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The Tired Eagles

Mary Graham Bonner

In the house where Kenneth lived there was an old Roman chair — very old, bought at an auction of curious things — and on each of its four corners was carved the head of an eagle. Kenneth had always been fascinated by those heads. They looked so lifelike. And he had always thought: it must be very dull, being an eagle who cannot fly.

One afternoon he fell asleep in the chair.

"You're terribly tired, aren't you," said the first eagle.

Kenneth admitted that he was a little tired.

"You're not as tired as we are," said the second.

"Not even close," said the third. "You're tired from playing games. We're tired from never moving at all."



"I've often thought about that," said Kenneth. "I've often thought it must be dreadful. Have you been here long?"

"Ages," said the fourth eagle, who had not spoken until now. "We were already old before your father bought this chair. We've been on it so long we can't remember not being here. And the worst of it is — we're eagles. We should be flying. That's what eagles do. And instead we are glued to a chair."

"Kenneth!" called his mother from upstairs. "It's long past bedtime!"

Kenneth opened his eyes slowly.

"I'm not nearly as tired as the eagles," he said.

His mother wondered, later, whether he'd been talking in his sleep.

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