

The Inspector

By Sophy Churches

Gabriel was 12 years old. He and his family lived in a Yorkshire village. His father was a coalminer, his older brother was continually between jobs and was a local thug whom everybody disliked. His mother was working in the candy factory and did not have much interest in the children's life. She prepared the meals and watched television continually.

Gabriel was a poor student and received some bullying at school. His brother was rough with him and beat him up just for exercise. So Gabriel liked to go out to the nearby forest and observe forest life. Once he found a small hawk struggling to fly at the bottom of a tree. He could not fly off, something was wrong with him. He wrapped the hawk in his shirt and headed for the local doctor's office. As he had good relationship with the doctor he asked him to cure the hawk. The doctor made a tiny splint for the hawk's wing, as it was broken.

Gabriel took the hawk home, put it in an old cage that they used to keep rabbits in and nursed him on stolen meats that he could find. He went to work for the local butcher after school and got some scrap meats for his help. The small hawk ate the meats and got better, he could spread his wings now.

Gabriel got a strong piece of string and placed it loosely on his neck. He found a pair of leather boots in the trashcans in town and he cut them up and made a cover for his arm, and taught the hawk to stand on his forearm, he also made a small hat for the hawk to cover his head and eyes. He took the hawk out to the forest and tried to let him fly, being tied to his hands. In time, the hawk did fly a short distance, then came back to his arm. They practiced it a lot. Gabriel talked to the hawk like his equal, never was angry or impatient with him.

One day the School Inspector came to Geography class and all the children had to list all the counties and their capitals of Great Britain. Gabriel only knew two. The Inspector talked to the teachers and asked what was happening with Gabriel. They all said that he is just left behind, he is a poor student. The Inspector took her time and talked with Gabriel. When Gabriel told the Inspector that he was only interested in his hawk. They went out to the forest together and the Inspector saw how wonderfully the hawk flown to high up in the sky and how it dived down and gently approached Gabriel's stretched out arm and landed on it. The Inspector knew from that he was not dumb, just a social problem.

The following night, his thuggish brother had a pick with Gabriel and his bird, and just went over to the bird's cage and cut the bird's head off.

Gabriel cried his eyes out and went into the forest and spent the night there. Next day, the police found him half frozen and speechless.

Who will take Gabriel now under his wing and make him fly?

Fortunately, the Inspector had a plan.