

## JUNIOR ESSAY – FIRST PLACE

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Age 10  
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### NEW RECIPE

It was the first day of squirrel season that allowed you to hunt with a dog. My dog Dixie does not look like a typical squirrel dog, but she is the best squirrel dog ever. She is a fluffy white snoodle (half poodle and half schnauzer). The type of dog you might see with bows in her hair sitting in an old lady's lap. But she is not that kind of dog. She will hunt squirrels all day long if you will reward her with animal crackers.

It was a cold crisp day when Grandpa and I set off to kill enough squirrels for Grandma to make her delicious three squirrel stew. The day was perfect, cold with a clear blue sky, and almost no wind. The trees had lost most of their colorful leaves. I took my trusty single barrel twenty gauge shotgun. We had killed two fat squirrels and just needed one more to make Grandma happy.

After hunting and walking and walking, Dixie finally treed a big red fox squirrel. She reared up on the side of the old white oak tree and barked. After a while I saw the squirrel laying flat on a small limb. I took careful aim and fired. The shot blew the limb off the tree so the limb and the squirrel tumbled to the ground at the same time. I hollered for Dixie to get the squirrel because I thought the squirrel was dead. The squirrel was not dead. It grabbed my dog Dixie and was clinging to her little furry back. The dog and the squirrel were fighting and rolling in the leaves on the ground each one trying to win. Finally, the squirrel got free and ran up the side of a tall Cyprus tree. I wanted to shoot him again but I was laughing too hard. I called my dog off and gave her an animal cracker.

The kill is supposed to be the thrill but that squirrel gave me such a big laugh I just could not kill him. Perhaps that little squirrel had given me something better than an ingredient for a tasty stew, he had made Grandpa and I really laugh. Our stew would just have to be a little smaller.

When we got home we shared our story with Grandma. She said less squirrel, more carrots and potatoes. A good story to share is always better than a meatier stew.