

THE EAGLE

Once there was a farmer who was out one day when he saw an eagle. 'Mm,' he thought, 'that big bird would make a tasty meal.' So he shot it - bang! The eagle fell through the air and landed heavily on the ground.

But when the farmer saw the eagle's big beak and sharp talons, he thought, 'That bird's a killer. Ugh! I don't want to eat something that's been killing animals and eating meat.' Then the farmer had an idea. He climbed high, high up the cliff until he found the eagle's nest. And in the eagle's nest was the eagle's egg, still warm.

So the farmer carried the eagle's egg to the farmhouse, and put it under a hen with her other eggs. And after some time, the little eagle chick hatched along with the baby chickens. The eagle chick grew up in the farmyard among the chickens. And the eagle thought it was a chicken. And it learnt to peck corn, just like the chickens.

And the baby eagle grew, and grew, and grew, until, when it stretched its wings, they were two metres from tip to tip, and the feathers were a beautiful golden brown colour. But still the eagle thought it was a chicken, and it pecked the corn just like the chickens.

And the farmer looked at the eagle and said 'Mm! This eagle is getting very big. It will make a tasty meal, and this eagle has never eaten meat.' So the farmer starting sharpening his knife - scritch! swish! scritch! swish!

A biologist who was walking past the farmyard saw the magnificent young eagle pecking corn among the chickens. 'Hello,' he said. 'What are you doing in a farmyard? You're not a chicken, you're an eagle.'

So saying, the biologist lifted up the eagle and threw it into the air, but the eagle fell to the ground and once again started pecking the corn among the chickens.

Just then the farmer came out of the farmhouse with his sharp, sharp knife ready to kill the eagle for his supper.

The biologist picked up the eagle again, lifted it high in the air and ran down the field, shouting, 'You are an eagle, not a chicken.' The eagle, to balance, spread forth one wing and then the other. 'Fly, eagle, fly,' shouted the biologist, and he threw the eagle into the air.

The eagle glided gently back to the ground, and then walked back to the farmyard and pecked the corn among the chickens.

The farmer walked towards the eagle with his sharp, sharp knife, and he put out his hand to take the eagle by the neck ... but ... the biologist grabbed the eagle and started running. The farmer ran after him, shouting, 'Stop thief. Bring back my eagle. Bring back my dinner. I've fed that eagle since it was a baby chick. It's mine!'

The biologist ran and ran and ran. He ran up the high, high cliff carrying the eagle, which by now was very heavy and seemed to be getting heavier by the minute. The farmer was following behind.

Eventually, just as the farmer was about to catch them, they reached the top of the high, high cliff. 'It's now or never,' whispered the biologist, and he threw the eagle over the cliff shouting, 'Fly! You are not a chicken. You're an eagle!'

The eagle fell through the air like a stone. Then, to balance, it spread out its wings, and the rising warm air caught it and held it in mid-air. And then the warm air lifted the eagle and it began to rise higher and higher and higher, until it was soaring high in the sky. Then, for the first time in its life, it flapped its wings and began to fly.

And from that day on, the eagle lived as an eagle, flying and soaring high in the sky.

But sometimes in its heart there was a great loneliness and a great sadness. Sometimes in its heart it was a chicken who longed to return to the farmyard and be among the chickens pecking corn.

