

**The Paper Bats :**  
***Metro Saves the Day***



**Jerry Evans**

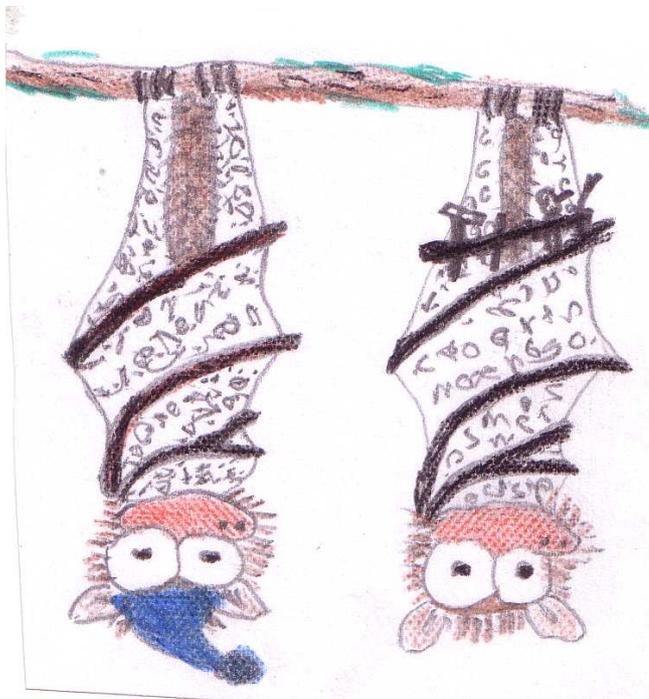
# *The Paper Bats*



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## Part 1



# Metro Saves the Day

**I**t had been another beautiful hot and sunny summer's day in the park. Yet the grass and trees were becoming increasingly dry and shrivelled because of the lack of rain.

Encouraged by the lovely weather, many local people had been using the park throughout the day. The most popular activities were family picnics, playing sports and swimming in the central lake.

The Paper Bat family had spent the day trying to remind visitors about keeping their park safe. They did this by using their special ability for altering the writing on their wings to show messages.

Grandpa Times and Granny Guardia had pretended to be posters, clinging onto the park keepers' lodge next to the south entrance gate. This was ideal for them, as they could stay still throughout the day and go to sleep.

Picture 1 of Grand-parents pretending to be posters  
on the lodge wall.

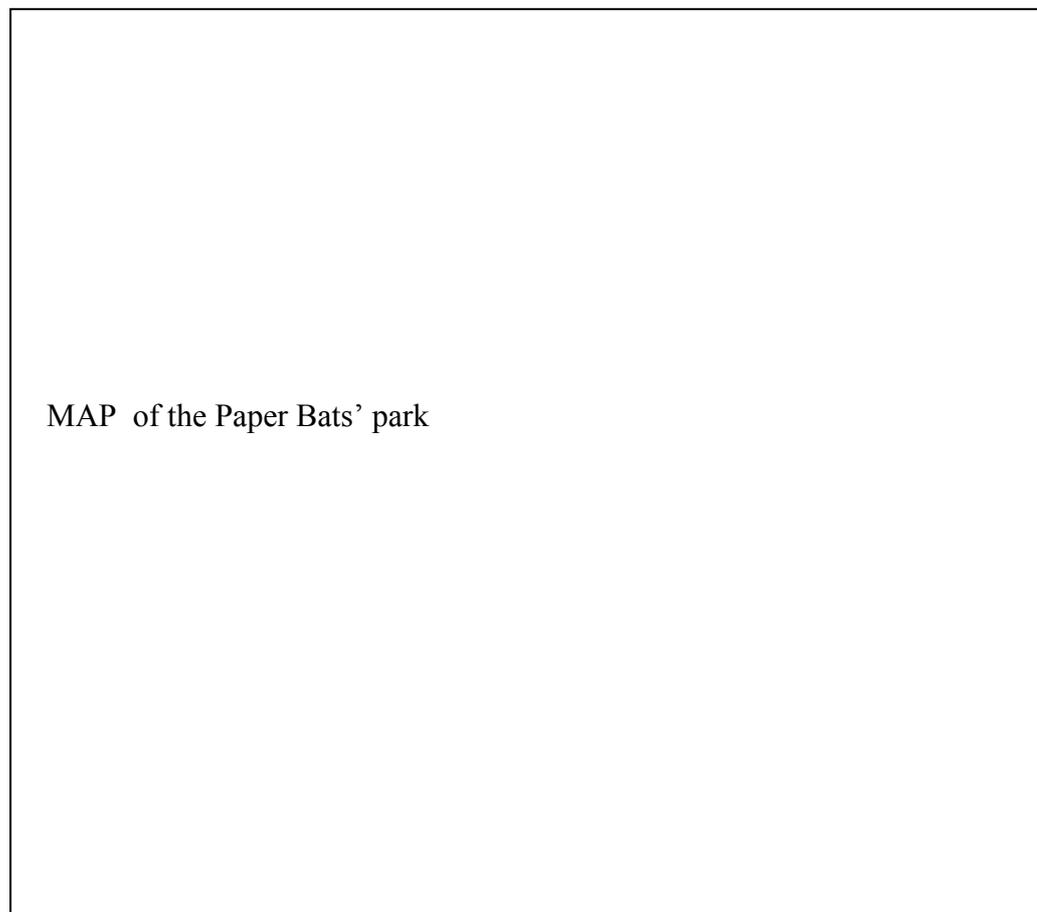
Mother Indy and her daughters, Sunny and Express, each had pretended to be pieces of paper on notice boards at the north entrance gate. This had been an ideal location to be seen by all the visitors to the playground and lake.

As usual, the twins Metro and Tel, had decided to have some fun. They spent all day acting as wind-blown rubbish, unravelling near to sunbathers and picnickers in the hope people might read the information on their outstretched wings.

Even Jack had been helping his Paper Bat friends by putting up notices that he had written himself.

Herald, father of the Paper Bat family, had organised the family. He had been very pleased with all their hard work.

By late afternoon all the Paper Bats were finally back at their tree home. Herald was thanking them. "You were all great today. I am sure many humans saw your information to keep the park safe and clean." But none of the other Paper Bats were listening to him as they were all very tired.



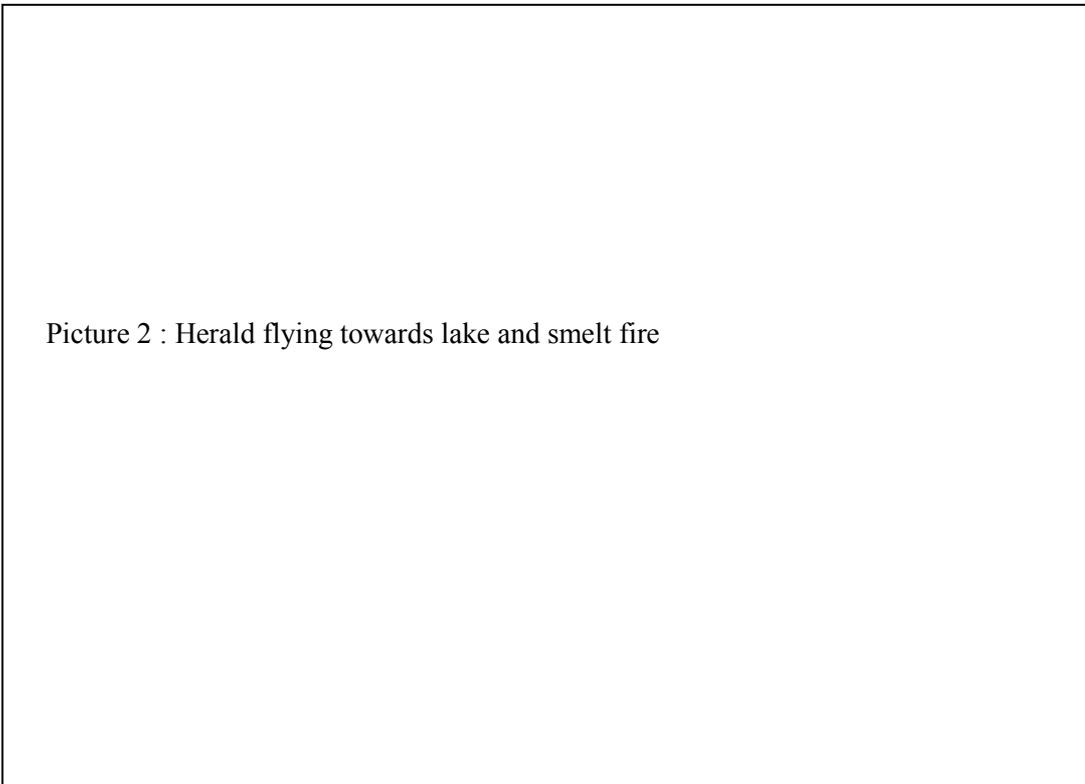
Jack yawned, "I'm going home now. I don't want be late, as my mum will have cooked dinner for me." He started to slowly walk home.

Unfortunately for Herald, he still had to finish his final job for the day and check the park was all safe for the night.

He flew out of the tree hole and towards the children's play area at the north of the park, passing the swings and roundabouts, before flying onto the central lake. As he flew around the lake, he noticed- or rather he smelt- something was wrong. The smell put fear into him, as it would for any Paper Bat. It was smoke from a fire! But from where?

Using his sensitive nose, Herald quickly searched for the source of the fire, sniffing one way and then the other. 'I must find it as soon as possible, so it does not spread' he thought to himself.

Herald flew back towards the northern gates- but nothing. Then he flew across the grass area at the top of the park - again nothing. Finally he flew down through the centre of the park along by the far side of the lake. In front of him Herald could see a large statue overlooking the water that was a popular place for picnickers. Then he spotted some smoke and flames. It was only a small fire at the moment, but he knew that fires can quickly grow. It probably had been started from a Barbeque left by some thoughtless picnickers earlier in the afternoon.



Picture 2 : Herald flying towards lake and smelt fire

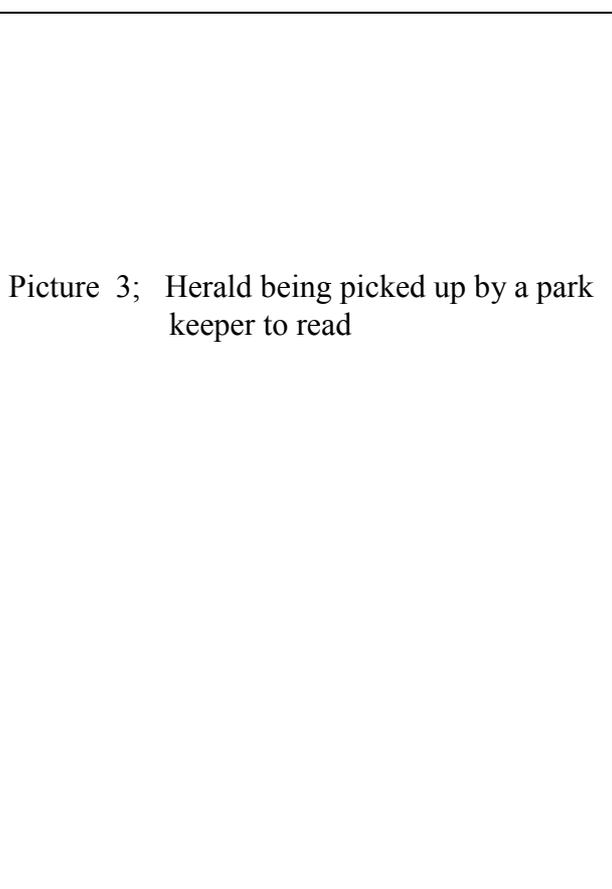
A fire would be a disaster for the park and its buildings, as everything was so dry. The fire needed to be stopped quickly, but

with the park closing there was nobody around to notice it. Herald wondered how he could put it out himself without being burnt.

Herald flew down around the central lake towards the park keepers' lodge at the south gate. It was an old, small bungalow where the park keepers met to eat their lunches, and store their tools. However they never slept there, so it was usually empty at night. Herald hoped it was not too late in the day for the park keepers still to be there.

As he flew towards the lodge, he was very relieved to see a light still on. Herald now had to get the park keepers' attention and warn them of the fire in the park. This was going to be a problem.

Then Herald had an idea. He flew up to the front door of the lodge and slipped under it, like a wind blown piece of paper. He hoped that the park keepers inside would notice.



Herald did not have to wait long. One of the park keepers spotted him and promptly picked him up.

“Did you see how that piece of paper blew under the door? I told you there was a terrible draft in here,” said the younger park keeper.

The older keeper briefly looked up. “Just throw it in the bin and finish tidying up. I want to get home.”

Just as the young keeper was about to crunch Herald into a tight paper ball, the keeper noticed the headline on Herald's wings- *'Fire in the park by the statue'*.

“Look at this,” the young keeper said to his companion, and showed him the headline.

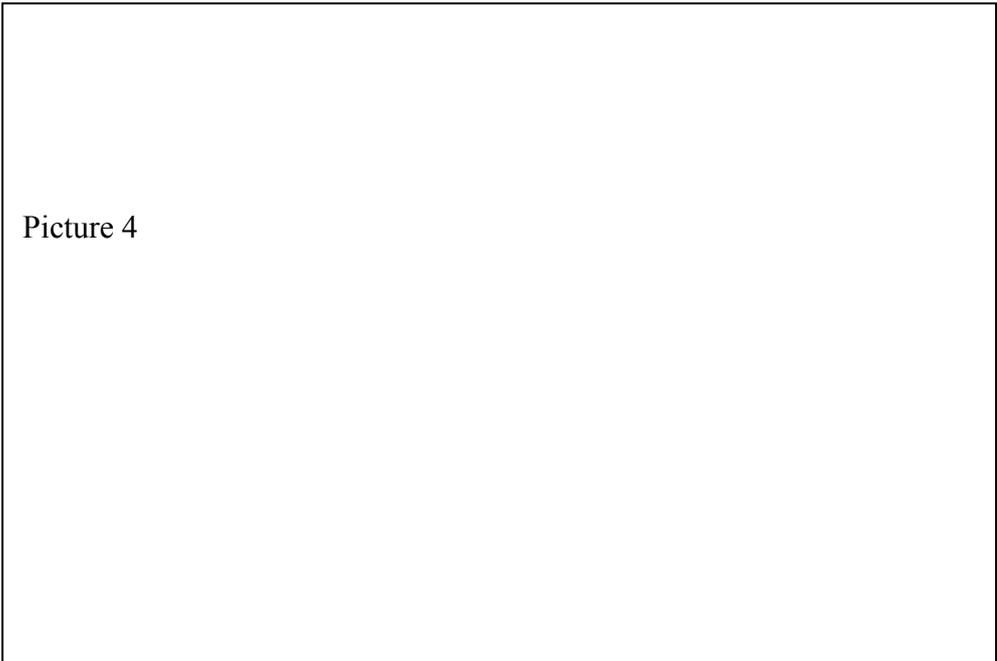
“Someone’s trying to play games with us, or maybe it’s an old newspaper report on that fire we had last month.” The older park keeper then walked over to the door, throwing Herald in the bin. “I’m just going to lock up the tool shed, it will be getting dark soon. Let’s go home.” The two park keepers then left, locking the door behind them.

Quickly unravelling his crumpled wings, Herald then slipped under the door. He was very disappointed that his plan to warn the park keepers had not worked. There was nobody else around that could now put the fire out. At that moment he realised that his Paper Bat family would have to put out the fire by themselves!

Herald flew as fast as he could back to the family tree home to alert the other Paper Bats. If there had been any people walking through the park, they would have thought it odd to see a piece of newspaper moving so fast through the air when there was so little wind that evening.

“There is a fire in the park!” Herald squeaked at the top of his voice as he arrived home, “I need help urgently.”

Bleary-eyed, all the Paper Bats woke up suddenly from their sleep. Granny Guardia was so alarmed at the squeaking she fell off her perch, and Grandpa Times jumped with such surprise, his glasses dropped off his nose.



Picture 4

Herald quickly started to organise every-one. “Express, would you please fly as fast as you can over to the north gate near the newsagents shop and try to find Jack. He can then tell other humans that a fire has started by the statue near the central lake.”

Express fluttered down from her sleeping perch, still half asleep. “No problem dad, I will fly there as fast as I can,” she said, before flying out of the tree hole.

Herald turned to Metro and Tel. “I need you both to go and get the fire beating brushes and bring them to the statue by the central lake to help put out the fire.

Tel looked worried, saying “are you sure there is no other way? The fire brushes are so dangerous for us to use.”

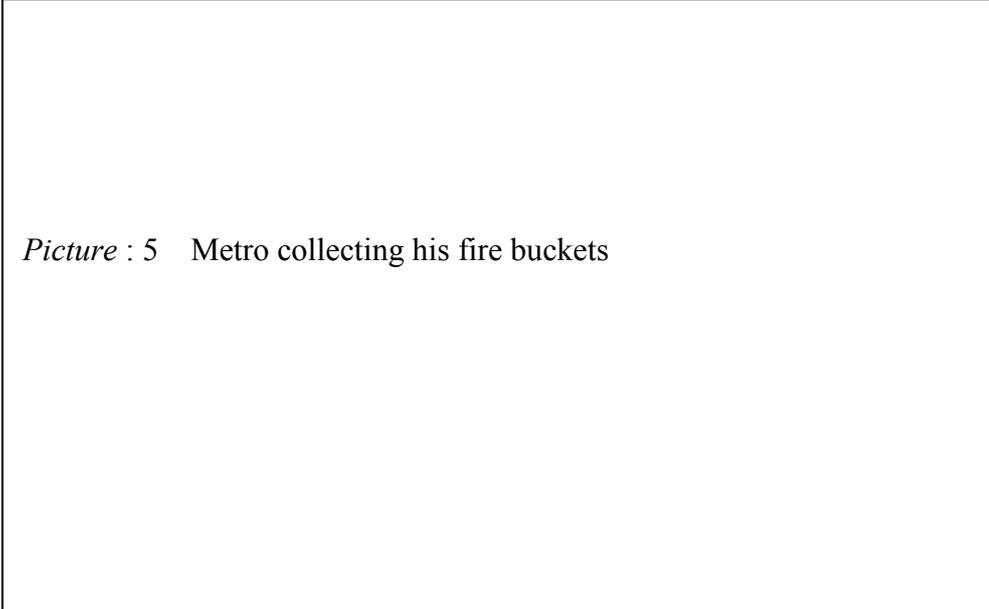
“I know, but there is nothing else we can do,” added Herald as he flew off.

So Tel and Metro raced off to the storeroom where the fire beating brushes were kept.

Then Metro suddenly stopped. “Did dad say the fire was by the lake?” Metro asked Tel.

“Yes,” replied Tel as he started to collect up several of the fire beating brushes in his claws.

Metro did not collect any. Instead he just raced out of the storeroom squeaking, “I have an idea. Don’t wait for me, I will catch you all up at the lake.” And with that comment he disappeared towards his inventing area of the tree home.



*Picture : 5* Metro collecting his fire buckets

At the statue next to the central lake, there was frantic activity going on. Tel, Grandpa Times and Herald were now busy using the fire beating brushes to try and reduce the fire in the grass and stop it spreading.

Unfortunately, all this activity was not having much success in stopping the fire. Herald was getting worried that they may not be able to put it out. And there had been no news from Express trying to warn anyone else!

However Express had remembered Jack was on his way home out of the park, and so had quickly fluttered up to the north gate. She had been just in time to catch Jack as he was about to cross the road. A gust of wind helped her flutter towards him, where she landed on Jack's face.

Jack's eyes could just see a furry paper face and a large pair of eyes through her wings. He mumbled something. But the wings were also over his mouth.

Carefully peeling her paper wings off his face, Jack looked at her in his hand. She was still breathless from all that flying. "Hello, are you alright?" Jack said in a surprised manner.

"It's an emergency. A fire has started by the lake," Express said in a worried squeak.

Holding onto Express, Jack turned around and quickly ran back through the park gates and towards the central lake. He soon arrived breathless. In front of him were several Paper Bats dangerously trying to put out the fire, still leaping up out of the grass.

But Metro was still not there. Where had he got to?

Then finally, Metro appeared flying very slowly and awkwardly.

"Here comes Metro, and he is carrying something" Jack said to Express and the other Paper Bats.

In Metro's claws he was clutching lots of small buckets. He finally flew to where the others were, collapsing with near exhaustion.

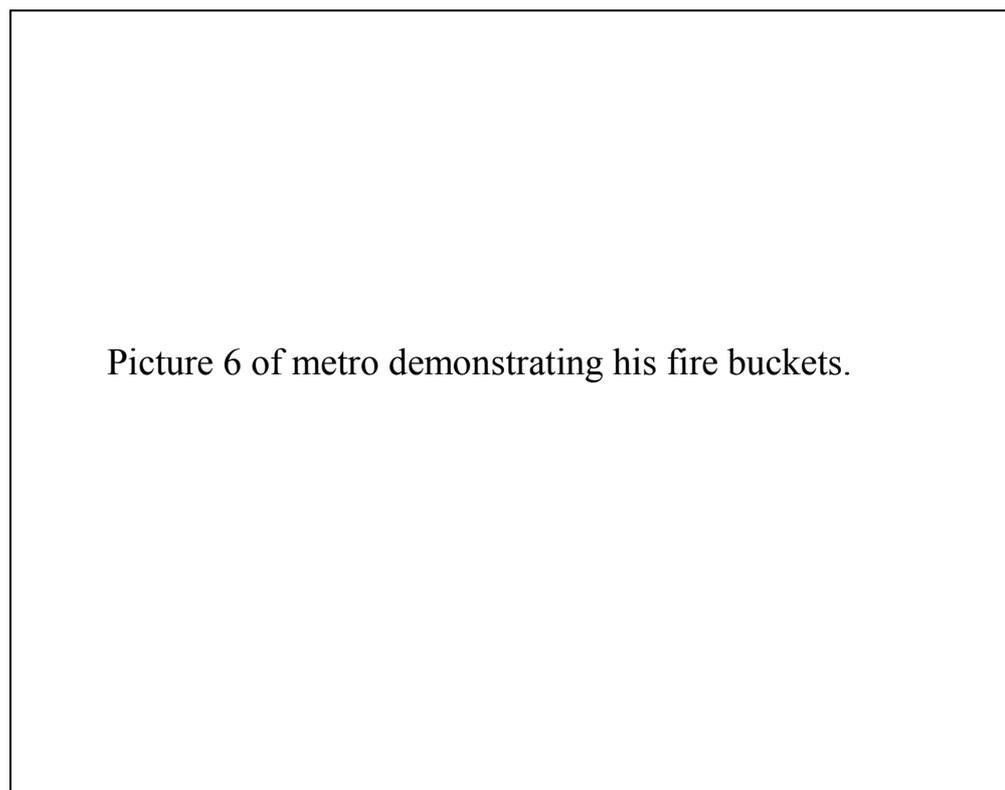
“What have you got there?” asked Herald in a surprised manner.

“Looks like a load of old buckets to me,” giggled Tel. But Tel, knew that Metro had a plan, so he was eager to try whatever idea Metro had come up with. And indeed it was one of his new inventions he had been working on over the past few days.

“I have brought each of you a special fire fighting bucket,” he squeaked. “Using water from the lake, you can fly over the flames, and then release this lever.” Metro pointed to a little handle. “It will make the bottom of the bucket open, so the water falls onto the fire.”

Metro then added, “this is safer for us as well, as you don’t have to get close to the flames, you can fly above them,” he proudly announced.

All the Paper bats watched as he demonstrated how his invention worked.



For a few seconds all the other Paper Bats were astonished by Metro’s idea, but then realised how useful it was.

“OK, everybody do as Metro suggested,” squeaked Herald loudly to make sure everybody could hear.

So for the next ten minutes they all busily scooped up water from the nearby lake and then dropped it onto the fire as fast as they could manage. Slowly the fire got smaller and smaller, before eventually it died out.

“It’s finally out,” gasped Tel as he flopped to the ground exhausted. All the other Paper Bats also collapsed around the base of the statue, very relieved.

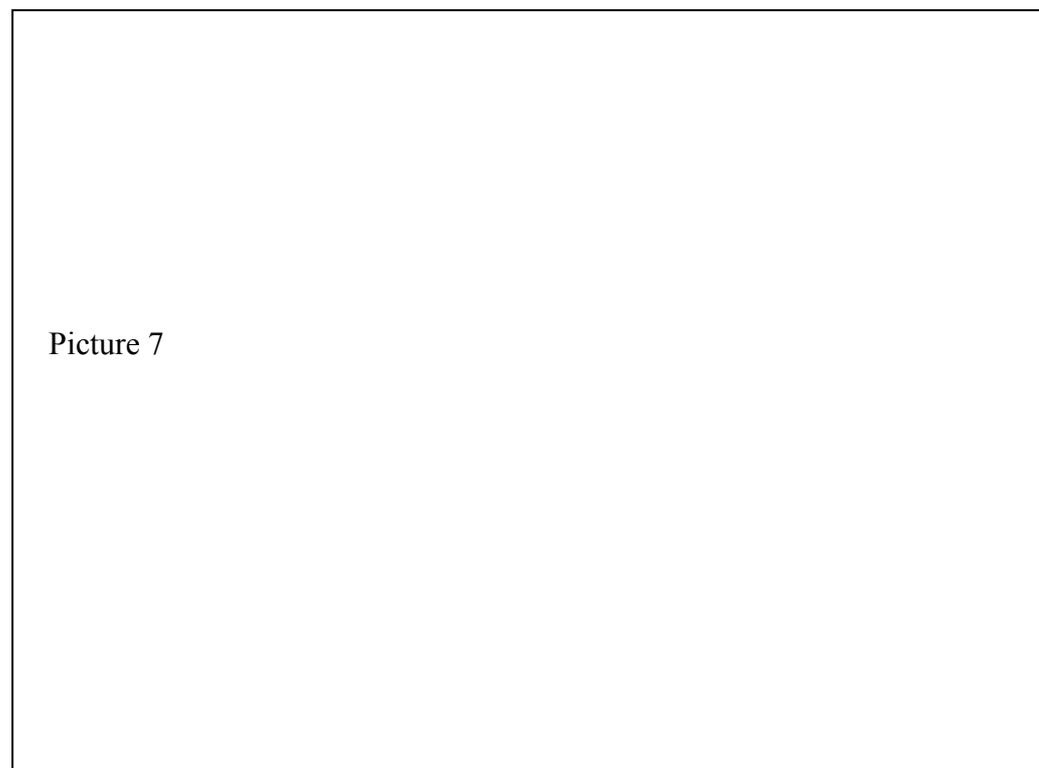
Metro still had a little water in his bucket, so he sprayed it all over everyone.

“Aah!” they all squeaked, “it’s cold.”

“Well everyone looked so hot and tired, so I thought it would revive you,” Metro added squeaking with laughter.

But they forgave him, as his invention had been such a success.

“That was a great invention of yours Metro,” said Herald, who was very impressed with his son’s idea.



Just at that moment, they could hear a noise coming from the path by the lake. It was the two park keepers. Apparently they had eventually seen the smoke coming from the direction of the lake just as they were leaving the park and decided to check it out.

“Look, over there,” shouted the young keeper. “There was definitely a fire here. I can see the grass is burnt around the statue.”

“Obviously some careless picnickers,” added the older keeper. “They are so thoughtless. Look, they even left all their paper rubbish around the statue!”

Then they saw Jack, still wet from splashing water over the fire. “What are you doing here lad?” asked the older keeper, looking at Jack.

Jack had to think quickly for an answer. He did not want to steal the credit for putting out the fire all by himself, but he also did not want to give away the Paper Bats either. “I was leaving the park when I saw the fire. Nobody else was around. So I splashed some water on it to put it out.”

The guards looked at Jack and nodded. “Well done lad. You saved us from what might have been a nasty fire as the park is so dry. We will tidy up here. Go home now as it is getting late.”

“I will just tidy up all these bits of newspaper lying around the statue before closing the gates,” the young keeper added, bending down to pick the bits of newspaper up.

“No, leave that until tomorrow. It’s too late now. We can do that in the morning,” suggested the older park warden, to the relief of Jack and several nervous Paper Bats.

And with that the two keepers left.

The Paper Bats then unfurled their tired wings and left for their tree home, quietly waving to Jack to thank him for his help.

None of the Paper Bats spoke on the flight back, as they were so tired.

Granny Guardia was waiting for them with special ointments to heal any burns and some moth soup. She was very pleased, but surprised, that no one was injured, due to Metro’s invention.

It wasn't long before the soup was all gone and for them all to be on their perches fast asleep. It had been an eventful day and night, and thanks to Metro's invention, everyone was safe.

Picture: 8 Guardia welcoming the bats with ointment and moth soup.



## Part 2



### Herald's Birthday Present.

It had been a quiet July summer's night. The Paper Bats had been watching over their local park as usual, whilst humans' slept unaware of these secretive little creatures.

Outside the entrance to the Paper Bat tree home, perched on a branch, was Grandpa Times, wearing his glasses and pointing a walking stick towards the sky. He was just finishing a school lesson on safety in the park with young Sunny.

“So please remember young Sunny, silence can also be very deadly, as hungry eagles and owls like to swoop unheard from the skies and eat Paper Bats,” warned Grandpa Times. “These creatures can see us for what we are, unlike those humans.”

Picture 9

“So do we need to be frightened of humans?” asked Sunny in her little squeaky voice.

“Oh, I am afraid you must always be careful of humans, Sunny. They may be very dangerous towards us without realising it. Children might pick us up thinking we were a bit of paper and make a dart out of us. Or worse still, a park keeper might put us into a waste bin ready to burn!”

Just then a hoot of an owl could be heard in the distance. Sunny jumped as a shiver passed through her body. She suddenly felt very nervous being outside the tree home and decided to go inside. She could smell a delicious meal being prepared which made her hungry.

In the kitchen area Sunny could see Granny Guardia being helped by Express. They had both spent the past few hours cooking many of Herald’s favourite foods, because today was Herald’s birthday.

The food was now almost ready, although there had been a few problems earlier. Granny Guardia had lost some of the ingredients, and then forgotten to put the oven on.

Unfortunately this was quite common for Granny Guardia, who had become very forgetful in her old age. This was reflected by her wings being blank.

Fortunately Express was always able to correct the cooking problems quickly. But Granny Guardia still had a sharp eye for any mischief makers, and spotted how Express had been ‘tasting’ all the foods. Express claimed it was to check if they were ready, but it was more likely that she was hungry. Fortunately, there was still plenty left for everyone else.

The dinner table was already covered with big bowls of moth soup with lots of fresh moss and side dishes of sticky flypaper with extra flies on it. There were also several jugs of different coloured liquids. These are the Paper Bats’ favourite types of drink- black and red ink.

Picture 10

Ink is very useful for all paper bats, as they can change the writing on their paper wings as a way to cleverly get their safety information noticed by humans.

It was now getting early in the morning. Indy had just finished a lovely painting of the park with the moon starting to go down. Herald had at last returned from a long night inspecting the park and children's playground areas. "What a lovely night it is," he commented as he rested at the edge of the tree hole.

As if from nowhere, lots of his family appeared around him and he was greeted by a chorus of "happy birthdays" from all his family; Grandpa Times, Granny Guardia, Indy, Express, Sunny and ..... but wait a minute, where were Metro and Tel?

"I should have guessed," huffed Guardia.

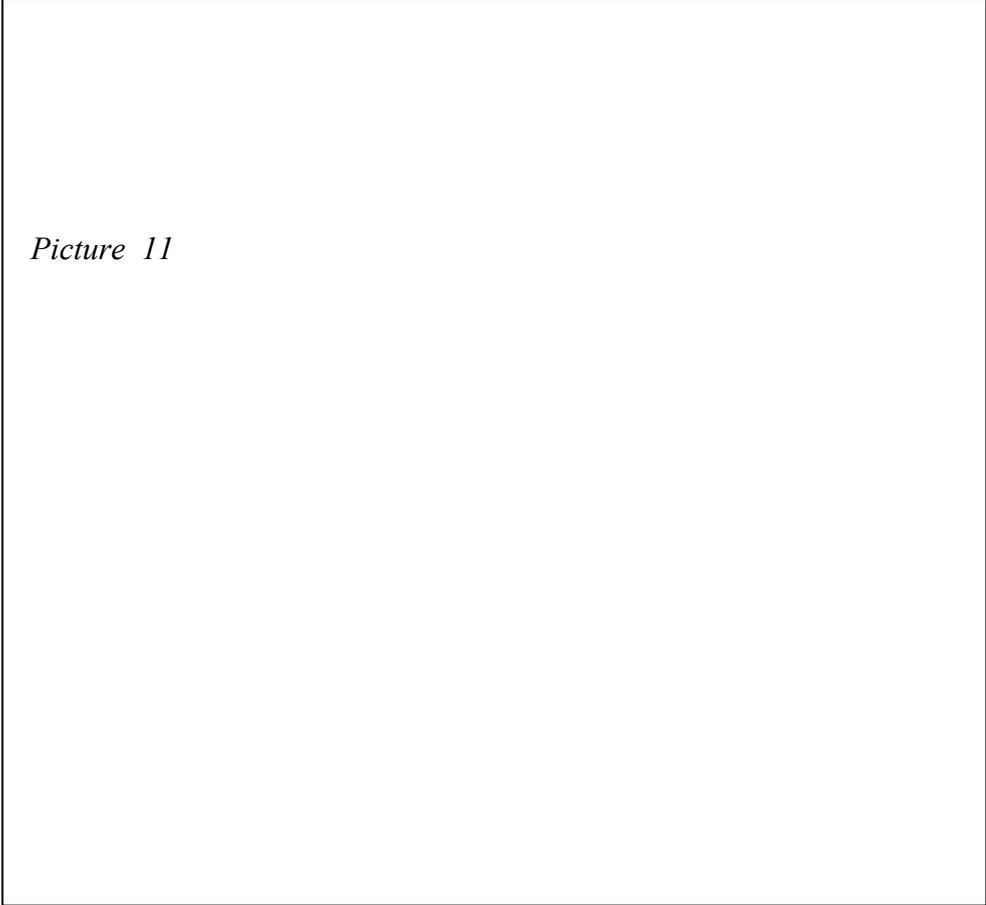
"They need a good talking to when they get back. They are always late or fooling around," added Indy with an annoyed squeak.

"I'll have a word with them later," said Herald. "But I just hope they are back soon, so I can eat that lovely food I can smell."

“I helped prepare your favourite meal for you,” Express said as her dad gave her a friendly hug with his wing.

They all settled down to wait for the twins. Granny Guardia and Express fussing over the food, Indy and Herald having a quiet chat, and Sunny playing with her pet caterpillar.

*Picture 11*



So where were the twins?

Unfortunately they were nowhere near home. In fact Metro and Tel were still playing by the gates near the north entrance by the children's' playground. They had been so busy chatting and chasing moths, that they had completely forgotten the time.

Suddenly Metro looked up at the moon.

“Oh no, we are going to be in trouble,” he squeaked. “The moon is going down and morning is coming. We must get home.”

“It's dad's birthday meal today as well. We don't want to miss it,” mentioned Tel, as he thought of all the lovely food that would be there.

“That reminds me. We were supposed to have collected some typewriter ink ribbon as a present. It’s dad’s favourite. But where can we find some this time of night!” worried Metro.

“Well, we could go to the newsagent shop across the main road outside the park,” said Tel nervously, knowing full-well that was out of bounds to them as it was outside the park gates. But they had done it before and got away with it.

“Alright, but we must not mention this when we get back home,” squeaked Metro to Tel.

“We promise,” they both said together, in a well practiced manner. They both squeaked with nervous joy for doing something forbidden.

Carefully they flew through the old iron gates at the north end of the park and over the main road towards the newspaper shop on the other side, which Jack’s family owned.

Both Metro and Tel were careful to look out for dangers such as early morning cars with sleepy drivers who might run them over, or hungry cats on an early morning stroll.

Once across the road, they flew towards the newsagent shop and perched on a window ledge at the back of the building. Fortunately the owner always left the top window open, and they had sneaked into it before.

Metro knew that Ink ribbon was used by old type-writers, but is now usually sold as computers have mostly replaced them. But ink ribbon was a delicious treat for all Paper Bats, and their dad loved it. He always said it brought back memories of his childhood.

Both Metro and Tel were careful as they flew around the shop’s storeroom. This was because their delicate wings could tear easily on the sharp scissors and pens that stuck out from the tightly packed shelves. They also had to be careful not to attract the attention of the cat, which was the pet of the newsagent’s son, Jack. But the cat was also used to keep mice away, usually by gobbling them up as a tasty meal. Paper Bats would be dealt with in just as deadly way, and the twins did not want to tempt any more trouble tonight.

*Picture: 12*

Metro quickly searched for some ink ribbon. Luckily he quickly found a reel in a glass jar on one of the top shelves. However, unluckily, the glass jar was sealed shut, and neither Metro or Tel could open the jar. They both tried their hardest, but the lid was just too tightly screwed on.

As they tried one last time, Tel slipped and his claws lost their grip, sending him falling off the shelf edge. He put his wings out to fly, but hit several smaller jars next to him. These were pushed off the shelf and slowly but unstopably fell towards the hard shop floor. Tel and Metro looked at each other in nervous anticipation.

The jars fell onto the floor with a loud ‘crash’.

“Oh no, that’s going to wake up somebody! Maybe the cat, or the owner. Either way, we are in trouble,” Tel said to Metro in a worried squeak.

Sure enough it wasn’t long before they heard a noise of someone coming down some stairs, through the front shop, and into the store room. A yawn could be heard as a light went on in

the room. There stood Jack, half asleep, as he looked around and saw the smashed jars on the floor. He shrugged and decided that it could be cleared up in the morning.

After looking around and seeing no other problems, he was just about to turn off the light when he heard a little squeaky sneeze. Jack recognised the sound. “Hello. Which Paper Bat is here. I won’t hurt you.”

Just then another little sneeze occurred, followed by a little voice saying, “I couldn’t help sneezing, there is so much dust on these shelves.”

“Well Jack knows we’re here now,” said Tel, as he and Metro flew nervously off the shelf and settled next to Jack.

“We’re really sorry Jack. We were trying to open a jar to get some ink ribbon. I know we should not have tried to take it,” Tel said very guiltily. Before adding, “It’s for our dad. It’s a treat for his birthday.”

Jack smiled and walked over to the jar containing the ink ribbon. “I’m sure my dad won’t miss this old reel of ribbon. The jar looks like it has not been opened for a long time,” Jack said as he strained to open the jar.

With a slight pop, the jar’s lid came off. Jack picked up the ink ribbon and put it down on the shelf next to the small two Paper Bats.

“Thanks Jack,” they both squeaked, as they carefully clutched hold of the reel of ribbon, each holding part of it because it was heavy. Slowly and awkwardly they flew towards the open window.

*Picture 13*

Before flying through it, they turned and waved their wings. “Our dad will be really happy with his present. See you soon.” But Jack had already started to leave the room, half asleep.

They struggled to squeeze the large reel through the gap of the window, before resting on the outside ledge for a few seconds to get their breath back.

However, the glinting ink ribbon in the moonlight caught the attention of something else. It was Jack’s pet cat, which had been resting in a tree over-hanging the shop. It was only a quick jump away from the ledge that the twins were resting on.

Picture 14

Metro and Tel gripped the ink ribbon tightly. But just as they were about to fly off, the cat jumped towards them.

Just in time, Tel saw the approaching cat with its claws outstretched. He squeaked a warning to Metro, and they flapped out of the way of the cat’s sharp claws .....but only just.

However, the cat did catch hold of the ink ribbon, which slipped out of the twins grip.

At first, the twins were just relieved to be safe. But then they realised that the cat had their reel of ink ribbon and had started to play with it. The cat appeared fascinated with its new toy.

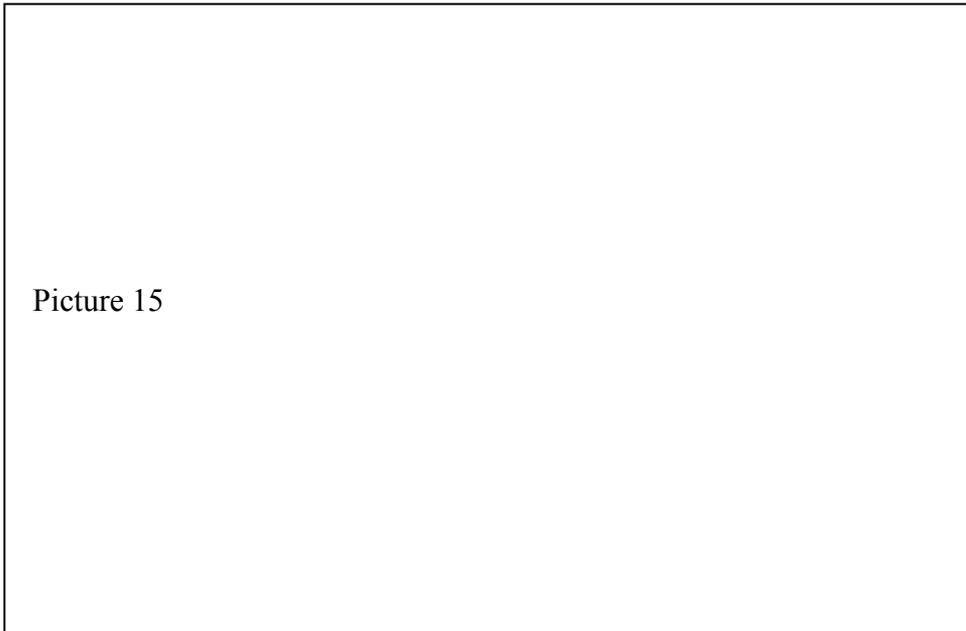
“That’s dad’s present. How are we going to get it back?” asked Metro in a worried squeak.

“I’m not sure. The cat is very big and fast,” Tel said nervously.

For a minute Tel watched the cat playing with the reel of ribbon before having an idea. "I know," he said out load, and he suddenly flew down towards the cat.

Metro looked on both horrified and alarmed as to what Tel was doing. However, as he watched Tel curl his wings up into a tight ball, like a small ball of paper, he understood what Metro was trying to do.

Quickly, Metro flew down towards the cat, which had momentarily stopped playing with the ink ribbon and was now eyeing up the ball of paper which was rolling and tumbling around in front of it. This created just enough time for Metro to grab the reel of ribbon, and with all his strength fly up to a tree branch near-by. Tel was starting to get tired of rolling around, and worried that the cat might pounce on him. But Metro's squeak of happiness told Tel that his plan had worked.



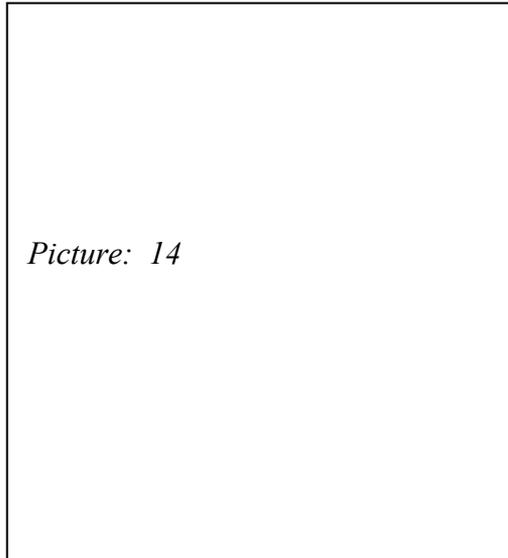
Picture 15

Moments before the cat jumped onto what seemed to be a paper ball, it grew wings and floated away, leaving the cat bemused and annoyed that it had lost its new found toy and the paper ball.

A very relieved pair of Paper Bats quickly flew home holding onto their ink ribbon present tightly. They had had a rather too exciting encounter with the cat and were both very relieved to be alright, although neither would admit it to the other.

As the twins flew to their tree home and entered the hollow tree, they both knew what to expect. It was not the first time they had got back late.

“Well what time do you call this? You naughty boys,” squeaked Indy, frustrated that the family had been waiting for them to arrive. She had also been very worried about them, as although they were old enough to look after themselves now, she still knew there were many dangers in the park. Indy did not need to say anything more as the twins could see she was very cross, because writing on her wings was flashing shades of red in anger, with words such as ‘late’, ‘concern’ and ‘warning’. Herald was also looking very annoyed.



Looking rather embarrassed, but relieved to be home, the twins flew over to Herald and gave him the reel of ink ribbon and some big hugs.

“Happy birthday dad,” they squeaked together.

Herald loved his children and soon forgot he was annoyed with them for being late.

At that point, Indy noticed that they both had small tears on their wings. “What happened to you both? I must see to those torn wings immediately before they get worse.” And with that, Indy quickly got some bits of sticky tape and carefully put them onto the torn areas of the wings. “They will soon heal now.” She said in a less worried voice.

Indy looked at the twins with some concern but also an inquisitive expression. “How did you get those wing tears?”

The twins looked at each other. Before saying together, “ah, that’s a long story.”

*Picture 17*