



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Jennie Wren Tells Mr. Cardinal What She Thinks

Abbie Phillips Walker

Little Jennie Wren was not afraid to speak her mind to anyone who happened to get in her way, and it happened one day that handsome Mr. Cardinal bird did this very thing.

He flew over from the top of a tall pine tree to the tree near the stone wall by the road where Jennie lived and began to sing while Mr. Wren was singing on a low limb of the tree.

"Such impertinence," sputtered Jennie Wren, flying out of her home in the tree hole. "He thinks just because he is so handsome he can do anything he likes. I will soon tell him, though, what I think of him," and up she flew near to where Mr. Cardinal was sitting, singing merrily.

"You get right away from this tree or stop singing this minute," scolded little Jennie. "This tree is where we live, and my husband is singing; you needn't think just because you wear handsome feathers you are the only singer in the woods, and my husband and I do not care for your song at all; we like our own much better."

Mr. Cardinal was so surprised that he stopped singing and listened, and when Jennie Wren stopped to breathe, he said calmly: "Have you heard my sweet-voiced wife sing? You may like to hear her song better than mine; I do."

Jennie was the surprised one this time, and she nearly lost her balance as she angrily hopped about and bobbed her tail, for she had expected Mr. Cardinal to quarrel with her.

"Huh!" replied Jennie, "your poor little wife; I should think you would say something in praise of her. The way you treat her is disgraceful. I know, and everybody must think so, too, that you are ashamed of her because she wears that brownish-gray dress all the time, while you go flying about all dressed up in fine clothes.



For my part, I admire her clothes much more than yours. She shows better taste dressing in such modest colors, and besides, if she did wear red, I guess the Cardinal family would soon come to an end, for she could be seen plainly enough by those who wish to harm birds and get their eggs."

While Jennie Wren was scolding and hopping about, a trim little bird flew to a twig near Mr. Cardinal, and when Jennie again stopped for breath, Mrs. Cardinal—for it was she—said in a very sweet voice: "You are wrong, Mrs. Wren; my husband is not ashamed of me. He loves me very dearly, and there is no bird that has a husband more devoted in his attentions than my handsome husband."

Again Jennie Wren was surprised, but she called back as she flew down to her home: "You poor thing; I suppose you do not dare say your soul is your own before your handsome husband; for my part, I'd rather have one that is on an equal with me in appearance."

Mrs. Cardinal flew beside her husband and snuggled close. "Come back to the pine tree, and I will sing to you," she said, "though I know well enough your own song is sweeter than mine."

"Not to my ears, my dear," answered Mr. Cardinal. "I think you have the sweetest voice in the world, but if you could not sing a note, I should be thankful that you do not scold like Mrs. Wren."

Stories help us explore cultures, learn moral lessons, connect with nature — or simply have fun. That's why ririro.com offers 3,000+ free stories — fairy tales, fables, bedtime stories, myths and more — for every age, in 13 languages, with free printable PDFs and often audio. Reading should be a right, not a privilege. Share ririro.com and spread the joy of reading.

Instagram: @ririro_reading · Pinterest: pinterest.com/ririrocom