

# Birds of a Feather

By

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## **They're Here**

Click. Clickety clack.

Everyone stopped what they were doing, all their heads turned towards the cage door. Even those in the cage next to their own had quieted.

The normally quiet Ernie spoke first, "They're here."

Everyone knew the strange clicking sound that came from the main door meant 'The Outsiders' were here for a visit. The four of them knew it was time to put all their squabbling aside and act right because of 'The Outsiders'. One of them just might be lucky enough to gain their freedom thanks to The Outsiders because it was a very special day for everyone in the cages.

The special day was called "Adopt A Bird Day At Lucy's Pet Emporium."

Once the people started walking into the pet shop the four of them started squawking along with the parakeets in the next cage. Adding to the din were the puppies yipping from behind the cages in a separate room. Old Joe just stood at the cage door, glaring at everyone who walked by as if daring them to look at him. Ernie was standing on top of the water bottle trying to look cute while he was guarding the water. Pete paced back and forth across the main perch in the cage while Eduardo was dozing on another perch trying to look aloof and disinterested.

Each of them would take turns in making comments about The Outsiders as they came by the cage. Some of the comments were kind while others weren't so kind.

“Hmm, I like that couple there. Oh, oh, oh wait. They have a kid! Naw. Not for me. How about you, Eduardo?” Pete was nodding towards the young couple standing near their cage but acting disinterested in any of the four of them.

“Naw man, I don’t wanna no kid pawin’ all over me with sticky, peanut buttery hands. Lookit these feathers, man. You think I’m gonna let just any joe blow handle me?” Eduardo was such a primper when it came to his precious feathers.

“Hey how about this one coming here, Eduardo? Hey, Eduardo!” Eduardo almost fell off his perch when Pete yelled at him like that. Pete could never understand how Eduardo could act that way when The Outsiders were in Lucy’s store. Sometimes it didn’t appear like Eduardo really wanted to get picked.

“Look alive men, they’re stopping at our cage.” Pete put on his best friend cockatiel look with his crest stuck straight up in the air for the stranger approaching the cage.

None of them could understand what The Outsiders was saying to Lucy or her assistant Jimmy. They all made some kind of a racket when they moved their mouths, and every once in a while they would point at the cage. Pete was paying close attention to the Pretty Lady standing there outside the cage talking with Jimmy.

“Maybe, guys. Hey guys, this one is takin’ a long time out here.” Pete was getting pretty excited here and let out with one of his famous wolf whistles that cockatiels are famous for. No luck, the Pretty Lady and Jimmy walked away from the cage but Pete kept up with the wolf whistles. The guy’s in the cage next to them was making fun of Pete because they thought they were all so special living in a cage for marked ‘*Parakeets Only*’. Pete figured the cage was marked that way as warning to The Outsiders so they wouldn’t get bit.

“Ohhh, Pretty Lady please take me home. It’s ever so lonely here in the losers’ cage. Oh, please pick me! Hah! Who would want a cockatiel strutting around when they can have a real bird like a parakeet?” The parakeets were an obnoxious lot of birds who all came into Lucy’s store a couple of weeks ago from some breeder up in Georgia. Pete wondered if there was such a thing as ‘redneck birds’.

“Pete, stop with the wolf whistles. You’re piercing my brain with that noise. Told ya no one wants us no wonder the others call this the loser cage.” Old Joe had such a sour disposition about him, it was no wonder he was the oldest of anyone in Lucy’s Pet Emporium.

“I ain’t no loser, chump. You’re just an angry old guy that hates the world.” Pete lashed out at Old Joe because deep down he really had hoped the Pretty Lady might have chosen him as a pet. ‘Ah, to be picked’ Pete thought to himself.

The other three birds knew not to rile Pete too awful much. He wasn’t the biggest bird in the cage but was the strongest. Once he pinned Old Joe up against the bars because he made fun of Pete not having any tail feathers. They all just left him on the main perch while they milled around on the bottom of the cage trying to attract the attention of an Outsider.

Pete kept his attention focused on the Pretty Lady as if trying to will her to come back to the cage. But he knew it was too late for that, she was over by the thing where Jimmy stands most of the day. Outsiders come in and get things and go over where Jimmy is and after a while Jimmy gives them a bag and the Outsider leaves Lucy’s store. Something small must be over there that the Pretty Lady wanted because Pete couldn’t see anything in her hand. Oh wait. There is something in her hand now because Jimmy just gave it to her. Some small cage, Pretty Lady must have small bird to buy such a small cage.

“Hey, guys! She’s coming back this way.” Pete exclaimed.

“Aw, Pete. They don’t want us, the parakeets are probably right; we’re just a bunch of losers.” Even Ernie was down in the dumps today. But Pete ever the optimist kept his eyes glued on both Jimmy and the Pretty Lady walking behind him. To Pete’s surprise they were walking down the aisle towards his cage.

Soon they were standing in front of the cage with Pretty Lady holding out that little cage in her hands to Jimmy. Jimmy opened the door to the cage and all four of them froze in place. No one ever put their hand inside the cage unless they were feeding the guys or someone was gaining their freedom. Imagine their surprise when Jimmy reached in and plucked Pete right off of the main perch!

“What? Hey, watch them hands, How ‘bout wearing some gloves? You hands are cold!” Jimmy was holding Pete while Pretty Lady held the cage out for Jimmy to put Pete inside of it.

Jimmy was holding Pete up at eye level now and saying goodbye to him. “Well, so long Pete. You were one of the good guys. Here’s your new owner Gloria to take you home.” Jimmy closed the door to the smaller cage and set it on the ledge beside the larger cage that Pete had formerly been living in. Pete looked over into the cage where he used to live and said goodbye to everyone.

“She wants me! Hey Eduardo! Sayonara, little dude, I’m bought and paid for! I’m being picked by the Pretty Lady! Ernie, you’re next pal. I just know it. Old Joe, hey Old Joe you be nice to these guys. Don’t be so mean ‘cause you ain’t never gonna leave here if you don’t be nicer to others.”

Pete managed to flip an obscene gesture at the guys in the parakeet cage with his feathers from inside his travel cage that Pretty Lady was holding. Pete was squawking up a storm as Pretty Lady made her way towards the door of Lucy’s Pet Emporium. Boy, he sure was glad to be leaving here. Last thing Pete wanted to do was to turn out like Old Joe did.

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About the author:

Floyd Larck lives in Orlando Florida with his wife Debbie, their lovebird name Peaches and a cockatiel name P.J. Floyd is an amateur radio operator and has been writing for five years as of the writing of this book you have just read.

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