A Berry Tail
by Katie O'Hara

Once there were six little birds. Their names were Singer, Dinger, Winger, Flapsy, Tweeter, and Cheeper. They lived in a nest made by their mother bird, hidden in a tree. Besides them, there were many more birds who lived nearby, and most of them were wise and virtuous like the six little ones, who spent their days singing, hunting for food, and learning from their parents. However, there also happened to be some that were by no means wise and virtuous. These birds where mean and went around squawking loudly, raiding bird feeders, stealing food, and laying their eggs in other birds' nests. In addition to being mean, these birds were also lazy and slept in late. This caused them to miss the morning pick of worms, and while the good birds woke early and found many worms to eat, their food was stolen from these late and lazy birds.

Now it happened one day that the bad birds ventured into Mr. Wombley's garden, which is something that all the birds did quite often, as the Wombleys were very friendly to them and always had seeds out. However, though they were allowed into the garden, the mighty eagle who ruled over all birds had forbidden them to go near the house, since Mrs. Wombley was a baker and often had pies cooling on the windowsill. As the birds flew into the garden and began to feast on the seeds, they spotted one of Mrs. Wombley's fresh berry pies cooling on the ledge. They began to talk among themselves saying, "All we have every day is seeds and bugs and boring stuff like that. Don't you guys think it is about time we had something new like one of Mrs. Wombley's delicious pies?"

Tweeter was eating nearby, and overhearing this, said, "No we can't! The mighty eagle has forbidden us to go near the house. Let us eat the food that has been given to us in the garden." However, the bad birds insisted and said, "Hmph. We are just as good as the mighty eagle; he can't tell us what to do! You are just little birds, what do you know about anything!" Winger came over and replied, "You know just as well as we do that none of us are allowed to eat Mrs. Wombley's pies, and that there will be consequences if you do!"

But the bad birds just laughed and disregarded the warnings and rules. They flew to the windowsill and devoured the berry pie like a bunch of savage brutes.

Inside the house, Mrs. Wombley heard the commotion and rushed to the window. To her horror, she saw the bad birds gobbling up her pie. She scared them away, but unfortunately it was too late. Not only was the pie all gone, but they left a terrible mess behind. After this happened, the Wombley's took away all

the bird seed, feeders, and birdbaths, and the mighty eagle, not knowing who the culprits were, prohibited all the birds from entering the garden.

It was just by chance fall at this time, and the good birds were worried about food.

“What will we do for food now?” cried Dinger. “The seeds have been taken away and winter is coming!” He continued, “Soon the bugs will be gone, and worms will be hard to find.”

“We must go to our mother and father bird and ask for help,” said Singer.

So off the birds flew to find their parents.

When the bad birds saw and heard all that was happening, they also began to feel worried now that there would be no food for winter. Singer, Winger, Dinger, Flapsy, Tweeter, and Cheeper all flew to their nest. When they arrived, they exclaimed to their parents, “The bad birds have gone against our mighty eagle’s commands and eaten Mrs. Wombley’s pie, causing the Wombley’s to take away the seeds right before winter! What will we do?”

The mother and father birds looked terribly upset at this news, thought for a minute, and then one said, “This is quite disturbing, but I have a plan. We will have to travel and scavenge for food, and store enough to get us through winter. To be successful, it’s important for all of our feathered friends to join in this task.

The little birds and their parents flew off to gather the other birds, explain the plan, and set off to look for food early the next day. The bad birds also came and participated, as they knew it was their fault that there would be no food for winter. At dawn, the whole community of birds, including the mighty eagle, began looking for food. They spread out across the fields and forests, searched high and low, covering every place they knew, but only found a few seeds among them.

Soon it was dark, and the autumn moon came out, illuminating everything with a tranquil glow. Fortunately, by the reflection of the moonlight, they came across some wild berry bushes, which were probably the last of the season. They were overjoyed at this finding and began to harvest them quickly. As they were gathering the berries, the bad birds remembered Mrs. Wombley’s pie that they had selfishly eaten. They began to say to one another, “Let us give some of these berries to the Wombleys and ask their forgiveness, as they have always been kind to us and we were not kind to them.” They all agreed and a portion of the berries were reserved for the Wombley’s.

The next morning, when they arrived at the Wombley’s house with the berries, they saw the empty pan of the pie they had eaten still on the ground. The berries

which had just been picked and reserved for them were then placed in it and flown to the windowsill by some of the bigger birds. All at once, Singer, Winger, Dinger, Flapsy, Cheeper, and Tweeter burst into beautiful melodies. Soon all the other birds joined in making an exquisite choir.

Mrs. Wombley, who was in the kitchen at the moment, heard the lovely bird songs and went to the window. Mr. Wombley, who had been busy grading his students' essays, also heard the singing and joined his wife at the window. To their amazement, all the birds they had seen eat their pie, and even the ones that hadn't, were now singing before them with a whole pan of fresh berries. When the birds finished their little concert, they flew away back to their nests, and none of them ever went hungry again. Not only did the Wombleys forgive the repentant birds and return the bird feeders, seed, and birdbaths, but they also left a small tin of berry pie on the ground each time Mrs. Wombley baked!