

Early Birds

"The Great Seed Robbery"

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EXT. SUBURBAN LAWN - DAY

The sun rises over the backyard of a small suburban house. In the distance, birds CHIRP.

A BIRD FEEDER hangs from a tree.

EXT. BIRD FEEDER - DAY

The feeder sways in the breeze. A small female cardinal pecks at the seeds. This is NELL. In human-years, she's about 7.

Suddenly, the feeder starts bouncing up and down. Something has leapt onto the branch above.

Panicked, Nell ZOOMS away.

A large squirrel named AGNES deftly maneuvers down the chain holding the bird feeder. She noses at the seeds.

Quickly, another squirrel joins her. This is BURT. He's delighted at the feast before him.

EXT. OAK TREE - DAY

Across the yard is a sprawling OAK TREE. Nell lands on a branch beside her older brother RED. He's around 10 (again, human-years).

Together, they watch the squirrels devour the bird feed.

	NELL	
	(muttering, upset)	
1	Unbelievable.	1

Red hops closer to Nell. He nudges her with his wing.

	RED	
2	Have you tried asking--	2

	NELL	
3	It's a BIRD feeder. For BIRDS!	3

Red sighs. The two watch the squirrels gorge themselves.

A small chickadee named DEE (8 human-years old) glides across the lawn. She flitters onto the branch next to Red and Nell.

	DEE	
4	Good morning Nell! Hi Red!	4

NELL RED
Can you believe this, Dee? Hiya, Dee.

Dee follows the pair's gaze to the thieving squirrels.

5 DEE
Oh no. Not *again*. 5

She shakes her head sadly as a young sparrow named JACK (also 8 human-years old) soars past the branch. He's holding a HUNK OF BREAD in his beak.

Jack notices the group and quickly circles back. He lands next to Dee.

JACK
(muffled, mouth full)
MM--LO!

No one looks at him; they're all focused on the squirrels. He sidles closer and spits out the bread.

7 JACK
I said '*Hello.*' 7

	DEE	
8	Hello, Jack.	8

9 JACK
What are you...? 9

He notices the squirrels. He looks back and forth between the feeder and the birds.

He WHISTLES sharply to get his friends' attention. Tweet tweet tweeeeeet.

No acknowledgement.

So he whistles even louder. TWEET TWEET TWEET TWEEEEEE--

10 JACK! NELL 10

He has their attention.

JACK

11 Who needs a feeder? Look what I 11
found in the trash!

He gestures with a wing to the hunk of bread.

Red looks at it, suspicious.

12 RED
A rock? 12

13 JACK
No, not a rock. 13

Nell leans in and sniffs the bread.

14 NELL
Really...old...bread? 14

15 JACK
Exactly. 15

He leans down to peck at the hunk.

CLANGGGG.

It's rock hard. Jack's beak is slightly bent, but he tries to play it cool.

16 JACK
The betht bread hath a thtrong
cruth. 16

The others titter. He shakes his head to restore his beak's shape.

17 NELL
I don't want a bread rock. I want
bird feed. From a *bird feeder*. 17

The birds look back at the feeder, still swarmed by the squirrels. The feed is running low.

18 RED
Why don't we ask if they'll share? 18

19 NELL
Who's going to ask? 19

The birds look over to the squirrels. Across the yard, Agnes the squirrel notices them staring.

She raises a paw to wave at them, but the birds flinch at the motion, ducking out of sight behind leaves and branches.

Agnes goes back to eating, so the birds warily stand up straight again.

20 DEE
I'm too small. 20

RED

21 I'm too scared. 21

22 JACK I'd rather have my rock. I mean bread. 22

He tries and fails again to crack open his bread-rock.

DEE

23 You care more about that than 23
 helping us?

Jack looks up, mouth full of bread.

JACK

Huh?

NELL

25 It doesn't matter. I already know 25
 what they'll say anyway. Besides,
 I've got a better idea.

DEE

What?

Nell thinks for a moment. She looks at the bird feeder across the lawn. Then she looks to the right.

At the SHED at the edge of the yard.

NELL
27 We steal it. 27

Red is startled.

	RED	
28	Steal the bird feeder?	28

NELL
Not the feeder.

A DRUMROLL sounds. The birds look up to see a WOODPECKER drilling into the oak tree.

30 NELL Hey Woody! Can you keep it down? 30

The drumroll stops. Everyone looks back to Nell.

NELL
We steal *the feed*.

JACK DEE
 (mouth full) How?
 Ph teal the fee?

EXT. LAWN (VARIOUS) - DAY

At the FEEDER: The squirrels devour the bird feed. The feeder is running low.

NELL (V.O.)
 32 The feeder is almost empty. Which 32
 means the Millers are going to need
 to refill it.

At the HOUSE: The back door opens. MR. MILLER (40) steps out.

NELL (V.O.)
 33 The bag of feed is inside the shed. 33

At the SHED: The shed is on the side of the yard. There's one small padlocked door and two windows on the side.

DEE (V.O.)
 34 How are we going to get the feed 34
 out?

At the OAK TREE: Nell can't help but smile.

NELL
 35 We won't get the feed out. We'll 35
 get *ourselves* in.

In the SHED: Sunlight streams through the windows. An ENORMOUS BAG OF BIRD FEED is opened and resting in the corner, alongside shovels, rakes, bags of mulch, etc.

RED (V.O.)
 36 But we can't just fly in. 36

At the OAK TREE: Nell smiles.

NELL
 37 Why not? 37

RED
 38 We're too big! He'd see us! 38

NELL
 39 All of us? 39

Dee's eyes grow wide.

40 I can do it! DEE 40

At the SHED: Mr. Miller jangles his keys. He unlocks the padlock on the handle and opens the door.

Quickly, quietly, only a few inches off the ground, Dee zips into the shed. She hides behind an old flowerpot.

Mr. Miller sets his keys on the pot, but doesn't notice Dee.

NELL (V.O.)
41 They'll refill the feeder, and then 41
put the feed back away.

42 JACK (V.O.)
So only Dee gets to be inside? Not 42
that I care, since I have my
bread...

At the OAK TREE: Nell shakes her head.

43 NELL
No. We'll get in. 43

44 How? RED 44

NELL
Through the window.

Dee shakes her head and holds up her wings.

DEE
46 But we can't open the window. 46

47 NELL 47
We won't have to.

Inside the SHED: Mr. Miller returns with the feed and sets it back in the corner. Suddenly, Dee emerges from her hiding place and takes flight.

NELL (V.O.)
Dee will get his attention. He'll
open a window to let her out.

Indeed, as Dee soars around the shed, Mr. Miller unlatches the shed window and pushes it open. It starts to close automatically, so he places a rock on the ledge to keep it propped open.

Dee does two laps around the shed before she flits out the open window.

At the OAK TREE: Nell smiles at the group.

NELL
49 And then, we're in. 49

Jack has picked up his bread-rock again.

50 JACK
(mouth full)
Geniuth! 50

Dee flutters out of the shed and over towards the group. They wait on their branch, watching the shed closely.

NELL

51 Now we just wait for him to leave, 51
 and then...

INT. SHED - DAY

Except, instead of leaving, Mr. Miller grabs the rock keeping the window open. He puts it back on the ground of the shed.

The window starts to close!

He turns and leaves through the door, leaving his keys on the flowerpot.

EXT. OAK TREE - DAY

The window is closing.

52 Go go go! NELL 52

They take off flying, but there's no chance they'll make it.

DEE
There's no time!

RED

54 We need something to prop it open. 54

Jack is still holding his bread-rock. He narrows his eyes.

55 JACK I gop fith. (*Trans: "I got this"*) 55

And he FLINGS the bread-rock through the air. Five, ten, fifteen feet across the yard. It hits the window sill and rolls perfectly into place.

EXT. SHED - DAY

The window is blocked by the bread-rock. It can't close!

The four birds arrive at the window sill, giddy.

	NELL	
56	Great shot, Jack!	56

	DEE	
57	I knew you liked us more than that rock!	57

Jack smiles.

	JACK	
58	It was bread. I think.	58

Dee slips through the cracked window back into the shed. So does Jack, and then Red.

Nell is about to enter when she looks back at the feeder.

It's swaying in the breeze, completely unoccupied.

She frowns at the vacant feeder.

	NELL	
59	But where are the...	59

She spots the two squirrels darting across the lawn. Right for the shed!

	NELL	
60	SQUIRRELS!	60

INT. SHED - DAY

The birds are playing in the bag of seed. They do the backstroke and spew fountains of seeds from their beaks.

	DEE	
61	What'd you say?	61

Nell pokes her head inside.

	NELL	
62	SQUIRRELS!	62

	RED		DEE
Run!		Hide!	

EXT. SHED - DAY

Nell pulls her head outside the window again. The squirrels, Agnes and Burt, have leapt up the side of the shed and are perched on the sill beside her.

Agnes marvels at the open window.

AGNES

(Cockney accent)

63 Well done, darling! 63

The squirrels are British, and extremely nice. This confuses Nell.

NELL

64 Thanks? 64

BURT

(also Cockney)

65 Go join your friends, deary, and 65
we'll keep watch for you.

Nell stumbles for words.

NELL

66 You want to be our lookout? 66

AGNES

67 This isn't our first job. 67

BURT

68 You always need a lookout. 68

AGNES

69 That's right, love. 69

NELL

70 Oh, um...that's... 70

She peers through the window at the bag of feed. Then returns her gaze to the smiling squirrels.

NELL

71 He won't be back for a while. Why 71
don't you come in with us?

Burt looks at Agnes, who beams at Nell.

AGNES

72 Just for a minute, then. 72

And they follow Nell through the window.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

The back door opens again. Mr. Miller steps out.

He makes his way across the lawn.

Towards the shed.

He opens the door.

INT. SHED - DAY

It's seed-strewn CHAOS. Imagine cats on catnip, but they can fly, and it's all on 2x speed.

Dee is zooming laps around the shed. Jack is cannon-balling into the bag of seed. Red is sorting seeds by size and color.

Nell is deep in conversation with Agnes and Burt.

But when the door swings open, everyone freezes.

BURT

(muttering)

73

You always need a lookout.

73

Red stands up.

RED

74

Everyone *run!*

74

And he flies RIGHT AT MR. MILLER.

Everyone else scatters. Out the window, out the door, under this, over that. They all dart as fast as they can.

Mr. Miller covers his face with his hands as Red zooms towards him.

Then Red swerves, missing Mr. Miller, and exits through the door.

Mr. Miller lowers his hands and looks around the shed in disbelief. No birds in sight. No squirrels either. Just a very messy shed.

Shaking his head, he closes the window and grabs his keys.

He makes sure to close the door on his way out.

EXT. LAWN - DAY

Morning has broken, and it's a beautiful day in the backyard of the small suburban house. In the distance, birds CHIRP.

EXT. BIRD FEEDER - DAY

Nell, Red, Jack, and Dee all hover around the bird feeder, taking turns eating.

They're laughing about the heist-gone-wrong.

	DEE	
75	He never even saw me!	75
	JACK	
76	I'll never eat trash bread again.	76
	NELL	
77	And we'd never have gotten out of there without Red!	77

Red blushes, turning even redder.

Suddenly, the feeder starts bouncing up and down. Something has leapt onto the branch above.

It's Agnes and Burt!

This time, the birds do not scatter. Nell even smiles.

	NELL	
78	Would you two like to join us?	78

The squirrels chuckle as they ease down the chain for a few bites. Then they back up and let the birds eat some too.

EXT. SUBURBAN LAWN - DAY

The yard is filled with the cheerful chirping of happy birds.

FADE TO BLACK.