

After about fifteen minutes, Fran could see the forest below them. As she flew over the trees, a flock of birds rose into the air below the plane. Fran didn't want a bird to fly into the propeller, so she searched for a place to land, but the forest was too dense. As the flock grew, Fran climbed to a higher altitude. The birds remained at a low height but kept up with her at a speed of 65 miles an hour.

*Wow, these birds fly fast.*

"Can you ask the chief if he wants to go back now?" Fran said.

Meadowlark spoke into the mike. When the chief turned around, he was smiling. Fran could see tears rolling down his cheeks. He nodded at her.

"The chief said thank you. He can go now."

After they returned, Fran lifted the little girl out of the plane and then assisted the chief. He looked at Fran and said something she didn't understand.

"He said he has money to pay you for the plane ride," Meadowlark said. "Or he will say a prayer for you to find what you are seeking."

Fran smiled and nodded at him.

"I sure would appreciate that prayer. Please tell the chief I said thank you and that it was my pleasure."

Fran spent the rest of her day walking the trail around the lake, eventually venturing down to the water's edge. She enjoyed being near a shore again, even if it wasn't the ocean.

That night Fran heard the throaty calls of ravens in the trees above her camp. She remembered a Celtic folktale her mother had told her about the raven. It was known in Irish legends as the Morrigan, a shape-shifter. Guardians of the dead and transporters between life and death, they had magical powers.

The following day, Fran packed up and began to go through the plane's checklist to prepare for the flight back home.

Satisfied with everything, she started the plane. As she taxied away from her camp, the engine sputtered and stopped. Fran hopped out to investigate. She carefully rechecked the fuel for any signs of condensation. Then, she lifted the engine cover and looked around for any debris that may have blown inside.

Suddenly, she heard a strange cry. When Fran turned, she saw two ravens on the ground. They were closing in on a bird with striking colors. She watched as one of the ravens yanked a bright blue feather from the bird's tail. The bird made the same peculiar sound.

*Those ravens are planning to kill that bird.*

Fran walked towards the fight, and the bullies flew off into the trees. She crouched down close to the victim and lowered her hand. To her surprise, the bird climbed onto her finger.

"How odd! Why you aren't even afraid of me in the least."

Fran held the bird close and could see the ravens had pecked its head. She gently stroked the bird, then took the empty flour sack from the plane's cockpit and carefully placed the bird inside. She reached into the plane to turn the ignition key, then pushed down on the propeller's blade. The engine roared to life. Fran climbed into the cockpit and taxied for a bit, making sure the engine didn't sputter again before taking off into the morning air.

During the flight, the bird continued to make unusual noises. Fran didn't know what kind of bird it was but guessed it was a pigeon, probably one of the passenger pigeons she'd seen yesterday at the Lost River.

"Papa isn't going to like this, you know," she said to the bird.

When she arrived at Seal Rock Airport, Seamus was standing outside the hangar, waving her over. He ran towards her as she cut the engine.

“Happy Easter and Passover!” he exclaimed. The bird squawked a loud response.

“Oh, shoot,” she said, “I completely forgot about Passover and Easter, too.”

The Finkels generally overlooked religious holidays.

“What’s in there?” he said, pointing at the moving bag.

“A bird.”

Fran took the sack out of the plane to show Seamus. He peeked inside.

“Wow, he’s a beauty!”

“He’s injured. Ravens were attacking him. I’m going to keep him until he’s better.”

“Papa’s not gonna like that. Are you going to name him?”

She thought about it for a minute. They didn’t know if the bird was male or female.

“How about Easter?” she suggested wryly.

Seamus made a face and rolled his eyes.

“Papa is going to hate that name.”

“Well, I’m not going to name the bird Passover,” she said.