

The Poor Woman and the Little Canary Bird

Hans Christian Andersen

There was a miserably poor woman. She was very sad, for she had nothing to eat, and her husband was dead and had to be buried, but she was so poor that she could not afford to buy a coffin. And no one would help her, not a single person, and so she wept and prayed to the good Lord to help her, for He is so good to us all.

The window was open, and a tiny little bird flew into the room. It was a canary bird that had escaped from its cage and flown over all the rooftops, and now, having come in through the poor woman's window, it sat by the head of the dead man and sang so beautifully. It was as if it wanted to say to the woman, "You must no be so sad. Can't you hear how happy I am!"

And the poor woman took some bread crumbs in her hand and called to the little bird. It hopped over to her and ate the crumbs. It was so sweet.

Then there was a knock on the door. A woman entered, and when she saw the little canary bird that had flown in through the window, she said, "This is surely the bird that was written about in the newspaper today. It has flown away from some people down the street."

And so the miserably poor woman went to the people with the little bird, and they were very happy to see it again. They asked her where she had found it, and she told them it had flown in through her window, had sat by her dead husband, and had sung so beautifully that she had stopped crying, although she was so poor she could not buy a coffin for her husband, and had nothing at all to eat.

And the people felt very sorry for her. They were so good, and so happy to have the bird back. They bought a coffin for her dead husband, and said to the poor woman that she must come to their home every day and eat and drink with them. She was very happy, and thanked the good Lord for having sent the little canary bird to her when she had been so sad.