

# The Scarecrow

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

The scarecrow stood alone in the field. He was a solitary figure, a bit ragged around the edges, arms extended to embrace the wide horizon. When the farmer first carried him out to this distant spot and set him up on a post to keep the crows away from his crops, the scarecrow had felt very lonely.

As the crops grew around him, he soon had many visitors. Flocks of birds would descend and eat what they could before the farmer got angry and sent his dog out to chase them away. The farmer didn't understand why the birds weren't afraid of his scarecrow, but the truth was that the scarecrow liked the company.

One small raven in particular enjoyed visiting with him. He'd land on the scarecrow's straw-stuffed shoulder covered in an old plaid work shirt, with a loud caw. "Hey, SC, what's new?"

"Nothing much, Poe," replied SC, greeting his friend. "Except the other day, I received an award."

"What? That's great," said Poe. "What was it for?"

"The farmer told me I was outstanding in my field," joked SC.

The raven cackled happily. "That's a good one, SC," he laughed. Poe and the others liked the scarecrow's sense of humor and would come visit him even if his field didn't have tasty young ears of corn. Together, the birds and the scarecrow laughed and sang the days away.

The farmer watching from the farmhouse scratched his head. He could not figure out why the scarecrow wasn't scaring off the birds. "Maybe he needs a bigger hat," he thought. He found one of his wife's old floppy sun hats and tied it to the scarecrow.

The next morning, Poe alighted on SC's shoulder. "Wow, you look dumb, SC!" He laughed.

"I know!" agreed SC. "Are you scared of me now?" They both giggled. Poe untied the hat from his friend's head and it dropped to the ground. "That's better!"

That evening the farmer came out with pinwheels and small flags and stuck them onto SC's head and arms. The waving and flapping and spinning should help the scarecrow do his job, he thought.

The next morning, the breeze sent the pinwheels in motion and the flags snapped cheerfully. When Poe arrived, he was surprised. "Hey SC, you are looking quite festive today!"

"I am, aren't I?" Said the scarecrow, pleased with the fancy new accessories. "Maybe it's my birthday!"

“Your birthday? Then we should have a party! All the ravens, crows, blackbirds, robins, and sparrows within tweeting distance heard Poe’s call and joined them in the field. They had a merry time singing and eating all day long.

The farmer, watching from the window, pulled on his hair and yelled. “Now there are more birds than ever in my field! Why isn’t that scarecrow working? I think I have to get a bigger one and dump that useless old fellow.” He sent his dog out to chase the birds away again.

The old beagle trotted out to the field where the party was still going strong. The dog also enjoyed the scarecrow’s jokes and the happy chatter of the birds. He shared the news with the scarecrow. “If you don’t start scaring the birds away, the farmer is going to replace you with a new, bigger scarecrow.”

“What will I do?” wondered SC. “The birds are my friends. They are not afraid of me. And if they did all go away, I would be lonely again.”

The clever young raven piped up. “We won’t leave you by yourself. I have an idea.” Poe gathered the rest of the birds closer, and they bobbed their heads and squawked in agreement. Poe flew up and settled on SC’s shoulder. “Feel like a change of scenery?”

SC trusted his friend, so he nodded. Poe untied the scarecrow from his post, and the straw man slumped over. Moving as one, the entire flock of birds gently lifted him up, and off they flew, carrying SC above the corn field and away to the nearby forest. They would bring him to live with them. They could sing songs and tell jokes and live together as a family.

The farmer watched in bewilderment as he saw his old scarecrow rise up into the sky on a black cloud of wings, flying away from the farm and the now-empty cornfield. He rubbed his eyes and blinked. When he looked again, the scarecrow was gone.

**Questions**

1. Why didn't the scarecrow scare the birds away from the field?
2. Why did Poe and the other birds like visiting?
3. What was making the farmer feel so frustrated?
4. What was the solution to the scarecrow's problem?