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Mrs. Robin And The Signboard

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One morning, Mrs. Robin, who was the first one out of the woods, saw a sign nailed to a tree. "Now, what in the world can that be about?" she thought, flying around to take a good look at it.

But, of course, she could not read, so she flew back to get Mrs. Blackbird and ask her if she could read what was printed there.

Mrs. Blackbird said she had left her glasses at home, so she couldn't read. "But if you will wait," she told Mrs. Robin, "I will fly right home and get them."

Mrs. Blackbird was a clever creature, and she did not wish to tell Mrs. Robin she could not read, so off she flew to a cornfield and did not return.

Billy Blue Jay flew along while Mrs. Robin was waiting, so she asked him to read the sign. "Oh, I can't stop; really, I can't," said Billy. "I have to go to the farm over the hill and back in a hurry."

"I don't believe he can read," said Mrs. Robin as she watched him out of sight. "I will go over to Jim Crow's. He surely will be able to read it. He knows all about signs."



Jim Crow came hurrying back with Mrs. Robin.

"Why, of course I can read!" said he, as they came up to the tree with the sign on it. "Easiest thing in the world to guess what that is. It is a scarecrow, put up there to scare all you birds out of the woods," said Jim, holding his head on one side and looking at Mrs. Robin to see if she believed him.

"I don't believe you can read at all," said Mrs. Robin. "You said it was easy to guess. If you can read, you do not need to guess at it."

"All right, all right," cawed Jim Crow. "Don't believe me then, but you ask Mr. Owl and see if I am not right."

"Why, of course! He is the wisest bird in the woods," said Mrs. Robin. "I wonder I did not think of him at first!" And off she flew to the home of Mr. Owl.

Mr. Owl poked out his head from his window, and when he heard what she wanted, he said:

"Oh, yes! Of course; I'll be right over when it is dark. You know I cannot read in the daytime."

"Oh, dear! I never thought about that," said Mrs. Robin. "And I do so want to know what is on that sign! Well, I suppose I shall have to wait. Now don't forget to come."

All day long, Mrs. Robin flew about the tree where the sign was, and when it came night, she decided to sit on a limb in the tree right over the sign so that she would not miss Mr. Owl.

But Mrs. Robin was not used to staying awake after dark, and soon she was nodding, and before long, she was fast asleep.

There is very little that Mr. Owl does not see at night, and while he had no notion of letting Mrs. Robin know he could not read, he did want to have a look at the sign, so he flew quietly to a place near the tree and looked around.

The very first thing he saw was Mrs. Robin fast asleep on the limb, and then he flew closer and looked at the big black letters on the sign.

He flew away without awaking Mrs. Robin, and the next morning when she called to scold him for not coming to the tree as he promised, Mr. Owl told her he did come, but no one was there. So all that day, poor little Mrs. Robin fluttered hither and thither around the tree, asking everyone she saw what was on the sign and missing all the worms and bugs which the other birds were finding.

Just at nighttime, Jack Sparrow flew to the tree, and when Mrs. Robin asked him what he was doing so far from the farm where he had a nest behind the blinds, Jack Sparrow told her he was going to live in the woods.

"Don't you see that sign?" he asked. "That says that no one can shoot birds in these woods, and so I am coming in here to live because it is safe. I heard the Farmer say he put this sign up, so I flew right over to make sure."

"You don't tell me that is what is on that sign," she said. "And Mr. Owl never told me a word about it."

Out of a sound sleep, she awoke Mr. Owl to tell him what she thought of him. "Why didn't you tell me what it said on the sign?" she asked. "I might have gone out of the woods and risked my life."

"You didn't ask me," said Mr. Owl. "I never tell anybody anything unless they ask."

And off flew Mrs. Robin to tell all the birds in the woods what the sign said. "That

was a narrow escape for me," said Mr. Owl. "I should have lost my fame for being wise if she had found out I could not read. Now I wonder what is on that signboard, anyway?"

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