

A Brush Turkey and a Bower Bird

Liam and Tony heard some rustling in the bushy area where their family had stopped for a picnic.

“Come, Patrick,” they invited their youngest brother to peek between the trees and see what was going on.

“I think it’s a brush turkey,” said Liam, who had seen something like this before.

They didn’t want to disturb the creature who was obviously very busy at work. Indeed he had a very challenging task—some would say, a nearly impossible one.

Mother came to squat down as well and look on with the boys.

Mother whispered,

“How the brush turkeys manage to create a place down under the ground with leaves and all that they use, is a work of art!

“And the truly amazing thing is that they are able to set up their nest in such a way that it is just the perfect temperature for the eggs.

“These types of birds know how to keep their nest at that very specific temperature, no matter what the weather is doing.”

The boys were amazed.

Liam said, “I wish our house had a that kind of a special “temperature control” feature, that without the use of electricity or machines, it would never be too hot or cold!”

These birds had a good understanding of nature and science—knowing at least what was needed for their particular task.

“What is also just as fascinating,” father added, “Is that when the chicks hatch, deep down in that pile of leaves and dirt, that they know what they are supposed to do.

“The baby birds know that they are meant to suddenly dig their way out—and to even know where up and out is!

“Just think about it: When they are grown, they also know how to do the very same thing that their parents did for them—how to create a nest and maintain the perfect temperature for their eggs.”

Mother thought of her boys, and how they enjoyed learning about things, and added,

“Yet, those little ones didn’t get to watch or have a class with their parents on how to dig and fill and create the perfect place for the eggs.

“It was a knowledge that was imparted to them. It was built into them, and would be passed on amazingly to their little babies—without teaching them.”

Tony thought, “Like getting a computer that already has programs on it?”

“Perhaps something like that,” father commented. But even beyond that.

Liam added,

“Like getting a computer that has programs on it and can print out a whole new computer that also has those programs

on it and that can then print out yet another whole computer... and so on.”

Every one laughed. But that is a bit what it was like.

Patrick then added to the discussion—“And a computer that has a program that makes it grow feathers, the right size and colour and type, at just the right time.”

The family smiled as they watched the brush turkey working on his family building project, then decided it was time to walk over and have their picnic.

Patrick was thinking more about the birds, their nest, and the eggs, and asked,

“But why does it need to be just right for the eggs—not too hot and not too cold?”

Father replied,

“It’s a bit like the seeds we planted in the garden last year. We had to plant them when the weather and ground were the right temperature.

“Eggs of birds need to be warm also in order to grow, or the bird inside will never develop and hatch.”

Mother added,

“And if I cook some seeds, like lentils, or put them in water that is too hot, they will never sprout either.

“Bird eggs are designed the same way—if they get too hot, they won’t start to grow and hatch. So we don’t have to worry that the boiled chicken eggs in the fridge will start cracking and a have a chick hopping out!”

The boys laughed at that.

After eating, the boys and their father went exploring around a bit more, while mother packed up the picnic.

There was an empty bottle of water, and its blue lid was on the picnic mat beside it. When Mother took some things and put them in the car, however, something mysterious happened, or so it seemed.

When she came back to the picnic mat to clear the rest of the items, the lid to the bottle was nowhere around.

“That’s odd, I thought I just saw it right there.”

She cleared everything and shook it out, and still there was no sign of the blue bottle cap.

Then another thing was missing. There had been a little scrap of blue cloth, a label that was taken off an old shirt. It wasn’t comfortable with it on, so she removed it.

She didn’t need it, but was aware that it had been beside the door of the car. It had fallen out and she was going to go around and pick up any scraps of trash, so as to keep the natural area looking nice.

“Hmmm,” she thought.

She had no explanation for this, since only birds and ants had been seen around there while she tidied and packed up.

When the boys and their father came back they told of a wonderful discovery.

“Guess what we saw?” Liam started out.

“A bower bird making its bower!” announced Tony.

“He likes to collect little blue things,” Patrick told his mother.

“Yes,” father added, “It seemed to have quite a good stash of

its favourite things—blue things.”

Mother asked, “Like what kinds of things?”

“A piece of plastic ribbon, like from a present someone must have opened here at a party in the woods,” Tony answered.

“There were a few blue bottle caps,” Liam remembered.

“And a little blue piece of cloth was in the birds beak as it flew back when we were watching it,” Patrick remembered.

Mother smiled. That explained the missing blue items.

This bird could tell the difference between colours, and knew what it liked. It could tell the difference between blue and purple or green, yellow or red. Perhaps it wanted just the right things to decorate its house. Not just anything would do.

As the family got in the car to continue on their trip they listed all the birds they’d seen so far. There were so many.

Yet when they thought about each type of bird, they realised that besides feathers and eggs, there was also something similar to each of them.

All of them had to do things just a certain way to bring the right result. They had to choose some things, and not choose others. They had to want one thing, and not want the other.

Like the brush turkey had to know and choose the right temperature. If it didn’t, they would never have any new little baby chicks.

Other birds that were meant to eat certain things needed to choose those and not eat other things that weren’t right for them. —That way all the parts of nature were cared for.

Not all birds needed fish, or bugs, or berries. Not all birds had

to crawl up from a deep pile of leaves and vegetation when they hatched, nor did all have to balance on a branch of a tree waiting to learn to fly.

Each type of bird had something different it was to do, to eat, to create, and a way to communicate. They each had to be happy to do what they were meant to do—and not try to do what another bird type was created to do.

“Choices fill our days too,” said father. “We each have to decide what is right for us, what will help us to make this world the best. We have to choose some things, and say no to others.

“We have to like some things—like the bower bird likes the blue; and not like other things—like the brush turkey female won’t be happy if the nest isn’t built just right. If it isn’t right and best for the babies, they have to try again and make it right.”

Mother looked up some interesting information on line about brush turkeys and bower birds, and read aloud as they drove.