're your acorns not ours!”

Spencer felt angry “that's not a very nice joke” he said.

But the rabbits kept on laughing. “You're so stupid” said the big rabbit “how can a squirrel not know where he has hidden his acorns!?”

“I'm not stupid!” Spencer replied “I just forget sometimes, that's all. It's not easy to remember where I hid all those acorns”.



The big rabbit came close to Spencer, pointed at him and said “You're not forgetful, you're stupid! None of the other squirrels have any problems finding their acorns. It's only you! Stupid Spencer squirrel”. Then all of the rabbits started to chant “STUPID SPENCER SQUIRREL! STUPID SPENCER SQUIRREL!”

Spencer ran away, and kept running until he couldn't hear those mean rabbits any more.

Spencer sat on a rock and felt very sad. He thought to himself “maybe those mean rabbits are right. Maybe I am stupid. My friend Sam squirrel never loses his acorns. And my sister Sarah squirrel has no problem finding her acorns, even though she hides them very carefully. But me? I always lose my acorns!”

Spencer started to cry “why am I so stupid!?”

But then he had an idea. He wiped away his tears, stood up and said “I'll show those rabbits. I'll become smart. I'll become the smartest squirrel in the whole forest, I'll never lose my acorns again, and then they won't say mean things to me any more.”

But then he sat back down and thought “how can I make myself smarter?” He thought and thought, but just couldn't come up with any ideas.

Then, in the distance, he saw Mr. Owl sat on the branch of a tree, which gave him an idea. “I know” he thought “I'll ask Mr. Owl to teach me how to be smart. He is the smartest animal in the forest. I'm sure he can help me”.

So off he ran to see Mr. Owl.

He ran all the way to the tree and climbed up to the branch where Mr. Owl was sitting.

“Well hello Spencer.” Said old Mr. Owl. “You look out of breath.”

“I am” replied Spencer “I ran all the way here! Mr. Owl, I need your help”

“Really?” Asked Mr. Owl “and what do you need my help with?”

Spencer waited a moment until he'd gotten his breath back and said “I need you to teach me how to be smart! I'm so stupid, I keep losing my acorns and the rabbits keep laughing at me and being mean to me.”

Mr. Owl looked at Spencer carefully. He could see that Spencer was very sad, and he would have liked to help him. But he didn't know how. “I can't teach you how to be smart. That's not something you can really teach” said Mr. Owl.

“Oh Please Mr. Owl” cried Spencer “you're the smartest animal in the whole forest, everyone knows that! Please teach me how to be smart, I'll do anything.”



Mr. Owl was quiet, he tried to think of how he could help Spencer, but he just didn't know. Yes, he was smart, but he had never learnt how to be smart, he had just always been that way. So how could he teach it to others? After a while Mr Owl spoke and said "I'm sorry Spencer, being smart just isn't something that can be taught".

Spencer tried not to cry. He felt helpless. If Mr. Owl couldn't teach him how to be smart, then no one could. He was about to climb down the tree, when he saw, behind Mr. Owl, a chessboard.

"That's it!" shouted Spencer.

"What's it?" Replied Mr. Owl

"Chess!" Said Spencer.

"Chess?" Asked Mr. Owl.

"Yes, chess. Only smart people are good at chess" explained Spencer "so you can teach me to be good at chess, and then I'll be smart!"

Mr. Owl thought about this for a while. He wasn't sure that Spencer was right. But, he did want to help him. And, besides, it would be good to have a new partner to play chess with. So he agreed. "OK Spencer, I'll teach you to play chess" Mr. Owl said. "But I can't promise it will make you smarter".

"Thank you, thank you, thank you!" Said Spencer excitedly "when can we begin?"

"It's getting late now, come back tomorrow morning" Mr. Owl yawned "we'll begin then."

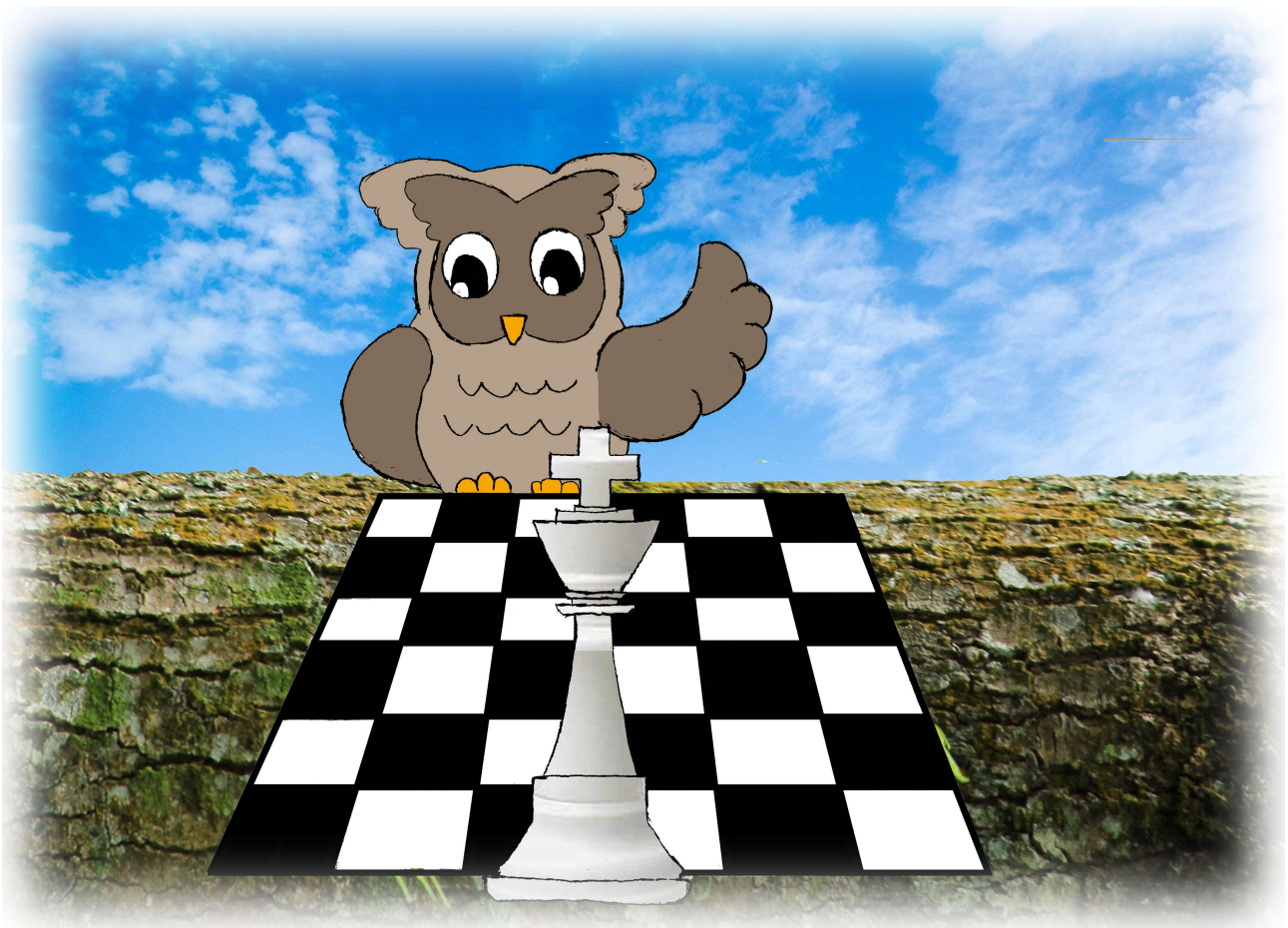
The next day Spencer arrived at Mr. Owl's tree very early. He had brought him some acorns for breakfast. But Mr. Owl wasn't impressed. "No thank you" he said sternly when Spencer offered him the acorns. "You don't like acorns?" Spencer asked in surprise. "I'm an Owl" replied Mr. Owl "I eat small mice". Spencer quietly put the acorns away and decided it would be best not to talk about food, and just concentrate on the chess instead.

Mr. Owl began to explain the rules to Spencer. "These are pawns" he said "they can only move forward. Unless they take another piece, in which case they can move diagonally. And they can only move one square at a time, unless it's their first move, in which case they can move 2 squares".

Spencer was already confused; he could tell that learning to be good at chess was going to be very hard indeed.

"Are you listening?" snapped Mr. Owl. "Yes, yes" replied Spencer nervously.

Spencer's first class didn't go very well. He was able to understand what one had to do in order to win. But he kept forgetting which way all the different pieces could move, which annoyed Mr. Owl a lot.



Nevertheless, he went back the next morning and the morning after that and the morning after that. And soon enough he could play chess. He wasn't very good, but he could remember how each piece moved and sometimes he could even take some of Mr. Owl's pieces.

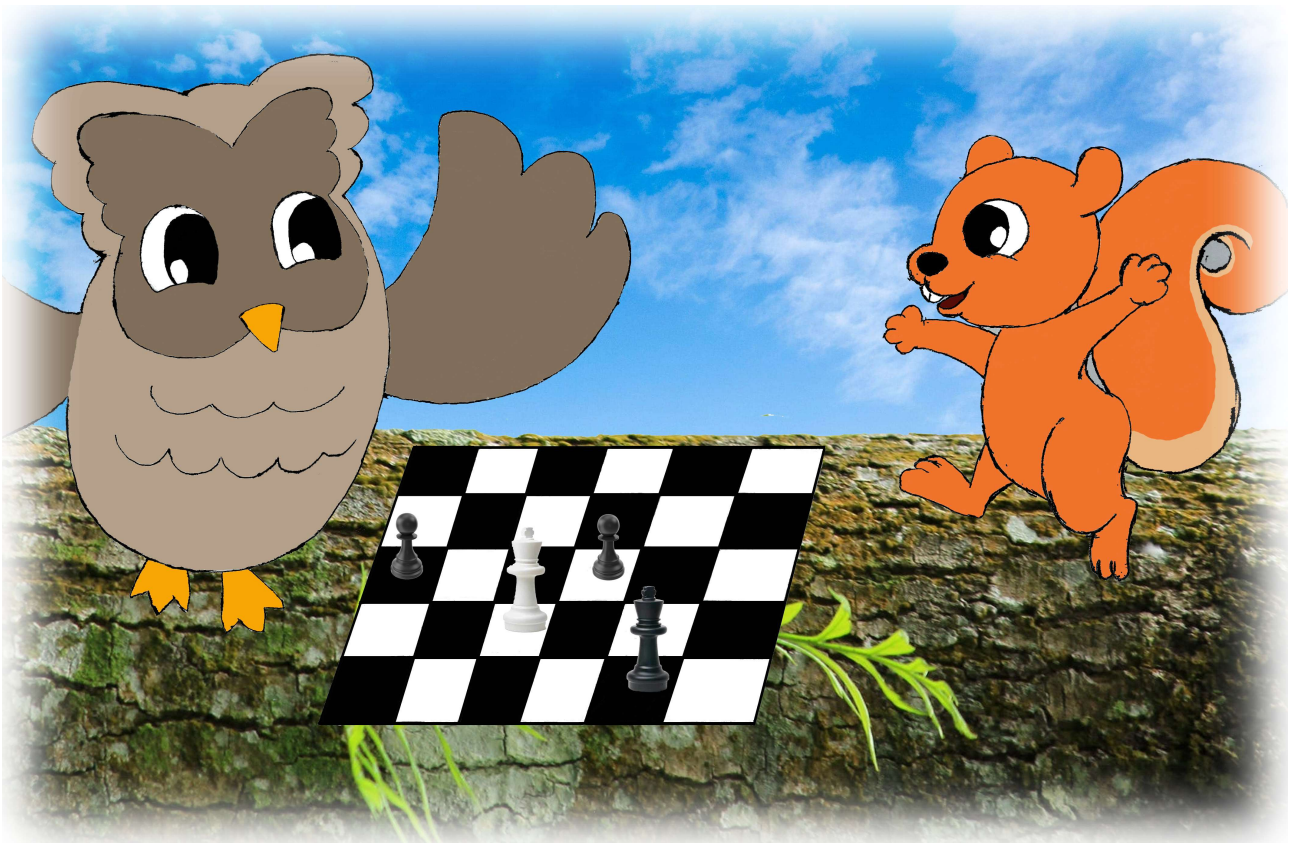
Each morning he would go to Mr. Owl's tree to practice chess, and in the night time he would think about what he had learnt, and play imaginary games in his head.

One day, after many weeks of training, something quite amazing happened. Spencer was playing very well, and had taken most of Mr. Owl's pieces. Then, Mr. Owl made a bad move and Spencer saw his chance. He moved his queen forward 3 spaces and then...

“Checkmate! Checkmate! It's really checkmate!” shouted Spencer in excitement.

Mr. Owl examined the board closely. “Well, you're right. It is checkmate.” said Mr. Owl “very good Spencer, you've won.”

“I can't believe it” said Spencer “finally, after all this time, I'm good at chess! I'm smart”.



Mr. Owl smiled, he was very happy for Spencer. But, he felt he had to tell him something. "You are now good at chess" he said "that's true. But you're no smarter now than when you first came to see me all those weeks ago."

"What!?" said Spencer "what do you mean?"

Mr. Owl explained "becoming good at chess doesn't mean you've become smarter. It just means you've become good at chess".

"So, you're saying I'm still stupid?" asked Spencer.

"No!" Mr. Owl said "you never were stupid! Forgetting where you put your acorns sometimes doesn't mean you're stupid. It just means you're a little forgetful. Lots of people are forgetful sometimes. In fact, I'm always forgetting where I put my glasses."

"Really?" asked Spencer.

"Yes, really" said Mr. Owl with a smile.

"But" Spencer began "then why do I feel so much smarter than before?"

Mr. Owl smiled "that's confidence!"

"Confidence?" asked Spencer.

"Yes, confidence." replied Mr. Owl. "You've always been smart. But before you had no confidence, you let what other people said hurt your feelings and make you feel stupid. But, learning to play chess has given you confidence. So now other people's mean words can't hurt you."

Spencer thought for a while and said "I think you might be right Mr. Owl."

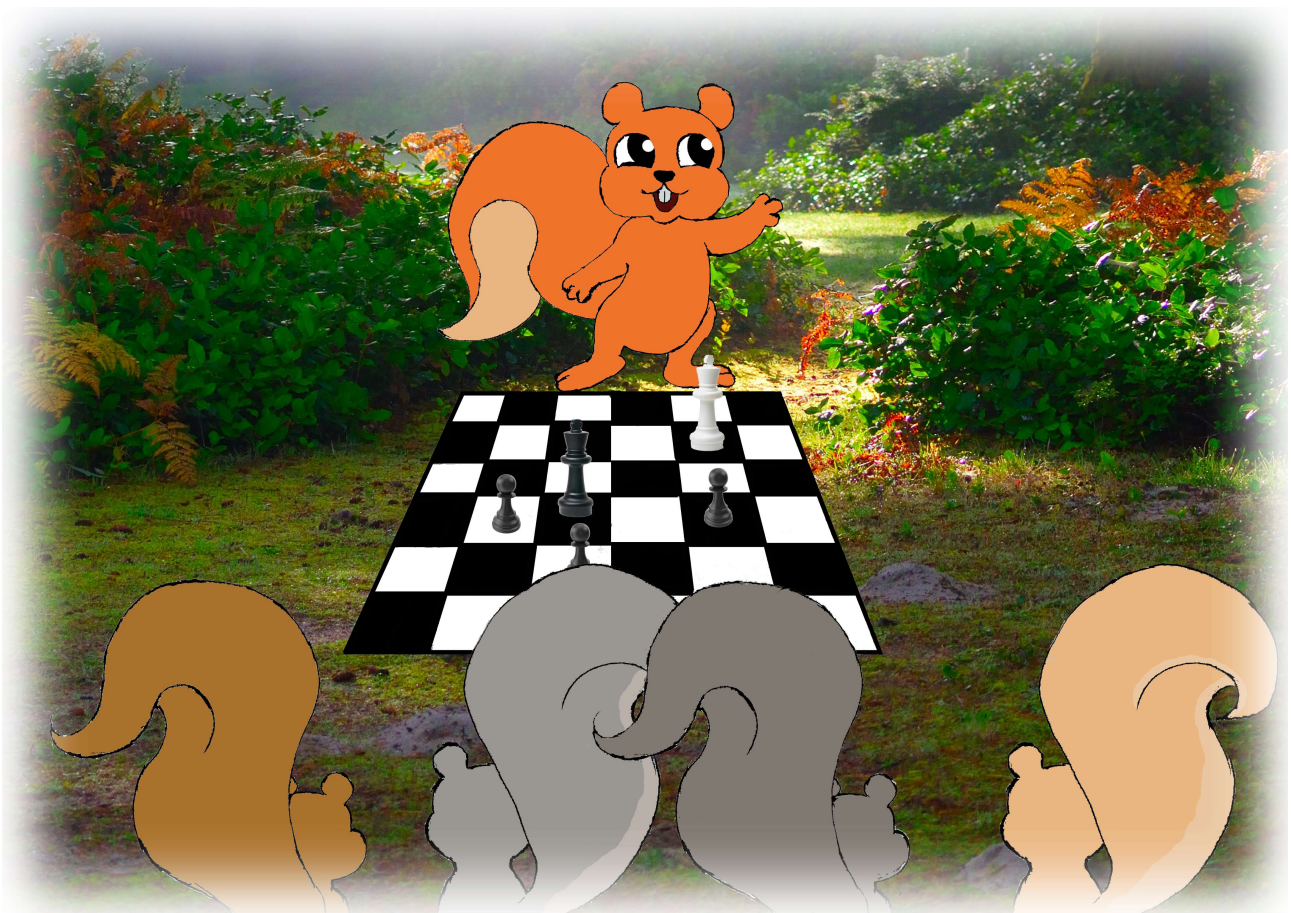
"I'm definitely right" replied Mr. Owl "I am the smartest animal in the forest, after all".

They both laughed. Spencer took the chessboard and climbed down the tree. He waved goodbye to Mr. Owl and slowly walked back home.

He felt a little strange. He had thought about this day for a long time. He had imagined that when he finally got good at chess, he would take the chessboard to the rabbits, challenge them to a game, then prove he was smart by beating them.

But now he didn't feel like challenging them. He knew he was smart and he had confidence; he didn't have to prove anything to a bunch of mean rabbits.

So instead, Spencer decided that he'd teach the other squirrels how to play chess. Like him they found it difficult at first, but eventually they learnt and they all had lots of fun playing together.



Spencer still sometimes forgot where he'd put his acorns. And the rabbits would still sometimes laugh and say mean things to him. But, it didn't bother him any more, he had the confidence to know that he was smart, and so their words couldn't hurt him.

THE END

单词	词义	音标	例句
squirrel	松鼠	skwɪrəl	Look at that cute squirrel!
acorn	橡果	eɪkɔːn	Wow, that acorn is really big.
shallow	浅的	ʃæləʊ	Don't worry, the water is shallow.
bury	埋	bəri	My dog likes to bury things in the garden.
stupid	笨	stjuːpɪd	You're not stupid, you just need to study a little harder.
chant	反复唱	tʃɑːnt	The crowd chanted the name of their favourite player.
wipe	擦掉	waɪp	We need to wipe the table clean first.
branch	树枝	brɑːntʃ	There's a pretty bird sitting on that branch.
forest	森林	fɒrɪst	Let's go for a walk in the forest.
breath	呼吸	brɛθ	It's so cold that I can see my breath.
helpless	无助的	helplɪs	The dog lay helpless on the floor.
chessboard	棋盘	tʃesbɔːd	I can't find the chessboard.
chess	棋	tʃes	I'm bored, let's play chess!
diagonally	对角地	daɪəɡənli	The road runs diagonally between the two cities.
piece	棋子	piːs	In this game, each player gets eight pieces.
nervously	紧张地	nɜːvəsli	She nervously walked into the classroom.
annoy	使生气	ənoɪ	The loud music annoys his mum.
checkmate	将军	tʃekmeɪt	That's checkmate, I win!
forgetful	健忘	fəɡətfʊl	You're so forgetful!
confidence	自信	kɒnfɪdəns	He has so much confidence, I wish I could be more like him.
prove	证明	pruːv	I'll get an A on this exam and that will prove how smart I am.
bother	使烦恼	bʌðə	The noise doesn't bother me, I can sleep through anything.