

# A Flock of Birds



A great flock of quail lived together in the forest. Food was plentiful and life was peaceful. One day a crafty hunter, who could imitate their song perfectly, came to the forest. When he whistled, a great group of quail gathered in response. When the flock landed on the ground, the hunter approached silently and threw a huge net over them. With a hearty laugh, he slung the net over his shoulder and took the quail to market. Each day he played his trick, and the flock grew smaller and smaller.

After some time, the wisest old quail assembled what was left of the flock and said, "The hunter is skilled and can easily trick you into his net. If you work together, he cannot defeat you. Beat your wings as one, and you will lift the net that binds you."

The flock listened carefully to the old quail's words. The next time the hunter came and threw his net over a group of quail, they were not dismayed. As one, they beat their wings. They rose, taking the net with them. They swooped down onto a tree. As the net caught and snagged in the tree's branches, the birds flew out from under it to freedom.

The hunter looked up in amazement and thought, "When the birds cooperate, I cannot capture them. Each bird is small and yet together they can lift the net!"

The next day, the hunter again flung his net over a large group of quail as they pecked seeds on the ground. Pleased with their mighty accomplishment of the day before, the quail began to beat their wings together. Accidentally, one quail bumped into another and started a ruckus. "Watch out!" squawked the bird. "You are stepping on my tail feathers."

"Someone pushed me!" retorted the other with a hard peck.

"This is no time to fight," scolded another still. "The hunter is almost here. We must all work together and peacefully fly as one."

"You are not the mighty ruler!" sniped the first. "Stop telling us what to do!"

*While they squabbled and scolded,  
postured and fought,  
the hunter arrived  
and the birds were caught.  
He scooped up his net  
and proclaimed, "I'm the winner!  
Together they're strong.  
Divided they're dinner."*