

# HE'S A DIRTY BIRD

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*Editor's Note: Can you find the 83 birds concealed in this story? Answers can be found in Answers and Solutions.*

"I'm so blue, Jay," Billie cried, wrenched with tears. She was feeling very birdened. "I'm a raven maniac!"

"What's a nice gull like you so bittern about?" Jay asked.

"I'm in an aukward situation because of Bob White," she grouched. "I'd like to knock the stuffin' out of that puffin. It's no myna thing, either."

"What did that booby, that...yellow-bellied sapsucker do now?" Jay asked, quailing at the thought of that loony, gooney nuthatch boyfriend of Billie's being such an albatross in her life. "That junco creeper must be stopped! You should have ducked when you saw him coming."

"Good grebe! I bet that coot condor out of all her money again," Billie's friend Cooie hooted softly to Jay.

"I was rooked," Billie railed, a flicker of sadness in her beautiful bird eyes, "although I feel like a stool pigeon for talking about it. He asked me if I could sparrow little money. He said he'd pay me back. I swallowed his sad story, again."

Cooie began to cassowary eye on her fine feathered female friend. "You silly goose, you're so cuckoo about that vulture that you're acting like a birdbrain. Face it! He's pheasant enough, but he's a nester, that's all there is to it!" she said, a little mockingly, as she craned her neck smugly.

"When he told me once a gannet toucan live as cheaply as one, I thought he was proposing. Then I realized, a guinea might be pulling another one of his fly-by-night tricks," Billie said stiltedly.

"Face the music, Billie. Since the Stork Club let him go for having too many cockateels, he's just an unemployed singer," Cooie crowed.

"Well, he's a pretty good warbler and a fair humming bird, but I guess his voice is not orkestrel quality."

"The only function his mouth has is as a flycatcher," Cooie criticized. "He's always been the blackbird of the Bob White family. Somebody needs to snap, grackle and pop him good."

"All you do is snipe, Cooie!" Jay shrieked loudly. "Go fly a kite if you can't be more kind."

"If he gets what he deserves, justice will be swift. A cardinal rule is, keep an eagle eye out for anyone who wants a loan, especially a fancy peacock like Bob White," Cooie said.

"Where is he now?" Jay asked.

"He's such a roadrunner, I guess he flew the coop," Billie said.

"Maybe he migrated with the Baltimore Orioles," Cooie clucked. "Boy! You gotta watch birds like him like a hawk."

"Cooie, if you don't quit parroting the same stuff over and over again, you're gonna egret it! You remind me of a magpie!" Billie called at the top of her voice. "What do you think, Jay?"

"I hate to say it, but Bobolink up with some other chickadee, owl bet my bottom waxwing on that."

Billie started to cry again. "If I ever catch up with that turkey, it'll be his swan song. He'll be dried up pecker wood," she told her two friends. "Well," she sighed, "Ibis hurry and replace some feathers he took from my nest. My down is just about scauped. Hope it grosbeck soon."

"He was robin your nest, too?" Cooie cried.

"Yeah, and now it's time to pay the piper," Billie said sadly.

"What's thrush?" Jay asked.

"Ostrich my luck if I don't plover for some petrel to gas up my bird buggy soon," Billie replied.

"What a lark! May I go with you?" Cooie chirped. "I'll show you where to go. You make a left tern down the road."

"Towhee! What a mess!" Jay sympathized. "Guess I'd like to come along."

Billie clacked her bill together with resolve. "OK, Jay! Come on! From heron out, Cooie, it's gonna be just the three of us: emu and me!"

### **A CALL FOR PAPERS**

*Leonard Ashley, current president of the American Society of Geolinguistics, appeals to Word Ways readers to submit papers (of a length to be read in 15 minutes) to the conference Geolinguistics in the 'Nineties, to be held at the CUNY Graduate Center on West 42nd Street in New York in late October, 1992. 300-word abstracts must be sent to Prof. Jesse Levitt, 485 Brooklawn Avenue, Fairfield CT 06432 by June 1. The conference proceedings will be published.*