

SWIFTY AND NOBO

Swiftly was a carrier pigeon that would fly long distances to deliver important messages. He had been named Swiftly because he had proven himself to be speedy at accomplishing his job. He had won many competitions and was one of the best carrier pigeons around, and he made sure everyone knew it.

Nobo was a common pigeon that lived in a park with his friends, near Swiftly's delivery route. His wings weren't exceptionally strong and he had no special flight records; he was just a common pigeon like the other pigeons one would find at the park.



Nobo enjoyed looking after his pigeon friends, making sure all were healthy and well-fed. Each morning he would get up earlier than the other pigeons, flying around the park and seeing if there were crumbs about, or if there were any leftovers from a picnic. Then he would return to lead his friends to the place where the feast was laid. His friendly concern made him popular with the other pigeons.

Swifty, however, had very few friends. He was so concerned with showing off how fast he was that no one could keep up with him, which caused him to fly alone most of the time. "You can't catch me!" he would daily taunt the park pigeons. Nobo's friends were annoyed at Swifty's constant boasts.

"He's so proud and irritating, Nobo," Jamie, the youngest pigeon complained.

"He's probably lonely and wants friends," Nobo would reply.



Then one day Swifty went too far with his teasing. Not only was he boastful, but he also made fun of the other pigeons, calling them fat and lazy. The pigeons' feelings were hurt, and they asked Swifty to leave and to not stop at the park again. Swifty left, saying that there were other parks he could go to.

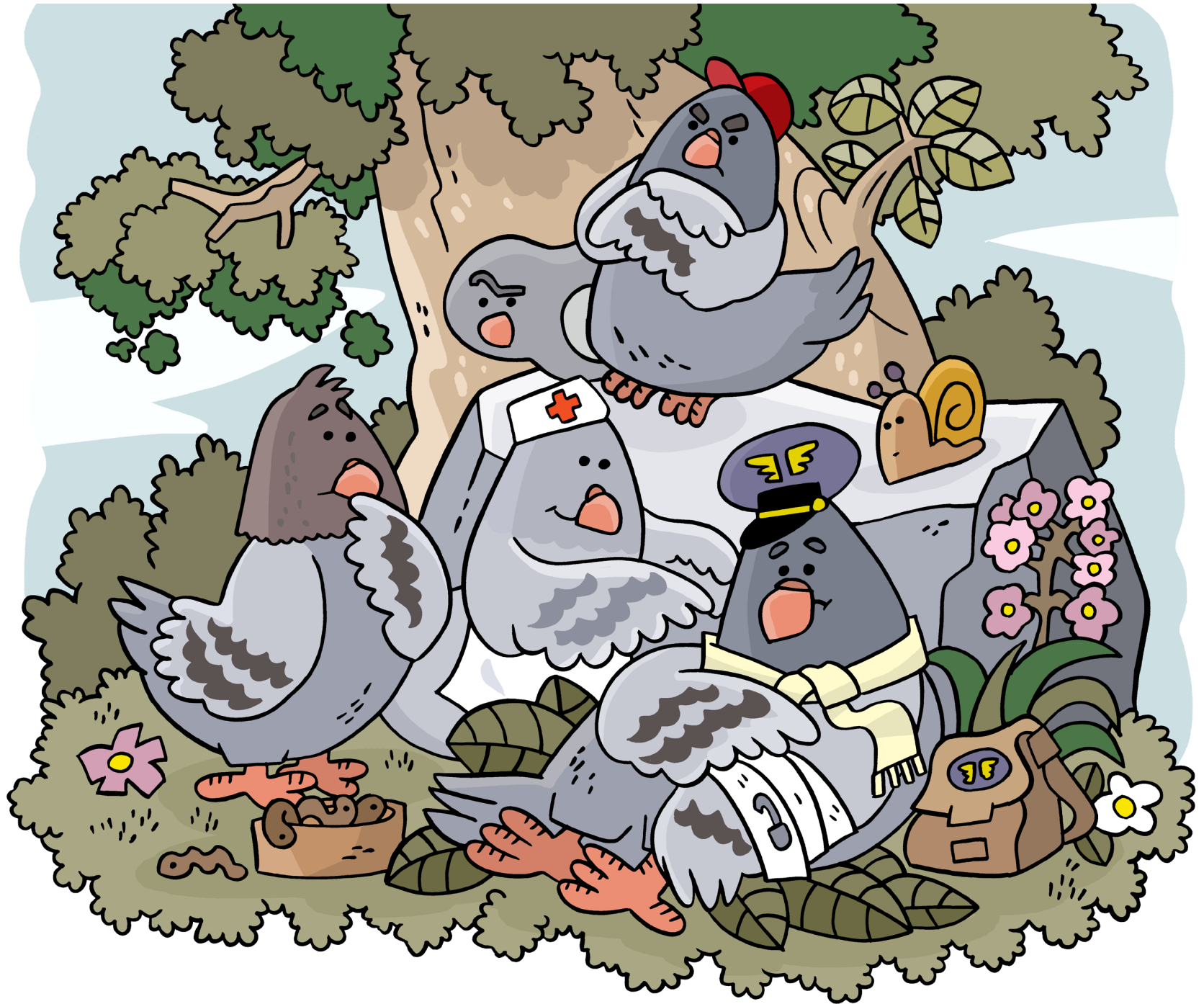
One bright sunny day while on a long courier trip, Swifty landed in the shade of a tree to rest and cool down. He didn't notice the stray dog hiding near where he sat. The dog swung a paw! Swifty escaped, but not before his left wing was injured. He began his flight home, but by the time he was passing over the park where Nobo lived, he knew he could go no further.



The park pigeons had seen Swifty flying low and unsteadily and then come to a clumsy landing in the middle of one of the park's paths. Nobo realized that something must be wrong. "Swifty! Are you all right?" shouted Nobo. "Friends, come help!" Nobo and a few other pigeons pulled Swifty off of the path and into a secluded area. They took care of him for a couple of days, bringing him food and tending to his wounds.

Not all of the pigeons were happy about caring for Swifty. "I really don't like helping Swifty," Jamie murmured to Nobo. "He was so mean to us earlier."

"Perhaps he doesn't know any better way to behave," Nobo responded.



Within a few days, Swifty felt well enough to move around some. Nobo was by his side. "I'm so glad you are feeling better. How is your wing?"

Swifty tried to fully stretch out his wing, but quickly pulled it back in. It was still painful. He let out a sigh.

"Don't overdo. You can stay here until you are better."

"Why are you so kind to me when I've been uncaring to you and your friends?"

Nobo smiled. "God wants us to be caring and kind to each other. He knows that when we are, it makes life wonderful and every day a joyous day."

Within a week, Swifty once again felt strong enough to fly. Before leaving, Swifty apologized to the other pigeons. "You have all taught me a good lesson. I've been boastful and unkind, but you have put me to shame through your care when I was hurt. You came to my rescue when I needed help.



"I thought this accident was the worst thing that ever happened to me, but I have learned what great things love and friendship are. I hope I'll be able to be as kind to others as you have been to me. Thank you!"

Jamie, who was standing next to Nobo, whispered to him, "You were right, Nobo! You showed him kindness and he has become a nicer bird."

Nobo stepped forward. "Please visit us again whenever you pass by. You are always welcome!"

All the park pigeons waved goodbye to Swifty as he flew away. And Swifty made a promise to himself to always try to show kindness to others—just as Nobo had shown such kindness to him.

The End

