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The Pink Cockatoo

Mary Graham Bonner

On the morning of Natalie's birthday, a pink cockatoo was waiting to greet her when she woke up.

Natalie could hardly believe it. She kept saying, over and over, "Oh, how lovely you are." And every time she said it, the cockatoo would raise his pink crest — high, high up into the air, much higher than a person raises an eyebrow — because that was what he did whenever he was admired, and he was always perfectly willing to be admired.



Within just a few days he was completely tame, and he seemed to grow more beautiful with every week that passed. He learned to follow Natalie around the house, and he talked the way parrots do, picking up words and phrases and surprising her with them at unexpected moments. He had his food in small pink dishes — Natalie had chosen them specially to match his feathers — and every morning he bathed in a pink soup bowl, which he considered a very fine arrangement indeed.

He learned tricks. He performed them for Natalie's friends. And far from being spoiled by all the fussing, he only grew tamer and more affectionate.

The following year, when Natalie threw her birthday party, the invitation had something unusual printed on it: the party was being given by *Natalie and the pink cockatoo*. In one corner was a little drawing Natalie had made of him herself.

When the cockatoo saw the drawing, he raised his crest as high as it would go and said, in his funny rasping voice: "Goodie, Natalie!" — which was his pet name for her.

This, it should be noted, is a true story.

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