

The Birds' Debate

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CHAPTER 1

On the 13th March 2019 an Australian Raven and a Spangled Drongo were having an argument. The Australian Raven was taunting the Spangled Drongo laughing and saying that in Australian slang ‘Drongo’, refers to a silly person and the Crow reckoned that ‘Drongo’ should apply to bird language as well. The Drongo was getting its own back by indignantly saying that if the crow was as dumb as all that it should lose its name privilege, the name ‘Crow’, should be transferred to the drongo and that the Crow was as dumb as a Drongo any day. They were reaching the peak of their argument and presently the Pigeon arrived. “Oops, I forgot my spectacles,” said the Pigeon. “I’m blind as a bat without them!” “You fool,” the Crow and Drongo cried almost simultaneously because he was wearing his spectacles as surely as he was a pigeon. “And bats can see, mind you!” said the crow. “It’s no good pretending they can’t!”

The next day the crow and drongo had both cooled down which was just as well because they might as well have plucked each other clean but there was something to that fight because they agreed on one thing: “The pigeon was as dumb as a drongo,” the crow put it and “as dumb as a crow,” the drongo put it. Either way they thought they

ought to write to the Bird Parliament. They both thought that an excellent idea and started writing. Their letter looked like this:

To: Bird Parliament

CC: Albatross

“Dear Bird Parliament,

“We have a suggestion to make pending changes to the law. Our attempt is to convince your majesty to make changes to the rules of our community. I am aware that this letter is directed to the two generals, former Sir Owl and Sir Vulture.”

Sincerely,

General Crow, Mister Drongo”

After completing that they felt deeply satisfied and the crow reclined in front of a television with an overflowing bowl of chips and the Drongo settled with pinching one if he could and casually hovering around the sitting room, (It could also be called “loitering”) to piece together a few chunks of the current TV special. Little did both Crow and Drongo know that they had carelessly forgotten to tell the famous Bird Parliament what the “pending changes” were. They printed - “Bird Parliament, 23 Parliament Hwy, Grogas” in big letters on the back and both reckoned that as they thought the letter was so “formal”, a stamp was not necessary.

The next day they received a letter titled, “From Bird Parliament” in a golden envelope and after a scuffle (because they both liked to have everything first) they opened it and peered inside. That was when they got their first surprise. This is what the letter said:

“TO Mister Crow and Prof Drongo,

“We are very grateful to have received a letter titled from you (please report if there is a mistake) containing a suggestion to make pending changes to our beloved law of parliament. Unfortunately, it seems that you have somehow mislaid the letter and curiously, the letter does not mention the details such as what you want to change. It seems that strangely, the letter does not define what exact changes you seem to want to make. If there is a mistake please let me know but I’ll look for any key information and if I can’t find any I’ll email you and you can reply with an email containing all the information that I will require to make your change.”

Sincerely,

General Owl.”

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“Mister Crow” and “Prof Drongo” were very angry at each other for forgetting it. “You careless ragamuffin!” “You

measly old rascal.” The deadly insults were being hurled across the room. “Will you kindly tell me how you could forget to add the changes?” the crow roared. “You forgot them just as much as me, you rascal.” screamed the Drongo. After about 10 hours of the continuous boil they cooled off like a burnt cake on a cooling rack. “We could (gasp) try and (splutter) write an- (gasp) other letter.” said the crow. “Yes (splutter) we could (gasp) try,” said Drongo. With much difficulty they composed yet another letter. It was titled:

To: Bird Parliament,

“Sorry, Bird Parliament, that stupid Drongo carelessly No! The stupid crow did it! We are Well he did well I am But he did suggest a new No I am rule for the Bird Parliament. That pigeon is a drongo No he is a crow because drongos are stupid no I said crows were stupid well the main rule is No I am saying this is that No shut up, crow Pigeon should be called Crow no I say No crow Drongo.”

Sincerely,

Mister Crow and Prof Drongo.

After each making their emotions clear the now battered letter was settled in its rightful place in the wastepaper basket. The Crow insisted that he take over the writing job and the Drongo which was known by the Crow as a

“miserable blighter” was to be a “spectator” and cheer whatever the all important crow embarked upon. Of course this was not agreed with both sides, a fight was boiling but they finally agreed to visit General Owl in person.

“Unless my ears are deceiving me, I can safely say that you are suggesting a new update to the Laws of Parliament, is that clear?” said General Owl. “Yes, I wanted to suggest that Mister Pigeon is as dumb as a Drongo ” began the Crow but was interrupted by the surging form of the indignantly retaliating Drongo. “It seems that Mister Crow has made a minor error,” said Drongo with politeness stretched to the maximum. “I seem to remember he politely remarked that in this case, the formerly-known as Mister Pigeon was as dumb as a *crow*, wasn’t that so, my dear Crow?” The Crow was so baffled by this sudden attack of politeness that he remained speechless with surprise. “I see you make no objection,” said General Owl. The Crow was fast coming to his senses. When he understood the situation he smartly attempted to get a blow at the Drongo who shrank back and just avoided being brained by the Crow’s heavy bill. “Cool down, cool down,” said General Owl, as he had more brain than muscle although he caught a mouse a day. “There’s no need to fight over minor reasons ” “You call that fighting?” interrupted the Drongo “You call a blow to an

eye fighting? More like murdering.” He uttered a short sarcastic laugh. “It jolly well is murdering all right.” He soon regretted his last few remarks as both Crow and Drongo were quickly escorted to the door with General Owl occasionally throwing in a “Oh, it’s time already.” at random intervals and, “I’ll have to attend the Owl Picnic. Shelley’s Eagle owl and the Fish Owl will murder me if I don’t.” He was only a Barn Owl and as the Shelley’s Eagle Owl or the Fish Owl would win a fight under any circumstances felt it a very convincing reason to boot two birds out his front door. The “Owl Meeting” was just a made up expression that was tired by General Owl because just about everyone in the district knew the excuse. With a bit of protesting from both Crow and Drongo, “But ” and “We ” he firmly said, “I need to pack the lunches, bye,” and without waiting for a reply he entered his house and retired to his couch. The still grumbling Crow and Drongo set out on the journey home.

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“Well *that* wasn’t successful,” said the Crow with the long tired sarcasm and was just about to add “well, all because of *you*” but seeing the icy stare on Drongo's face he decided to save it for later. The Drongo, taking advantage of this predictable silence, used the Crow’s remark first.

“Well, it was all because of *you*,” he said, imitating what the crow was going to say. The furious Crow said “Hey, I thought of that,” and then realised what an unconvincing statement it was, he hastily backed away, hoping the Drongo was half deaf and turned on the TV as if nothing had happened at all. The Drongo sighed and went back to pondering this debate. If he went to General Owl, they would have tired him out and he probably would have mentioned their visit to Sir Vulture so he was not an option. He decided they would visit Albatross. Albatross was a plain sort of bird, he didn’t have sir or general or even prof in front of his name but he could usually convince General Owl to add a new rule for a 2 mile sea tour on his back so the Crow and Drongo decided to search for him.

“And mind you,” the Crow was saying, “don’t you dare tell him we told you to do this, ok?” (“him” referred to General Owl) “Yes, I’d be much obliged.” said Albatross with the arrogance and pugnacious characteristics usually found in Albatrosses. “Sure, but what time?” “On the 3rd hour hast shall Albatross complete thy task thy slay thy wicked General Owl.” said Drongo with a lively spirit. It seemed like a villain was being put to death. Unfortunately, the newly sprouted actor rather did not get the result he was searching or “sought” for. The “great audience” which

consisted of a grumpy crow and a half deaf albatross was not paying him the least bit of attention. The Crow said, “will you ever shut up?” and the Albatross grunted a casual “mm-hmm.” The Drongo was deeply hurt but chose to hide it. The question that he used to “cover up” his pain was not the most casual one “Don’t you have any sympathy?” The Crow and Albatross ignored the last inquiry and went back to business.

“So General Owl, would you like to have a 10,000 km sea voyage?” said the Albatross. General Owl didn’t pick up hints as much as the Crow or Drongo and simply replied, “No, I think I would rather stay home.” “Well than a 10 km sea voyage?” coaxed the Albatross. General Owl looked suspicious. “Why are you offering *free* voyages?” said General Owl. “I thought they used to be 10 bob a ride.” The Albatross’s face went blank, intensely searching for a reason. After a while he guessed something was expected of him so he said rather feebly. “Well, Mister Crow suggested it,” and then continued rather desperately, “*didn’t* you Mister Crow? Please tell me.” General Owl’s face darkened. “Are you saying to me that those two miserable midgets I cleared out of this very room only this *very* morning have suggested a new method of your sea voyages,” he said coldly. “I am going to have a talk with Mister Crow.” “Oh, General Owl, please General Owl,

can't I stay for tea?" said the Albatross rather sheepishly. "No." said General Owl shortly. "I will be having some visitors." The still pleading Albatross was escorted to the door and the door was shut and locked. Meanwhile the original causers of the commotion were lounging in the sitting room.

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"You know," the Crow was saying to the Drongo, "that old Albatross is taking a jolly long time!"

"Yeah." replied the Drongo "I think he probably stayed and ate too many cakes." The much discussed Albatross was at this second cowering in a hole. "I don't know why, I guess General Owl's cook makes scrumptious stuff but I thought old Buller's Albatross could refrain himself a little." wondered the Crow. "It is strange but I guess General Owl has given him a big telling off." said the Crow nearing the truth. "Anyway, there's a program about worms on." Four eyes were drawn to the television and the conversation adjourned. Meanwhile in the hole the Albatross was beginning to reckon he should explain to the Crow and the Drongo.

CHAPTER 2

After failing on all fronts the Crow and the Drongo had pretty much given up hope. They decided to risk it and try Sir Vulture. They composed a new letter that consisted of:

To: Sir Vulture, Palace of Torment, 27 Garamont Road, Queenston

“Dear Sir Vulture,

“We are wanting to compose a new plan of Parliament. I know you do not supervise the Parliament like General Owl but the Palace of Torment is good enough. We are hoping you could change the name rules and that Drongo (No this is me (Drongo) he means Crow) should be transferred to the bird, Rock Dove and Rock Dove should be transferred to Drongo.”

Sincerely,

Mister Crow and prof Drongo”

This letter was the least successful and they soon received a reply which was not at all what they were seeking. It was more like what an old man would write to a boy's father if the boy trampled on his pansies all day:

To: old” silly crow and idiot drongo

OF COURSE YOU CAN'T YOU RASCALS GENERAL OWL TOLD ME ABOUT YOU YOU WILL NOT CHANGE THE RULES.

*With hate,
Sir G. Vulture,*

“He didn’t even bother writing a proper letter,” shouted the Crow. “For one thing I agree with you,” the Drongo shouted back. “I get it,” said the Crow. “The “Palace of Torment” is the last place we want to write to. How about we try Sir Eagle. He hates General Owl?”

“Well, we could try,” said the Drongo with a doubtful expression. He seemed to foresee what would happen. The Crow didn’t pick up the Drongo’s hints. “Yay, let’s go.” They decided to visit Sir Eagle because according to other accounts they felt someone was more likely to have good emotions with them if they came in person. “Well, we would have to write a letter telling them that we will come to their house,” said the Drongo. “It is best to let people know.” The letter that the Crow and the Drongo composed was not exactly what you call polite but they thought it was pretty straightforward. This is what the letter looked like:

To: Sir Eagle, Jacana Flats, Jabiru Heights, Kingscape

*“
Dear Sir Eagle,*

“We will come to your house tomorrow.”

Sincerely,

Mister Crow and prof Drongo”

It turned out that Sir Eagle was not exactly the guy to be relying on for changing the law. “Referring to our memory we have contacted General Owl and Sir Vulture and they have not been capable of changing the law,” said the Crow nervously. “Yes,” interrupted the Drongo. “We wanted to make changes to the law... and... your well “friends”, General Owl and Sir Vulture have both said that we should seek you,” which was not true of course. “Yes,” continued the Crow. “Our plan of campaign, well if we have one, is to make changes to the laws of parliament and the changes are due to the bird's name and well... level of intelligence. We - that refers to me (Crow) and him (Drongo) and we have noticed the former...” the Crow had trouble saying that word. “Former... former... former... well Mister Pigeon.”

“I see,” said Sir Eagle. Mister Pigeon is very smart you are saying and deserves a spot in college?”

“Well... as a matter of fact,” said the Crow, “that was not exactly our idea, we were planning to do name transferring...”

“You mean we transfer the name, Owl, to the Pigeon?”

said Sir Eagle. “No, as a matter of fact...” what the Crow was going to say almost made him throw up with embarrassment but it would do as to ease Sir Eagle onto their side. “Well, what I was about to say was that...

umph... groan... gasp... splutter... that “Drongo” is a very

smart name,” he finished quickly and had to catch his breath again.

“I see,” said Sir Eagle. “So what are you going to do now?”

“Well,” began the crow but Sir Eagle interrupted him. “I know all you know! You will swap names with Pigeon!” said Sir Eagle. “Isn’t it perfectly wonderful?”

“No, I was just saying because “Drongo” wheeze... is a smart name and Pigeon deserves a smart name pigeon could be named Drongo!” After making his point, Crow was breathless but satisfied. “Great!” said Sir Eagle. “You can go home and do it!” “No, I was thinking that only you, Sir Eagle are capable of doing such a great deed, embarking upon such a challenge...”

“Yes, yes!” interrupted Sir Eagle. “I know everything. This is great! My name will be Sir Pigeon from now on!”

“No,” said the Crow. “As you might know, Corvids are very smart and I just thought that as Pigeon is so smart and (splutter) “Drongo” is such an intelligent name “Drongo” should be transferred to the Pigeon because he is so smart and Pigeon should be transferred to Drongo.” He collapsed after reciting such a non-truthful speech (he reckoned Drongo was a dumb name and Pigeon was a dumb bird). “Yes,” said the Drongo running to help him up. “You get the basic idea.”

“Yes,” said Sir Eagle. “I think I can help.” Greatly cheered by this prospect the Crow and the Drongo were pleasantly walking side by side, unaware of the letter that was awaiting them in the red and white painted box. They thought it would be like “Dear Mister Crow and Mister Drongo, I will start right away! Sincerely, Sir Eagle” but it was quite different.

“TO: Mister Crow and Mister Drongo,

“I am so grateful for your generous contribution to the society of Name Translating, (the cryptic name is Nemesis) We have been so grateful and I am so happy, I will do exactly what you want and in MY HOUSE Sir Eagle is formally known as Mister Pigeon.”

Sincerely,

Sir Eagle.”

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“Well what do *you* think you’re doing?” asked the Crow.

“You make all Sir Eagle’s housemaids call him “Mister Pigeon”? Why, that is the silliest thing I’ve seen for ages.” he chuckled. “Anyway, it’s not so silly as it sounds - when that guy realizes what he’s done he’ll most likely rip up the earth!”

“Well you just don’t go blaming it on me!” roared the Drongo who was obviously less sarcastic. “I didn’t do it -

you did all the talking so if anyone's getting a spanking it's you!" They went on accusing each other with the Drongo getting angrier and angrier and the Crow keeping his sarcasticness. They had pretty much run out of generals. The Drongo suggested general's from other countries but that was even less successful. "What do you want to do? Make Pigeon a Drongo "

"You mean make Pigeon a Crow!"

"Well, never mind. I just wanted to say make Pigeon a whatever in Africa?"

"I know!" said the Crow triumphantly. "We can just *call* Pigeon a Drongo "

"No, a Crow!"

"Well, you get the basic stuff," said the Crow. "Let's go find him." They walked for a while and there was no sign of Pigeon until they came across him sunning on a rock.

"Hi Drongo!" said the Crow and "Hi Crow!" said Drongo.

"Oom, oom," murmured the Pigeon. "I have to get some new spectacles." Then the two foolish birds realized the Pigeon had just thought they were addressing each other as the Crow had said 'Hi Drongo' and the Drongo had said 'Hi Crow'. They both felt quite foolish as they had made their speeches with deep satisfaction.

"So you thought *that* would work," said the Drongo with just a hint of sarcasm. "Yeah, that was the best idea since

Asus ROG Zephyrus G14 (NeVida 4900HS Graphics)
8-core AMD Ryzen 9 laptops continued the Drongo. “I never thought you would do that!” He uttered a short sarcastic laugh. “Well, *you* can say that for all *I* care,” said the Crow. “It’s not my fault the old Pigeon was so dumb he didn’t even figure it out!” After both reckoning they had had their fair share of sarcasm they both retired to the warm vicinity of the living room couch.

CHAPTER 3

It was two unhappy birds that entered the dining room that night and it was for good reason. “Mister Crow” and “prof Drongo” had tried every way possible to change the law but they couldn’t do it. They had pretty much given up hope. So far, they had made enemies with General Owl, been chased out of the Palace of Torment by Sir Vulture, put the Albatross in a hole, made all Sir Eagle’s housemaids call him “Mister Pigeon” and said foolish things in front of a Pigeon. “You know,” the Drongo was saying, “I think that we might as well give up because a Crow is so dumb,” he began but was almost immediately interrupted by the indignantly surging form of the crow claiming that drongos were the dumbest birds ever known to dwell on the surface of the earth. This statement was not true of course and although the crow and drongo could never be together without a fight brewing it was surprising they were capable of embarking upon anything together. “Should we try General Hawk?” suggested the Drongo. “Well,” said the Crow doubtfully, “I guess we could try,” he was not the most optimistic about their success in convincing a general due to their previous experience with General Owl. Seeing no better ideas, the crow thought it didn’t sound too bad and they set about packing a lunch. If I hadn’t mentioned this before, you should know that both

the Crow and Drongo were very particular about exactly what they liked for their lunch and there was much dispute on if they should pack one big lunch which the drongo suggested chicken sandwiches but as the crow preferred sardine sandwiches they settled on separate lunches. The Crow's consisted of sardine sandwiches and an apple and the Drongo seeing the bright idea of an apple ;according to what they latter decided the Drongo had a chicken sandwich and shared the apple to much complaining of the crow who insisted that he take a "bite-sized bite" which the Drongo cheated on by saying that a "bite-sized bite" was exactly the same size as the apple. After the Drongo had completed his "bite-sized bite" the apple was no more and to much complaining of the owner who regretted being so generous peace was settled when the Crow took a "bite-sized bite" of the Drongo's chicken sandwich. This explanation was not accepted by the angry owner and the Drongo ended up demolishing the Crow's sardine sandwich. Then they realised that they not only had eaten up all their lunch but eaten each others and the Crow remembered he despised chicken and the drongo he despised sardines. They began packing all over again and in the process the Drongo got a sore stomach and the Crow vomited. When the lunch was packed they set of to see the General Hawk. They thought that due to previous

experiences of composing letters they thought that it was more “effective” to come in person.

They set out the next day.

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“So, you are saying you want to do a name changing?” asked General Hawk. “I had a call a few days ago from General Owl saying... saying... not to trust you, but you can explain to me,” he added hastily. “Well,” began the Crow, “I think that this might not be the ahh... easiest way to explain, just I think that it would well we just wanted to name change... I thought that it would be necessary to name change, because the name “Drongo” is such an intelligent name and it should be applied to an intelligent bird...” he drifted off thinking the Drongo would hit him as he said, “it should be applied to an intelligent bird because Drongos are not really what you call intelligent and pigeons are smart so pigeons should be named Drongos.” He drew a deep breath on finishing and retired to the corner. “You see, what he means to say is that Pigeons should be called Crows,” said the Drongo indirectly taking his revenge. “Crows are such dumb birds,” he continued warming to his subject, “and intelligent birds like pigeons,” even he had trouble saying the next sentence, “should deserve better names so the Pigeon should be called Crow

and that would settle this.” he finished briefly heaving a deep sigh of relief. “I see,” said General Hawk. “So you are kindly suggesting that I should change the name of the Drongo to Pigeon?”

“No, that is not what I want,” said the Drongo hastily, lest the Hawk should set about the process at once. “That is not exactly what we mean... you seem to have swapped the order, I was wanting to suggest that you should change the name of the Pigeon to Crow,” said the Drongo and was almost immediately interrupted by the Crow. “He means to change it to “Drongo”,” the Crow rejaulated. I just need to make it clear, Drongo is such an intelligent name...” he began on the long -tired excuse, “and I predict that you will believe that an intelligent bird should deserve an intelligent name. And it wouldn’t hurt to say that the Pigeon is probably the most intelligent bird ever seen...” he had to be extinguished by the Drongo after reciting such an untrue statement. General Hawk tried to hide his suspicion. “Ahh... can you er please explain a reason why you have er embarked upon er such a er diffult er task,” he paused, wiping perspiration from his brow. Both Crow and Drongo knew what this meant. “I suppose you understand now,” began the crow, “if we could just nick off for a bit you would be able to... well... manage the job,” he added, “I feel like me and Drongo have a bit of work to do. General Hawk tried to hide his

embarrassment. “Well, General Hawk,” said the Drongo, “you would be able to do this for us,” he put on his best persuasive face. General Hawk was torn between pride and embarrassment. “Well,” he began doubtfully, “I guess I could try.”

Greatly cheered by this proclamation, the Crow and Drongo set off home. For once they felt successful. It was not too useful, based on previous occasions but even the usually doubtful and pessimistic Drongo felt lighthearted and cheerful. General Hawk had not seemed the most willing to perform the job, it had taken much persuasion but eventually he had tried. They were so optimistic that they had been addressing each other as Pigeon, and despite having two pigeons in one house slightly inconvenient, they both thought it very interesting and many outlookers looked on as two pigeons, one looking suspiciously like a Crow and one like a Drongo. General Hawk never tried to change the names but it never seemed to matter. One thing that both birds learned that day was it never hurts to do things by halves.

