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Nine Years Old

Mary Graham Bonner

"I'm nine years old today," chirped the canary bird. "Nine years — that's a good long life for a canary, and I know it."

"I believe I am to have a special piece of crisp lettuce, and a new cuttlefish bone. Perhaps even a bite of apple. My mistress has been talking about this day for weeks."

"She is very good to me. I should tell you — I haven't been able to see for about a year now. The world got blurry, and then blurrier, and then one day it was simply gone. I can feel my way around my cage well enough, and I know where everything is. Sometimes my mistress takes me out and lets me sit on her finger, and she kisses the top of my head."

"I give her little pecks back — that's how a canary says thank you, you know."



"I can tell when night comes because she says 'Hush' to me several times, very gently, and kisses me goodnight one time after another. Then I go back to my perch and tuck my head under my wing. That's how we sleep. And when I peep out for a moment, I hear her say quietly: 'Good, Dicky. That's right.'"

"Nine years. Nine happy years of bird life, so far."

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