

- 6 Tommy gazed at his mom with big eyes, his expression concerned and sympathetic for the bird and her eggs.
- 7 "Mom," Tommy asked, "how can we help her protect her babies?"
- 8 Jake scowled at his brother. He had nothing against birds, but the treehouse was his sanctuary; he went there to play, to read, to get away from the world—it was *his* spot.
- 9 Jake saw Tommy and his mother sit down to devise a plan to protect the fledgling family. He crossed his arms and grumbled under his breath when Tommy looked over at him expectantly. He shut his eyes and reminisced about his favorite place in the tree, where he would look out from his high perch at the happenings below. But then his mind drifted to the bird that had fled when he spoke too loudly, and of the helpless newborns that would soon be pecking their way out of their eggs. Jake opened his eyes and sighed: he could give up his tree for just a little while. Smiling at his younger brother, he suggested they each surrender a bit of their lawn-mowing money to buy birdseed.
- 10 "We'll leave some out in a bowl," Jake explained. "Then the mother bird won't need to search everywhere for food, and she can spend more time with the eggs."
- 11 So as the flowers burst into blooms around the yard and the season's warm sun stretched over the skies, Tommy and Jake resolved to share their beloved treehouse in order to keep the birds safe and fed. They continued sharing it, even after they began hearing the soft, hoarse cheeping of newly hatched baby birds. Knowing they'd have their treehouse back soon, the boys found places to play nearby, watching the baby birds grow through Jake's binoculars and proud to help protect and bring forth some of spring's brightest gifts.