



# ***The Tree of Happiness***

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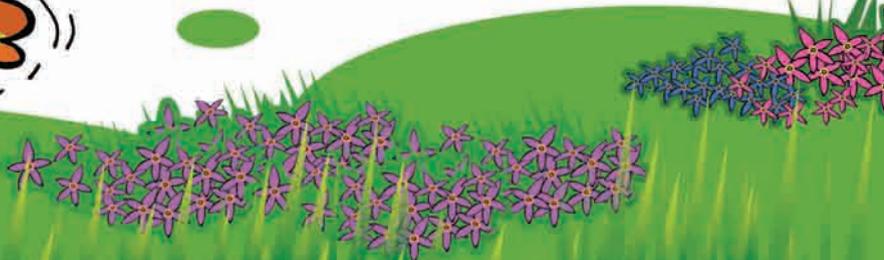
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In a large, beautiful garden, filled with bushes and flowers, stood a big tree.



Its branches spread out laden with sweet fruit and fragrant flowers, and it cast a wide shadow under its boughs. All of these things made it the most beautiful tree in the garden. All the birds loved the tree. They would fly around it and build their nests in it. The tree was good to people and birds who sought protection in and under it, enjoyed its beauty, or played around it.





Flocks of birds sought refuge with this huge tree.

They made their homes in the shade of its leaves, and built their nests in and on its branches. They enjoyed their life twittering, flitting about in the tree, and eating its fruits. It was a happy life. They would go out in the mornings to look for food and return at night to their nests in their beautiful tree. They would never lose their way back home, no matter how far they had strayed during the day.



The birds lived in their beloved home cooperating and helping each other. The larger birds watched over the smaller ones, and the stronger ones helped the weaker. If one grew too old to search for food, the others would kindly share their food with him.

In and under the shade of this happy home, there lived small, happy families of birds. Every member of the family did his part in love and togetherness. The mother birds sat on the eggs tenderly and lovingly. The father birds were out all day searching for food. In the evening they would come home tired but having their beaks full of food for their youngsters.





This happy tree drew the attention of all the birds nesting in the trees around it. They would fly all around it and circle in the air above it. They were so happy with the tree that they named it "The tree of happiness." The birds of the tree were happy with this name. They kept twittering and chirping in its branches all day.

In fact, they not only helped each other inside their home tree, but they also helped every bird that needed help in the neighbouring trees.



One day an old crow came fleeing to the tree of happiness seeking refuge. He weepingly told his tale. "A sly fox destroyed my nest, ate my young, and injured my wings. I am sick and have no place to go to, Now, I have no family, and no relatives, because the fox drove them off their nests too."

The old crow began to cry even more. He asked the little birds to have pity on him and said, "Let me stay with you in your beautiful home. I will do my best to be a good guest amongst you."



The crow continued, "If you agree to help me, I will build a nest on a low branch, far away from you so that I will not bother you, I will also keep quiet and stay for a while until I build my own home again."

One of the birds counselled the others, "We do not want a stranger in our tree to spoil our happiness."

The others said, "There is nothing wrong with inviting this poor bird, who has been driven out of his home and has no other place to go to . We must help him."

The birds counselled together and decided to allow the crow to stay until he regained his health.



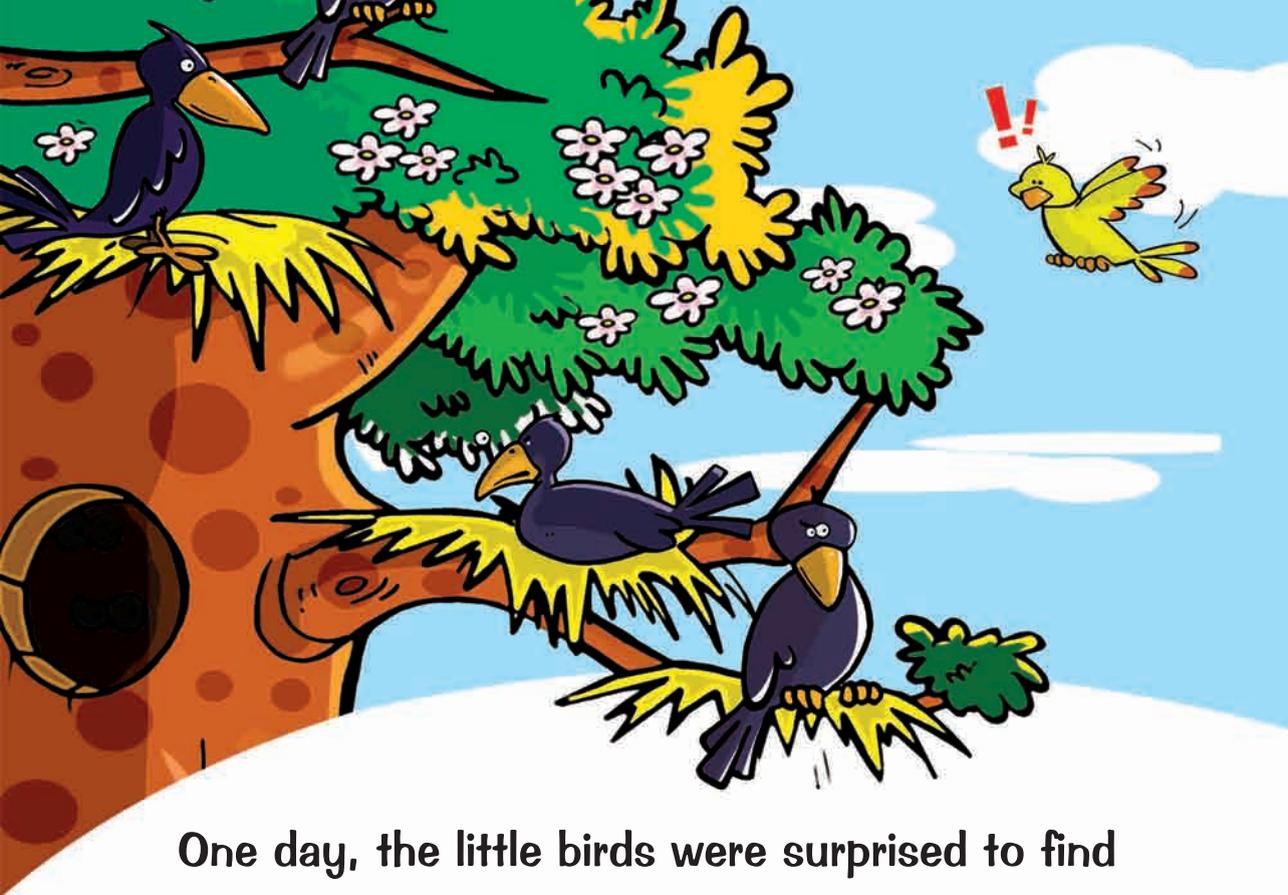
All the birds participated in building a fine nest of feathers and straw for their unfortunate guest. They built the nest on one of the leafy branches in their tree . Then they all competed with each other to find the best food for him until his health improved.

And this is how the crow was set up in the tree of happiness amongst the little birds, who never lost a moment in serving him, taking care of him, and watching over him. They were never tired of helping him and they always treated him with the utmost respect and affection.



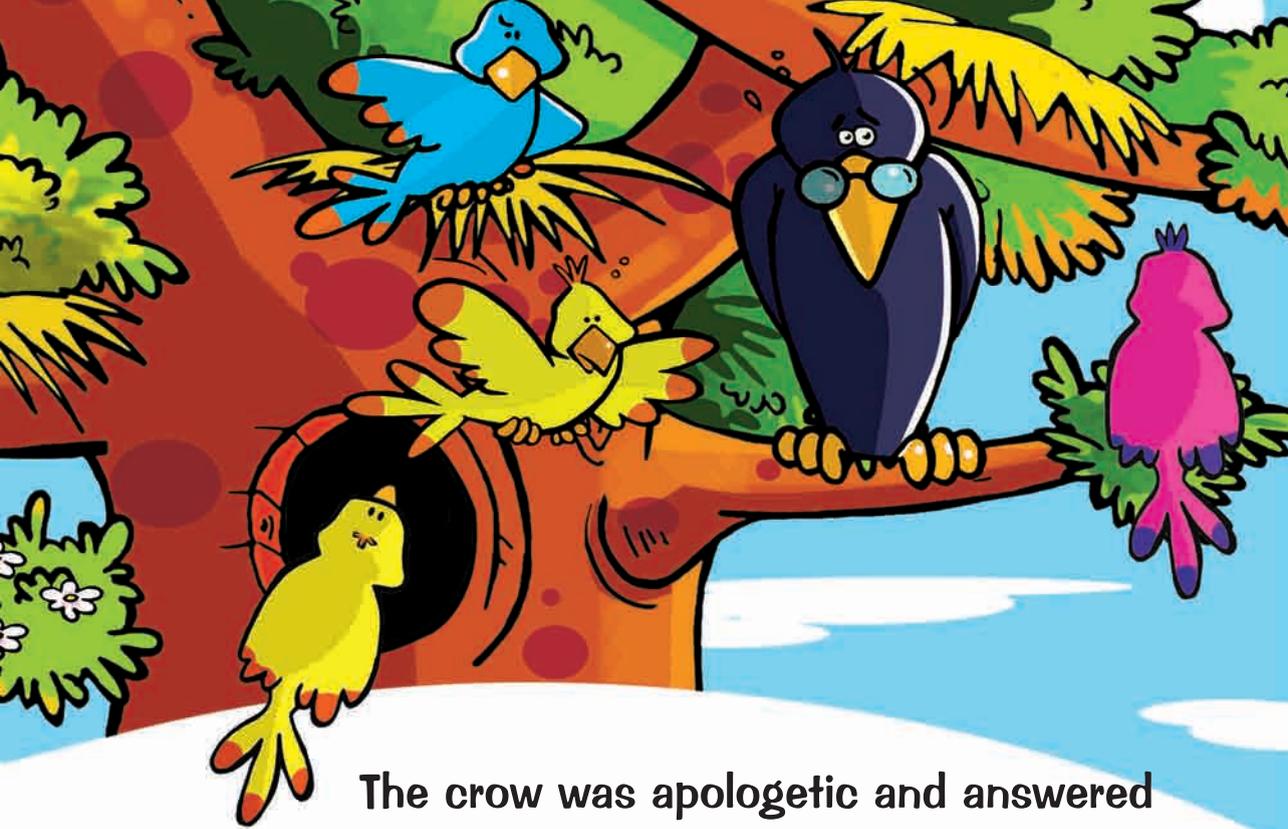
The days went by and the crow lived a life of comfort in the tree of happiness. He enjoyed its shade, its fruits and the honour of his hosts, the little birds. He began to grow very fond of them, and they felt the same for him. They never asked him about the time he might leave their tree and return to his own home. They did not wish to hurt his feelings, besides, it is not improper for a host to ask his guest when he leaves.





One day, the little birds were surprised to find many new nests built near the nest of their guest the crow.

When they asked about the owners of the new nests, they learned that it was a group of crows. The crow had invited them to come and build nests near him without asking permission of the birds. The birds grew angry and asked themselves, "How can he allow himself to invite his friends here without first asking permission?" So, they asked the crow to explain why he did so.



The crow was apologetic and answered meekly, "They are my friends and colleagues, who have asked for my protection and help. I acted as if I were in my own house. Please excuse me, we will leave in a few days. Please accept my friends into your hospitality for a very short while until we build nests in some other places."

The birds were annoyed at the behaviour of the crow, and the bother of these unwelcomed guests. However, they remained silent and waited to see if after a few days the crows would really leave, as the crow had promised, or whether there would be some new surprise.



The birds waited patiently. Each day, they saw more and more new nests. The tree of happiness became depressing, dull and drab to look upon. The air was full of the crawling of crows, and the joy of the birds turned into silence and grief. The crows grew even rude and began to order the birds about. "Do not come near our nests." "Do not twitter among our branches." "Do not build your nests on our side of the tree of happiness." "This is our property. If you do not obey our orders, we will kick you out of the tree!"

The birds counselled together and decided, "We must find a solution to this problem."



The birds agreed to band and unite together and to rely upon their wits, trusting in Allah for victory, for they were in the right side .

One cold and stormy night in winter the crows were huddled in their nests trying to keep out of the bitter cold. The wind shook the branches of the tree violently and the hearts of the crows shook with fear and they huddled further down in their nests.

This was the chance the birds had been waiting for to work the plan they had agreed upon.

They waited for a sign. Finally came a series of short whistles, which signalled the beginning of the battle.





The birds swooped and rushed boldly down on the crows. They were divided into groups, and each group chose one crow to attack from all sides, pecking at his eyes without stopping. The crows left their nests in the branches of the tree screaming in pain and fright and fled far away from the attack of the birds.





The little birds had the right to defend their home. Because of their uniting together in council, their careful planning, and their sincere love of their homeland Allah granted victory to the little birds, and singing returned to the branches of the tree of happiness. The little birds danced about with joy, in the sweetness of victory, the beauty of freedom, and the joy of independence.

