

Ċips iż-Żgħir

Darba waħda kien hemm żewġ għasafar tal-bejt, raġel u mara, li kellhom bejta go sığra. F'din il-bejta kien hemm ħames bajdiet żgħar. L-għasfura kienet kuljum toqgħod fuqhom biex iżzommhom sħan sakemm ifaqqsu.

Gurnata waħda l-għasfura semgħet *Krakk!* L-ewwel bajda nqasmet u minnha ħareġ l-ewwel fellus. Imbagħad *Krakk! Krakk! Krakk!* u faqqsu tlieta oħra. L-erba' flieles bdew ipespsu għax kienu bil-ġuħ. Fethu ħalq daqsxiex.

Il-Papà u l-Mamà kellhom ħafna x'jagħmlu issa għax riedu joqogħdu jiġru 'l hawn u 'l hemm ifittxu l-ikel għat-tfal tagħhom.

"Dejjem jieklu dawn iż-żgħar," qal il-Papà wara gurnata jaqbad id-dud. "Dejjem ħalqhom miftuħ."

"Dak għax iridu jikbru malajr," qaltli l-Mamà, "Għalhekk jieklu ħafna. Nixtieq ngħinek iktar biex issib l-ikel imma baqagħli bajda x'insahħan għax għadha ma faqqsitx."

L-għada l-għasfura semgħet *Krakk!* u rat xaqq fil-bajda. Il-Mamà bdiet ittektek fuq il-bajda biex tgħin lill-fellus ifaqqas. Fl-aħħar ħareġ.

"Kemmi inti żgħir!" qalet, "Lilek ħa nsemmik Ċips. Ċips iż-Żgħir."

Il-Papà tgħidx kemm feraħ bil-fellus il-ġdid. U issa l-Mamà setgħet tgħinu jitma' lill-familja.

Iż-żewġ ġenituri issa kellhom ħamest itfal x'jitingħu. Għamlu ħafna ħin ġejjin b'munqarhom mimli dud u insetti. Dawn bdew ideffsuhom f'kull ħalq miftuħ li jsibu.

Il-flieles bdew jikbru għmielhom imma miskin Ċips ma tantx kien jiekol għax kien żgħir wisq. Hutu kienu

jimbuttawh 'l hawn u 'l hemm biex jieklu huma u Ċips kultant kien jispiċċa b'xejn. U għalhekk baqa' żgħir.

Wara ftit granet il-Mamà qalet lill-Papà: "Issa kibru mhux ħazin it-tfal tagħna. Aħjar ngħallmuhom itiru, xi tgħid?"

"Veru," qal il-Papà, "Ara kemm kibrilhom ir-rix fuq il-ġwienah."

"Ejjew tfal, qumu minn hemm. Ġejja lezzjoni li għandkom bżonnha ħafna."

Il-flieles ħarġu kollha mill-bejta, wieħed wara l-ieħor, u qagħdu fuq zokk iferfru ġwinħajhom. Ċips ukoll ħareġ, allavolja kien għadu żgħir wisq biex itir. Il-Mamà u l-Papà bdew jimbuttawhom bil-mod u juruhom kif jifthu u jferfru l-ġwienah.

Bdew jaqbz u minn zokk għal zokk u tgħallmu mhux ħazin. Wieħed wieħed taru 'l isfel lejn l-art. Imma Ċips miskin flok tar waqa' mal-art b'tisbita, għax kellu l-ġwienah żgħar. Qata' ftit nifsu imma ma wegġax.

Wara dik il-lezzjoni l-flieles reġa' qabadhom il-ġuħ u bdew ipespsu u jferfru biex il-Mamà u l-Papà jinzlu jagħtuhom l-ikel. Imma dak il-ħin minn wara ħajt tfaċċa qattus, u mar biex jaqbadhom.

"Ar'hemmi! Tiru! Tiru!" bdew jgħajtu, imma miskin wieħed minnhom ma lehaqx tar u l-qattus qabdu.

Ċips staħba taħt werqa ta' xitla u beda jirtogħod bil-biża'. Wara ftit sema' l-passi ġejjin. Kien tifel jismu Shaun. Shaun ra lil Ċips fl-art u qal:

"Ara jaħasra, naħseb dan l-għasfur waqa' mill-bejta u ntilef. Kemmi hu żgħir miskin!"

Shaun kien qalbu tajba u ma riedx iħalli lil Ċips waħdu. Għalhekk għabru f'idejh bil-mod biex imur id-dar ħalli jrabbih hu.

Imma dak il-ħin sema' t-tpespis fis-sığra u ra żewġ għasafar tal-bejt iħarsu lejha. Ċips ukoll beda jpespes minn go idejn Shaun.

"Naħseb dawk il-Papà u l-Mamà ta' dal-fellus. Mela allura mhux mitluf. Ħa npoġġih fl-art u nara x'jiġri."

Shaun poġġa lil Ċips fl-art u staħba wara l-ħajt. Wara ftit il-Mamà u l-Papà ta' Ċips niżlu hdejn it-tifel tagħhom. Ċips tgħidx kemm ferfer ġwinħajh bil-ferħ.

"Hsibtkom insejtuni," qalilhom.

"Ma tarax, inti t-tifel tagħna u m'aħniex se ninsewk." U Ċips telaq jaqbez wara missieru u ommu biex isibu lil hutu l-oħra.

Kemm feraħ Shaun.

"Sewwa hsibt," qal, "Dak l-għasfur ma kienx mitluf. Kien għadu qed jitgħallm itir. Imnalla ma ħadtux id-dar għax m'hemmx aħjar mill-ġenituri tiegħu biex jieħdu hsiebu."

Shaun mar jiġri d-dar jgħid lil Mamà tiegħu x'ra u x'tgħallm.



Little Ćips

Once upon a time there were two sparrows, a Daddy Sparrow and a Mummy Sparrow, and they had a nest in a tree. In the nest there were five little eggs. Mummy Sparrow sat on the eggs every day to keep them warm until they hatched.

One day Mummy Sparrow heard *Crack!* The first egg broke and a little chick hatched from the egg. Then she heard *Crack! Crack! Crack!* and three more chicks hatched. The four chicks began to cheep because they were hungry. They opened their mouth wide.

Daddy and Mummy Sparrows were very busy. They flew here and there looking for food for their chicks.

"These chicks are always eating," said Daddy Sparrow after flying around all day catching worms and caterpillars. "Their mouth is always open!"

"That's because they need to grow up quickly," said Mummy Sparrow. "That's why they eat so much. I cannot help you more because one of the eggs hasn't hatched. I must sit on it to keep it warm."

Next day Mummy Sparrow heard *Crack!* and she saw a hole in the egg. Mummy Sparrow tapped the egg with her beak to help the new chick to hatch. At last he came out.

"How small you are!" said Mummy Sparrow, "I'm going to call you Little Ćips!"

Daddy Sparrow was very happy. Now Mummy Sparrow could help him catch more food for the family.

The chicks began to grow, but Little Ćips was not very strong. His brothers and sisters pushed him about and sometimes they ate his food. Little Ćips didn't eat much and stayed small.

One day Mummy Sparrow said to Daddy Sparrow "How big our children have grown. It's time they learned to fly."

"Yes," said Daddy Sparrow, "They have many feathers on their wings now."

"Come on, kids, get up! Today you're going to learn a very important lesson."

One by one the chicks hopped out of the nest. They sat on the branch fluttering their wings. Ćips was too small to fly but he hopped out too. Mummy and Daddy Sparrows pushed them gently and showed them how to flap their wings.

The chicks flapped their wings and jumped from branch to branch. Soon they could fly and they flew down to the floor. Poor Ćips had small wings and he couldn't fly well. He landed on the floor with a bump, but he wasn't hurt.

Now the chicks were hungry again. They began to cheep for Mummy and Daddy to bring them food. But then a cat jumped out from behind a wall. He tried to catch the chicks.

The chicks shouted "Look out! Fly away! Fly away!" but one of them was not quick enough. The cat caught her and ran off.

Little Ćips was lucky. He hid under a plant and the cat didn't see him. He stayed there, trembling and scared. Soon he heard footsteps. It was Shaun, a little boy. Shaun saw Ćips and he said:

"Poor bird! Have you fallen from your nest? Are you lost? How small you are!"

Shaun was a kind boy. He didn't want to leave Ćips alone, so he picked him up gently. He wanted to take Ćips home to look after him.

But just then he heard a lot of chirping in the tree. He looked up and he saw Mummy and Daddy Sparrows looking

and him. Ćips too began to cheep in Shaun's hand.

"Hey, I think those two birds are the daddy and mummy of this chick" said Shaun. "This little bird isn't lost after all. I'll put him down and see what happens."

Shaun put Little Ćips down and went to hide behind the wall. Soon Mummy and Daddy Sparrows flew down near Ćips. Ćips was very happy and he fluttered his wings and chirped.

"I thought you forgot about me," he said.

"Of course we didn't forget you," said Daddy Sparrow. "You are our son."

Little Ćips hopped after his parents and they went to find the other chicks.

Shaun was very happy.

"I was right," he said. "That little bird was not lost. He was only learning to fly. It's a good thing I didn't take him home, because his parents will look after him much better than me."

Shaun ran home to tell his Mum all about it.

