



Cuckoo!

Pen Paper

Animals, Fable, Humor

Once upon a time, in a forest far far away from the reaches of civilization, was the legendary Hill Woods.

Unlike what its name implied, there weren't any hills in the area. Nor was the forest itself situated on one. Instead, the Woodlands forest was home to thousands of extraordinary little creatures, living together in peace and harmony.

However, Cuckoo definitely wasn't one of them. The bird had a nasty streak. She was petite in size, yet held a festering evilness in her that was larger than life, egging her on to do bad deeds. If you were to listen for a heartbeat, you would find none, so heartless was she, that not many others liked her for her bad behavior.

It was mating season one day, and our Cuckoo was about to lay her eggs. However, she was far too lazy to sit on her eggs to keep them warm.

Frustrated, she looked around, searching for an alternative solution that was the easy way out, regardless of how immoral that might be.

Aha! She found it.

It was a nest which belonged to a beloved little bird called Warbler, which was filled to the brim with her eggs.

Poor sweet little Warbler was a hardworking little thing. Everybody loved her; she was a kind and quiet little woodland creature. Except Cuckoo, anyway, but not that she had particularly loved anybody else.

And Cuckoo knew that she had a kind and good-natured side to her. She could definitely trust Warbler to take care of her eggs for her! After all, she couldn't be bothered to raise them herself. Might as well let someone else more willing take up the job, and she could always come back a few years later to reap the rewards. Or so she thought.

Eyeing the unguarded nest with her unsuspecting victim away to collect berries for dinner, she viciously rolled Warbler's own eggs out of her nest with her feet, causing them to splatter on the ground with a resounding 'crack'. Quickly laying her eggs in the nest, she smiled evilly to herself and flew away. It was foolproof!

When Warbler returned, eyeing her eggs on the floor, she dropped her berries in shock, her heart shattered.

But what also pained her were five little eggs that did not belong to her, cold and alone, sitting in her nest...

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Months went by, and the baby cuckoos under Warbler's care soon grew up to be big, beautiful children. But they soon realized something was wrong. They looked too different from Warbler, whom they regarded as their mother.

Finally, one of them spoke. "Mother, why do we look so different from you?"

"To tell you the truth..." Warbler ruffled her feathers, preparing herself to reveal the uncomfortable truth to her precious little babies. "The truth is... I'm not your mother."

"WHAT?!" The babies chirped in unison, before turning to each other, chirping away with confused looks on their faces as they tried to process the situation.

“I found you all in my nest one day, after I came home from finding berries to eat.” Warbler continued, a tinge of guilt in her voice. “I’m sorry, children. I shouldn’t have lied to you and pretended to be your mother all these months. I was hoping that I wouldn’t need to tell you the truth... that we could remain a happy family together... forever.”

She sniffed. “I saw you all, lying haplessly in my nest, cold and abandoned. Wanting children anyway, I made the selfish decision to raise you all as my own. I am very sorry, dear children!”

The young cuckoos stared at their mother, before looking at each other, shaking their heads. Warbler hung her head low, before turning away from the cuckoos.

Finally, one spoke. ‘Mother, why are you saying such silly things? We should be all the more thankful that you took us in despite not being our biological parent, saving us from the cold and hunger.’ The other birds nodded in agreement. “We are grateful for your care, Mother! Thank you so much! You have taken care of us and taught us lots! If anything, now is our turn to take care of you!”

A single tear fell from Warbler’s eye.

“Really? You would? Even after all of this?” She sobbed, turning to face them.

“Especially after all of this! To us, you’re our one and only mother!” They smiled, before running to embrace her. “We can be one big, happy family again like we always have been!”

“Now this is where I step in,” A voice called out from the shadows. “Long time no see, my darlings.”

It was Cuckoo.

And she was here for her children.

“Thank you so much indeed.”

She walked towards the group, as the young cuckoos pulled away from Warbler, eyeing this stranger that looked exactly like an older version of them with suspicion. “But it is time to part, is it not?” Cuckoo smiled. “I’m here for my children.”

“Wrong nest, buzz off.” One of the young cuckoos stared back at Cuckoo indignantly. Cuckoo just laughed.

“What a rude child!” She exclaimed. “It seems that your parenting is indeed a bit lacking, don’t you think? But no need to worry. Under my guidance, they will become fine brood parasites, like me!”

“I’m not handing them over. You abandoned them! I can’t trust you to be a good parent. I’m not sure if they would even want to leave with you, either.” Warbler retorted, standing in between the young cuckoos and Cuckoo, shielding the former with her wings, spread out.

“I’m not asking you for them. I’m taking them back.” Cuckoo lunged at Warbler, viciously attacking her with her beak, causing her to bleed from the side, tripping and sprawling.

“Now, for our first lesson, young children.” Cuckoo gestured flamboyantly. “Let me demonstrate how we Cuckoos knock eggs from other birds’ nests, like I did to hers!”

The young cuckoos’ eyes widened as they watched their mother’s unmoving body move closer and closer to the edge as Cuckoo carried it with her vicious, pointy claws.

The tree was several meters tall, and Warbler, being injured, wouldn’t survive the fall.

“Don’t touch Mother!” All at once, they launched themselves at Cuckoo, knocking her off-balance, and making her drop Warbler, just at the edge of the nest. She was safe, for now.

“Bad children! I’ll get rid of her! I’LL KILL HER! I’LL KILL HER SO I’M THE ONLY MOTHER YOU’LL EVER HAVE!” Cuckoo yelled as she was being charged at.

“You were never our mother to begin with!” Tackling Cuckoo, the young birds nodded at each other, piling on her and breaking her wings.

“I’LL BE BACK! THIS ISN’T OVER! I WON’T JUST KILL HER; I’LL KILL YOU ALL TOO!” Cuckoo screeched in

pain, before realizing that she was moving against her will.

She was being carried out by the young cuckoos out of the nest.

“NOOOOOOOOOO!” The intruder screamed as she was being shoved off unceremoniously, falling off the nest to an uncertain doom.

The young cuckoos watched as she fell, until she disappeared from their view.

The baby birds hurried to Warbler’s side, fearing for her life. “Mother!” They cried by her side, prodding her.

“Are you okay?”

Warbler stirred slightly, but was too weak to reply.

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Later, it turned out that Warbler’s wounds were not severe, and with the loving care of her baby cuckoos, she was healthy in no time.

Nothing could keep them apart. And together, they lived together as one big family, in Hill Woods, happily ever after.

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