

The Prince and the Coddling Mother



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- ❑ **Ivandoe and Bert stumble upon a village of songbirds that just so happens to be Bert's birthplace. There, Ivandoe meets Benjamin and Beatrice, Bert's parents, along with his siblings. Unfortunately, Beatrice continues to treat Bert like a hatchling, and now he is determined to prove to her that he is more than capable of caring for himself.**

le Bert had been on his quest. Bert also told his family about the many adventures he and Ivandoe had been on. The stories frightened his mother who had looks of concern on her face. "I certainly hope you've been staying safe!" Beatrice said. "Yes mum." Bert replied. That night Bert attempted to sleep with his siblings in the nest, but he found it extremely uncomfortable. Even though he was warm, sleeping in a pile of other bluebirds huddling together actually made it difficult for him to sleep. Bert slowly and quietly exited the nest sneaking past his mother and father. He flew down to a small nest he had built located close to Ivandoe's tent. "That is much better." Bert said as he dozed off in his own personal nest.

That morning Bert was bombarded by his mother. "Good morning sweetheart! How are you today! Did you sleep well? No crooked feathers or injured wings?" "No, mother I am just fine." Bert replied. "Oh, good, because I brought some worms for you! You know what they say, the early bird-." "Gets the worm." Bert said in an annoyed tone. "Like I haven't heard Ivandoe and Bert wandered through the forest until they arrived at a village of songbirds. Robins, chickadees, cardinals, sparrows, and of course, bluebirds flew throughout the trees. Bert was incredibly happy while Ivandoe looked confused. "Where are we?" he asked. "This is my home village sire! I hatched and grew up here! My nest shouldn't be too far-." Before Bert could say another word, two bluebirds raced down and embraced him. "Mother, father!" Bert exclaimed. "I am so happy to see you, Bertie!" exclaimed Beatrice. "It's great to know you're safe!" "Good to see you son! I knew you would do well on your quest." Benjamin added. "Hello Mr. Benjamin, Mrs. Beatrice."

Ivandoe said politely. “Your highness.” the two bluebirds said in sync while bowing. “So good to know my whittle Bert has someone keeping him safe.” Beatrice said. “Mum.” Bert said embarrassingly. “I’m so proud of you Bert!” Benjamin said while patting his son’s back. “I assume you and Ivandoe have made quite the team huh!” “Indeed father!” Bert replied. “It’s me and the prince against the forest!” As Ivandoe approached Bert he was immediately swarmed by five young bluebirds. “Who are you?” They all asked. Ivandoe had no idea how to respond and said, “Bert?” in confusion. Bert flew down to the other bluebirds and hugged them. “Bert, we missed you!” They all said in unison. “These are my siblings’ sire!” Bert exclaimed. “My older sisters are Briar, Brooke, and Bailey; my older brothers are Beau and Ben.” “Well, it’s nice to meet all of you.” Ivandoe said in a kind voice. Bert’s siblings all landed on the prince before bombarding Bert. “Bert, you must see this new play tomorrow! I am the lead actor!” exclaimed Beau. “Father and I discovered a new type of minnow in the lake yesterday, Bert!” exclaimed Ben. “I have been working on new spells the whole time you have been gone little brother! I hope you are interested in seeing them!” exclaimed Briar. “I have been working on a perfect painting of our tree and nest!” exclaimed Brooke. “I’ve been helping mum find delicious new insects in woods!” exclaimed Bailey. “Slow down kids.” Benjamin said. “Your brother is only visiting, and he just came home from a long journey. I am sure he would like to rest, then you can catch up on everything that has happened since he left.” “Okay dad.” Bert’s siblings said in unison. “I hope you’ve been able to find worms all by yourself!” “Yes mum! I have been able to find food. I have been able to do all sorts of things since I left home! The Prince and I fought some monsters, battled bandits, and dueled with witches!” Benjamin laughed and ruffled Bert’s feathers. “Seems like you and the prince have been on quite the adventure!” “Indeed father!” Bert exclaimed. “Did you say monsters!?” Beatrice exclaimed in fear. “No need to worry

mother! I always outsmart them! Along with the prince of course.” Beatrice looked shocked and hugged her son once again. “Be careful my little nestling! You could be seriously hurt! Like the time you tried to fly off that branch and smacked into the ground!” Bert sighed and reassured his mother. “I have been traveling with the prince for quite some time mother. I am braver than you think.” Beatrice examined her son and shook her head. “My little chick has fighting for his life!” “Beatrice dear,” Benjamin replied. “Bert assists the prince! I’m sure he can handle anything.” “It is true mother! I am the bravest I have ever been!” Beatrice hugged Bert and clung to him. “Bert my little blueberry, you were afraid of your own shadow before you left the nest. Now you expect me to believe you can fight monsters?” Bert struggled to break free from his mother’s grasp and said, “Mother, I was a hatchling then. I barely even had flight feathers!” “Sweetheart, promise me you will continue to stay close to the prince. I feel safer knowing you are under royal protection.” Bert sighed and nodded his head. “That’s my sweet little chick!” she exclaimed. “So good to your mother.” “Your father and I will return to nest. If you need anything do not be afraid to ask my little blueberry.” Bert’s siblings followed Beatrice and Benjamin back to the nest. Bert looked embarrassed but smiled and watched as they flew off. “Little blueberry?” Ivandoe asked while chuckling. Bert sighed and flew after his family. When they arrived at the redwood tree, he was filled with nostalgia. His family’s nest was still located inside of the tree. He sprawled out on it and remembered happy memories. “It is good to be home.” Bert said as he sat in the nest. Throughout the day Bert caught up with his family. His siblings embraced many activities which he did that a thousand times.” he mumbled. “Mum you’re not helping!” Bert said. “No need to feed me!” he said while avoiding the worms. “I can find food all by myself. I even prepare the prince’s turnips!” As Bert attempted to leave the nest, Beatrice was insistent on giving him worms. Initially, he was resistant, but finally accepted the worms his mother had

gathered for him. He opened his beak as she placed them in and smiled with worms wriggling in his beak. Then, Bert swallowed them with a look of embarrassment on his face. "Thank you, mother." he replied sarcastically. Before he could take off, Bert was stopped by Beatrice once again. "Hold on my little nestling, you have not washed up. Your feathers are dirty and ruffled! You cannot fly without clean feathers, blueberry! We can find you a nice lake or puddle of water and clean you up!" When Beatrice looked around, she noticed Bert was missing. "Bertie!" she shouted. "Oh, Bert dear where are you? Come to your mummy!" Bert flew faster than he ever had before. Racing to hide from Beatrice. Ivandoe was washing up in the lake when he felt something bump him. "What the-". He said in confusion. "Sorry sire it's me!" Bert said in a worried voice. "Why are you flying so fast Bertie?" Ivandoe asked. Ivandoe could hear Beatrice calling Bert's name. "Bertie! Oh Bert! Where are you my little blueberry!" "Sire you must hide me!" Bert exclaimed. My mum has been chasing me around all day! She is incredibly overprotective! I have not had a moments peace!" Ivandoe nodded his head and smiled signaling for Bert to hide behind him. Bert flew behind Ivandoe and was quieter than a mouse. "Hello your majesty." Beatrice said. "Have you seen a baby bird around here?" Ivandoe shrugged and shook his head. "No. I have not seen Bert recently. Maybe he flew back to his nest." Beatrice looked suspiciously at Ivandoe noticing a drop of sweat. "Well, I guess I will just fly home." Beatrice said sarcastically. She glanced back at Ivandoe and chirped. Bert attempted to resist responding but ended up chirping loudly back. Beatrice flew to Bert and hugged him. "There you are my little blueberry. Let's get you cleaned up." Beatrice held Bert's right wing and brought him to the shallow end of the lake. "Do not mind us your highness. Beatrice said. I am just bathing my baby!" "Mum your not helping." Bert said in frustration. Before Beatrice started cleaning Bert's feathers, his siblings sat on a nearby branch laughing their little heads off. "You need help

washing your back feathers, Bertie!” Beau exclaimed. “Is mum going to sit on you when you come back to the nest!” Shouted Brooke. Bert was embarrassed and shouted, “It is not funny!” Beatrice looked up and noticed her other chicks. “Look Bert! Your sisters and brothers are here! Maybe they can join us!” Bert’s siblings looked at each other before Briar exclaimed, “Do you guys hear dad calling!” “Yeah!” exclaimed her siblings. “We better go see what he wants!” Added Ben. Bert exclaimed, “Cowards!” As his brothers and sisters took off into the forest. “I did not hear Benjamin? Did you Bert?” Beatrice asked. Bert sighed and resisted his mother’s attempts to bathe him. Beatrice scooped up water and washed Bert. The young bluebird attempted to escape her grasp, but she brought him back into the shallow end of the lake. “Hold still Blueberry!” Beatrice exclaimed. When she removed his hat Bert almost had a heart attack exclaiming, “Mum! Do not ruin my hat!” “Do not fret Bertie, I just need to clean your head feathers. Beatrice used her beak and cloth to clean Bert. She cleaned his front and back feathers, under his wings, his legs, and face. Ivandoe chuckled and attempted to hide his face while Bert’s Mum cleaned him up. When she was finished, Bert’s feathers were puffed out to the point where he looked like porcupine. He gave a long hard shake before his mother came back and hugged him. “My little Bertie! You are perfectly clean now! My baby bird looks neat and smells even better!” Bert was embarrassed as Ivandoe tried to hide his laughter. “Oh, and I have this for you Blueberry.” Beatrice said. As Bert attempted to fly away, Beatrice shoved a cricket into his beak. Then he swallowed and retorted “Not helping mum!” Beatrice chuckled as she led Bert out of the water. Bert quickly flew off to play with his brothers and sisters. Returning to some of their favorite spots they used to play at when they were small hatchlings. Ivandoe watched from the forest floor as the bluebirds took to the skies. “See if you can keep up Bert!” exclaimed Beau. Bert flapped his wings as hard as he could until he reached the top of a redwood tree. He

performed four loops in the air as his siblings cheered for him. "I have never seen Bert fly so high! Bailey said to Brooke. "Looks like the quest made him braver!" Added Beau. "Great job little brother!" exclaimed Briar. Suddenly, Bert heard his mother yell his name in fear. "BERT my baby what are you doing flying so high! Your father and I could see you from the nest!" "Mum! What are you doing!" Bert said as his mother grabbed his left wing. "I am flying you back to the forest floor where it is safe!" "But mum! I have flown high like this before!" Bert said. "Blueberry, don't speak when you are landing you could hurt yourself!" Beatrice replied. Bert sighed as Beatrice examined him for injuries. Beatrice glanced angrily at Ivandoe and exclaimed, "Did... did you put him up to this!!!" "No, no never Mrs. Beatrice! I would never tell Bert to do anything like that!" "Don't blame him mum!" Beau quickly exclaimed. "We were the ones encouraging him." Beatrice looked shocked and shook her head. "How could you five be so irresponsible! Letting your little brother fly so high! What if he had gotten hurt!" "Take it easy on them Bea." Benjamin said. "Bert is a phenomenal flyer! I am sure he could handle it." "Bert is a chick, Benjamin!" Beatrice replied. "He cannot defend himself!" Beatrice hugged Bert tightly and patted him on the head. "Oh, my poor baby!" "Mum." Bert said uncomfortably. "You're hugging me to tigh-." Before Bert could finish his sentence, a white splat came out and landed on the floor. "OOOOOOOH... Bert's siblings said in unison. "Oh Bea." Benjamin said in a worried voice. Ivandoe looked away in both disgust and fear. Bert finally exclaimed, "ENOUGH!" As he broke free from his mother's embrace. "I am sick and tired of you treating me like a helpless little hatchling! I can handle myself! All you have done is embarrass me!" Beatrice looked shocked but attempted to offer Bert a worm once again. This time, Bert slapped the worm from her wing and exclaimed, "This is EXACTLY why I left the nest!! You never let me do anything! I cannot even fly without you telling me I'm too weak!" Beatrice softly replied,

“But Blueberry-“ “NO!” Shouted Bert. “I am not your blueberry or whittle chick anymore! I am Bert! B-E-R-T! And from now on I will sleep in my OWN nest, find my OWN food, and make my OWN decisions!” Bert quickly flew off in a huff while his siblings, mother, and father were in shock. “I think you broke Bert.” Beau said to his mother. Ivandoe looked like he had just seen a ghost. “Wow I never knew Bert got angry let alone heard him yell!” Beatrice gave Benjamin a concerned look before he calmly said, “I’ll go talk to him.” and flew off. Bert skipped stones on a small lake and sighed. “Hey, son! Thought I would drop in.” Benjamin said calmly. Bert sighed and continued skipping stones. “I thought I told mum not to-.” “Your mum did not send me.” Benjamin replied. “I came here to tell you the reason she acts so...crazy. Especially when it comes to you.” Bert crossed his arms and sat down next to his father. “You know, your mum was quite the adventurer herself Bert. Before you, your sisters, and brothers hatched your mother, and I went on our own adventures.” “Really!” Bert replied in a surprised voice. Benjamin nodded his head and patted Bert on the back. “Funny enough, your mum and I met when we flew into each other one night, we were your age at the time. We were both reckless and wanted to explore the most mystical areas of the forest. Your mother never really lost her adventure-seeking spirit until we had eggs. All she could think about was keeping all six of you safe.” Bert smiled as Benjamin placed him under his left wing. “Unfortunately, Bert you were born a runt, you used to be so tiny and helpless. To be honest, your mum was too scared to even sit on you, but you survived. Your mum to this day has not forgiven herself for what happened the first time your tried to fly.” Bert sighed and remembered the garden snake that had snuck up on him when he landed on the forest floor. “I remember,” he replied solemnly. “You see Bert, sometimes parents do the wrong things for the right reasons.” Benjamin said. “I agree your mother is definitely clingily and ridiculously overprotective, but she only acts that way because she loves you, and she would not forgive

herself if anything bad happened to you again.” “I understand.” Bert replied. “I hope someday your mother can see that you have grown into a brave and independent young bluebird. It is hard for her because you are no longer a chick that depends on her, and your mum has a tough time excepting that.” “Thank you, father.” Bert replied while hugging him. “I will be back at the nest if you need me” Benjamin replied. Bert watched as his father flew away and thought deeply about what he had said.

While Bert sat on the branch, he noticed a large shadow standing over him. When he looked up he noticed a long sharp beak. “Falc-!” Bert tried to yell but the falcon had covered his beak with his wings. “Well, look what we have here.” The falcon said maliciously. “A tasty blue treat!” Bert backed away as the falcon walked approached. “You songbirds are pathetic! He exclaimed. Sitting in trees and crying your whittle eyes out! It might not taste good, but then again, it might!” Bert flew as fast as he could to escape the falcon. Unfortunately, he was being pursued by a quick and agile bird of prey. “Come back here!” the falcon shouted. Bert flew into a hole in a nearby tree. He remained silent until he noticed his brothers and sisters. “What are you doing here Bert?” asked Beau. “I thought you were blowing off steam?” “Shhh!” Bert whispered. “There’s a falcon chasing me!” “Bert’s siblings laughed and shook their heads. “Aw Bert, my crazy little brother. There is no falcon! Falcons have not been seen here for years.” In that moment, Bert’s siblings heard a loud “EEEEEEEEEEK!” as the falcon flew by the hole. In that moment, Bert’s siblings huddled into the corner of the tree, and quivered with fear. “Okay, that is definitely a falcon!” Beau exclaimed. Bert looked at the falcon circling the tree and got an idea. “I have a plan guys!” he said quietly. “No Bert, I have a plan!” replied Beau. “We wait here until mum and dad get back. Then they can scare off the falcon.” Bert shook his head and said, “Whatever happened to not depending on mum and dad?” Beau shrugged and continued to hide

with the rest of his siblings. “Well Bert, that changes when a vicious bird of prey is trying to eat us!” Bert joined his siblings in the corner and whispered. “Do you think that will work?” asked Brooke. “I know it will.” Bert replied. As Ivandoe and Beatrice began searching for Bert they heard a loud shrieking in the distance. Benjamin flew to her side before she exclaimed, “Did you hear that, Benjamin! A FALCON! Please tell me you did not leave our children alone with a falcon!” Benjamin looked shocked and panicked at the sound. “I just started hearing shrieking dearest!” Benjamin said. “MY BABIES!!” Beatrice exclaimed in fear. “Come Benjamin, we must protect them!” Beatrice flew faster than she ever had before while Benjamin flew behind her. “I am coming Bert!” Ivandoe exclaimed as he followed the older bluebirds. The falcon landed on a branch closest to the hole in the tree. He stuck his head inside and searched for the young bluebirds. “Come out, don’t be shy!” he said jokingly. “I just want to eat—I mean... meet you.” The falcon’s talons dug into the wood as he realized they had vanished. “Those little blue pests!” he shouted in anger. When the falcon turned around, he noticed all the young bluebirds were assembled behind him. Bert stood at the top while the others were below him. “Hey why does Bert get to be the head!” shouted Ben. “Well, I am the youngest---, but this is not the time to discuss it, Ben!” Bert replied. The falcon was dumbfounded and confused. He tilted his head to the side before laughing hysterically. “You tiny birds think you can fight me and win? Huh! I have eaten chickens twice your size.” The falcon sharpened his talons and let out a loud “EEEEEEK!” Then charged at them. Bert and his siblings dodged the falcon’s first charge and flew towards it. “Remember everyone, stay together, and keep him distracted as long as possible!” Bert’s brothers and sisters nodded and started diving at the falcon one by one. The falcon snapped and swiped at them, but the young bluebirds were persistent and pecked him from all sides. “Ouch, ooh, ahh!” The falcon exclaimed in pain. “You really think this will stop

me!” The Falcon shrieked as it continued to snap and swipe at them. When Benjamin and Beatrice arrived, they were surprised to see their kids taking on the falcon. “Are those.... our kids!?” Beatrice said in shock. Benjamin laughed and nodded his head. “When Beatrice looked up, she saw Bert flying above the falcon with a look of determination on his face. “Bert! Blueberry, wait I’m coming!” Benjamin blocked Beatrice with his wing which confused and frightened her. “Benjamin! What on Earth do you think you’re doing! Are you crazy! Have you lost your mind!!!” “Shhhh. Just watch Bea.” “But there is a falcon, Benjamin! That vicious beast will rip them all apart!” Benjamin stared at Beatrice once again and stopped her from getting closer. “Trust me... just watch.” he said calmly. Beatrice saw her daughters plucking off the falcon's tail feathers while her sons were diving and pecking at its wings. Bert puffed out his chest and flew to the top of a redwood tree, then he took a deep breath and dove down quickly. He stretched out his right leg and kicked the falcon on the top of his head. The falcon saw stars as Bert’s foot made an impact on his head. He looked dazed and passed out on a nearby branch. “Wahoo!! We did it!” exclaimed Bert’s siblings. “Nice job little brother!” Beau said while hugging him. While all of them celebrated Beatrice smiled as tears formed in her eyes. “Bert!” she exclaimed with joy. “Oh, you... you were so daring!” Benjamin flew over and landed next to Bert. “My boy you are one wild bluebird!” he said with pride. “I’m... I’m sorry for the way I treated you son. I was just trying to protect you. I know you are not a little chick anymore and you have shown me you are more than capable of taking care of yourself. I have never been prouder.” Bert smiled as tears of happiness flooded his eyes. “I love you mum!” he said as he gave Beatrice a hug. “All of you were brave today! I have never seen young bluebirds take on a falcon!” Beatrice exclaimed as she hugged the rest of her children. Benjamin sat next to Beatrice with a large smile on his face. Suddenly, she gave him a disapproving glance and smacked him

on the beak. "Ow! "What was that for?" Benjamin asked. "That was preventing me from defending my babies!" Beatrice replied. "Not only was it reckless, but it was also foolish and dangerous!" Beatrice's eyes softened up as she rested her head on Benjamin's shoulder. "But that is why I love you, and this is for showing me how strong our children are." Beatrice kissed Benjamin on the beak before placing her head under his. Benjamin blushed and lightly chuckled. "I love you to Bea." "Awww." Bert's sisters said. "Ewww!" Ben and Beau said in disgust. "Family hug!" Benjamin said as he grabbed Bert, his siblings, and Beatrice. The bluebirds embraced each other while giggling and laughing. Ivandoe watched happily with tears of happiness in his eyes. "Wow Bert, you have such a wonderful family!" he exclaimed. "Well, what are you waiting for your highness!" Benjamin exclaimed. "Join in!" Ivandoe wiped the tears from his eyes and hugged the bluebirds. "Oh, you are all the best!" "Okay, okay you're crushing our lungs!" Benjamin replied. "Oh sorry!" Ivandoe said. "Sometimes I forget you guys are small."

The End