



Up in the sky

Everybody knew Zonke had only one passion: birds. In class, in the schoolyard, at home...her head was always turned to the sky. “You will break your neck, the sun will make you blind,” her classmates warned. But nobody and nothing could convince her to stop looking up.



One day, as she was walking out of her classroom – looking up, of course – she bumped into Mina, the school janitor.

“Be careful, young lady,” said Mina.

“Am sorry ma’am, I did not see you,” said Zonke.

“You were looking at birds, weren’t you?” said Mina.

“Yes,” replied Zonke.

**“Well, I also have a passion for birds. You wish you could fly away with them, don’t you?” asked Mina
“I do,” replied Zonke.**

They both went to the storeroom and the mysterious janitor gave her a leaf to chew. “You can be flying up there with them if you want.”

She chewed the leaf and BOOM! Wings, beak, feathers! Zonke was a magnificent bird!

“Here are a few grains for your first days as a bird. Don’t eat them all at once. When they’re finished, you will have to find your own food,” warned Mina.

She was finally in the sky. It was magnificent. The wind was caressing her feathers and the warmth of the sun had never been so pleasant.

As she looked down, she could see the schoolyard. The place all the mean kids bullied her because she was different.

Birds have different colours and none of them seemed to care. That’s why she had always dreamed of being a bird: she could fly freely with nobody to bully her because she looked different. She felt so happy to not be there anymore.

A bit later, she looked down again. She could see her house. Her mother was at the porch, crying. It had been several hours, and Zonke was not home. Her family was worried. Zonke thought of them: they all loved her so much and protected her at all costs. She felt sad and started missing them.

That's when she bumped into Luma, the eagle.

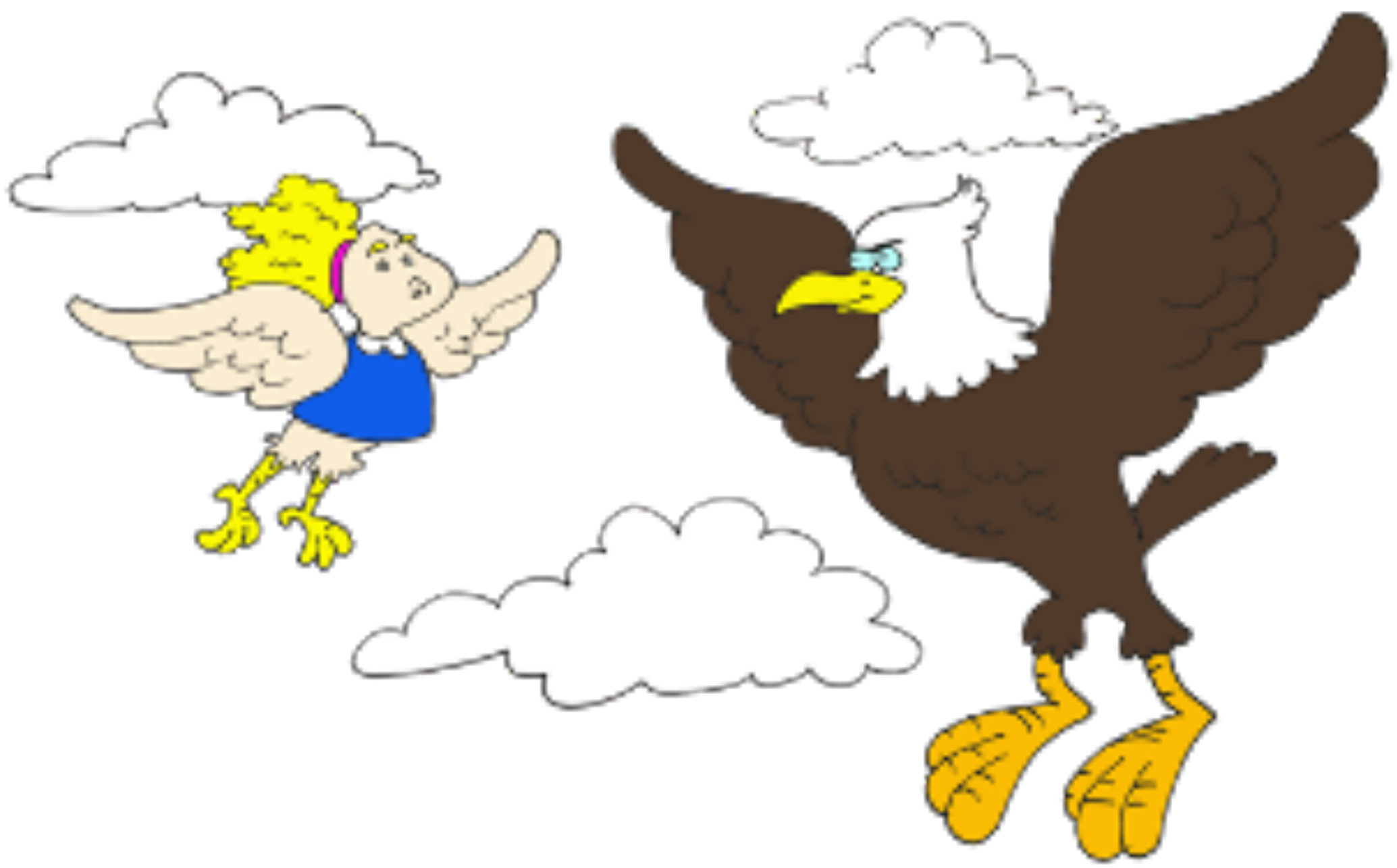
“Be careful, young lady,” said Luma.

“Am sorry, I didn't see you,” said Zonke.

“You were looking down, weren't you?” said the eagle. “I, too, sometimes, wish I were a human. They have families, they eat together, they play together. Being a bird is so lonely.”

Zonke felt even sadder than she had moments ago.

“Well, the reality is that we are birds and we need to look where we're flying. You're lucky I am not hungry. I would have eaten you right away,” said the Luma, flying away.



Zonke flew a little further until she got tired. She found a tree and decided to settle there for a bit. There were chicks in a nest, all by themselves.

“Mommy, Mommy,” they all chirped in chorus when they heard her.

“Am not your mother. I Am sorry, I just want to rest,” said Zonke.

“But we are hungry,” they all chirped, once again.

She fed the chicks with some of the grains she had. They were all so happy that they came out of the nest to play with her.

Moments later, their mother returned.

“My name is Kile and I am the mother of these chicks. I have travelled in vain to find food for them. Thank you for feeding and taking care of them while I was gone,” said their mother.

“You are probably very hungry yourself. Here are some grains for you,” said Zonke.

“You are very kind” said Kile. “In my travels, I met Luma the eagle. He told me about a yellow bird who wanted to be a human. Are you, by any chance, that yellow bird?” she continued

“Yes,” she sobbed. “I miss my family. They are in pain because I disappeared.”

“I appreciate what you did for my chicks. Your mother raised you well and I could not imagine how worried I would be if one of mine disappeared,” said Kile. “Here is a leaf that you can eat to return to your normal appearance.”



Zonke thanked Kile and said goodbye to the chicks. She flew back to the ground and ate the leaf to become human again.

Her mother was still waiting by the porch in tears, as Zonke went to embrace her. They were both so happy that she had returned.

“I thought I lost you,” said her mother.

“Never,” said Zonke.

No matter how other people look at you, you will always be the treasure of your mother.



**For More Stories
CLICK HERE**