

## No Parakeets!

“People in this neighborhood NEVER buy pet parakeets,” Ben said. He stood in the doorway of his mother’s home office. He loved birds and did not believe in putting them into cages.

“And why is that?” His mother looked up from the computer.

“Because a kid called the Bird Girl rescues them.” Ben walked into the room and stood by his mother’s desk. She grinned and pushed back her rolling desk chair to listen. He explained that Olivia, his new third grade friend, had told him about the Bird Girl. Nobody knew her real name, and she didn’t go to school. She was a wild girl living on her own in a state park local to their community.

“How interesting,” his mother said. “But what does she do with the parakeets?”

“She lets them fly away.” Ben thought this was obvious.

His mother laughed as if he had told a joke. “We’ll just have to take our chances,” she said and pulled herself back to the desk. “Because I *am* buying two parakeets for your grandmother whether you approve or not.”

The next day when Ben came home from school, he found a big cage in his bedroom with two parakeets. One was green with a yellow head and the other blue with a white head. He named them Peter and Pauline. But when he approached the cage, they scooted together on their perch.

“Is my mom hiding you in here from Nana?” The birds cocked their heads together to listen. Since his parents’ divorce, Nana had moved in with them though, as a real estate agent, she was seldom home. “Don’t worry,” Ben said, pushing a wiggling finger in between the bars. “The Bird Girl will rescue you.”

On Saturday morning, Nana’s birthday, Ben woke to find his bedroom window open. On a high branch of the maple tree perched Peter and Pauline.

