



The blackbird
who couldn't fly



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The music in the audio recordings was composed by Rachel Jamieson – find out more at www.racheljamieson.com.



The narrator was Christopher Jamieson – www.christopherjamieson.co.uk.



Some of the pictures were drawn by Samantha Purkis. Find her etsy shop at www.etsy.com/uk/shop/LittlePaperTrails.



The legal bit

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Special thanks to the following (all of whom appear on www.pixabay.com) for images used on the website and in these various stories :- Clker-Free-Vector-Images • eommina • Johanna Pakkala • k-images • one_life • OpenClipart-Vectors

Before you start

These booklets contain ...

The text of the story, in case you'd like to read it to your child yourself.

Some simple sentences inspired by the story, for new readers.

Some quiz questions and activities.

A colouring-in sheet.

You may want to print the colouring-in sheet. In some cases, you may want to print the activity sheet too. These are always in black and white, so they should print on any printer, and won't use much ink.

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The blackbird who couldn't fly

Once upon a time, there was a blackbird called Bill. In most ways, he was just like any other blackbird – he had two eyes, two wings and a tail. But he had one big problem. He was scared of being high up. He got dizzy just standing on tiptoe, and if he jumped up on to a stone, he felt really sick.

Now of course all Bill's friends could fly, and they used to have lovely games flying around in the air. But poor old Bill just couldn't fly at all – it made him feel much too ill. He used to try as hard as he could; he used to jump up in the air and flap his wings, but he just couldn't fly, and it made him very miserable.

At last, he thought to himself, 'I just can't go on this way. I must learn to fly.'

So he spoke to one of his friends and asked him to help. The bird thought for a long time, and then said 'Yes, I know what to do. The first thing we'll do is tie a handkerchief around your eyes so that you don't know how high up you are.'

The bird tied a handkerchief around Bill's eyes, and then took him off to a nearby block of flats. He looked carefully all around to make sure that no one was watching, and then they went over to the lift. The bird flew up and pressed the button, and then when the lift came he helped Bill inside.

'Whoosh' went the lift, and took them all the way up to the top floor. Then the bird helped Bill out of the lift and went over to the window to check that there was a nice soft piece of grass to land on.

'Right,' he said to Bill, 'I want you to jump out and flap your wings.' Bill did as he was told, and soon landed on the grass. The bird flew down and landed beside him. 'How was that?' he asked.

'Oh that was easy', said Bill.

'Right,' said the bird. 'We'd better do it once again.'

So they went over to the flats, and went whoosh up in the lift, and then Bill jumped out of the window and flew down to the grass again.

'Was that still all right?' asked the bird.

'Yes, of course it was,' said Bill, who was still wearing the handkerchief and didn't know how high up he'd been. 'It was fine. But unless we go high up in the air, I don't see how I'm ever going to stop being afraid.'

The bird just laughed and said 'Right, we'll do it again, only this time I'll fly alongside you while you're in the air and take the handkerchief off.'

So up they went again, all the way to the top of the flats. Just before Bill jumped, the bird said 'Now remember when I take the handkerchief off that you've already done this twice, so there's nothing to be afraid of.'

Bill jumped, and then the bird flew along and pulled at the handkerchief until it came off. Bill looked down. 'Aaaaaaaagh!!!' he said. 'I'm miles up in the air. Help!' 'Don't be silly,' said the bird, 'I told you, you've already done this twice and you were all right.'

'But I wasn't this high up,' said Bill.

'Of course you were,' said the bird.

Once Bill had thought about this for a moment, he stopped being quite so afraid, and rather began to enjoy feeling the air rushing through his feathers.

'Oh look,' he said, 'I can see all the children from the playschool out playing on the swings. What a lovely view. I like flying.'

And from that day on, Bill was never afraid of being high up again – in fact he used to fly higher than any of his friends, so high that he could even look at all the people in the aeroplanes as they went past.

For new readers

This is Bill.

Bill is a bird.

Bill is black.

Bill can fly now.



Bill eats this.

Yuck!



Bill eats this too.

Yum!



Here are some quiz questions. You get ten points for each answer you get right.

Some questions about the story

What was the name of the bird in the story?

What kind of bird was he?

What problem did he have?

How did his friend help him?

How did they get to the top of the building?

Some questions about birds

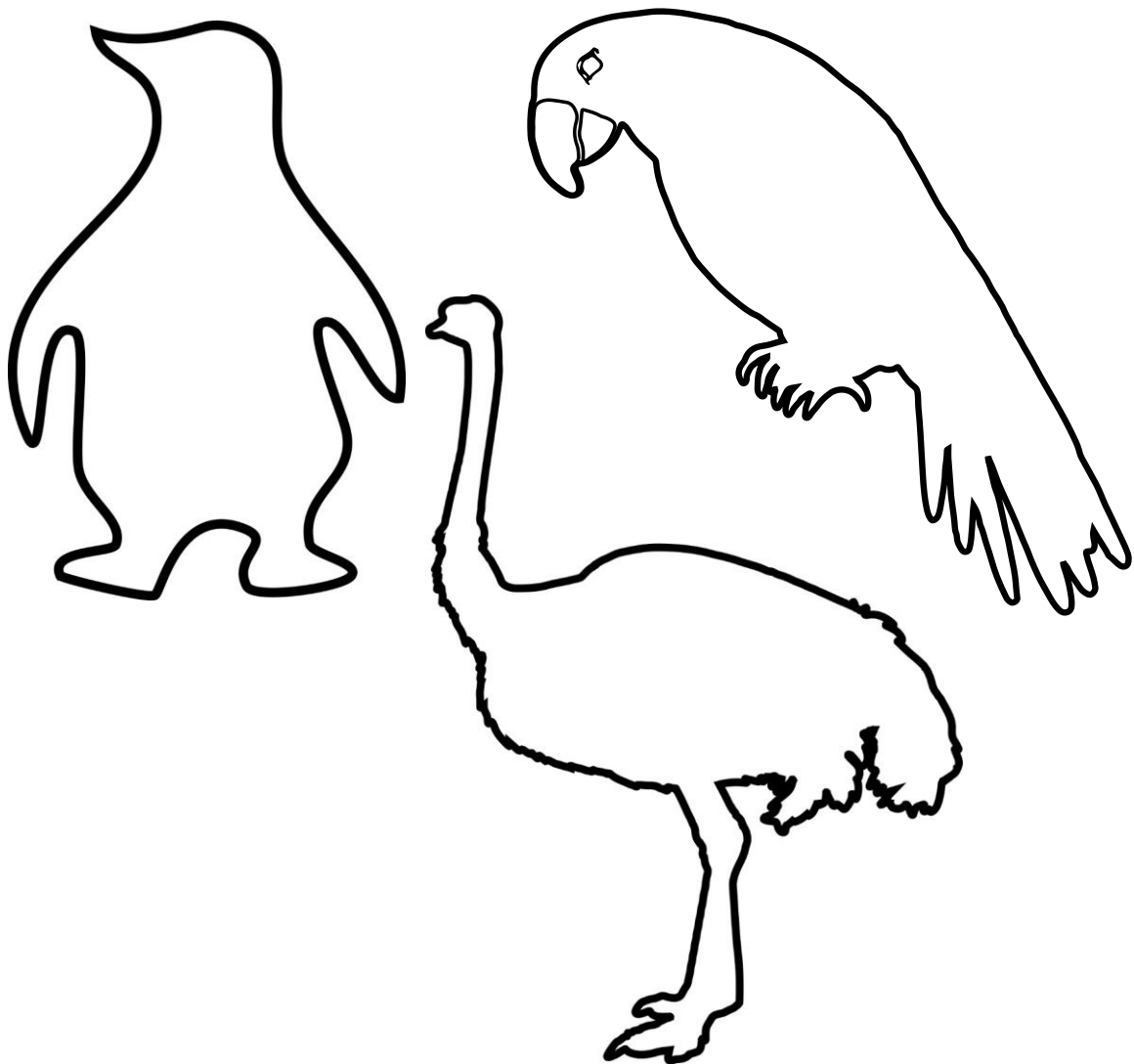
Most birds can fly, but there are some that can't.
Can you think of any that can't?

What is the name of the special kind of house that birds build in the trees?

What do they make their houses out of?

Mrs Blackbird has laid four eggs. A baby blackbird comes out of one of the eggs. How many eggs are left?

**Here are three kinds of birds. Do you know their names?
(10 points each).**



Only one of these birds can fly. Do you know which one?

Colour the birds in. You can colour them in so they look like they do in real life, or to make them very pretty. Ask a grown up to tell you how many points you got for your colouring in.

Some things to find out

Ask a grown up to help you find out some more things about blackbirds ...

Only daddy blackbirds are black. What colour are mummy blackbirds?

What do blackbirds eat?

How many eggs do mummy blackbirds usually lay?

What colour are the eggs?

How do mummy blackbirds look after their eggs?

See if you can find a recording of a blackbird singing. Next time you are outside playing, see if you can hear any blackbirds.

That's the end of the quiz

How many points did you get?

San Puckit

