

Adventures of Birds and Bugs —Part 2—

Imaginary Story

Adventures of Birds and Bugs -Part 2-





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Chapter



Chapter 1—Little Baby Buggie

Little Baby Buggie was crawling eagerly up to the top of a long, ever so long, blade of grass. "At last! I made it!"

Little Baby Buggie liked challenging himself, seeing how high he could crawl on strands of grass and tall flower stems, as they waved in the wind. He'd have to hold on real tight and just keep on going.

Of course, Little Baby Buggie could also fly. He didn't only have to crawl, though most of the time he did. If he flew, though it was easier and faster to get up to this or that place, he would miss all the many details that could be seen while crawling on the plants.

He couldn't eat or drink while flying. But as he took the patient way of taking one step at a time, he'd get little treats along the way. Little Baby Buggie wasn't really a baby at all, but still so cute. That is why he had this name.

Actually, it was the farmer's daughter, Melline who named him this. She was stopping to look at a flower, when all of a sudden up and on to her landed this little ladybug.

There were bigger beetles and bugs in the garden. This ladybug seemed like a baby in comparison.

"Hi little baby buggie," she said, and then off he flew. And that was his name from then on.

Today he was crawling on the furthest side of the garden, right near the flower pots. The farmer's wife had a lot, and I mean oodles, of potted plants and flowers and plants sprouting. There were endless places for Little Baby Buggie to explore. Sometimes he came here just to play chase or hide-and-seek with other bugs.

The farmer's wife didn't mind a few bugs and beetles, or butterflies visiting her plants, but there was one creature that she certainly did mind and wished would never come to trouble her growing and sprouting plants.

A certain creature who carried around its own mini house. A slimy creature that always was very hungry.

Snails!

They'd leave a trail of slime up the side of a plant pot, and there would be several missing leaves after it left.

Sometimes Melline and her younger brother Ted and their father would be on snail search. Before going to bed they'd take a look all around the tender plants to find these slimy, slow moving munchers and take them away. They'd look just after dark when these sneaky snails like to snatch snacks while the humans were slumbering. But if the team of careful children caught these creepers, then there would be a lot less bites taken in the night. And more plants meant more food for the family to feast on.

"Why is it," Little Baby Buggie wondered, "that some of us bugs are considered a pest, while others are helpful and allowed to be around?"

Just then a very hungry moth caterpillar crept up and took a large bite of the plant that Little Baby Buggie was crawling beside. This helped to answer his question.

"I guess it has to do with our diets and what we feast on, that make us unpleasant or desired to have around. If bugs or critters eat up the work and take away the growth that the farmers are needing, then it has taken away from their progress. But some, like the bees and butterflies and others help to pollinate the plants, and this helps good growth to occur."

So Little Baby Buggie assumed in his thoughts that a diet that took away from plant growth is what made a bug unpleasant to have around in a human's garden. But those that helped the crops and plants to grow and produce seeds were good to have around.

"Oh look! There he is! My little pet ladybug! Dear Little Baby Buggie, come here," Melline said, offering her hand to the tiny cute creature.

On her finger he crawled, then on to her shirt sleeve, up to her shoulder and then took flight again into the air, to then land on a flower bush nearby. "Where did you go? Oh, there you are," she said, offering him another ride on her hand. He stayed a bit longer this time as she helped him crawl from one hand to the next and back again.

"Time to eat!" her mother called out.

"Oh, I gotta go now. But I'll come back later, just in case you are around again," Melline said as she helped him crawl on to a blade of grass.

On her way into the house Melline didn't realise that Little Baby Buggie had flown up from the grass, just as she turned to go, and had landed on her hat.

When she came into the kitchen her mother said, "What a lovely little decoration you have on your hat!"

Melline gave a questioning look. Perhaps she'd placed flowers in her hat but had forgotten? She went to the mirror to see. "My oh my!" she said, "Look at you! Come now, let's go back outside. That's where you'll have what you need," Melline said, taking her hat off and setting it outside on the front porch. She'd let her little friend choose when to crawl or fly off. She didn't need her hat on now, for it was mealtime.

The meal was spread on the large dining table. With freshly washed hands Melline began to serve her plate, choosing this and that from the food set out. There were freshly dug up boiled potatoes. There was a salad with fresh herbs sprinkled on it, with oil and vinegar to dress it. Some baked pumpkin with onions and garlic, and some pea soup.

She was hungry and all this good, home-grown food was great. After thanking God for the food He'd provided them with, the family began to eat and to talk. "Mother," Melline started out asking, "Can we go to the seaside some time? I'd really like to try out my little boat.— The one I made out of sticks. I guess it's more like a raft. But I want to see if it holds me up."

"That sounds like a lot of fun. What does Father have to say?" Mother said looking over to her husband, Melline's dad.

"I couldn't think of a funner way to spend next weekend," he said in positive tones.

"And we could go camping!" Ted added in. Always one to spend as much time outdoors as possible.

"We could do just that. Sounds like a great plan. You kids are the best idea folks around when it comes to how to have fun and spend a day," their father encouraged. "Maybe Aunt Tilma will come and watch over the farm and house and feed the animals, so I can come along too," suggested Mother.

"Yea!" they all cheered. They had something really great to look forward to.

The story ended, and Kyran and Kayla were glad that they were already doing something those children in story wished to be doing--camping. They were glad to have a family that liked having fun outdoors.







Chapter 2—Peggy the Penguin

The camping team was waking. Mother began cooking some pancakes to serve with fresh cut up fruit they had picked from the farm the day before.

"Could we read the other 'Creatures with Character' story, while waiting for breakfast?" the children asked their mother.

Mother realised that she still had plenty of stories to read, and thought that was a great idea.

The children took turns reading the booklet:

Peggy the Penguin

Sally the scientist was showing pictures of one of her trips to Antarctica, to Darling Debbie her granddaughter. "Grandma, can you please tell me about the funny birds that can't fly, but can swim in icy water?" Darling Debbie prodded for another story before bedtime.

The picture showed Granny, when she was much younger, taking notes on a very cold day in a very cold place, while looking at the penguins she had gone there to check on.

"Alright," said Grandma Sally. "When you are all snug in your warm bed, I'll tell you a story about an imaginary little penguin chick called Peggie.

"You will get a bit of an idea what it is like for a penguin family, living in a far away cold land called Antarctica."

Darling Debbie curled up in bed and listened as she closed her eyes, imagining everything as the story was told.

Peggie was a little Penguin chick, who had recently popped out of her egg. She had been kept so warm and snug, even though it was icy cold where her family lived. Peggie looked up to see her very big father towering over her. It felt warm being near him. She knew she had always been cared for.

Papa penguin looked down with a smile at his little fluffy baby. He was glad that he had been there day after day, keeping the egg warm for the long time it took until his little chick was ready to come out.

Now here she was! His patience was rewarded. They were a family now papa and mama and chick. Although she didn't see her mama yet, her mama was coming home just then with a surprise.

"Where is my mama?" the chick wondered, and looked around.

There were so many other penguins nearby huddled together for warmth, and she wondered if her mama knew that she had hatched.

Papa was patient, and did his job of guarding and keeping the egg warm. But there was something he couldn't do right then: provide food for his little one. Papa penguin was sure his little chick was getting quite hungry. In fact, he was rather hungry too.

When Peggie was still in her eggshell, her Papa was so careful to keep the little egg warm that he didn't leave it even for a moment. He had not gone off to the sea to find food, because his little Peggie needed him to be there always with her to keep her warm.

Papa explained this to little Peggie, that they just had to wait a short while and Mama would return with just what they needed—food she had gathered from the sea. Papa knew that Mama would be there right on time.

Mama had worked hard swimming and fishing, while Papa had guarded their little egg. She caught fish and swam in very icy water. She would scoot along the ice, or waddle over the edge of an iceberg and then leap down into the freezing water.

When she caught the sea food, she had a specially designed body that would safely keep whatever she swallowed that was meant to be shared with her baby chick. It was like putting it away in storage for later.

Without seeing or hearing her family, that were somewhere huddled in the large group of many other penguins, Mama penguin knew just when to go back to her family, and right where to find them. "There's Mama!" Papa penguin exclaimed.

Peggie looked around to see a lovely penguin waddling over to them.

Papa penguin said,

"I am amazed to see how you knew just the right time to be here, right when our little chick has hatched. How you found us in this big crowd was very clever!"

Mama responded,

"I know you are depending on me, and it's important to me that I arrive right on time. You must be so hungry. Here, I've got lots of food stored up for you."

Mama then shared with her little chick the food she brought home. Then it was Papa's turn to get to swim and go fishing, at last. Before he left, Papa penguin said to Peggie, "When you are a bit bigger, then you can come learn to swim, too. It will be lots of fun!"

Mama penguin added,

"And I'll teach you how to be a good mother to your little chick, when you are grown up, and how it is important to be there at the right time to provide what your family needs, even if you are having fun doing something else—like swimming."

Peggie had seen her parents do what was most important to do, to have a happy family. She chatted with her mama about what she had noticed.

Peggie said,

"I think good parents care well for the little ones, even if it means not getting what the parents want right away. "They are patient and do their job, and don't give up even if it's not always exciting.

"And even if they are gone from home sometimes, they are always thinking about their family and doing something that helps them. They don't stay away too long, but try to come back home at the right time."

Mama penguin said,

"We need to be punctual—that means we arrive somewhere, or do something at the time expected; at the time we promised to be there, or to do something.

"When you are a bit older you'll get to play with friends your own age and be watched by someone else for a while, and I'll go swimming to get some food. But I'll always come back again on time to be with you and give you food." Mama penguin then asked Peggie, "And what about a little penguin chick? What can you do that helps our family to be happy?"

Peggie thought for a moment. She knew that besides pecking out of her shell, she hadn't done any other work. But then she realised, "I just stay close to Papa and you, so I won't get lost or too cold."

Mama penguin smiled, "Yes, very good! I'm so glad you do."

Peggie snuggled up warmly to her mama. She needed to now be patient until she was bigger before she could venture to the sea and learn to swim to find seafood on her own. But now she felt rather drowsy, and curled up for a nice nap.

When the story ended, Darling Debbie said, "Thank you, Grandma, for that nice story!" "Your welcome," Grandma Sally replied, and gave her granddaughter a goodnight hug.

"Tomorrow I'll tell you some interesting things I learned about penguins."

(End of story booklet)

When Kyran and Kayla were finished reading about Peggy the Penguin, so was their meal ready for eating. After a prayer for their day, and a chapter of the Bible read, they were ready for a new day.

The children felt like they could go on and on camping, but the story helped them realise that sometimes they had to stop doing one thing, in order to be punctual to do other things.

Besides, the clouds were rolling in. Would the rain fall heavy on their last day? It seemed quite likely.







Chapter 3—Living Underground

Somewhere deep under the soil, down some newly dug tunnels, a team of worms was working away. They didn't labour hard in the sun, like a farmer hoeing a field and loosening things up for planting.

They couldn't manage the sunlight, or more like the sun's heat, for they were fashioned to endure the cold, dark and wet, hard-earth conditions of under the surface. Yet, their job was quite the same.

The earthworms were created to loosen up the soil and make it easy for the roots of plants to reach down for moisture and for nourishment.

These garden helpers were very lowly, indeed always under where people walked, children biked, and men drove tractors. The dirt was their home and their work. As they moved, as they ate, as they excreted, they were doing what they were meant to do.

One inch at a time, as they dug their tunnels through the soil, they were making it possible for others to live on the surface and enjoy the sunshine, having their bellies filled with good food that grew well.

Rumble! Rumble! The ground tremored as the tractor drove along.

Said one earthworm to the other,

"Sounds like Nelly the Farmer is gearing up to turn up the soil on this new plot of land, preparing it for planting. It's been a good season of growth so far, I think. By the looks of the roots that reached down over yonder, the abundance of them, I do think crops so far have been a success." The other replied with a story of what happened just the day before.

"Let me tell you, I wouldn't even be here today speaking to you if good old farmer Nelly hadn't done what he did. First of all I was working my way around the few potatoes over there, when all of a sudden, thump goes the shovel. You gotta watch out for it, right? Anyway, the farmer was digging some up for his supper I imagine. Before I knew it, I was suddenly out in the open air. My! That has gotta be one of the scariest sensations ever. All exposed to the heat and air, and most of all... yep, you guessed it, the birds!"

"Carry on! What happened next?" his worm friend asked.

"Well, as the birds do, they were moving in to see the newly turned up soil. There always is a feast and fun for them when soil is turned. "But I really didn't want it to be my turn to be on their dinner menu. Just then I felt some fingers snatch me up before the bird even had a chance. It was Nelly the farmer.

"He took a look and said, 'My aren't you a big one. I think I'd like you to keep doing what you do best. I need good guys like you.' Then he dropped me into a hollow and covered me with the soil so the hungry winged creatures couldn't get me, and I'd be snug and safe."

The worm finished his story of adventure. The other one responded,

"Glad to still have you. You know I didn't always used to work the field. I used to work in a much, much smaller environment. Up at the house where the potting plants are kept, in a small greenhouse is where I was born and grew." "Then how did you get all the way here? I don't imagine you burrowed through a pot and crawled all the way here? Or did you?" the other worm asked.

"Well, it happened rather suddenly, from one day to the next, or rather one moment to the next. The pot I was in was growing a plant that was definitely outgrowing it. I felt the pot being carried, and then the soil and roots and all were tipped out and placed in a hole in the ground right on the edge of the field.

"I stayed for a while until the roots were all spread out and the plant was doing well. But then I moved on out to help in new areas, such as here, where we met."

The worm finished his story and kept on burrowing through the soil, until he met up with another old friend and greeted him. "Been awhile since I've come across you, old pal, what's it like out there where you've come from?"

"Oh, just dirt and loads of it. But it's good to be in the soil I tell you. Another one of us didn't get on so well when the rain hit. He'd decided to 'go up for air' as he put it. Just wanted to look around at the forbidden surface, the danger zone. 'I'll be fine, you'll see,' he said. But he wasn't. That is when he was met with the strong rain.

"We knew it was raining, and raining hard, as the soil near the top was getting mighty easy to get through, all slimy and mud like, you know? But rather than going down to soil that wasn't quite as wet, he wanted to know and feel the rain in all its wetness."

The two worms listening to their friend asked him to go on, "So, what happened then?"

"Well," he continued, "I was pushing my way through the muck, when I heard a sorrowful moan and mourn; more like a lament that was saying, 'Why, oh why did I come up here? I'm too water logged now to move. I'll be a goner for sure.'

"It seemed he got stuck in a puddle of water, and was drowning."

"Did he make it or is he alright?" the eager listening friends asked.

"I don't know just how he's doing now, but I tried to burrow a hole up there to drain some of the water out. That was a difficult job indeed and got me mighty wet, you know. I called for some others and they did the same.

"With all the easy-to-crawl-down holes, he had an easy way out. But he's still in recovery. I don't think he'll be up to the surface again, at least not for a long time. "Now he knows it's best to stick to the spot we are to work and not go hankering after somewhere else."

The listening worms nodded and with new vigour got working their plot of land.

"Better do what we can while it's still so warm, and the ground is not frozen," one worm encouraged, and on they worked.











Chapter 4—Joy Up in the Tree

Kayla was taking a rest under a tree, while Mother was beside her, doing some drawing. Father and Kyran had gone to the farmer's house to get some needed items, just in case it rained hard that night and the following day.

The ants were busy at work nibbling some of the crumbs that had been tossed off the picnic blanket from their lunch earlier. Bugs and butterflies were busy flying and crawling around, as they did in this Meadow of New Stars.

For some reason, Kayla just felt like shutting her eyes and sleeping for awhile, and so she did.

When she awoke, she had a large smile on her face.

"Did you have a nice rest? Or did a butterfly just tickle your nose?" her mother asked. "Yes—I mean, both! But I'm actually smiling because I had such a nice dream. I feel I want to write it down."

So Mother pulled out her notebook and took notes while Kayla told of the dream. "We can put this in our book series, 'Laughing with Jesus'" Mother said, happy for a new chapter to add.

"Yes! And can we read it also tonight for story time with Daddy and Kyran?" Kayla asked.

So that night Mother's first story for the night was called, "Tea in the Tree". Later on, when home again, Mother would type it up and include it in the book series.

Tea in the Tree

"Peek a boo! Ha, ha!" Jesus was peeking out from behind a tree, playing with a few laughing young children.
They would run to Him, and He would pick them up and not only swing them around, but whirl with them through the air.

Their mother was smiling. It was always special and fun to have Jesus playing with them. She fixed a snack and waved.

Jesus held the children's hands and came run-flying through the air over to mommy. They climbed up into their favourite tree house for a fun tea party.

The little girl, Mellina, helped to pour the drink into each of their little cups. And Antonis, the boy, helped to pass out the snack bowls.

"Thank you" said Jesus, as He received His snack.

"Would you like Me to help you build more onto the tree house after the snack?" Jesus asked. "Perhaps I could put a slide on it, or a pole to zoom down. Maybe a bird feeder—and you can see so many new and amazing birds coming to visit you so close."

"Yay!" Said Mellina and Antonis. "Can we also have a rope ladder that goes up to the top of the tree?"

"Sure thing! Let's get started!" Jesus said, as they began to collect the needed items. In Heaven things weren't dangerous, just fun and safe. They could go to the top of the tree if they wanted to—falling wasn't a problem, since they could just float down if they wanted to.

They watched Jesus tying this rope, putting that piece of wood there, fixing up that, and so forth. The children eagerly helped whenever there was something they could do. At last it was all done. "Now for a special touch—I'm going to put magical paint on it. The tree house can now change to any colour that you want it to be, whenever you are playing! Just think what you'd like it to be, and to you it will look like that!"

"But what if we both want different colours?" Asked Antonis

"Whatever colour you want, that's how it will look to you. If your sister wants to see it painted something else, then to her, at that moment, it will look like that! Now that's magic paint!" Jesus explained.

The children thought for a moment and said aloud their colour preferences. Mellina said, "Pink and purple, with golden edges."

Antonis said, "Green and blue, with silver stars on the roof".

And so it was. And lots of fun was had there that day.

"Look!" called Antonis to his sister. "Look at that bird!" Mellina saw it too. It was as big as a peacock, but had different coloured feathers, and other wings too, so it could fly.

"Wow! It's soooo pretty!"

"Thank You, Jesus!" they said. "We're having so much fun!"

After reading that dream story, Mother made it her story choice to then read from a book series called, "Learning with Jesus".

The story talked about sparrows cute little birds.

The Sparrow in the Tree

Esther was a cute little girl, with curly dark brown hair. She had a smile ready to share with those who passed her way. She couldn't get around like others.

She had to sit or be carried around from place to place. She couldn't walk. But that didn't steal away the happiness that seemed to be in her soul as a bubbling stream, sparkling in the sun's rays.

One day she told her friend. "Do you know why I'm content, even though I can't walk and get around as you do?"

Dilliah her friend had often wondered this. "You always seem to find your smile, even on the hottest days, or when folks around you seem too busy to even notice you are there. What keeps you content, and filled with praise to God, even though things aren't easy for you?" "Look up in this tree!" Esther said to Dilliah, who'd come to spend some time with her now, under the shade of the tree. It was the hottest time of the day, and the relief from the sun was a welcoming thought.

"See that little bird on that branch, way up high?" Esther continued.

Dilliah looked hard, and then at last spotted it, "Ah, yes, there it is! How cute!"

"Well, one day when I was sitting here, watching everyone moving here and there. I saw how they were able to walk and get whatever they needed, without having to wait for others to assist them. On that day, Jesus came to visit me. He has the friendliest nature, and such a kind heart.

"I think He must have sensed that I was starting to feel sad about my situation. "We sat here under this very tree and looked up. That day there were 10 sparrows to be seen. We played a game of finding and counting them all, as well as watching them fly here and there to gather food. And Jesus reminded me about how special we all are to God. He knows each one of us.

"We can't fly like the birds—that's their job. It's what suits them. I can't walk, but I can be content with how I have been made. I can do what God has made me to do."

"And what is that?" Dilliah asked. "What has God made you for, and how can your being crippled help you to do it?"

"Jesus told me that there isn't a single person on this world that doesn't need prayer, or a kind word, or a look of cheer. And most people are too busy going here and there, and doing this and that, in their busy lives, to remember to help each other in these important ways. But He said, I could do just that!

"If I pray for each person I see; if I smile at each one that looks my way; if my words are filled with hope and kindness when talking with those who stop by, then it will give them joy, strength, and courage to carry on.

"This town will be filled with laughter instead of tears. Instead of struggling with the heavy load of work, they will do it with joy, knowing that God sees and cares for them. I can talk to the children. I can tell them about God's love and care.

"Oh, Dilliah, don't you see there is so much that I can do, and that needs to be done. I may be the only one today that has the time to do these things. See, we each have our place, and each can do a big and important job for God." "So every time you see a sparrow, it reminds you of what Jesus told you?" Dilliah asked.

"Yes, it helps me to smile, to sing a song of praise, and to cheerfully do what I can do—and it does make a difference. Did you notice the neighbour over there, the one who used to always be angry about something? He now has a smile as he whistles about his work.

"God blessed his crops, and his family, and those around him are also starting to cheer up more. I am helping! And it feels wonderful. So that's why I can smile. God made me to be just what I am, and I am glad He can use me to help others."

"Thanks for talking to me," Dilliah said. "You've helped me too," she said, wiping a few tears from her eyes. You've warmed my heart and reminded me of God's special love and care for me too." Esther gave her a hug, and waved as Dilliah ran off, helping to fill her place as well, with more joy than before. Esther smiled. It felt good to encourage a friend, just as Jesus had encouraged her too.



Chapter 5—Thunder and Boots

A rumbling sound shook the stillness. It had been raining most of the night, and on through much of the day. There was a break in the watery fall in the afternoon, and the children at the farm ran out to play.

The camping team had spent much of the day in their large tent. They had brought many books on birds and bugs and farming. It was a good time to catch up on reading these.

Something their father had gotten the day before from the farmer, was a very large covering to place over the tent, to protect it further from leaking. He'd brought also some food that didn't need cooking on a fire, so it was easy to nibble in the tent.

In the afternoon, when the rain stopped briefly, and the farmer's children

were outdoors playing, Kyran and Kayla were invited to join them. But it wasn't long before...

"Thunder!" a team of worms under the ground all chorused.

Suddenly a "thump" feeling left them feeling very squished. They heard a child squealing and clomping with boots in the field just above them. Due to the rain and the soft mud, the feet of a person would sink down faster and further than usual.

"Ah they do have fun in the mud, those young ones!" said one worm, trying to straighten himself out again. He knew the feeling and effect of boots above him, and knew it wasn't something to worry about. Just a slight discomfort but they'd be all on their way again soon enough.

"Oh, look! There's a worm!" said a running girl with boots.

She knew he wasn't feeling like staying out in the exposed air and weather. She took a stick and made a deep hole. Then picking up the very wet worm, placed him into the soil. She got a bit wet herself, but felt happy to have helped something that helped their farm.

When she got into the house, and was sitting to dry off beside the fire, she was thinking about the Meadow of New Stars. She wondered how the bugs there were getting on. She wasn't sure just where the butterflies took refuge, if it was raining just as hard there as it was here.

"I'm glad I have a nice warm house to be in now," she said aloud.

Mother handed her and her brother each a warm mug of soup to drink, and said, "Me too. And I'm glad I have you and our whole family to share this cosy home with." Father sat down with his boots removed. His feet were set to get warm by the fire. His socks had more than one hole to be spotted.

"What happened to your socks, Daddy?" the girl asked.

Her farmer father felt like having a laugh—which was better to do than to complain about things that weren't perfect, and he said,

"Hmmm. Look at that! I wonder if the earthworms worked their way through them when I wasn't looking?"

Everyone chuckled.

Then to his delight, his wife handed him a small package that had been sent to them just that day.

"This was sent for you, I think it's from your mother," she said.

"Daddy open it! What is it?" Melline and Ted, the children, started to say. Unopened packages were always something fun.

"Well, look at that!" he said, pulling out a newly made pair of woollen socks.

"These sure came at a good time!"

"Put them on! Put them on!" his boy Ted was happily urging.

So off the worn and threadbare socks went, and on went the warm and nice new ones.

"Mommy, I want to learn to knit!" the girl suddenly said. It seemed a helpful skill to have. One day she might have her own family that would need her skills to help them stay comfortably clothed.

"I think that would be a great idea. Did you know Grandmother will be visiting us this next month, and will stay for several weeks. She misses you and wants to get to know you better. Wouldn't that be a great time to learn how to knit? She 's so skilled in it."

The girl smiled. That was something enjoyable to look forward to. There was so much to learn, and it was great when members of her family took time to teach her things she wanted to know.

"Can Grandma teach me how to make potato pancakes? Her special kind?" Ted asked.

"That will be a great thing to learn, with all the potatoes we'll have soon," Father replied. "I'm sure she can,"



Chapter 6—A Big Boat and a Bird

Tonight was their last night at the camp. It was Daddy's turn to pick the story to read.

"I think with such a watery night and day, I'll choose a well-known story from our "Story Time with Jesus" books. Can you guess what this true story is about?" he asked.

"Noah and the flood!" Kyran guessed.

"Oh, I was going to guess Elijah and the time it finally rained," said Kayla.

"That would have been a nice one too," replied their father.

"But this time it is the story of the worldwide flood—which I am glad we are not having. We can go to sleep now listening to this true Bible story, as told by Jesus, while we also listen to the rain begin to fall again. "If you listen carefully you'll notice what special job some birds had something only they could do." So their father began to read:

A Good Man for a Great Job

Noah was one of the few people on Earth who had chosen to follow God's way, and he made God glad. So he was chosen out of everyone on the Earth to do a very important job.

Have you ever cried a lot, I mean a whole lot? So much that you felt you could hardly stop, and your face was all wet with tears, your nose was running, and you were sobbing, thinking there was nothing that could cheer you up?

Perhaps you lost something or someone that was really special to you? Or something that you'd worked so hard on got totally ruined? Or something that you'd been looking forward to and planning for a long while didn't work out, and your hopes and dreams were smashed?

Well, that was a bit how God felt when things on Earth started to go so wrong. The people He had lovingly created now made Him feel so sad with their poor choices and bad behaviour. The world that He made wasn't the happy, thriving, beautiful, loving place that He had made it to be.

After all He'd put into it, it was now ruined and soiled with the wrongs that people were doing. He cried and cried, and the whole world was going to be washed and cleansed with the water that He'd send.

Maybe that's how many tears He felt He had. The old things were washed away, and He could start again. He chose Noah to help Him during this time, to salvage what good was still left in the Earth. Noah had learned to hear and obey God's voice. And he had learned to hate the terrible things that were going on in the world. He didn't want anything to do with evil. He just wanted to live God's way. God was able to speak clearly with him. Noah was eager to do things God's way, even if they had never been done before.

If God told him, "Cut down trees and build a floating vehicle, fill it with animals and food, and go in it with your family," then Noah would do it—and he did, because that is what God said.

There was a lot of work to be done, and it took over a hundred years to do it! It all had to be done right, so that the ship would be safe and sturdy, and would last—staying strong and stable until the washed new world was dry again. It needed to be built well so it would shelter, house, keep, and save Noah's family and the land animals. After this "ark" was built, it was time to fill it with the creatures that were to be on it. Every type of animal was put in the ark—a male and female of each kind.

There were only two of most animals on the ark, but 14 of those animals that mankind would need plenty of in the new clean world. For example, there needed to be lots of sheep for wool for clothing, and cows to give milk and pull ploughs, and so forth.

The task was enormous, and there weren't many people to do it. It's one thing to want to do a job, to be willing to do what God calls you to do.—But then to stick with it until it's done, and to do the hard work, day after day until it's completed, that takes determination and vision. Those are two things that Noah and his family had to have.

They also needed to have unity and teamwork, and to be willing to help each

other, and to work very hard. They needed each other. They had to talk together, listen to each other, work things out together, encourage each other, pray and get the right ideas from God in order to make it all just right, to do things in the best way.

It took years and years of working towards a goal and not giving up, and not giving in to those who were trying to stop them and make things difficult. Their minds had to be on the job and their hearts set on God's ways.

Finally they did it! They won! The ark was built, the animals were safely inside, and all the things they'd need for their long voyage were packed and ready! Their destination was a new clean world.

Imagine the excitement, the anticipation they must have felt, with the job all done and everyone and everything that was meant to be in the ark safely there.

God shut the door tight, and then they just had to wait. For seven days and nights they waited inside the ark, for the promised flood to come.

Rain and a Rainbow

It was time for the world to be washed, and the ark was finished and ready to float. It wasn't a frantic time, however, with rain pouring down and Noah's family trying to shove animals in and get into the ark themselves. No. They brought the animals into the ark when God told them to, and then they waited, safe and dry within the ark for a whole week before any rain started.

Can you imagine what they must have felt? "Father, when did you say the rain would come?" his sons may have asked Noah. "God said the rain would come. We must be patient, and tend carefully to the animals. They need very good care," Noah may have said to his family.

Sure enough, it not only rained, but poured down huge amounts from the sky, and water gushed from fountains deep under the ground. The world had never been so wet.

When the ark started to float, it must have been an unforgettable experience. They had never felt anything like that before. They were rocking, floating, bobbing, swaying and bumping. They had to have a lot of faith, as well as try to keep their animals calm and well cared for.

With so much to do, that family must have been extremely busy. They certainly weren't on a fancy cruise ship, sitting around with lots of time on their hands, expecting to be waited on.

Noah and his family were grateful and in awe at the miracle of God's love, and how He loved them so much. And God was also thankful for their love for Him, so He gave them the privilege of being the only ones from the old world to cross over into the new.

God could have just started it all over again and remade everything from scratch, but in His love and mercy He gave mankind one more chance, and let good Noah and his family enter the new unspoiled world.

The journey was tiring and long, and not easy in the least. It probably didn't smell very nice most of the time, with so many animals all in one place.

Imagine being on a stinky boat for a very long time, without being able to run

and play outside—because there was no grass to go on.

They worked very hard together as a team to keep the animals fed and well, and to care for themselves. At last they made it through that time, and with great joy they entered a fresh, new, clean world.

The ark first landed on a rocky mountain. A while later, Noah sent a raven and a dove to fly around and see how things were going in the watery world outside. When the dove returned with an olive leaf in her mouth, this was a clue for them that the waters had gone down a great deal.

It gave them hope and patience to wait until the land would be dry enough and safe to walk on. When the time was right, God released the door He'd shut tight, and the family could make their great exit. Ahh!—Air, light, land, and nature! It was cause for a celebration and time of worship. Noah called his family together to praise and thank God for bringing them safely through.

A beautiful rainbow painted the sky, as God's promise that this difficult event, so sad, so hard to live through, would never happen again. They didn't have to worry the next time it rained that they would have to dash back to the ark. Rain was just a part of watering the world, and God wouldn't create a worldwide flood again.

People's life spans also changed. Instead of living for several hundred years, God changed things on Earth and the average age became much shorter. Because of people's choices, often to go the wrong and unkind way, God made things be such a way that they were not permitted to live as long as before. The choices are the same for everyone around the world: What will you do today? Will you use your time and strength to make the world and your surroundings a happy and loving place to be, or will you choose what's wrong? The choice is as much yours today as it was for those people of old.

What will you do with your life while you are on Earth, for however long or short your life might be? What you do may affect more people than you realise. God knows if you love, obey and respect Him. He knows not only what you do, but your heart and thoughts as well. And He will bless, protect, and give privileges to those who want to do the things that make Him glad, just as He did for Noah.

(End of story.)

















Chapter 7—Still Raining,

and Mr. Bizzare (Part 1)

In some ways, the fact that it was still raining the next morning at the camp, did make it easier to leave. Otherwise, if it was a really pleasant sunny day, it might be more compelling to stay. However, it did make it a bit more challenging to pack up the camping gear.

"We'll just have to dry it out later on at home, when the sun shines again. It's bound to shine one of these days," Father said.

He had on his raincoat and was loading whatever was ready to pack, into the car. The children, after cleaning everything up from inside the tent, stayed inside.

"Here's a book that I saved to give you, for the trip home—something you can read a bit of now, and during the trip, as well as when we are at home too," Mother said, handing it to the children.

It was called: "Mr. Bizzare and his two String Guitar"

It looked funny. So they started reading, as long as they could before the tent needed to be packed up.

Mr. Bizzare and his two String Guitar

It's important to note that whenever Mr. Bizzare was at work in his studio, he always wore some kind of hat.

"Ya neber do know when dem birds will come. Don't want no turds messing with my words."

He'd say, when he donned the most fitting hat for the day, if he ever was questioned. To match with his purple and grey suit, a suitable and worthy bright blue hat was chosen, complete with a beacon of sorts. This was for transmitting thoughts to his friends who lived on the other side of the "great deep" as Mr. Bizzare called it--that is to say, the large sea.

Both strings on his old guitar were completely out of tune, and so he set to work on perfecting their tone.

When the strings were out of tune he had names for them. One string he called, "Rebel" for it was seldom in tune whenever he set out to play.

The other he called, "revenge" as it seemed to "get back at" the first odd sounding notes of the first string, with a far worse sound than ever.

"I gotta get dem two strings out of their tune and into the right tune." At first it was hard, that is, when Mr. Bizzare had on headphones listening to Miss Mollymuckup's latest album, "The Hit Dog's Howling Hey Day", while at the same time yelling outside for the cars to stop driving past, as this made it hard to hear right.

But Mr. Bizzare knew his bizarre ways were just that--a bit too bizarre on some days, so he had rigged up a contraption to snap him back to a more sensible way of being.

A button could be pushed and a recording of his voice repeating his father's wise sayings would boom through the air zone, "Take off the headphones; sit still and be quiet."

By this it meant stop listening to the wrong sounds--such as the headphones were sounding out.

He had a habit of making sure that he promptly followed through when the

instructions rang out. He was always glad when he did.

So he sat down, removed the headphones and turned off the odd music, stopped his own talking to others out the window, and set to work on getting "dem strings" ringing out soundly.

He used a tuning fork part of the time, and an electronic device called a "upper note sound-a-fyre" that his father gave him.

When at last these strings were ringing aright again, he called them,

"Right" and "rest" for it was then that he could get right to work, and rest assured that the sounds he would play would be right, while he worked on the rest of his recording.

(To be continued.)


















Chapter 8—Breakfast in the Car, and Mr. Bizzare (Part 2)

The tent now needed to get packed up, and while Mother and Father were doing that, the children sat in the car, making themselves a bowl of breakfast—with some of the food that dad had gotten from the farmer's wife.

They appreciated their parents who were cheerfully out in the rain.

"I'm glad it didn't rain before," Kyran said, trying to be cheerful as well. After all, he had a pretty nice trip, and even now was still having a fun time--eating yummy food, staying dry, and getting to read a new book.

"I'm glad it's raining, too," said Kayla, thinking about all the crops that the farmer's around the area were trying to grow. "It will make it nice for us later on, when we get to eat the food that is grown, partly because it did rain now." "And I'm glad that it's raining on the day we are leaving, and not on the first day we came. We did have a very nice time," Kyran added to the positive discussion.

"Also," Kayla remembered, "if it hadn't rained yesterday, we wouldn't have gone to visit and play with the farmer's children. It was nice having some games with them at their house, and then running outside with boots on in the mud."

Kyran nodded as he finished his last bite of breakfast, and then continued to read, aloud, from the new story book, "Mr. Bizzare and his two String Guitar".

(Story book Continues:) It was one dark night, as all nights were, but during one particular night, a dream came to him. In this dream Mr. Bizzare was walking and whistling along to the park, as he usually did while he walked, when a most displeasing sound was heard. At first Mr. Bizzare thought his mouth caught a fly or something in it, for it seemed as if the whistling tune had taken a very bad turn. He spit and coughed and cleared his throat; he rinsed his mouth and garggled with water from the park's drinking fountain.

But as he kept walking around, whistling, there was the added unwelcome notes.

It was then that he noticed a strange and hateful looking bird flying around, just out of sight mostly, due to the tall trees, but his squawk was heard, and it was made to be as if it was coming from Mr. Bizzare's own mouth, as he whistled along.

"Fitly the Evil bird of hate! I always heard you were a troublesome pest! You be going before I sling rather than sing. --You beast of deception on top of all the troubles you cause! "Why it had nothing to do with my merry song after all. I want none of this from this moment on!"

Mr. Bizzare stood his ground and called out for the Bird of Hate to depart. And only when he saw the mangy, broken, weak-feathered angry looking fowl depart, did he continue his walk and whistle.

That is when the dream ended.

When Mr. Bizzare sat up in bed on that night, he knew that was the answer to his question--what makes the strings on his guitar sound in such a way. They must be sensitive to any sounds around and try to get in tune with other means of so called "music".

And it was true, for the dream revealed a great mystery: whenever Fitly the evil and foul Bird of Hate flew around, the strings got out of tune. It was a troublesome thing, but a string is a string, and all he could do for the time being was to keep at work to make them right, for awhile at least.

Early one morning, soon after Mr. Bizzare had just finished recording his latest album called, "The Storm is just starting--and So am I" he looked out the window to the distant mountain peaks. There seemed to be snow on them. But as he looked on, it seemed as if a bit of the snow was flying off of the mountain and over to where he was. Something of white was coming closer and closer.

Mr. Bizzare rubbed his eyes first.

"Perhaps something is on my eyelash..." he wondered.

That task done, and yet the white something was still coming closer, he took out his telescopic device that not only showed him what was far, but played a large moving picture of it on a screen for him to see.

"Aha! So you're not snow, just white as snow! A lovely one you are!" This he said of the dove that he saw flying, "Love Dove" is precisely what was flying his way.

"I don't mind you comin' round. 'Could use some of that niceness and all that ya bring!" Mr. Bizzare half mubbled, half thought. He'd noticed that whenever this lovely feathered thing flapped its wings over his way, that a good day was to be had.

Somehow on those days both strings on his Bizzare-guitar kept their proper ring for a lot longer than they normally did. He had less tuning work to do--and more work got done, and more fun was had.

(To be continued.)

















Chapter 9—The Trip Home, and Mr. Bizzare (Part 3)

When the traveling team of campers stopped for lunch, the sun was already beginning to peek out from behind some clouds. They were able to stretch their legs and enjoy a picnic.

Dad needed to study the map a bit, as he needed to take a new route home. The usual road had been flooded. While Mother packed things up again, Kyran and Kalya took some time to keep reading from Mr. Bizzare and his two String Guitar.

(Story book continues:)

He'd heard about Fitly the foul feathered fallen Bird of Hate from a colour comic book long ago. Thinking it was just a myth he seldom gave it much thought. But though seldom seen with the eye, the effects could be clearly seen, so now Mr. Bizzare believed that bird was something to watch out for.

One day when talking with his father, he learned a tip--that a hat keeps the hate bird's squawk from echoing through his brain and sounding out his own mouth. That is when he got to work gathering a whole chest filled with hats-hats of every shade and colour, with all kinds of built-in features and flares.

He could wear a new one, or nearly new one, every day for some time! Then he could start all over again, working through the hats from the beginning-unless someone gave him new hats to add to his chest.

Sorting through the hats and selecting the one that would be right for him each day was always a fun way to start the day. Sometimes he made the choice according to what clothing he had on, other times, he would choose the clothes to match the hat he wished to don. Other times, he didn't worry about matching this and that, but just wore what felt comfortable, or that made him feel like singing, or that made his little brother laugh. There were many reasons for choosing this or that hat, but always wearing one each day proved to help.

Love Dove seemed to visit him more often, ever since he started wearing the special hats from his chest; and Fitly the Bird of Hate had a hard time getting his sounds to ring out anywhere around Mr. Bizzare's studio.

(To be continued.)

The return camping family was then off driving before too long, though the route did take them longer than usual to return home. That night Mother said, "I did have one more story to read, from the collection of bird stories."

And so they curled up in bed, the first time to be in their regular bed in a week, and enjoyed one more story. They closed their eyes and imagined that they were still in the tent.

"This story is from the book, 'What would Jesus do?', it's called: 'Always'", Mother said and began to read.

Always

The rainbow was spectacular. It had been a long time since Melanie had seen one. She stood there looking at it for as long as possible. Soon it faded away, and she skipped happily off to play with her two younger twin brothers. They were pretending to build a fort, with anything they could find around the yard. Melanie was to be the cook for the building team. She had collected all sorts of things for their "meal". Every type of leaf she could find was used, as well as a few dandelions, grass, and a bit of sand. Each was representing a type of food in their make-belief game.

"Jesus," she said, praying aloud. "It was so nice of you to stop the rain so we could play outdoors—and it was very special to get to see that rainbow. For some reason, I'm still a little sad.

"Even though I have brothers to be with, and we are playing a fun game, I just still miss my Auntie. She always had new and great ideas. Mummy is busy in the house, and Daddy isn't here right now.

"I'm trying to think of fun things to keep us busy and happy, but it just doesn't feel as nice as it was before, when she lived with us." Melanie was stirring her pot of pretend food, and she thought she heard a whisper. Was it just the leaves rustling in the tree?

"Hi, Melanie!" said a voice in a friendly way. She looked up.

"Mind if I join you?" the older boy said.

She was about to ask, "Who are you?" but just one look at His face told her the answer. She knew it was Jesus dropping by, just when she really needed some encouragement.

"I know you miss your Auntie, and I came to bring you something to cheer you up. Every time you see this, I want you to remember how I'd like to be a friend to you, and that you can talk to Me anytime. –Just like you did today. You won't always be able to see Me, but here's something you can see," the very youthful looking Jesus said. He held on His finger a little brown bird. It was so cute. Melanie hadn't seen a bird up that close before, unless it was in a cage as a pet.

"I'll send this little bird to fly into your garden every now and then. It will be a special reminder that I am there with you. And just like your Auntie had to fly away for now, you can still know that you are very special to her, and she loves you very much! I'm taking care of her too," Jesus told her.

Melanie smiled. In the months that followed she would often see her special little bird come into the garden. It cheered her every time. She imagined it sitting on Jesus' finger, and remembered that He was really there with her too not just when the bird was around, but all the time. She called the bird "Always", like the words of Jesus that said, "I am with you alway." (Matthew 28:20) (End of story.)



Chapter 10—Sunshine, and Mr. Bizzare (Part 4)

"Well, the good news is, the sun is shining good and bright!" Father said the next morning at breakfast. "Which means...."

He left a pause to let the children guess what it meant.

"That we need to help unpack the tent so it can get dry?" Kyran guessed correctly.

"That's right. Perhaps the 'men' of the team—Kyran and I can do that," Father said.

And Mother added to Kayla, "And us ladies can unpack and wash up the dishes, and put the other things away."

"But before we get to work, let's have our family time of prayer, and Bible reading," Father said. "And can we finish reading the 'Mr. Bizzare and his two String Guitar' story?" " Kayla asked.

Dad agreed.

And so they ended their morning breakfast time with the rest of the book.

Daddy read, starting with the last paragraph from before, just to make sure he knew what was being said:

(Story book continues:)

Love Dove seemed to visit him more often, ever since he started wearing the special hats from his chest; and Fitly the Bird of Hate had a hard time getting his sounds to ring out anywhere around Mr. Bizzare's studio.

The next thing that happened was that Mr. Bizzare began noticing behavioral change in others--and he could detect whether Fitly or Love Dove was allowed around them. Someone would be walking along, pushing their baby's stroller, for example, smiling at a butterfly who had just landed on a dandelion, when all of a sudden a dog would come up and strangely start barking grumpily at the little one. That would cause the baby to cry.

This caused the mother to be most upset and begin to yell. This caused the baby to cry all the harder.

When the owner of the dog caught up with it, you can be sure no smile or "good day" was passed on from the mother who was holding her little one to calm him.

The owner of the dog didn't seemed to notice anyway, for the scowl on his face showed he was much too upset, all of a sudden, because someone had stepped on his shoelace and caused him to have to retie it--and that was the cause of his dog running away to bark wherever he pleased. And he barked whenever the man he walked with got grumpy over some happening.

As the man ran briskly past the mother holding the baby, trying to catch up with the dog, his bag knocked the stroller, causing the baby's water bottle to fall out.

This did nothing but further upset the mother. She thought she'd at least hear a "sorry" half mumbled, but her ears heard no such thing. What a pity.

Now, if Love Dove had been called forand this could easily be done by simply cooing a note that Love Dove likes to hear--things would have been so much different.

Even if the man's shoe lace was still stepped on, if the man cooed out the sound and called for Love Dove to fly overhead or perhaps even rest on his shoulders as he walked, he would have remained calm.

He would have said, "No problem--it gives me a chance to inspect the details of the pavement, which I would have surely missed..." or something charitable of that sort.

His dog wouldn't have ran away, in an eager attempt to escape hearing foul words, and carrying on the same notes in his bark.

Instead the dog would have patiently sat down, smiling as best as dogs can, while the man retied his shoe. Then on for their walk they could have gone.

The lady, if instead of getting upset at a barking dog, could have likewise cooed and let the Love Dove change her inner reactions. She would have held her baby right away, and not let him cry, nor yelled out. The dog would have stopped his barking anyway and most likely wandered back to the man. Everyone would have been happy then.

When the man then passed by with a calm and happy dog, and said hello to the mother and her baby.

This would have made for happy interaction that could have cheered them on for the next part of their day. --Especially when they were neighbours after all, and neighbours that are friendly make for a happy living place, with each one adding to the joy of each other.

Perhaps the mother would have gotten the idea to invite the man and his wife over for a meal with her family that night—and the stories they could tell, while in a happy mood, would have caused the room to echo with peals of laughter. In situations like these, Mr. Bizzare knew whether and when the Bird of Hate or Love Dove was allowed around and called for.

The difference is that the Bird of Hate was a rather rude creature, and never waited to see if or when he would be invited to join a person's thoughts and actions and words, but pushed his ugliness around wherever he could get away with it, never caring to notice the harm done. In fact the more troublesome the activity the better; that's all it cared to do.

However, it was different with Love Dove, she would gently visit all who called for her. She never missed a call, even the tiniest whisper of a young child calling and cooing for her. With fast yet graceful wings she was there to bring a pleasantness to wherever she was invited. Her goal was to bring peaceful beauty, in any way she could. Mr. Bizzare had learned, and was continuing to learn, the way to have the best day.

(End of story book.)

The story ended, and their father said:

"So let's get on our 'cheerful working' hats and all help each other."

Mother started off a round of hugs, and the team of returned campers began the clean-up part of the trip.

"Oh, and by the way," their father said,

"I heard of this great camping place in the mountains by a very tall waterfall. I wonder if you'd like to go there next? But it's pretty wild there. Occasionally even bears have been spotted there."

The children smiled. They would be glad for more adventures to look forward to.

How to draw a flying butterfly:





How to draw a bumble bee:



How to draw a resting butterfly:



