

“The Bluebird”

By Bunny Sandefur

C.S. Lewis once wrote: “Love is not affectionate feeling, but a steady wish for the loved person's ultimate good as far as it can be obtained”

I'm sure we all have wished for something that seemed impossible at one time or another. Today I will tell you about (I) a little bluebird who had a wish and (II) how love granted his wish.

There was once a handsome little bluebird, whose feathers were a magnificent shade of sapphire. When he soared through the air and between the branches of the trees, the sun glistened off of his wings, making him look like a jewel flying about. He lived in a park where humans would come to picnic, play games and do the usual recreational activities in which humans do. He was very fascinated by humans and everything they did, and he certainly had no need to fear them because they were always delighted by him and his beautiful song. You see, he was the only bluebird that lived in this particular park, and in fact bluebirds were not common at all in this area. He was a very bold little bird as well, and had no problem landing on a human's shoulder, where he could get a closer look at what they were doing. They say that a bird's eye view is a nice picture of everything going on, but he thought it would be better if he could see things from a human's perspective. He loved watching families enjoying each other's company, and he especially loved watching sweethearts fall in love. It was his hobby to find a couple and sing to them, watching their actions discreetly. How he longed to join them and do as they do. He desired this above anything in the world, to just be human so he could be free to go anywhere, do anything and experience all of the joys in which people did.

He expressed his grievances to the other birds. They told him to stop dreaming of such nonsense because it was impossible to become human, and he should be thankful that he was attractive and could sing so beautifully. There was one bird in particular though who was especially jealous of the bluebird because he was not as brightly colored, and his song was not as sweet, so the humans did not pay him as much attention. He went to the bluebird one day and told him “I know a way to become human. It is very difficult, but you are brave, and I know you alone could do it.” The bluebird became very excited and said “Tell me, please!” The other bird looked the bluebird straight in the eyes and said “In the middle of the day, when the sun is very high, you must fly as fast as you can up towards it, never taking your eyes off of the sun. While you do this, you must think about becoming human, and focus on nothing else. Once you get close enough so that the almighty sun can hear your thoughts, it will grant you your wish.” The bluebird thought this was a splendid plan, and thanked the other bird for his kindness. The other bird, of course, knew very well that this was not true, and that flying to high was dangerous. However, he would do anything to get rid of the bluebird so that maybe the humans would pay attention to him instead for once.

The very next day, the bluebird did just what the other bird had told him to do. Right around noon, when the sun was at its highest, beating down on the Earth below, the little bluebird took a deep breath and then took off as fast as possible, flapping his little wings as hard as he could. Up and up and up he climbed into the sky, keeping his eyes open and

focused on the sun. He concentrated in his head, his wish to be human to be free to run, jump, play, picnic and fall in love. Higher he soared, straight upwards, until his head began to feel light and his vision was blurred. Suddenly, every thing went black, and the little blue bird began to fall from the heavens. Luckily for him, his fall was broken by a water, as he landed in a pond. His body was submerged from the impact, completely limb and unconscious. A turtle who was having a leisurely afternoon swim noticed the poor bluebird and came to his rescue. The turtle fished him out of the water, and dragged him back up to the surface, laying him down on the edge of the pond. He laid him on his belly and patted his back until water came out of his mouth and the little bluebird began to choke back into consciousness.

“Little bluebird,” said the turtle, “what on earth were you doing?” The little bluebird told the turtle of the plan and his wish to become human. The turtle was very old, and seemed quite knowledgeable. He sat for a moment and thought to himself, and then finally said to him “I may know of a way in which you can become human. Of course I must warn you that any such lofty ideas have never been achieved without a price, and I unfortunately do not know of anyone who was tried to do such as a thing as you. However I do know of a legend that says if a human falls in love with you, the power of their heart will grant you a wish. Perhaps if you do so, you may find that your own wish will come true.” The bluebird thought this was an even better idea than the last, and he should have gone to the turtle in the first place because there were no older or wiser creature in the park than he.

So the little bluebird set off to make a human fall in love with him, and that he did quite skillfully. He found a girl in a wheelchair, whom he had sang for before, sitting all alone under a tree, eating a picnic for one. She looked very lonely, so the bluebird decided to join her. He landed first on the handle of her basket to get her attention. “Hello little bluebird!” she said with delight. He sang to her his most beautiful of songs, never ones taking his eyes off of her glorious smile. When he finished, the girl said “Thank you for singing to me, little bluebird. It is nice to have a friend today. I wish you could go home with me and sing every day.” He then took the opportunity, and perched himself on her shoulder. She was startled at first, but then simple overjoyed. “Does that mean you want to come home with me?” she asked, to which the bluebird simply chirped in reply.

Taking that as a yes, the girl took the bluebird home with her, stopping only at the pet-store to buy a cage. She lived alone in an efficiency apartment, which only had one room with a bed, a table and a bookshelf. There was a window with a clear view of the sky and some trees outside. She placed the bluebird in the cage next to the window, but left the door open so he could fly in and out of the cage whenever he liked.

He following days seemed to pass quite slowly. The bluebird was hardly ever in the cage, and preferred to spend time with his human friend whenever she was home. Problem was, she barely was ever there because she had a job in which she worked very long hours and did not come home until late at night. She was always very delighted to see the little bluebird when she came home, and she talked to him just about every moment she was awake. “Little bluebird, you are so lucky. You are beautiful, you can sing and you can fly so majestically through the sky. I, on the other-hand, can’t even walk. My legs have been

useless since I was a little girl, and there's nothing I can do to fix them. I certainly have no striking features, and I cannot sing pretty songs such as you. No one wants to be with a girl in a wheelchair, for I am just a burden on everyone. I am so jealous of you, little blue bird, but happy that you are here with me because I am so very alone." She smiled at him, and he sang her a beautiful song, much like he had done the first day in the park.

That night while the girl slept, the bluebird perched in the windowsill and thought of the things that the girl had said to him. He then thought of the park and how much he missed flying about freely, with the wind against him and the ground below. The bluebird was overcome by sadness, not so much for himself, but for the girl. He realized that to be human was not just fun and games, and being so would not necessarily mean to be free. In fact, the girl was anything but free, confined to both her wheelchair, and her life in this tiny box apartment. He missed his freedom, but more than that he wished that she could be free as well. It pained him to see her live her life so confined and alone, believing that no one wanted to be near her because of her handicap. More than he ever wanted to be human, he wanted the girl to be happy.

The next morning, while the girl was sleeping, the little bluebird decided to wake her with a song. As he sang from his cage, she stirred in her bed. Something funny happened, though. As she woke, her legs began to move, as they never had before. The girl sat up in her bed, paying no attention to this matter, only focused on the bluebird. When he noticed her legs moving, he immediately stopped singing. "What is wrong little bluebird? Please continue, it was lovely!" He immediately flew over to her and perched on her toes. He hopped around on each one of them playfully. "Stop," she said through laughter, "that tickles!" She giggled and fidgeted about. Suddenly she noticed that her legs were moving, and she was aghast! "Sweet baby Jesus!" she exclaimed, and jumped out of bed excitedly. The bluebird had never seen her so happy. She raced to get dressed and then left the apartment to experience a day with her newfound freedom. The bluebird was very happy for her, and yet still very sad that he was once again alone. No longer did he care about being human, however he did wish to have his freedom back.

The girl did not come home until very, very late that night. The little bluebird stood perched in the windowsill, almost motionless. His heart was once again very heavy. The girl's joy was diminished by the sight of her unhappy friend. "Little bluebird, you seem so sad! I am sorry that I left you alone for so long. Today was the happiest day in my entire life, next to the day in which I met you." The bluebird simply looked at her with sad eyes, his heart too heavy to sing. She saw this and said "Little bluebird, you have brought me so much joy. You have made me happy when no one else could. I love you dearly, and I thank you for that. But now that this miracle has happened, I am afraid that I will not be home as much to spend time with you, and it is simply not fair that I now have freedom, while I am keeping you from yours." With that said, she picked up the little bluebird and left with him. She took him back to the park, in the place in which they had first met. She held him out in the palm of her hand and said "Thank you little bluebird for making me happy. I had wished all of my life to be able to walk, and now that I can, I want you to be free. I am sorry that I took you from your home and tried to keep you locked up. It was very unfair of me. I want you to be happy, just as you have

made me. Please return home now.” The little bluebird sang to her one last song, perching once more upon the girl’s should. When he was finished, he examined her smile for one last time before flying away.

On that night the bluebird returned home, happy to be able to fly once more through the crisp, clear sky. Never before in his life had he felt so free and so full of purpose. For although the little bird did not become human as he had wished, he had indeed caused a human to fall in love with him, and his dearest wish **was** granted. For at that moment, his wish for her to be happy was more important to him than his own. And so they both are today, the girl and the bluebird, who are happy and both free as a bird.