

The Oriole and the Snipe

“Hi, I’m Sandy. What are you doing up there?”

A bright orange oriole dangled upside down from a branch. “Hi, I’m Oliver. I’m building my nest.”

Sandy flew up to a nearby branch. “Interesting. I’m a Wilson’s snipe. I live down by the marshes. The bushes give me plenty of places to hide. With my brown colors it makes it even harder for anyone to spot me. You’re so bright, you’re a sitting duck up here.”

Oliver chirped a song as he worked. “Well, from up here, I can see any trouble coming. I’d think it’s more dangerous on the ground.”

Sandy flew to Oliver’s branch. “Aren’t you afraid your nest will fall? It’s just hanging there.”

“Nope.” Oliver tugged on the cord that held his nest firmly to the tree. “If it’s built right, it won’t go anywhere. And, I know how to build it right. Hey, you sure have a LONG bill. Doesn’t it get in your way?”

Sandy waved her bill through the air. “Not at all. It helps me dig for worms and clams and snails, and other good stuff. What can you get with that little bill of yours?”

Oliver stopped his work. “Ha. This little bill is the perfect size for drinking nectar from flowers and eating fruit. I have no trouble getting insects too. And, my small size helps me get into small places. You’re so big, you’re probably clumsy. And, you’d definitely get stuck in the places I can go.”

Sandy spread her wings and took off in a zigzag pattern. “Not so clumsy now, am I,” she yelled to Oliver. Then she landed back on the branch.

Oliver laughed. “No, not bad. Not bad at all. You know, I dropped the perfect twig for my nest in the mud down there.”

Before Oliver could say another word, Sandy zoomed down to the ground and dug till she found the twig. In a flash she was back. “Here you go.” She gave the twig to Oliver.

“Gee, thanks a bunch,” chirped Oliver. “It’s the perfect size for the bottom of my nest. I owe you one, friend.”

Sandy lowered her head. “I wouldn’t have thought of asking,” she whispered. “But, I dropped a charm my grandmother gave me in a hole in that tree over there. Do you think—?”

Oliver shot off. In a few minutes he came back with the charm in his bill. He dropped it on the branch. “Is this what you were looking for?”

A tear welled up in Sandy's eye. "Oh, my charm. I thought I lost it forever. You are a good friend, Oliver. I never had an oriole as a friend."

"Who would have thought it," said Oliver. "We have so many differences, but it's because of those differences that we can help each other. I guess you don't have to be the same to be friends."

Questions

1. Where did Oliver build his nest?
2. What were two differences between Oliver and Sandy?
3. What did Sandy lose?
4. Why did Oliver think being different was a good thing?