

Song of the Forest

by

Alan James Brown

Lyrebird is the best singer in the forest, and he searches for just the right place to sing his song. He finds the mound of an old fallen tree, and scratches and pecks all round.

When the little clearing is ready, he stands on the mound, fluffs up his feathers and fans his tail proudly. He stretches his neck and opens his beak. Then he sings. He sings the song of the forest.

Lyrebird sings the sound of the cricket, “Crick-crack! Crick-crack!”

The crickets answer from their hiding place in amongst the spotty fungus, “Crick-crack! We are here! Crick-crack!”

“All is well in the forest!” sings Lyrebird.

Lyrebird sings the sound of the frog, “Blurr! Blurr!”

The frogs answer as they cling with sticky feet to the green vine leaves, “Blurr! We are here! Blurr, blurr!”

“All is well in the forest!” sings Lyrebird.

Lyrebird sings the sound of the parrot, “Kark! Kark!”

The parrots answer from their feeding place high in the fig tree’s branches, “Kark! We are here! Kark, kark!”

“All is well in the forest!” sings Lyrebird.

Lyrebird sings the sound of the possum, “Chatter-chit! Chitter-chat!”

The possums answer from their home in the hollow tulip tree, “Chatter-chit! We are here! Chitter-chat!”

“All is well in the forest!” sings Lyrebird.

Loggers with their chain-saws start to make a big clearing in the forest. “Grrr-crash! Grrr-crash!” They fell the trees.

Lyrebird is puzzled, but he sings the sound of the loggers, “Grrr! Grrr-crash! What is happening to the forest?”

There is no answer.

Builders pour concrete over the earth to make roads. They saw and hammer to build houses and shops, “Zzzz! Bang-bang!”

Lyrebird does not like the noise, but he sings the sound of the builders, “Zzzz! Bang-bang! Zzzz! Bang-bang! What is happening to the forest?”

The answer comes. “Grrr-crash! Grrr-crash!” The clearing gets bigger and bigger, and “Zzzz! Bang-bang! Zzzz! Bang-bang!” there are factories, offices, churches and schools. Soon, there are cars and trucks, TV’s and shopping malls, but no forest and nowhere for lyrebirds to sing.

Children learn about the forest in libraries and museums, but to hear the creatures of the forest they go to a very special place.

In the National Park, Lyrebird has found just the right place to sing his song. He stands on a mound and spreads his wings and tail proudly. He stretches his neck and opens his beak. Then he sings. He sings the song of the Park.

Lyrebird sings the busy sound of the tourists, “Whirr! Whirr-click!”

The tourists take photos of the wonderful trees and beautiful creatures, “Whirr-click! We are here! Whirr-click!”

“All is well in the forest!” sings Lyrebird.

Lyrebird sings the laughing sound of happy children exploring the Park, “Ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha!”

The children answer, “Ha-ha-ha! We are here, Lyrebird! Where are you?”

“I am here!” sings Lyrebird. “Ha-ha-ha! All is well in the forest!”

Now, when you listen to the sound of the crickets, the frogs, the parrots and the possums, deep in the shady forest, is it really them that you hear? Is that really your friends calling you through the trees?

Or is it the song of the Lyrebird?

“All is well in the forest!”

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© Alan James Brown
Crowden Cottage
Upper Booth
Edale
Hope Valley
Derbyshire
S33 7ZJ
UK

Literary agent:

Caroline Walsh
David Higham Associates
5-8 Lower John Street
Golden Square
London
W1F 9HA
UK