

The Copper Sparrow



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In a snug workshop at the edge of the woods lived a lonely inventor. His name was Mr. Elias, and his only companions were his tools and his thoughts. He had kind grey eyes and wispy white hair that stuck out under his round spectacles. One day, he decided to build a friend. He polished copper and tiny gears until they shone.



Mr. Elias worked for many days. He shaped a small body of polished copper and wings of riveted metal. He gave it a brass beak and bright round glass eyes. Then he placed a tiny clockwork heart inside its chest. When he wound the key on its back, the heart glowed amber and began to tick. 'Hello, little Copper,' whispered the inventor.



Copper fluttered his metal wings and rose into the air. Mr. Elias laughed with joy. He taught Copper to fly between the shelves and out the open window. Copper loved the feel of wind on his copper feathers. But he was curious about the world beyond the workshop. One morning, he flew out into the big green forest.



The forest was full of real sparrows. They chirped and hopped on branches, their soft brown feathers ruffling in the breeze. When Copper landed nearby, they all went quiet. His shiny copper body gleamed in the sunlight, and his metal wings clinked softly. The sparrows stared with their black eyes. 'What is that?' whispered one.



A bold young sparrow named Pip hopped closer. His brown and cream feathers were neat, and his perky tail flicked with interest. 'Hello!' he chirped. 'You're very shiny. What are you?' Copper tilted his head. 'I'm Copper,' he said. 'I'm a sparrow, like you. But I'm made of metal.' Pip's black eyes widened. 'Made of metal? How strange!'



Pip asked a hundred questions. 'Does your heart really tick? Can you eat seeds? Why are your wings so stiff?' Copper answered as best he could. He showed Pip his glowing clockwork heart. Pip was fascinated. 'Your heart glows!' he said. 'That's amazing!' The other sparrows still kept their distance, but Pip stayed close. Copper felt a warm tickle in his chest.



Old Wren, the wisest sparrow in the flock, fluttered down. Her grey-brown feathers were slightly ruffled, and her speckled chest puffed out. She looked at Copper with wise dark eyes. 'A metal bird?' she said slowly. 'I have never seen such a thing. Are you sure you belong here?' Copper's wings drooped. 'I don't know,' he said quietly.



Copper tried to join the sparrows' games. They played catch-the-seed and tag among the branches. But his metal wings were too stiff for quick turns, and his brass beak made a clinking sound when he pecked. The other sparrows giggled and moved away. 'He can't do it like us,' they whispered. Copper felt very alone. Only Pip stayed by his side.



That afternoon, the wind began to blow. At first it was just a breeze, but soon it grew stronger. The trees swayed, and leaves flew through the air. The sparrows huddled together in a bush. 'A storm is coming!' cried Old Wren. 'We must get to the big oak tree for shelter!' But the wind was already howling.



The sparrows tried to fly, but the strong winds pushed them back. Their soft feathers were tossed about, and they tumbled through the air. 'I can't fly in this!' squeaked Pip, clinging to a branch. Copper watched his friends struggle. His metal wings felt steady in the gusty wind. He knew what he had to do. 'Follow me!' he called. 'I can fly through this!'



Copper spread his riveted metal wings and launched into the storm. The wind battered his copper body, but his metal wings held strong. He flew in front, cutting a path through the gusts. 'This way!' he chirped. 'Stay close!' The sparrows, amazed, followed his lead. Copper's clockwork heart ticked steadily as he guided them between the swaying trees.



Copper led the flock through the strong winds, his metal wings beating firmly. He dodged branches and flew low where the wind was weaker. Pip followed right behind him, and Old Wren came next. The other sparrows trusted Copper's steady flight. Finally, they reached the big oak tree. Its thick trunk and wide branches offered a safe shelter from the storm.



Inside the oak's leafy shelter, the sparrows huddled together, safe and dry. Old Wren turned to Copper. 'You saved us,' she said, her wise eyes soft. 'Your metal wings are not strange—they are wonderful.' The other sparrows nodded and chirped their thanks. Copper's clockwork heart glowed warmly. He had never felt so happy.



When the storm passed, the forest sparkled with raindrops. Pip hopped over to Copper. 'You're the bravest sparrow I know,' he said. 'Will you stay with us?' Copper looked at his new friends. 'I would like that,' he said. From that day on, Copper lived among the sparrows. He still couldn't eat seeds, but he could tell the best stories.



Old Wren often sat with Copper, watching the sunset. 'We were foolish to fear your shiny wings,' she said. 'They are a gift.' Copper learned that being different wasn't something to hide. His metal wings and clockwork heart made him special. And helping others made his heart glow brighter than ever before.



One evening, Copper flew back to visit Mr. Elias. The inventor's eyes lit up when he saw his little sparrow. 'You've found friends!' he said. Copper nodded. 'And I helped them,' he chirped. Mr. Elias smiled, his wrinkles creasing. Copper knew he would always have a home in the workshop, but his heart belonged to the forest too.