

King of the Birds

出處：故事萬花筒（東西出版社）

In a time long ago, when the world was young, the birds decided they needed a king. A meeting was called. They had lots of ideas on how to choose a king. Some wanted to take a vote. Others thought the king should be the best hunter. In the end they determined that the bird who could fly the highest would be king.

They wanted the weather to be perfect for the contest. Otherwise, they knew some birds would later say, "I could have flown much higher if it hadn't been so windy," or something of that sort. Luckily, the next day was a fine one. All the birds met in a big meadow. Many of them lined up to try. Even one of the tiniest birds, the wren, got ready. When Eagle saw him, he said, "Wren, surely you don't expect to be crowned King. Everyone knows I'm the strongest flyer of all."

Wren didn't say a word. He knew he couldn't fly the highest, but he wanted to take part in such an important event. He was so mad at Eagle that when the birds soared up into the air, Wren hopped on Eagle's back. Since he was so light, Eagle didn't even know Wren was there.

Up and up Eagle soared till he'd left the other birds far below. At last, when Wren saw that Eagle could fly no higher, he flew off Eagle's back. Wren circled above Eagle and called down, "Is that as far as you can go? Surely, a great eagle can fly higher than a tiny wren."

Although Eagle tried, he was too exhausted and was forced to fly back down to earth. When they landed, Wren called out, "I am the winner ! I am the king !"

The other animals couldn't believe it. They didn't want to be ruled by such a tiny, insignificant bird. But what choice did they have ? Wren seemed to have won the contest fair and square.

Eagle, however, knew that Wren had cheated. With his keen eyes, he had seen Wren fly off his back. The enormous eagle looked at the tiny bird and angrily demanded, "Wren, it's time you told everyone the truth."

Wren didn't have to be told twice. He announced to the birds, "My friends, I'm sorry , but I must admit that I tricked you. I just wanted to have some fun. There's only one bird who deserves to be king, and that's Eagle. He's strong, has sharp eye-sight, and can soar to the heavens. I give up my claim to be king."

The birds cheered and prepared to crown Eagle their king. Even Wren cheered. But since that day, Wren loves to tell the story of how, for a short time, he was king of all the birds.

The Tail Trade

出處：故事萬花筒（東西出版社）

Long ago, when the world was new, Beaver had a long, thin tail. He loved to dive, but his long tail didn't help him get to the bottom of the pond fast enough. He couldn't use his tail to slap the mud into place when he built a dam.

One day, Muskrat swam by .Beaver noticed Muskrat's broad, flat tail. He realized it would be perfect for diving and building dams. At the same time, Muskrat gazed enviously at Beaver's tail. Muskrat loved to swim fast, and his broad, flat tail dragged in the water and slowed him down. He thought it would be better to have Beaver's tail. So Muskrat said, "Beaver, I would do anything to have a tail like yours."

"Is that so?" replied Beaver. "I was just admiring your tail. Why don't we trade?"

Muskrat eagerly agreed, and they exchanged tails right then and there. Muskrat couldn't wait to try his new long, thin tail. He was pleased as could be when he shot across the pond with great speed. But then he watched as Beaver showed off his new tricks. Beaver easily dove to the bottom of the pond with his new broad, flat tail. He gathered some mud, swam up, and with a loud **smack!** slapped it onto his dam. When he felt danger was nearby, a loud **smack!** would be heard as Beaver slapped his tail on the water. It was his way of warning others to keep away.

Muskrat was jealous. He had never even dreamed of the clever ways Beaver had thought to use the broad, flat tail. Muskrat went to Beaver and said, "I want my tail back!" But Beaver wasn't about to give it up. His only answer was a loud **smack!**

Muskrat knew better than to ask again. To this day, Beaver still has the broad, flat tail he got from Muskrat, and Muskrat has the long, thin one he got from Beaver.

The Argument Between the Sea and the Sky 出處：故事萬花筒（東西出版社）

In the beginning, there was no land at all. Only the sea and sky existed. These two had been good friends for hundreds of years. They had never once had an argument.

One day a hawk suddenly appeared from nowhere. All day long he soared through the sky and hunted for food in the sea. The hawk grew tired, but there was no place to rest. He thought if he could stir up trouble between the sea and the sky, they might create a resting spot. So he came up with a plan.

First, the hawk flew up to the sky and said, “The sea has insulted you. It said you have an ugly, puffy face.” Then the hawk flew down to the sea and said, “The sky is talking behind your back. It said you can’t be counted on. Sometimes you’re calm, and sometimes you’re rough.”

For the first time, the two friends began to argue. The sea threw water up at the sky. The sky made hard balls from clouds and threw them down at the sea. The sea ran back and forth, trying to dodge the hard balls. At last, the sea was so tired it begged the sky to stop.

The sky took pity on the sea. It stopped fling the balls, but it refused to remove the ones it had already thrown. That’s how the land came to be. The little cloud balls became islands, and the large ones continents.

The hawk was pleased that his plan had worked. He now had a place to rest. But his mischief ruined the friendship between the sea and sky. The sky never removed the pieces of clouds it threw, so the land has remained. That’s why the sea constantly washes its waves over the land, trying to wear it away.