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The Brave Mocking Bird

Mary Graham Bonner

Mitchell Mocking Bird was a pet in a large family of children. They all loved him dearly. He had learned to speak quite a few words and to sing like a dozen different birds, and he was allowed the run of the house besides his cage.

One night, Mitchell began to scream.

How he did yell. Piercing cries shot through every room. He flew from bedroom to bedroom, frantic and relentless, until he had woken the mother and father and every child in the house.

"Come!" he called. It was a word he knew, and he repeated it without stopping. "Come! Come! Come!"

They all hurried downstairs after him—and found a small blaze at the base of the wall, sputtering and growing by the second.



"Water—everyone get water!" the father shouted. And while Mitchell kept crying "Come!"—they raced back and forth with buckets and jugs until the flame went out.

In the sudden quiet, they noticed Mitchell for the first time. He looked exhausted. His eyes blinked slowly, as though he could barely stay awake.

"Mitchell," the father said quietly, "you've saved the house. You've saved our lives. That fire would have spread. What a fine, brave bird you are."

The children gathered around him and stroked his feathers softly. "Fine, brave bird," they whispered. "Our lovely Mitchell."

Mitchell was almost asleep. The fire was out. He didn't care much about praise—but he was happy knowing they loved him, and happy that they were safe.

And then, to everyone's astonishment, he said something he had never said before. No one had known he could say it—but it was exactly the right word for the moment.

"Safe," said Mitchell softly. "All safe." And he went to sleep.

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