

The King of the Birds

A long time ago all of the birds were gathered together for a big meeting. There were birds of all sizes. There were teeny tiny birds, small birds, medium sized birds, larger birds and huge birds.

There were birds that ate seeds, birds that ate insects and worms, birds that ate small animals, birds that ate fish, and birds that ate other things too.

There were warm weather birds and cold weather birds. There were birds that lived in the same place all year long and birds that traveled from place to place when the season changed. All of the birds had wings, but while most used them to fly, others stayed on or close to the ground.

And the noises they made? Some cackled. Some chirped. Some peeped. Some crowed. Some screamed. Some hissed. Some gobbled. Some warbled, and unfortunately at that meeting, they all made their noises at the same time. Everyone wanted to talk, and no one wanted to listen until, "Roar!"



The roaring of the Lion quieted them all. The Lion was the king of the beasts. He ruled over all the animals that lived on the ground. It had become quite clear to him that there was no way for him to also rule over the skies. This is why he called them to this big meeting. The birds need to select their own king. The very idea is what caused all of the birds to talk at the same time.

"You must find a way to select who will be king," said the Lion. "Perhaps a contest of some kind?" he suggested.

The Nightingale said, "We could hold a contest to see who sings the most beautifully. But after I sang my first note, everyone would want me to be king, so the contest would not be fair. I would lose all my friends."

Falcon sat quiet. He would like to be king of the birds. He knew if there was a contest to see who could fly the highest that he would win and become king. But, he did not say this to the whole group for he too wished to keep his friends. But, Falcon turned to Wren, a tiny bird that sat next to him and whispered, "God gave us all wings. Perhaps our king should be the bird that can fly the highest. After all, our king should be able to easily fly over everyone to watch over the kingdom."

Little Wren flew to the center of the gathering. Falcon was delighted when Wren said, "Fellow birds, God gave us all wings! Our king should be a bird that can fly over us all to watch over us. Our king should be the bird that can go the highest in the sky."

Even the birds that could not fly agreed, "Our king should be the bird that can go highest in the sky." But none of the birds saw Wren leave the center of the gathering and fly back to where the Falcon perched on a branch. Nor did they see him climb onto the Falcon's back.

The Falcon was so excited dreaming about becoming the king that he did not feel the weight of tiny Wren, who was lighter than a sparrow, as Wren grabbed tightly to the Falcon's feathers.

Birds began to leave their perches and flapped their wings moving towards the sky. The Falcon flew above the canopy of the trees and circled, giving time for the other birds to catch up. Each time the birds caught up to Falcon, he would climb higher, always circling, always catching the wind beneath his wings. He went higher and higher until at last no other bird could climb as high in the sky. He thrilled as he heard the birds below him begin to say, "Falcon should be our king."

All the birds began to fly back towards the earth. Falcon was the last to leave the sky to perch on his branch once more. Just as he landed, the birds saw Wren let go of the feathers on Falcon's back and fly up into the air. Wren landed in the center of the gathering and sat quietly. Little Wren did not say a word. He just smiled.

Then one bird said, "Falcon flew the highest. He should be our king."

But another bird reminded everyone, "The contest was not to see who flew the highest, but to see who could go the highest in the sky. Wren went the highest, and he did not even have to fly. He used his brains and let Falcon do the flying. Wren was on Falcon's back. So he went higher than Falcon."

Even Falcon had to admit that clever Wren did go the highest.

This is why a smart little bird, Wren, became king of all the birds.

Chirp, Chirp, Chirp!