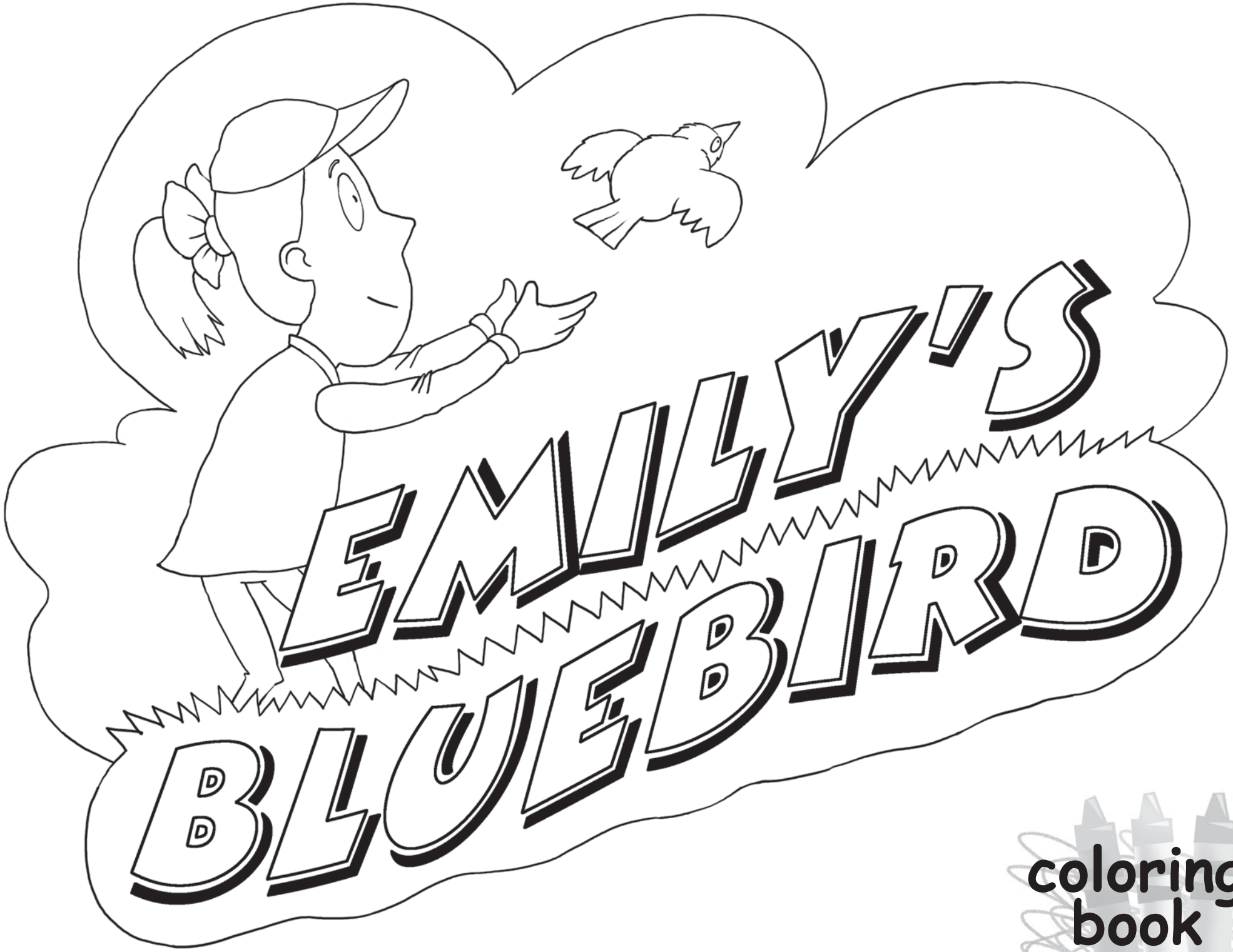


coloring book

It was a sunny afternoon in May,

and Emily was searching her backyard for signs of spring. She ran to an old, dead tree where woodpeckers had made a nest hole. Sometimes other birds use old woodpecker holes for their nests, and she listened eagerly for the "peep peep" of baby birds. If she were lucky, she might even see a parent bird fly up with food for its hungry chicks.

Just as Emily reached the old tree, she saw something

moving in the grass under the woodpecker hole.

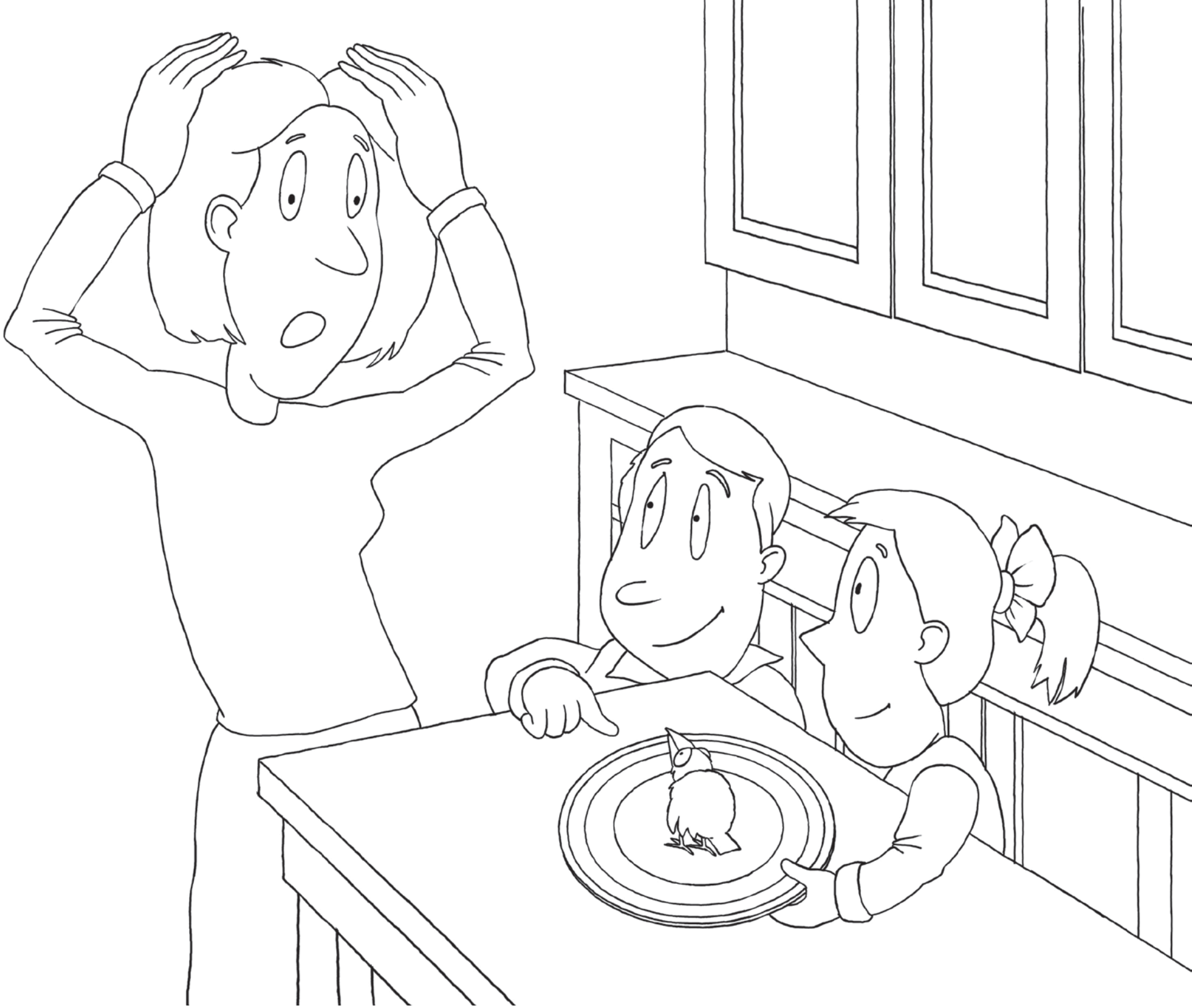
It was a baby bird!

It didn't fly away when Emily got closer.

Maybe it was too young to fly.

"I'll take you home, little bird," she said to the chick. "Mom will

show me how to take care of you. Mom knows all about nature."



Emily's mother did not seem thrilled

when her daughter plopped a baby bird onto the kitchen table.

"Emmie, it's perfectly normal for babies to

jump out of the nest

a few days before they can fly. Nests are dangerous places. They're easy for predators like squirrels and snakes to find, and after a couple of weeks a nest full of chicks can get pretty dirty. Most songbird chicks leave as soon as they're old enough to hop and climb, but before their feathers have grown enough to fly."

“This is a bluebird chick, and it looks healthy to me”

said Emily’s mom. “Bluebirds eat bugs and worms.

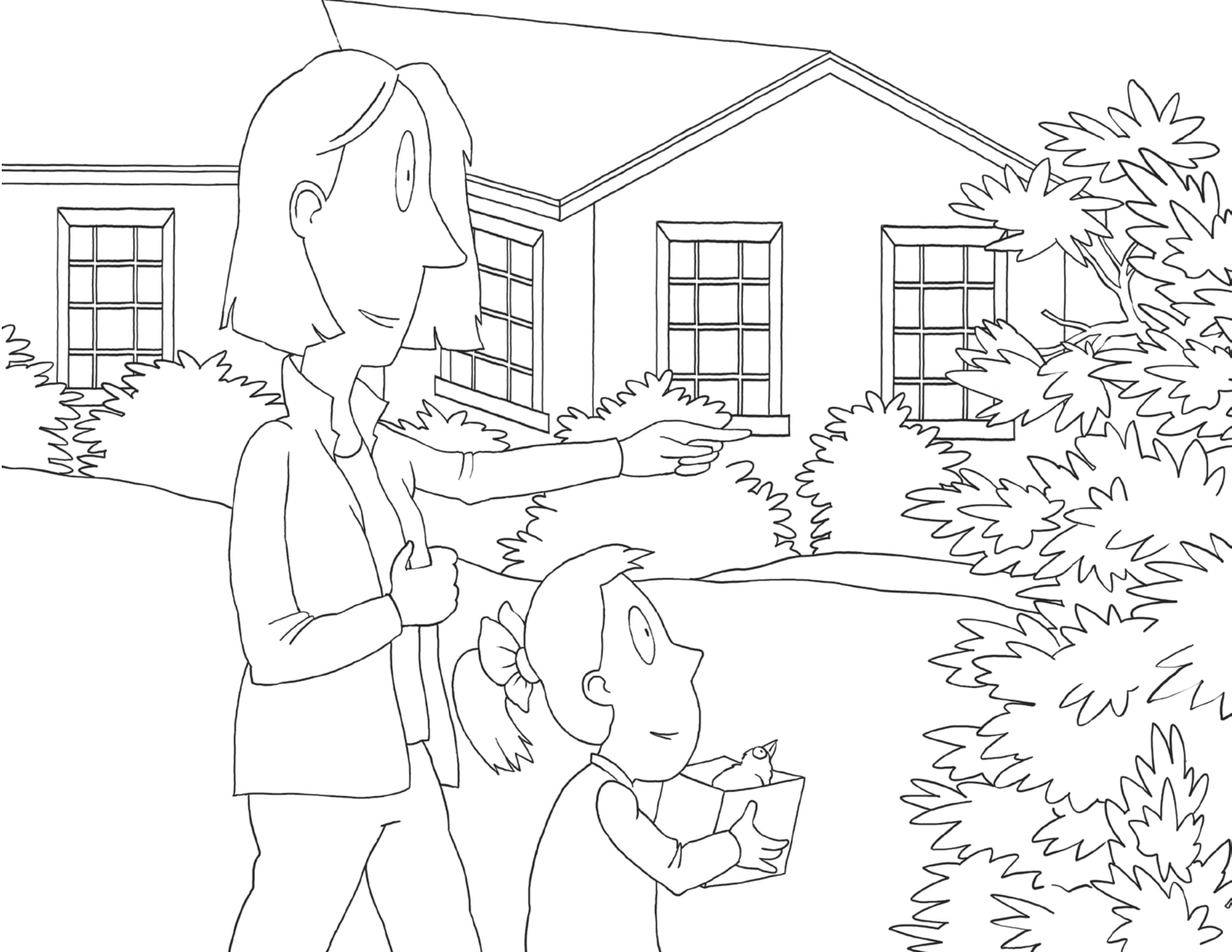
We can’t take care of it

nearly as well as its mother and father.

They don’t need our help, so let’s put it back

before the parents get too worried.

Help me find a good, safe place.”



Emily followed her mother into the backyard,

carrying the bluebird chick.

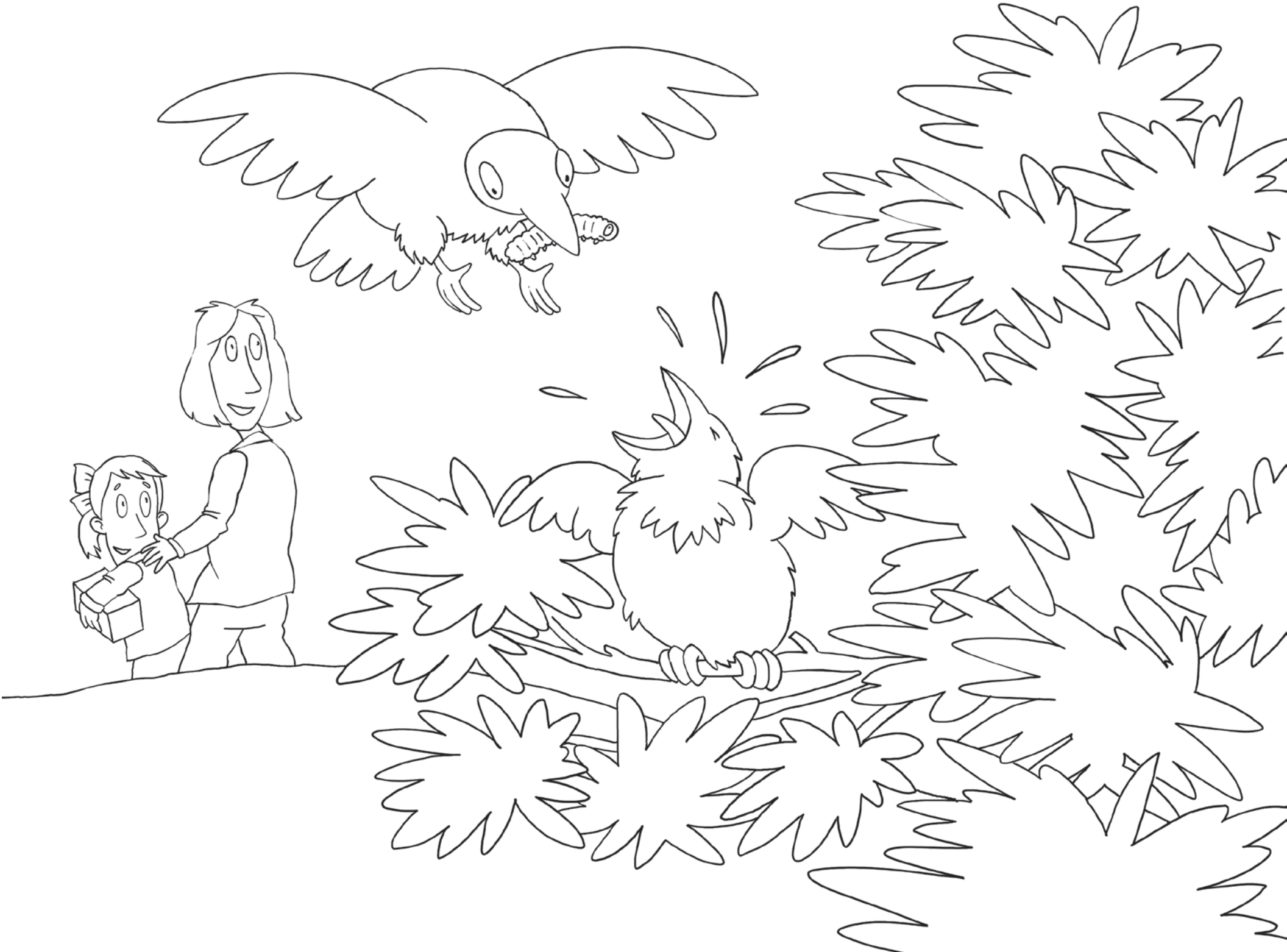
Near the old tree, Emily saw a bush with lots of branches and leaves.

"How about here, Mom?" she said.

"That will be perfect, Emmie," said her mother.

"The chick will be safer than on the ground,

and the parents should find it quickly."



With a boost from her mother,

Emily put the chick on a small branch, out of reach of cats.

As soon as they backed away, the hungry little bird began peeping.

Emily's mother explained that chicks peep so their parents can keep track of them. Sure enough, an adult bluebird arrived a minute later with a juicy caterpillar,

and poked it into the chick's mouth. Yum!

Emily was a little disappointed that she wouldn't have a baby bird to take care of, but happy that the chick was safe and the parents weren't worried about it. But she wasn't prepared for what happened next: **three more bluebird chicks climbed out of the nest hole,** looked around at their new world, and fluttered right into the same bush!

The nest was empty, and all the babies were safe.

Emily was glad she hadn't interfered too much with nature.

BLUE BIRD HOUSE
1.Back
2. Side
3. Front
4.Top
5. Bottom
1.
2.
2.
3.
4.
5.

That night, a big storm arrived.

The next morning, Emily saw that the old nest tree

had been blown down by the storm's strong winds.

She wondered, what will the bluebirds do now?

Emily decided to look on the Internet for more information about

bluebirds. She learned about **nest boxes,** and found some

plans at NBII Kids <http://www.nbiikids.com/birdhouse.html>

Emily asked her father to help her make a bluebird nest box,

to replace the woodpecker hole in the old tree.

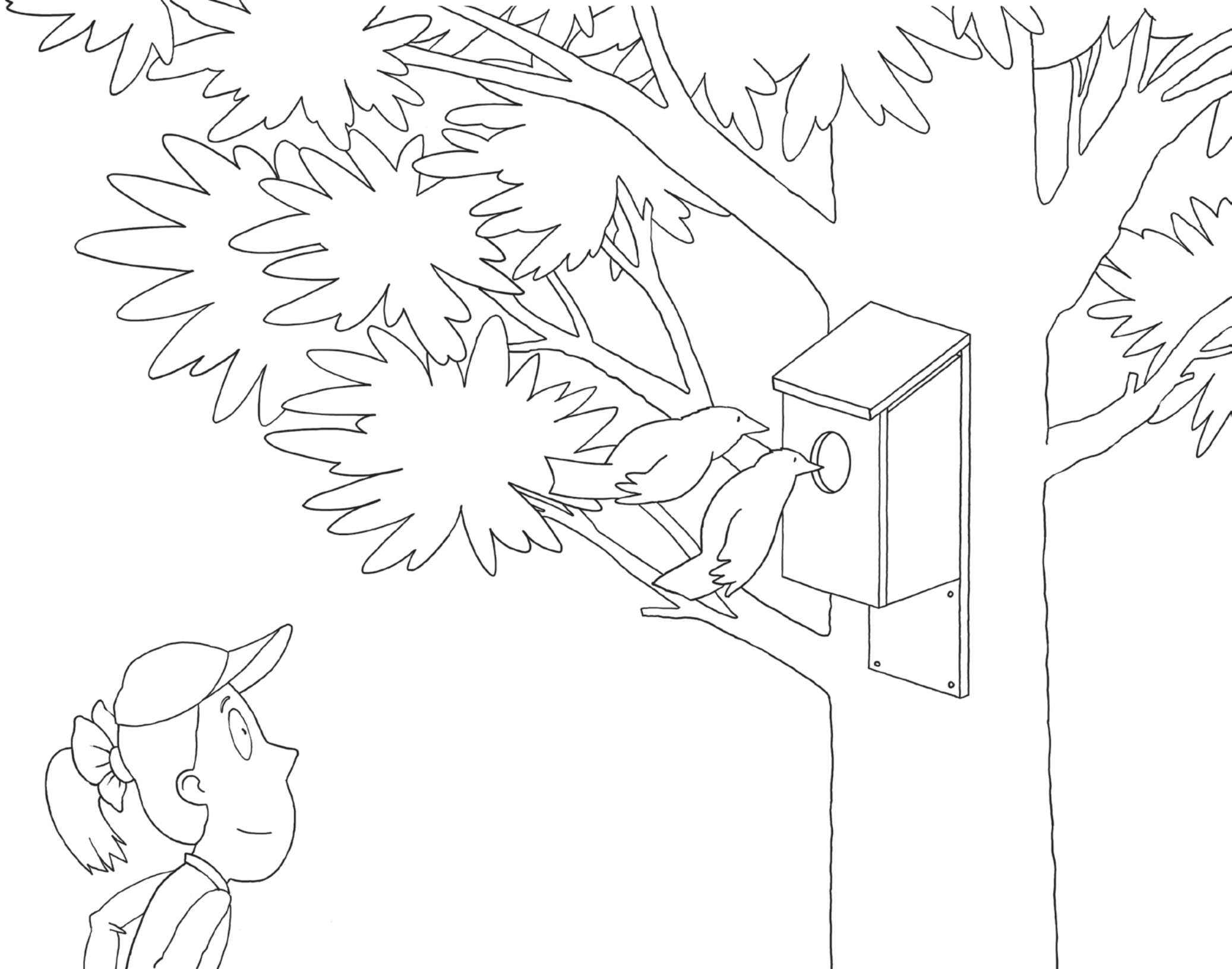
They bought the materials, and together they built the nest

box in her father's basement workshop.

It was easy, and fun.

Emily's father fastened the new box to another tree

in the backyard, not far from the old one that blew down.



Emily watched the nest box every day.

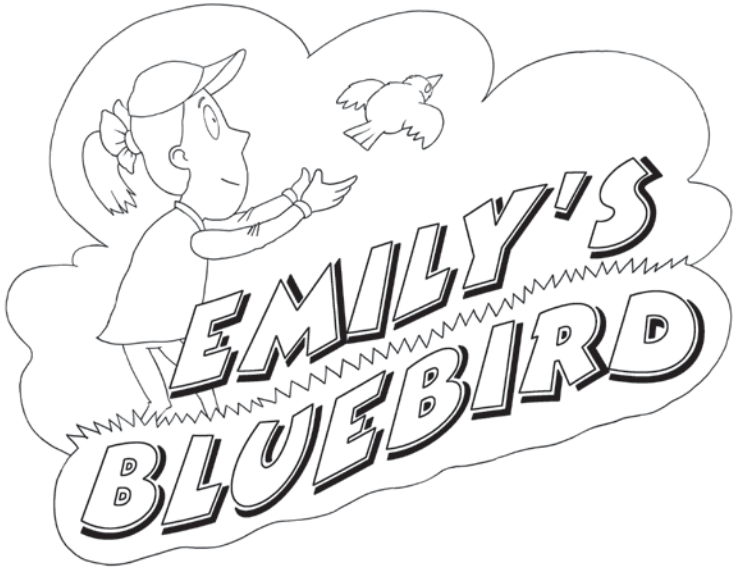
After only a week, she saw a pair of bluebirds

checking out the box, and

soon another nest was underway.

Were they the same bluebirds?

Could be!



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