

## A Season of Happiness Presents



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### Story Eleven – THE COMING OF THE GEESE

By Dave Hawkins

Preparations were being made in The Valley to welcome overseas visitors. These particular ones were geese who came every year from far away to build their nests and lay eggs. And they stayed in the Valley until the eggs had hatched and the young birds were old enough to fly by themselves.

Pronto was keeping a watch on the sky for a sign of the geese arriving. "I do love it when the geese come," he said happily. "They are always so chatty and friendly."

"Maybe to you," grumbled Wombat gloomily, "But I'm not as tall as them and they chase me."

"Perhaps it's because you go too close to their nests," suggested Pronto, "They probably think you are after their eggs."

"I don't see why. I told them I don't like eggs," insisted Wombat, "But they never seem to understand."

Pronto explained to his friend that the geese came from a foreign land and didn't speak the same language as The Valley people. "But they are really just the same as us," he went on to add. "They sound different, that's all."

Despite not wanting to agree with anything Pronto said; or anyone else, come to that; Wombat supposed he could be right. Thinking back to last year, he seemed to recall the geese were quite friendly when they weren't chasing him; and he did like their excited chatter and honking; even if he couldn't understand what they were talking about.

Soon the geese began arriving. The leaders came first, flying over the hills and into The Valley in small groups, looking down to see if it was safe to land in the usual place. It was, naturally, because The Valley people were expecting them and had laid out a special welcome for their overseas visitors.

When the first geese landed, everyone rushed up to greet them, As the geese and the people were making so much noise and talking at once, nobody really noticed they were

speaking in two different languages. All that really mattered was that everyone was laughing happily, which is the same in any language.

Usually, the more geese that landed, the happier the day became; but not this time. For some reason the geese arriving later were telling some tale which made the others very sad. Pronto and the rest of The Valley folk noticed and were getting quite sad themselves; although they didn't know why, no-one in The Valley being able to speak foreign-geese language. Then, to complicate things even further, Rainbow suddenly appeared in the sky above them.

Pronto turned and frowned at Wombat. "Did you call Rainbow?" he asked disapprovingly.

"I did not!" declared Wombat grumpily. "How could I? I didn't bother to bring my umbrella."

"Then it must have been the Drumlins," Pronto supposed. Like everyone else, they had come to welcome the geese and were standing in a group nearby. Pronto looked at Red and asked for an explanation.

"We did not call Rainbow either," said Red, "Not without orders."

"No," Purple chimed in and added: "More's the pity because we could have done the Drumlin dance."

A soft voice echoed down from the sky as Rainbow spoke: "I decided to come, even though I had not been called," she said. "You have noticed how sad the geese are. The reason is that a few of them were injured when they flew through a bad storm. They are still coming, but their wings are damaged and they cannot fly very well."

"Oh dear," moaned Orange in a whisper. "That means they might not be able to land properly," and it sounded as if she was ready to cry.

"They'll most likely crash," said Purple, making more of the matter than was necessary. "Crash, wallop - really horrendously!"

"Do stop with that nonsense, you silly Drumlin," Yellow chided in her usual hoity-toity way. "If you can't come up with something useful, keep quiet."

"What er... we er... need," said Blue, stroking his tie, "Is some place er... soft for them to er... land on."

"I can't think of anything softer than Purple's head," said Yellow jokingly.

"Actually," said Green, who had been silent to that point because he had been thinking, "Every Drumlin is really very soft all the way though."

"Of course they are," declared Red loudly. "Drumlins are nice and soft and very cuddly – just the thing for badly-battered foreign geese to land on." He spun to face the other Drumlins. "Shape up, Drumlins," he bellowed. "Front and centre, and quick march to the landing area."

So, the Drumlins all marched to the middle of the paddock and lay down together on the hard ground making themselves into a big, soft mat for the injured geese to land on. And not only that: the late arrivals didn't have to ask where to land. Even from high in the sky, they couldn't fail to see the brightly coloured Drumlin-mat below.

As it happened, once all of the injured ones had landed safely, the other geese were so grateful to the Drumlins for saving their friends that they picked them up and carried them about the paddock, honking and hissing with joy. Then they thanked The Valley people for their kindness in welcoming them this year and every year. Not that anyone had a clue what they were saying; but they were all so happy that no-one really cared.

Pronto stood to one side watching the geese chattering and honking noisily. "I wonder what they're saying?" he asked Wombat.

"They're saying thank you," Wombat said very positively. "I know that after one of them started to teach me her language; and I'm going to learn to speak it properly."

Pronto was puzzled. "Why would you want to do that?"

"So that I can learn all about the foreign geese, and the places they've been, and the things they've seen. I want to be their friend, Pronto."

"Well, that's a very nice idea, Wombat," said Pronto. "Could I be their friend too, do you think?"

"Honk, hiss, honk honk," replied Wombat.

Pronto was totally confused. "And what does that mean?"

Wombat shrugged and began to shuffle off. "I have no idea. Let's go and ask the geese."