

## The Grebe

by Bob Wilson

It was Christmas time in England. There were two wood pigeons sitting on a telegraph pole.

"I'm cold and wet," said one of the pigeons, "I wish I were somewhere nice and warm."

"I was in Valencia once," said the other pigeon, "That was nice and warm. And the statues there are very friendly. One of them told me a story, a story about a grebe."

The other pigeon asks, "What's a grebe?"

"A grebe is a fishing bird that lives by the lagoon in Valencia."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"Come on then. Tell me the story."

"Some small boys were playing beside a fountain in Valencia. They were laughing and having a great time. Suddenly, one of the boys slipped and fell into the water. The fish saw the boy in the water but the fish were frightened of small boys.

"Small boys throw stones at us," said one fish.

"Small boys try to catch us with nets," said another fish. So the fish didn't help the boy in the water and the boy was in terrible trouble. Then the geese saw the boy in the water but geese don't like small boys.

"Small boys steal our eggs and their fathers shoot at us with guns." So the geese did nothing and the small boy was going to drown. Then the grebe saw the small boy drowning in the water. She dived in and said to the boy, "Hold on to my neck and I'll save you."

The boy hung on to the grebe's neck and the bird helped the boy out of the water. The boy ran back to the other boys and they all began throwing stones at the grebe. The grebe flew away before the boys could hurt her."

Then the pigeon said, "Sometimes, when you help people, they are very ungrateful.

"Yeah I'd noticed that," said the other pigeon. The pigeon then told his friend how relaxing it was to sit on a Valencian statue and listen to the fountains, especially when it's nice and warm. The pigeons closed their eyes and imagined they were in Valencia. Soon they were asleep and the soothing sound of the fountains filled their sleepy thoughts with happy dreams.

Goodnight, my pigeon friends.