



BIRD TALK

BY

TRENT RHODES



"Are you ready for the trip? It's about time to go. Flighty flight," Jay said to the younger pigeon. He felt excited for his son's first trip to the south.

"Flighty flight?" the young one said.

"Flighty flight."

"How long will it take us to make it to the warm land?"

"Oh a...about 20 sun-ups and downs. We'll get to sightsee too."

"Oh realllly? What kind?"

"Umm..." Jay looked up towards the sky then down at his three toes. Below him was a crowd of humans, people gathered. They were laughing and smoking cigarettes. "See those people down there? They're called humans. They're taller than us, have two legs like us but they also have arms. And funny hair on top of their heads."

The young bird giggled.

"Yes!" Jay laughed with his son. "They have all sorts of weird-looking styles on their heads. You can tell which one's the male and female by the length of it. Sometimes!"

The youngster laughed again.

"Blue, little one, it's time to go. The others are here." Jay flapped his wings to greet the other birds. Baby Blue was now among a flock of 30 pigeons. He remembered his father talking about a big trip to a new land when the weather turned cold here. This would be his first trip to the south. He happened to be born in the fall and never experienced what the Warm Time was like. Plenty of sunshine, warm temperature, cool breezes and lots of green. Yes, he felt excited. Blue had to contain his enthusiasm so he would not appear too young to the adults.

"Hey dad, tell me more about the tall ones. The humans."

"Jay, you're teaching Blue about people?" another bird said, chest puffed out. He was heavier with a full neck and broader wings.

"It's about time, Mellow. We're going to see plenty along the way. You know that. It's the perfect opportunity, a learning experience." He winked at his son. "For example, look at those people, son. Down there. They're sitting down and drinking what they call 'alcohol.'"



"Aloco...alo...alc..." Blue struggled to say the words.

"Al-co-hol," Jay repeated. "That's what we birds call the fuzzy stuff."

"Yeah, good name for it too," Mellow chimed in. "It makes the people have fuzzy brains, and then they act stupid."

"Why would they drink something that makes them act stupid?" the boy asked.

"I don't know, son. Either way, they still manage to get some things right."

"What do you mean?"

"See there?" Jay nodded as the flock flew over several tall buildings. "Those are places where people go to work. They do this to make money."

"Money? What's that?"

"Money is what they use to buy things."

"What kind of things?"

Jay knew that question was coming. He was not surprised about the barrage of inquiries coming in; Blue showed curiosity since he was first born. He tried to fly after watching him go off to find a new tree to build a nest in. But he sensed this was becoming more than mere curiosity.

"Well...let's see. You know how we can just go find food when we need it? If your mom yells at me to go and catch some worms, which she does all of the time by the way, I can fly out, find some worms and bring them back for a good snack. They can't just go and take food. They have to buy it with the money."

Jay noticed Blue's beak crinkle at trying to understand.

"Dad, this doesn't make sense to me."

"What? That your mom always yells at me to get the food? I have proof! Mellow here can testify and..."

"No, not that. I mean, what the sense of using something that's not real to pick up food, when the food's already there? I mean, why do they have to buy something that's already provided? Can't they eat worms?"

"They probably COULD eat worms, Blue," Mellow flew slightly ahead of the two. "And grow their own fruits and vegetables, and eat from the trees and do some fishing for food, but..."



“But?”

“But they WON'T because they're LAZY! So lazy that they had to create something to do something. They use that money stuff to pick up everything, from clothes to stay warm to entertainment on light screens.”

“Whew...” Blue felt relieved. “I'm glad I'm not a human! Can't wait to tell mom when we get there, how much I'm glad to be a bird.”

Jay smiled. “And I think some of the humans wish they could be birds, with the way they've living right now.”