

The Troll that hatched an Egg

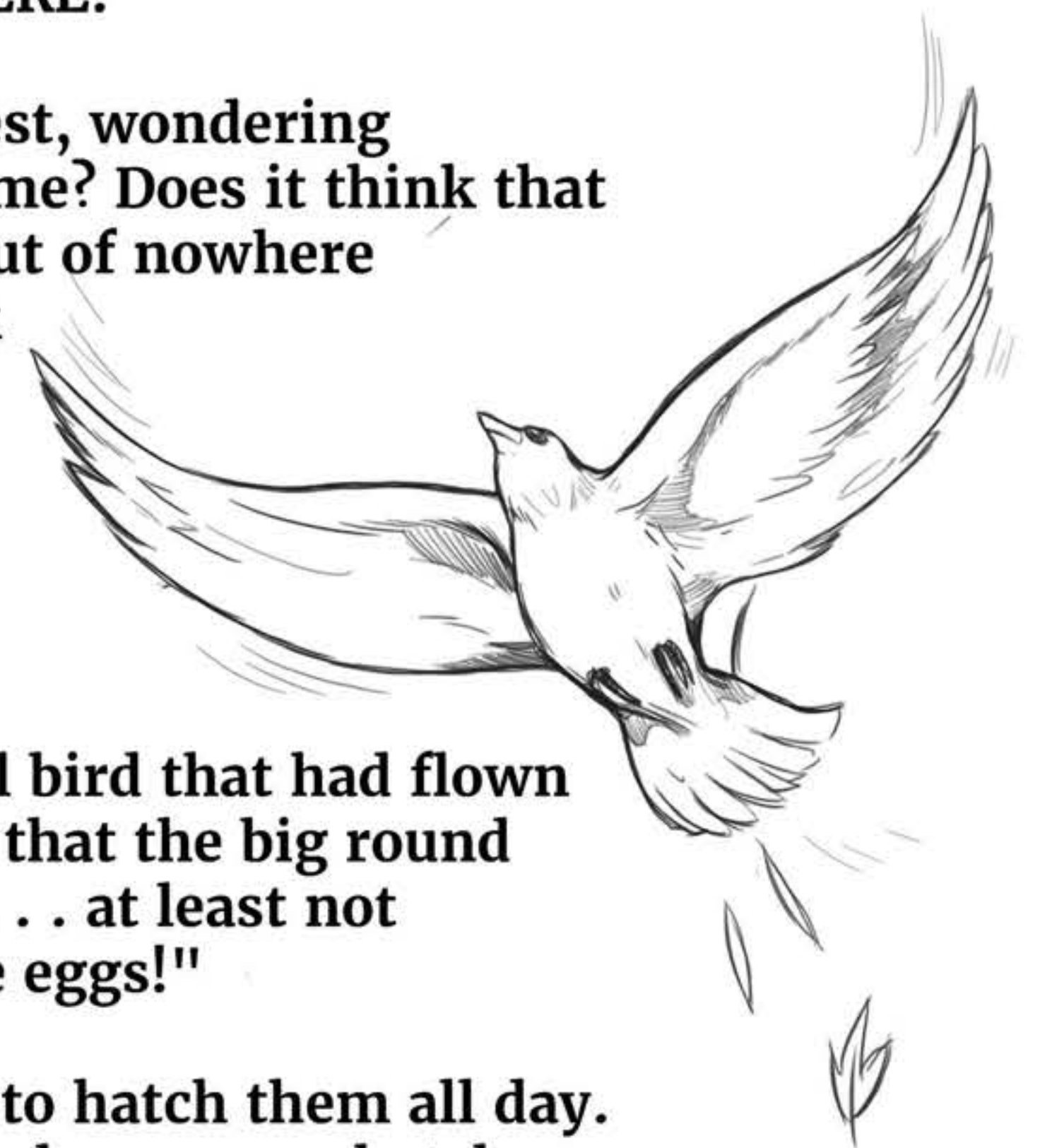


Once upon a time, not too long ago, a family of three trolls lived in a forest. Bo was the father, Bodil was the mother, and little Bibbi was their curious daughter. Every summer, a little red Cardinal would visit them and sing songs about the great outside. Songs about mountains made of big square stones. Songs of rivers of red and white light and about endless black plains with white stripes and metal birds bigger and thicker than the widest trees. Even though the trolls were the most enormous creatures in the forest, they couldn't see above the majestic trees, so little Bibbi loved these stories. Her parents could feel her excitement but warned her, "It's safe here in the forest. Stay here. Beneath the leaves, amongst the trees, is where you belong."

One day while little Bibbi was lying on her back in the soft moss, looking at the sky, waiting for her flying red friend to come by, a giant metal bird with stiff wings flew over the forest. Bibbi thought that a bird THAT BIG must fly further than usual birds. Therefore, it must have some extraordinary stories to tell. So Bibbi started waving at the metal bird.

"COME DOWN HERE!" she yelled. "HELLO UP THERE! YOU THERE!! COME DOWN HERE!"

But the giant metal bird did not even look at her. Bibbi trudged back through the forest, wondering whether she'd maybe scared the metal bird, thinking, "Why didn't it want to talk to me? Does it think that trolls are smelly and dumb?" Bibbi did not know what to do about it, but suddenly, out of nowhere, a massive stone fell from the sky and landed right beside her. The bluebirds all took flight, the woodpeckers knocked loudly on the tree trunks, and the bluejays scolded loudly! Bibbi looked up and saw even more stones falling and raced to catch one, but it knocked Bibbi off her feet, thump! Bibbi sat up and brushed the dirt off her furry knees. These stones did not really look like stones. "More like... eggs!" she thought. "Just way too big, and they feel cold, like metal..."



Bo and Bodil stared at the eggs while Bibbi tried to explain the size of the shiny metal bird that had flown over the forest. Bodil didn't really believe her daughter's story, but she was also sure that the big round things weren't troll eggs. "After all," she thought, "trolls don't really arrive in eggs . . . at least not usually. The size fits pretty well, though, but... maybe the big metal bird did drop the eggs!"

Bo's bushy bottom was feeling very sore. He'd been sitting on top of the eggs, trying to hatch them all day. Bodil, on the other hand, was exhausted from trying to build a giant nest! "Everybody knows you hatch eggs in a nest," she fussed. "It's not going to work without one! I'm telling you, Bo! Get off those eggs and help me!" The beautiful red Cardinal sang loudly as if to say, "Yes, yes, help her!"

A few days later, Bo, Bodil, and Bibbi were all very tired of sitting on the eggs in the nest. Bibbi knew she needed to find that gigantic, metal mother bird. So that night, she gathered branches from the forest floor and started building herself a giant set of wings. She had watched the way the birds flew many times and knew exactly how they used their wings. "What else can I do?" she thought. "I'm gonna learn to fly, and then I'll fly up, up, up and find that momma bird and show her where her baby eggs are!"

Just before sunrise, Bibbi quietly snuck away while Bo and Bodil were still sleeping. Today was the day little Bibbi was going to fly. She put on her wings, closed her eyes, and took a deep breath.

"You can do this," she whispered. "I . . . Bibbi of the forest . . . am now a bird!" The troll opened her eyes and stared right into the red morning sun. "Focus," she thought and started flapping her wings as a flock of crows in a nearby oak tree cheered her on. "YOU CAN DO IT, BIBBI!! WE KNOW YOU CAN," Bibbi flapped hard and started running, faster than she had ever run before. She pushed her feet to the ground with such force that moss flew out from under her feet!

Run and flap! Run and flap! Run and flap!

Bibbi ran and ran. She ran further than she'd ever run before until, suddenly, the last trees of the forest were right in front of her. Bibbi got very scared and tried to stop, but it was too late. She looked to her right, saw a soaring Red-tailed hawk, and realized: "I'm flying!"

Then she saw the enormous metal bird erupting from a cloud, and this time she wouldn't let it slip away. Side by side with the unimpressed metal bird, Bibbi started yelling questions. "Where are you from?" "Did you lose an egg?" and "Why don't you flap?" But the metal bird didn't answer or even look at little Bibbi - it just slowly stretched down its legs with very unusual round feet.

Totally confused, little Bibbi looked down and saw her home from above for the first time. The green forest, the shining streams where the water giggled over the rocks, the blue river where the herons waded, and the fish jumped.... She also saw all the things her friend the red Cardinal had told her about, the square mountains, the endless black plains, and down there between the white lines, sleeping metal birds with little people walking in and out of their bellies! Right then, little Bibbi knew that the metal bird was not a real bird, and the giant eggs were not real eggs and would therefore probably never hatch....

It wasn't that the metal bird didn't want to talk, but simply that it didn't talk.

Bibbi now knew how special her home was and how important it was to value and protect it.

Little Bibbi wanted to swoop with the Cooper's hawk and soar with the Bald eagles. She wanted to learn everything about the world and bring stories back to the forest. First, she had to fly down there, through the treetops, to tell her parents to get off those giant eggs!

