

The Lion and the Bird

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What makes a good friend?

It Goes Both Ways

This story has few words, but a lot happens. Lion helps injured Bird recover, fulfilling the *mitzvah* (Hebrew for “commandment” or good deed) of *refuat cholim*, healing the sick. Lion doesn’t stop there — he also welcomes Bird into his home, performing the *mitzvah* of *hachnasat orchim*, welcoming guests. But you know what? Lion gets something back, too, something really important: a new friend. *Chesed* (Hebrew for “loving-kindness”) benefits everyone, both giver and receiver. Luckily, there are countless ways to perform kind acts, no matter what species we happen to be. To learn more visit pjlibrary.org/lionandbird.

Better to Have Loved and Lost

Lion and Bird spend an entire winter together, becoming close friends, but when spring comes, it’s time for Bird to rejoin the flock. Although “sometimes life is like that,” Lion misses his friend. Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, a 19th-century Hasidic sage, said, “There is nothing more whole than a broken heart.” That’s because true friendship runs deep. When we miss people, it’s because we have real connections to them — and feeling connected to the people around us is one way of being whole. When Bird’s flock flies south again that winter, though, Bird comes back to Lion...and Lion feels truly complete again.

Language of the Heart

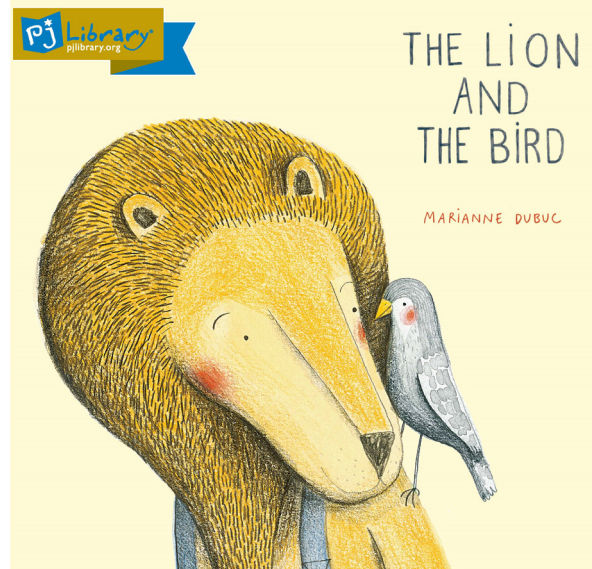
In this book, Lion speaks with words, but Bird simply sings. They still understand each other perfectly well, don’t they? *Pirkei Avot* (*Ethics of the Ancestors*, a collection of rabbinic sayings) reminds us, “Acquire yourself a friend.” Friends come in many forms. They don’t have to be just like you, or even speak the same language as you. You just have to be able to count on each other. Life is better when we can share it with others — and not just the fun times, but the hard ones, too. Even the darkest night of winter “doesn’t feel all that cold with a friend.”

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

How do you think Lion feels when Bird flies away? What makes you think that?

Why do you think Bird comes back to Lion?

What do you like to do with your friends?



HANDS ON!

Make a Cereal Bird Feeder



Want to invite a few more birds into your life? Try serving up some breakfast! No birdseed required.

Supplies

O-shaped cereal
Pipe cleaners



Make a knot at one end of a pipe cleaner, then string the cereal onto it. Fasten the two ends together into a loop, then loop another pipe cleaner around it as a holder. Place the bird feeder on a sturdy branch outside and let the birds feast!