

BEDTIME STORIES

FOR

GOD'S LITTLE ONES

by

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JO JO THE BIRD

WITH *THE UPSIDE DOWN SMILE*

The first thing Jo Jo remembered, was feeling as snug as a bug in a rug. He felt warm and cozy, so he turned over and went back to sleep.

A few days later, Jo Jo awoke with a strange feeling. His warm cozy surroundings had become tight, and when he tried to turn, he bumped his head and his wing was twisted around his back. Then when Jo Jo changed his position, something terrible happened... a big crack appeared in his cozy home; bright light streamed into his eyes and something he had never felt before forced its way into his lungs.

Jo Jo coughed, then coughed again. The air streamed into his lungs and he heard strange sounds.

The little bird opened his eyes and looked around. A big-feathered nest held four strange creatures. They had feathers just like him, with large eyes and all were chirping at the same

time. Jo Jo felt hungry so he opened his beak and out came the same strange sounds. Before long, two large birds appeared. They had loving eyes and began to stroke the baby birds with their beaks. They were carrying long, thin wiggly things in their beaks.

While Jo Jo was chirping, one of the large birds dropped a long wiggly thing into his beak. He almost choked....but as he was gasping to get it out of his beak he began to taste it. "Oh my, how good this wiggly thing tastes," he said. Just then, another worm dropped into his beautiful beak. "Oh yes, it is delicious....more....more," chirped Jo Jo. "I want more." Finally, he was full and satisfied. "Now I can sleep," he chirped.

Before long, the morning sun forced its way through the dark sky. Jo Jo opened his eyes.

"Oh my, what a strange place." He had three brothers and one sister, a beautiful mother and a strong powerful father.

Each day, the baby birds grew bigger and bigger. Then, one day Mother Bird told the babies that it was time to learn how to fly. The babies were very excited...all except Jo Jo.

"Why learn to fly away from this cozy home?" he said.

"But, you must learn to fly," Mother bird said. The little bird closed his eyes and pretended to fall asleep.

The baby birds were doing very well with their flying lessons and Mother and Father Bird were very pleased. Pleased with everyone.....except Jo Jo.

"What will we do with Jo Jo, he will not learn how to fly," said Mother bird "I'm so worried."

“Tomorrow I’ll take him on my wings, when he sees what fun it is will want to fly,” Father said.

So, early the next morning, Father Bird woke Jo Jo up and stroked his soft feathered head. “It’s time for your flying lessons. It’s such fun to fly through the air and see all the lakes and mountains.” Father Bird chirped.

Jo Jo opened one eye, looked over the nest and down to the ground below, “No, I can’t fly, I’m afraid I’ll fall and go kerplunk. I want to stay here in my cozy little nest.”

“Jo Jo, your brothers and sister are getting big. Soon they will leave the nest to start new lives for themselves; Mother and I will be leaving also. You must learn to fly or else how can you find food?” Father bird looked very worried, because Jo Jo had fallen asleep again.

Finally, the summer was over and the leaves had turned to every color of the rainbow.

“It’s time to fly south for the winter,” Mother bird whispered to Father Bird. “We must show the babies the short cut we know so well.”

“Jo Jo, listen to me . . . you must learn to fly,” said Father Bird, but Jo Jo pulled a large golden leaf over his head and closed his eyes.

“We must leave tomorrow, because it’s getting chilly,” Mother Bird said.

“Jo Jo , tomorrow we are going to fly south; it’s getting cold; we have taught you all we can; Please, please, fly with us,” pleaded Mother Bird.

“No, I’m afraid I’ll fall and go Keplunk,”he whined.

Mother Bird shook her head. “I don’t know what else we can do. So, we’ll take the others south and come back for you later. Mrs. Robin will take care of you while we are away.”

“I don’t want a bird sitter. I want you”! Jo Jo put his head under his wing, “I’m too scared to fly, I’m afraid I’ll fall and go keplunk.”

The next morning when Jo Jo awoke, the wind was blowing and all the leaves had fallen from his beautiful tree home. He felt hungry. “Where is everyone? Where is my food? I want my food. I want my food....I’m hungry....I’m starving....” He screamed as loud as he could.

Then he remembered...his family had gone south.

“Hey, I’m all alone----I want my food, I want my food.” Baby bird was getting angrier and angrier. Then he yelled at the top of his lungs, “I WANT MY FOOD.”

But no one was there.

All that morning Jo Jo shouted and fumed. Then, just before sundown, a Mother Robin flew over the nest. “Sorry I’m late; I had to feed my little ones. Is something wrong?” she asked.

“Yes, something is very wrong; I want my food,” shouted the naughty little bird.

“Well, fly down and pick your food from the ground. I’m sure there are nice juicy worms at the west end of the large oak tree,” chirped Mother Robin.

“I can’t fly; I’m too scared; the ground is so far down; I might fall and go kerplunk,” he cried.

“Here, you get on my wings; I’ll teach you how to fly,” Mother Robin said in a sweet voice.

“No, no, I won’t learn how to fly-----go away----go away....”

Mother Robin became angry. “All right I’ll go away. It looks as if you don’t need my help at all!” And off she flew.

Mother Robin flew to her nest and was settling down for the night when she looked up into the sun-set. “Oh God, how beautiful you have made this world, every day is more beautiful than the last,” then thinking of baby bird she began to feel guilty.

“Oh, God, please forgive me for being so impatient with that baby bird. He must not know that you care for all creatures, even the birds that fly in the sky. Help me show him not to be afraid, because you take care of us all.” As Mother Robin fell asleep, she said, “please God, take care of the little bird with the upside-down smile.”

The next morning, Mother Robin was up early, waiting for the sunrise. Father bird and her little ones were still asleep. She flew to the old oak tree, got several nice juicy worms and took them to Jo Jo’s nest. She heard him crying. “I’m afraid . . . I’m afraid . . . I can’t fly . . . I just know I’ll fall and go kerplunk . . . Maybe I’ll starve to death”

Mother Robin put her wings around the little bird. “I brought you something to eat.” Jo Jo gobbled down the juicy food; then he put his head close to Mother Robin.

“Little Bird, don’t you know that God will always take care of you? He created this beautiful world for you and me. Even before you were born, God planned for you. He made the sky for you to fly in; He put life into seeds so you could have a home right here in this tree. The sun and the raindrops He made, so you could have food to eat. He made everything you would need to live here on this earth. Then He gave a promise that he would take care of you and me,

and that He would never leave you, no matter what. Little Bird you never need to be afraid, for God cares for you; He loves you; you are a part of his plan.”

Jo Jo looked puzzled. “God? Who’s God?”

Mother Robin stroked his soft ruffled feathers “God is our heavenly father. He lives high up in the sky so He can look over the whole world and see who needs His help.”

“My heavenly Father?” He looked up into the sky. “Way up there?” Mother Robin shook her head. “God loves Me, little ‘ole me?” the little bird began to chirp. “God’s going to take care of me forever?” And just at that very moment, Jo Jo’s upside –down smile grew into a big, happy smile. It was as though the sun had come through a big black cloud.

Jo Jo learned how to fly that very day. And not once did he go kerplunk. For he knew he belonged to God and that God loved Him and would always take care of him, just as he promised.

So, from that day on Jo Jo had a new song in his heart and as he flew, he sang, “I never, never have to be afraid again...’cause I belong to God.”

The End

THE BIG STORM

Ricky Raccoon lived with his mother and father at the edge of a great forest in a little cottage surrounded by tall evergreens and pretty wild flowers.

Since Ricky had no brothers or sisters, you could always find him playing at Peter Rabbit's house. He loved being there, because there were so many children and they were all so happy. The bunnies hardly ever fought and Mrs. Rabbit made the best carrot stew he had ever tasted.

One bright, sunny morning, when the boys were playing in the big field beyond the old hollow tree, big black cloud suddenly appeared. The wind began to blow and it whistled through the trees; bending the small limbs to the ground. Just then, a flash of lightening lit up the sky, and thunder echoed through the forest. Big drops of rain began to fall and in one second, they were drenched in a terrible rainstorm.

“Come home with me, Ricky,” yelled Peter. “You’ll never make it to your house.” The boys ran as fast as they could to Peter’s house. When they reached the door, Mother Rabbit was waiting for them.

“I’ve been so worried. Thank God, you’re safe. Hurry and change your clothes and dry off by the fire,” she said. “We’ll be having lunch soon, and when the storm is over, Father and I will take Ricky home.”

The table was covered with a blue-checkered tablecloth and in the center; Ricky saw a huge bowl of carrot stew. He could hardly wait while Peter’s father filled each bowl with the great smelling stew. It took a long time because there were so many brothers and sisters around the table. The butter was as yellow as buttercups, and the steaming brown bread made Ricky’s mouth water.

Finally, every bowl was filled.

Ricky Raccoon reached for his spoon and put it into his stew. Peter tugged Rick’s arm. Father Rabbit cleared his throat, peered over his glasses at Ricky then folded his paws. Just like the hands on a clock, every pair of paws was folded and every head bowed. Then Father Rabbit began.

“Father God – bless this food, and all these children gathered at our table. Forgive us our sins, and teach us to love you more each day. Thank you for taking care of Ricky and Peter through the storm. In Jesus’ name, Amen.” Then all together, like the striking of the clock, the children sang “Amen.”

Everyone ate heartily. The butter melted over the steaming brown bread, the milk was cold and sweet, and the carrot stew...Ricky couldn't think of a word to describe the stew.

Soon the storm passed and Mr. and Mrs. Rabbit, with Peter, began to walk Ricky home. The raindrops had covered the trees making them look like sparkling diamonds in the bright sunshine. "All the flowers and trees have had a good drink of water. See how God takes care of His garden?"

"God's garden?" Ricky asked. Gee, I wish I could know Peter's God, he whispered to himself.

Ricky was glad to see his mother and father standing at the door with big smiles. They were happy to know Ricky had been safe at Peter's house.

After kissing their son, Mother said, "Boys, run upstairs and play while I fix blackberry tea for Mr. and Mrs. Rabbit."

They climbed the stairs to Ricky's room. He was glad to see his cozy little attic bedroom. Ricky got out his Lego set and they began building a fortress. "Peter," who's God?"

"You don't know who God is?" Peter's eyes widen. "God is our heavenly Father. He made this whole earth and everything in it. He even made you and he made me too, because He wanted someone to love him back. God wanted a family, with me and you in it." Peter giggled. "And best of all He sent Jesus, His only son to earth so we could be forgiven for our sins. He has a perfect plan for every live."

"Maybe He loves you, but how can He love me? He doesn't even know me," Ricky replied. "And what about that sin thing?"

“He knows everyone. I pray for you every night. I ask God to bless you and take care of you. You’re my best friend, you know. And about that sin thing, as you call it, it means things that doesn’t please God. Like not telling the truth, or being mean to others, and not obeying your mom and dad. That’s a really big one!”

“I don’t think my mom and dad know about God.” Ricky said.

“Well, I guess it’s up to you to tell’em, and don’t forget to tell them about Jesus. Because only Jesus can forgive sins. God doesn’t allow sin in His kingdom. And if they accept Jesus into their hearts, they will live forever and forever in his beautiful heavenly kingdom.

“Peter, we’d better go, it looks like rain again,” his mother yelled from the bottom of the stairs.

“You pray for me?” asked Ricky. “I wish I could pray like your father. But really Peter, I don’t think God knows me.”

“Look, if you want to pray, just tell God your name and that you’re my friend. Gotta go!”

Ricky waved good-bye and sat down on his bed. “Well, here goes”... and holding his hands in the same fashion as he had seen the rabbit children, he began.

“God Father...or was it Father God?” he whispered to himself. “I don’t want to mess up he whispered to himself. Now I remember. Dear Father God and Jesus too, I don’t think you know me but, my name is Ricky Raccoon and Peter is my friend. He told me you love me, but I don’t understand how you can, since I’ve not even said hello to you. So, I just want to say hello. Thank you for loving me. Thank you for Peter. I want to know you, God. I want to know

someone that would love me even before I knew them. I'll talk to you again, soon. Your friend,
Amen...I mean, your friend, Ricky Raccoon.”

Ricky opened his eyes and saw the sun streaming into his room. He felt warm and happy
because he knew that God was his friend.

THE END

Look Out For Beadle Bomb

The Little Car That Looked Like A Bug

Beadle Bomb sat on the used car lot looking very unhappy. He knew that his previous owners couldn't take him with them for they needed a bigger car with fewer miles, and Beadle Bomb was afraid that no one would want him. He looked over the used car lot at the other cars.

The caddy was black and shining. How elegant he looked. What a handsome body, not a dent anywhere. And, what about that flashy little sports job. Who could pass him up? Even the little red pick-up truck looked raring to go!

Then, there was Beadle Bomb.

"Maybe if I just smile and look happy, no one will notice my lumps and bumps," he said.

The sun began to set and all the salesmen left for their homes. How quiet it was. This was the first time that Beadle Bomb had ever been left out all night. His old owners had always put him to bed each night in the neat, safe garage.

Big tears began to run down Beadle Bomb's hood and splashed onto the asphalt pavement.

“Hey, look out. You’re splashing your sloppy tears all over my hubcaps,” shouted Hotsy Totsy Caddy.

“Gee whiz, I’m sorry.” Beadle Bomb tried to wipe his tears away. “It’s just that this is my first day away from home. I’m just feeling sorry for myself, I guess.”

“Leave him alone,” said the Chevy jeep. “I remember my first day here.”

“It’s not that my old owners didn’t like me anymore. It was that they couldn’t take me with them. They were moving too far away.” Beadle Bomb felt better now that he had told them that he was loved very much.

“Go to sleep,” shouted the Model T Ford in the back of the parking lot. “Talk, talk, talk. I need my sleep.”

“Tell me about your owners,” whispered Chevy jeep. “I’m sure they must have been nice people. You don’t have any stains on your covers. You can always tell what kind of people owned a car.”

“Do you really want to hear?” asked Beadle Bomb. But, before he could answer, Beadle Bomb went on. “Father Loar and his family were just about the nicest people in the whole wide world. They took such good care of me. I was washed and shined every Saturday, because everyone wanted to look their best on Sunday. On that day, the two kids and Father and Mrs. Loar would pile in, put in a tape deck of beautiful music and off we would go to church!”

Beadle Bomb looked closely at Chevy. “Gee whiz,” he said. “Chevy has fallen asleep. Guess I’d better go to sleep too. Want to look my best for tomorrow. Maybe, just maybe, if I smile and

look happy, some nice person will buy me.” After a big yawn, he closed his eyes and tried to sleep. In the distance, he could hear traffic, horns blowing and motors racing.

He thought of his family traveling along the highway far away. He closed his eyes and prayed. “God, take care of Father Loar and his family as they travel on the highway. Keep them safe and help me find a new family who will take care of me. Thank you, God. Amen.”

Beadle Bomb yawned once more and settled down for the night. Suddenly, he found himself on “The King’s Highway.” Everything was so bright on the highway. Just ahead, he heard horns blowing, brakes screeching as they steered around a stalled black car. “Why, it’s Hotsy Totsy. He has a flat tire.”

“Hi, Hotsy. Do you need help?” shouted Beadle Bomb.

“Oh, it’s you, the little bug car. Well yes, I do need help. No one has stopped to help me. Could you, would you, change my tire?” Hotsy looked very unhappy.

“Sure, you’re my friend. Move over and I’ll change that tire in a jiffy,” Beadle smiled. “Everybody should help those in need.” Beadle Bomb hummed as he fixed the flat tire. In no time at all, the new tire was on and Hotsy Totsy was ready to go.

“Thanks, Beadle Bomb. You’re a true friend,” he tooted his horn and was off.

As Beadle Bomb waved good-bye, he saw storm clouds gathering. In a matter of moments, it grew dark. He put his fog lights on and travelled very slowly. Then a terrible rainstorm hit the highway. Lightning lit up the sky, and the thunder made Beadle Bomb shutter.

Just ahead, he could see cars that had stopped along the way. Beadle Bomb coasted up to them. There was Chevy jeep. “What can we do, Beadle Bomb? Everyone is so frightened. We can’t go any further.” Chevy looked very worried.

“Well, when my family got into a situation in which they were afraid, they prayed. Chevy, let’s ask God to still this storm,” yelled Beadle Bomb.

Then, in a quiet voice, Beadle Bomb prayed. “Father God, we are frightened and do not know what to do. We know that we can trust You with our very lives. Take care of us and show us what to do. Thank you, God. Now, we must stay here and wait,” he said to Chevy.

“Are you sure God heard you? That clap of thunder was pretty loud,” Chevy said.

“God heard,” said Beadle Bomb.

“Maybe God wasn’t home when you prayed.” Chevy looked worried.

“God is always home,” Beadle Bomb smiled.

“Maybe God will say tough luck, I’m too busy.” Chevy’s eyes began to fill with tears.

“In the Bible, God promised that He will never leave us or fail us. I believe God. He takes care of everything in the whole wide world. This storm is a piece of cake for Him.” Beadle Bomb was happy that he knew and loved God.

A few minutes passed. Another loud clap of thunder frightened Chevy. “Are you sure God knows you? It’s still raining.” Chevy said.

Beadle Bomb looked up to the sky. “Well, sometimes . . . God says no. And, sometimes he says not yet. I guess . . . He’s saying not yet.” Beadle said softly.

An hour passed. Then, the sun pushed the big black storm clouds away, the rain stopped and the sky was blue again. Beetle Bomb put on his wiper blades, looked out his window and saw a beautiful rainbow.

“See, Chevy. See the rainbow? It’s God’s special promise to us.” Beetle Bomb was smiling a big, broad smile.

The storm had passed. God had taken care of them all.

Beadle Bomb was awakened by the voice of the salesman. “This is a fine car. Just what you are looking for. Never had a day’s trouble from this one. He’s got a few miles on him, but he is very reliable,” the salesman patted Beetle’s fender.

“He’ll be perfect. The perfect birthday present for my husband.”

Beadle Bomb liked the sound of the young woman’s voice. Beetle Bomb looked in the back seat of her car. “They’ve got kids too,” he said trying to look wide-awake and sharp.

“We’ll take him!” she said.

So, that very afternoon, he was driven to his new home. Beadle Bomb had said good-bye to all his friends at the car lot. He didn’t have time to tell them about his dream, but he knew that God had taken care of him and had given him a new family.

Beadle Bomb sat quietly in his new garage.

“Happy Birthday to you, happy birthday to you,” he could hear singing through the window, then footsteps coming to the garage. The door opened and there was his new family. Everyone was smiling.

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