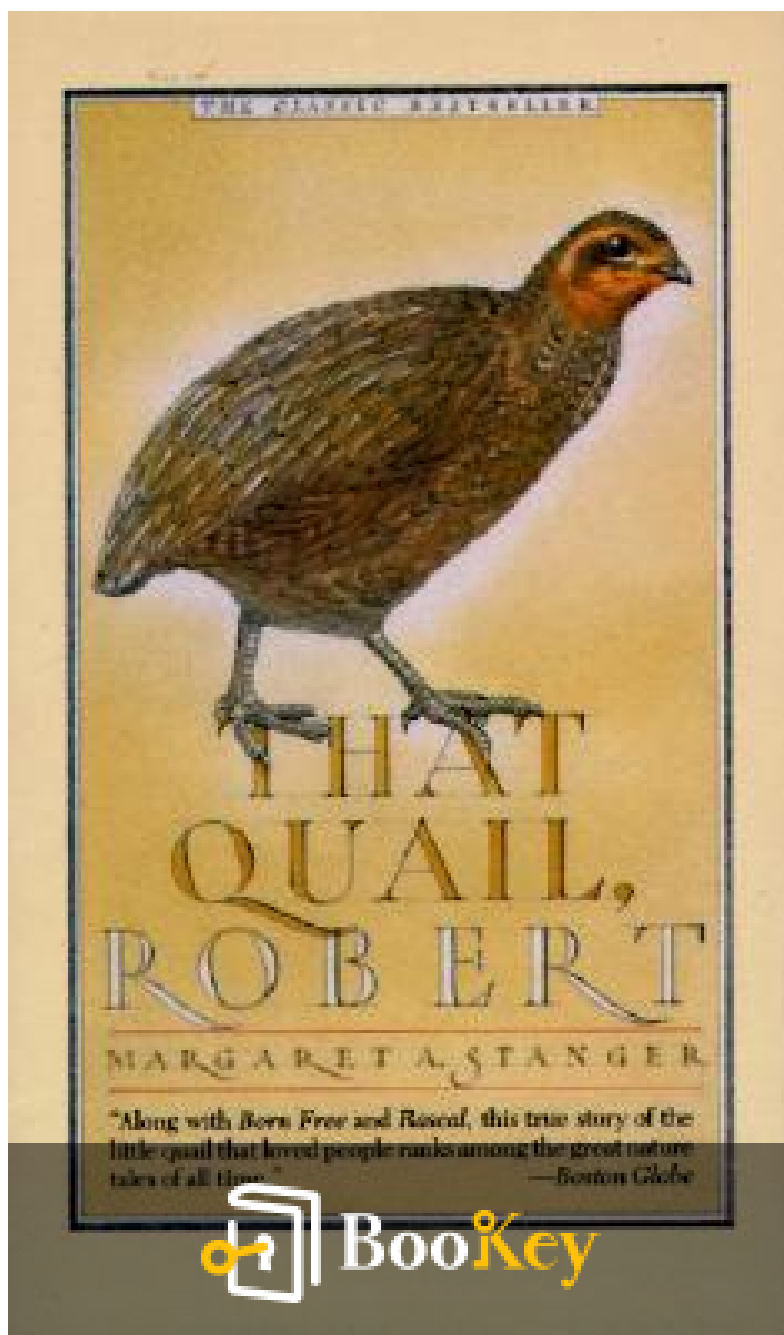


That Quail, Robert PDF (Limited Copy)

Margaret A. Stanger



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That Quail, Robert Summary

A Journey of Growth and Self-Discovery.
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About the book

In "That Quail, Robert," Margaret A. Stanger intricately weaves a heartwarming tale of innocence, discovery, and the fragile bond between a young boy and his beloved pet quail, Robert. Through the eyes of joyful curiosity and poignant growth, the story explores themes of love and loss, as well as the profound impact that even the smallest of creatures can have on our lives. As the boy navigates the complexities of childhood alongside his feathered companion, readers are invited to reflect on their own connections to the natural world and the lessons we learn through friendship and change. Stanger's delicate prose and vibrant storytelling promise to captivate the hearts of both young readers and the young at heart, making "That Quail, Robert" a timeless exploration of life's fleeting moments.

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About the author

Margaret A. Stanger was an American author and poet known for her keen observations of nature and the human condition, which she skillfully interwove into her narratives. Born in the early 20th century, Stanger's literary career blossomed through her ability to capture the subtleties of everyday life with a unique blend of humor and warmth. Her works often reflect her deep appreciation for the outdoors and her intuitive understanding of complex familial and social dynamics. "That Quail, Robert" is perhaps her most celebrated work, showcasing her talent for storytelling while providing readers with poignant insights into the bonds of family and the challenges of growing up. Stanger's contributions to literature continue to resonate, offering timeless themes that connect generations of readers.

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Chapter 1 Summary: The Miracle

Chapter 1: The Miracle

On July 11, 1962, an unexpected turn of events heralded a significant change in the lives of Dr. Thomas Kienzle and his wife Mildred. Until that day, their lives were dominated by the rich tapestry of nature around their retirement home on Cape Cod, where they had carefully preserved the wildlife sanctuary they called home. Their friend, the narrator, describes how Tommy had discovered a quail nest hidden in the tall grass near their residence, a secret haven they had both cherished and nurtured.

The Kienzles had chosen a picturesque yet rugged four-acre plot of land overlooking Crystal Lake. Tommy, having transitioned from a prominent medical career to a peaceful retirement, brought with him a deep love for nature, cultivated since their childhood in Kentucky. On that fateful morning, while preparing for a trip, Tommy encountered an incredible display of parental instinct from a pair of quails. The male and female quail feigned injury to draw his gaze away from their nest, allowing twelve hatchlings to escape safely into the woods.

When the Kienzles returned to inspect the nest later, they found two eggs — one perfect and one cracked. Intrigued, they decided to take the perfect egg

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home, meticulously cleaning and warming it with a boudoir lamp. To their astonishment, after several days of anticipation, the egg began to crack, revealing a tiny quail chick, which they named Robert.

As Robert hatched, the Kienzles quickly provided him with warmth and comfort, using a duster as a makeshift nest. Initially hesitant to eat, Robert eventually began to forage on his own, showcasing an innate self-sufficiency that surprised his caretakers. Mildred and Tommy became enamored with their new charge, standing in amazement as Robert exhibited notable intelligence and personality traits.

Despite the doubts expressed by friends about Robert's chances of survival and legality, the Kienzles committed themselves to nurturing him until he was strong enough to fend for himself. With each passing day, Robert grew in size and confidence, exploring his surroundings while forging strong bonds with his human caretakers. His transformation was remarkable in both appearance and character – he flourished from a fragile chick into a vibrant, sociable quail.

When it was time to try letting Robert explore the outdoors, he surprised the Kienzles by running back into the house, declaring that he had no intention of leaving his newfound family. Robert quickly settled into life in the house, exploring every nook and cranny, while also taking on the role of a companion and pest control agent, ridding the home of spiders with

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formidable efficiency. His affection for the Kienzles deepened, as he followed them around, participated in their daily activities, and greeted visitors with enthusiasm.

As summer slipped into autumn, the Kienzles celebrated Robert's growth, even marking his two-month anniversary with a special treat. Through laughter and love, Robert's story became one of connection and companionship, reflecting a bond that transcended the boundaries between wild and domesticated life, bringing joy and wonder into their lives. The transformation from an abandoned egg to a cherished family member highlighted the beauty of unexpected miracles, illustrating that sometimes the wildest adventures begin with the smallest of beginnings.

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Chapter 2 Summary: Registration

Chapter 2: Registration

In retrospect, Mildred and Tommy understood that their worries about Robert, the quail they had taken in, were unwarranted. They decided to consult Mr. Wallace Bailey, the director of a nearby bird sanctuary, and share their unusual story. The sanctuary was dedicated to rehabilitating injured birds, and Mr. Bailey was known for his innovative ideas regarding their care.

When they attended one of Mr. Bailey's lectures, they were impressed by his dedication to wildlife conservation. After the talk, they had a moment to discuss Robert with him. Mildred nervously asked if they should bring Robert to the sanctuary. Mr. Bailey suggested that since Robert thrived under their care, it might be best to keep him where he was but recommended banding him for identification purposes. They agreed, and the next day, a small metal band was placed on Robert's leg, officially registering him as part of the U.S. Wildlife Service. Though it was a significant milestone, Robert seemed completely indifferent to his new status, remaining unaware of the human systems of categorization that now included him.

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Despite his nonchalance, Robert was sensitive to changes in his environment. He would react dramatically if something small was out of place, demonstrating his perceptive nature. For instance, if a rug was crumpled, he would express his unease until it was fixed. His routine at the breakfast table revealed his keen sense of shared spaces. If Mildred was late to join him and Tommy, he would fly to the bedroom to prompt her to return, indicating his preference for established patterns and familiar company.

As Robert grew accustomed to household life, he also transitioned from sleeping in a box to finding a cozy spot on a red velvet pillbox hat on a shelf. This became his new sleeping arrangement after a brief exploration that led to a tumble and a small injury. This incident, along with another minor fall, made the family more vigilant, resulting in the addition of a night light for safety. Their approach balanced caution with the understanding that some risks were unavoidable in Robert's growth.

Robert was a late riser, missing family breakfasts. His humorous morning routine included a mad dash around the house for his morning "business," which became an entertaining part of daily life. Mildred and Tommy ensured that their home environment remained clean and accommodating for Robert's energetic nature, leading to minimal messes.

As autumn arrived, Robert's plumage changed; he developed richer colors

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and tiny spikes on his head that would rise with excitement. This was particularly noticeable when he reacted to unfamiliar sounds, like the whistling of a kettle, where his topknot would stand erect in curiosity. Robert also enjoyed interacting with the phone, often hopping onto the shoulders of whoever was speaking, showcasing his gregarious and friendly personality.

One notable encounter occurred when a telephone repairman, who had heard about Robert, visited their home. He was amazed to find a quail examining his tools and promptly engaged in conversation with Robert. The exchange revealed not only the repairman's astonishment but also highlighted Robert's ability to captivate anyone who visited, further solidifying his place in Mildred and Tommy's lives.

Overall, Robert's journey from a wild quail to a beloved member of the family unfolded seamlessly, filled with the joys of companionship and the challenges of adapting to human life, making each day an adventure.

Key Points	Description
Consultation with Mr. Bailey	Mildred and Tommy seek advice from Mr. Wallace Bailey, a bird sanctuary director, about caring for Robert, their quail.
Robert's Registration	Mr. Bailey recommends banding Robert for identification; he is officially registered with the U.S. Wildlife Service.
Robert's	Robert shows sensitivity to his environment and engages in routines,



Key Points	Description
Perceptiveness	signaling preferences for established patterns.
Change in Sleeping Habits	Robert transitions from sleeping in a box to a red velvet pillbox hat after minor accidents prompt family caution.
Morning Routine	Robert develops a humorous morning routine, dashing around the house and missing family breakfasts, while the environment is kept tidy for him.
Seasonal Changes	As autumn arrives, Robert's plumage changes, displaying more vibrant colors and a gregarious personality.
Interaction with Visitors	Robert charms a visiting telephone repairman, showcasing his ability to connect with people and solidifying his place in the family.
Overall Journey	Robert's adaptation from wild quail to a family member is marked by joy and challenges, enriching Mildred and Tommy's daily lives.

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Chapter 3 Summary: A Change of Season

Chapter 3: A Change of Season

As winter arrived, the indoor quail named Robert displayed a surprising aversion to the first snowfall. Despite being a species native to areas as far north as Maine, Robert was bewildered by the unfamiliar cold and white blanket that covered the patio outside. His initial attempts to venture out were marked by hesitation and retreat back to the warmth of the indoors. After a short while, he seemed to forget his fear and requested another outing. However, the light snow still deterred him, leading to little quail footprints in the powder. By the end of the day, he chose to stay inside, showcasing his preference for comfort over adventure.

While most people find solace in the warmth of a fireplace, Robert displayed a unique attachment to his lamp in the kitchen. It became his favorite spot during snowy days as he perched on the lampshade, warming himself and watching other birds outside. His demeanor suggested contentment, resembling that of a cat enjoying the hearth rather than a quail braving the winter.

Robert's love for warmth was evident when a fire crackled in the fireplace. Unlike wild birds who instinctively fear flames, Robert showed no such

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caution. He would position himself close to the fire, seeming to relish the heat without any concern. This behavior led the narrator to recall an experiment involving baby monkeys and their attachment to comfort objects, likening Robert's fondness for the lamp as a mother substitute—a source of warmth and security.

Nightly rituals revolved around the lamp, where Robert would circle it affectionately before settling down to sleep. His routine was comforting both for him and those who watched him, as he relaxed completely, oblivious to the bustling household activities around him.

However, Robert's life was not without its challenges. A painful incident occurred when he was accidentally stepped on by Mildred, the narrator's partner, who had forgotten about him while dressing. The injury to his toe led to significant concern and care from the family. Tommy, one of the family members, tenderly held Robert throughout the day, ensuring he felt comforted as he healed. Despite some lingering difficulties with his toe, Robert showed resilience and affection towards his caretakers.

Another crisis struck when Robert caught a cold from a grandchild. Despite the family's attempts to isolate him from illness, he became quite ill, exhibiting symptoms akin to those humans experience. The concern for his well-being grew as the family sought to care for him, yet he began to recover on his own, ultimately regaining his spirited personality. This experience



reinforced the family's sense of responsibility toward Robert and their deepening bond with him.

Throughout these challenges and events, Robert displayed an innate empathy toward his human companions. Whenever someone in the family was unwell, Robert would remain close, offering a soothing presence and a sense of companionship. This mutual affection underscored the special relationship between Robert and the family, highlighting the bond that can develop between humans and animals in shared environments.

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Chapter 4: Christmas and Grandchildren

Chapter 4: Christmas and Grandchildren

CAPE COD was graced with beautiful pre-Christmas weather, offering a perfect backdrop for outdoor play. Robert, a young quail, reveled in this delightful setting. He darted through fallen leaves and explored the woodpile, demonstrating his natural instinct for foraging despite being a well-cared-for house bird. His sharp eye allowed him to detect the slightest movement, and he savored catching delicious insects like granddaddy longlegs, all while blending seamlessly into his environment with his rich plumage.

As Christmas approached, a crèche crafted by Herbert Plimpton provided Robert with his introduction to the holiday season. His curiosity led him to examine the beautiful figures, particularly the scene with the shepherds. This marked a moment of quiet reverence, as Robert sat before the Infant, seemingly captivated by the display.

Just days before Christmas, Tommy introduced a four-foot spruce tree into their home. At first, Robert was taken aback by its presence on the cement floor. However, his inquisitive nature soon had him exploring the tree's branches and forgetting his usual haunt, the woodpile. The quail's behavior

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was amusingly incongruous; while quail are typically ground-dwelling birds, he often sought refuge atop the tree, sometimes curling up as if to nap.

On Christmas Eve, Mildred and Tommy decided to set up the tree inside while Robert slept, opting to decorate without his interference. They avoided using tinsel, knowing that its shiny look might confuse him with his favorite sauerkraut. Among the decorations was a unique ornament—a gilded branch attached to a perfect bird’s nest, holding three delicate Christmas balls. They also hung three stockings by the mantel—one for each grandchild and a tiny one for Robert, filled with treats.

After attending midnight Mass, the family returned home, exhausted yet excited for the festivities of Christmas morning. Breakfast was quick, as Tom, Nancy, and the grandchildren were soon to arrive. Robert made his entrance, yawning and hopping onto the breakfast table where he spotted the tree and the stockings. His cries of surprise echoed his excitement as he explored the decorations, eventually uncovering his own treat—a sprig of chickweed in his stocking.

In a delightful turn of events, Robert decided to settle into the gilded nest on the tree, further enhancing the holiday's charm. This behavior was unexpected, yet it seemed to convey gratitude for the efforts put into decorating.

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As the day unfolded, Robert maintained a balance between enjoying the festivities and retreating to a safe space when the grandchildren's playful energy became overwhelming. He engaged with the chaos of unwrapped gifts, tissue paper, and ribbons but also found solace underneath the king-size bed when the excitement became too much.

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Chapter 5 Summary: In the Spring—a Surprise

Chapter 5: In the Spring—A Surprise

As spring began to unfold, Robert's human companions felt a mix of dread and anticipation. Throughout the winter, Robert had remained cheerful despite undergoing a significant molt, shedding feathers in abundance and looking rather disheveled. While they expected his behavior to change with the arrival of spring and its mating instincts, Robert's spirits stayed remarkably high. However, as pairs of quail began appearing outside, the humans couldn't help but worry whether he would respond to those natural calls.

To their surprise, Robert, who was presumed to be male, suddenly changed. One day, he refused food and sought constant attention, cuddling close to Tommy and making distressing sounds. Concerned, his friends scrambled to attend to him. Then, in a moment of shock, Robert produced an egg. This unexpected event excited his human friends and drew attention from the local community, resulting in headlines declaring "ROBERT SHRIEKS, LAYS FIRST EGG."

The egg, large and robust, was ignored by Robert immediately after laying it. She eagerly consumed food as if she had been starved. Her humans were

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left to ponder the implications of this discovery. Tommy mused that since only a female could lay an egg, it was clear Robert was a girl all along. Mildred affectionately comforted Robert and recognized the lesson they had learned about her true identity. Despite suggestions to rename her Roberta, they decided to stick with Robert, as that was the name that had come to symbolize their bond.

The unexpected appearance of the egg stirred curiosity and confusion among their visitors, who naively asked if it would hatch. The humans patiently explained that it wouldn't because it was unfertilized, often simplifying the science of reproduction for inquisitive children. They discussed Robert's laying history, recalling she had been found in a nest containing around thirteen eggs, and speculated she might lay more eggs soon. However, Robert had a different plan—she never laid another egg despite their expectations.

As the weeks passed, local media humorously announced "ROBERT'S A FAILURE" for only laying one egg, but she seemed unconcerned with the ordeal. Robert continued to be unpredictable, defying the dire forecasts made by experts about her survival and the effects of the mating season. An ornithologist cautiously advised the humans to enjoy their time with Robert while they could, warning that she may not last through another season. While they respected his expertise, they dismissed his gloomy prediction, bolstered by Robert's resilience.

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A new question emerged regarding Robert's weight, leading them to consider various options for measuring the little bird. Eventually, Mrs. Nellie Barrington, a kind nursing home director, brought a scale, and to everyone's delight, Robert weighed exactly five ounces. Shortly after, Mrs. Barrington expressed her wish to have her picture taken with Robert for her seventy-ninth birthday. This simple request was easily fulfilled, adding another joy to their relationship with the charming little quail.

In this chapter, the themes of identity, companionship, and the unpredictable nature of life weave throughout the narrative, highlighting the tender bond between Robert and her human friends as they navigate the quirks of springtime and the surprises it brings.

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Chapter 6 Summary: A Big Problem

Chapter 6: A Big Problem

For nearly a year, I had reveled in the joys of caring for Robert, a quail who had become an inseparable part of the Kienzle family. My life had taken on a caretaker's simplicity, filled with playdates and outdoor excursions, free from the worries of her health and safety. However, the idyllic routine took a turn when the Kienzles finally decided to embark on the long-dreamed-of trip to Europe, inspired by their younger son Don's engagement to a lovely woman named Monika in Berlin. Their excitement about the trip, which had lingered in a vague 'someday' category, now clashed with the practical concern of what to do with Robert during their absence.

Thoughts began to swirl between the Kienzles' enthusiasm for the trip and my rising anxiety about Robert's well-being. Suggestions emerged—boarding her, taking her along, or even canceling the trip altogether. Each option felt more ludicrous than the last; boarding would cage her and taking her to Europe seemed cruel given the quarantine laws. I recognized that Robert's happiness was paramount, yet I often found myself wishing for a solution that would support both the Kienzles' adventure and Robert's comfort.

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One fateful afternoon, during a tea gathering, a well-intentioned conversation about the quail led me to a decisive moment—I would keep Robert while the Kienzles traveled. The thought of their faces lighting up with relief when I called them to share my decision only solidified my resolve. Planning for Robert's stay required immediate attention: envisioning an outdoor enclosure where she could hunt and take her beloved dirt baths, away from the danger of predatory cats that prowled my home. I enlisted the help of my friend, Walter Peers, a builder, who agreed to sketch out a plan for a safe space for Robert.

That evening was filled with activity—measuring, discussing materials, and ultimately launching into a flurry of preparation. With the plans in place and Walter's estimate in hand, I contacted the Kienzles with the good news, letting them bask in the joy of their upcoming trip while I settled into the new role of Robert's caretaker.

As the departure day approached, a wave of apprehension washed over me. What if Robert was not content in my home? My thoughts drifted to a previous episode when Robert had spent a night away from her family, resulting in her distress and confusion—crying for hours in an unfamiliar space. It had taken a reunion with her beloved caretakers for her to settle down again, drawing attention to her need for security and familiarity.

Despite recalling the expert findings of Dr. Konrad Lorenz on birds and their

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capacity to bond, I still felt a heavy responsibility weighing on me. Would Robert form a similar bond with me during the Kienzles' absence? The realization of her high intelligence, evidenced by her behavior and interactions, spurred me to think positively. My background in child psychology encouraged me to approach the situation as a puzzle to be unraveled—one that could be endured with love and attention.

As the night wore on and sleep eluded me, I shifted my mindset from anxiety to constructive thinking. Strategies began to emerge naturally, offering me hope that I could manage Robert's care effectively. With my newfound clarity, I finally welcomed a peaceful slumber, confident that I was ready to embrace the journey ahead with Robert and ensure her happiness during the Kienzles' momentous trip.

Section	Summary
Year of Caring for Robert	The narrator enjoyed a year of caring for Robert, the quail, which became a cherished part of the Kienzle family, filled with joy and simplicity.
Travel Plans	The Kienzles planned a trip to Europe due to their son Don's engagement, creating anxiety over Robert's care during their absence.
Concerns for Robert	The narrator contemplated various care options for Robert such as boarding, taking her along, or canceling the trip, but found none suitable.
Decision to Care for Robert	During a tea gathering, the narrator decided to care for Robert while the Kienzles traveled, envisioning a comfortable outdoor enclosure for her.

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Section	Summary
Preparing for Robert's Stay	The narrator collaborated with friend Walter Peers to create a safe space for Robert, preparing for her stay while allowing the Kienzles to enjoy their trip.
Anxiety Before Departure	As departure day approached, the narrator felt apprehensive about Robert's contentment due to past distress when left alone.
Finding Hope	Reflections on bird bonding and the narrator's psychology background fostered optimism, leading to constructive strategies for Robert's care.
Final Thoughts	The narrator embraced the upcoming responsibility with confidence and readiness to ensure Robert's happiness during the Kienzles' trip.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Embracing responsibility can lead to personal growth and fulfillment.

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 6 of 'That Quail, Robert,' the decision to take on the care of Robert while the Kienzles traveled serves as a powerful reminder of how embracing responsibility can transform our lives. When you step up to support others, you not only contribute to their happiness but also discover strengths and insights within yourself. This chapter encourages you to recognize that the challenges you face, like caring for someone or something else, can push you to grow beyond your comfort zone, fostering resilience and deepening your connections with the world around you.

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Chapter 7 Summary: Fait Accompli

Chapter 7 Summary: Fait Accompli

By August 1, preparations for the arrival of Robert, a quail, were complete. The patio had been optimized for her, featuring choices like freshly planted chickweed, a cozy flat stump for her V-8 juice, and comfortable lawn chairs for visitors. Little did the host realize, Robert would attract a staggering three hundred visitors during her three-month stay, prompting the necessity of a guest book filled with names from twenty-four states and two foreign countries, including writers and ornithologists.

On August 9, the Kienzles, Robert's caretakers, departed, leaving her in the narrator's care. Riding in the car, Robert enjoyed the view from various perches but faced dangers due to her eagerness to explore. Upon arrival at the narrator's home, Robert quickly displayed her curiosity by inspecting every corner of the space. Though initially hesitant, she ventured into her new patio, showing excitement at the sight of her new surroundings.

During her first days, Robert adjusted to the new environment, exploring her space and building a routine. The narrator created a cozy home for her, ensuring she had familiar belongings, such as her feeding tray and beloved velvet hat. However, Robert soon made it clear that she preferred not to use

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the hat in her new home, pushing it off her bed repeatedly until it was removed altogether.

As the days went by, Robert established a morning routine, learning where to find food and water. Initial concerns about her adapting to kitchen life faded as Robert learned to navigate the space intelligently, avoiding hot stove burners while also favoring warmth when available. The narrator's initial plans for a free-roaming patio for Robert did not pan out, as she would cry when left alone outside.

A nearby neighbor, Helen Lindorff, agreed to babysit Robert when the narrator had errands. Despite being left alone briefly, Robert sought comfort atop a blanket chest, uniquely choosing to sit on an old Bible, which seemed to bring her solace. Strikingly, she also found refuge on a New Testament on a side table during evening solo times.

These adaptations and the resulting companionship enriched the narrator's life, creating memorable, instructive days spent caring for Robert. Each moment spent together fostered a deeper bond of understanding, companionship, and joy, marking what would become an incredibly influential chapter in both their lives.

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Chapter 8: I Learn

In Chapter 8, titled "I Learn," the narrator shares experiences with Robert, a quail, highlighting insights into the quirks and behaviors of this bird. The chapter opens with the narrator's newfound knowledge about quails, specifically their practical habits like drinking dew and their selective eating preferences. The presence of Robert proves to be a blessing as the narrator finds themselves increasingly engaged in observing and learning more about the natural world around them.

On morning outings while the grass is still glistening with dew, the narrator observes Robert's drinking technique: she carefully seeks out dew-laden grass blades, skillfully sipping the droplets with her beak. This process, along with the observation of her preferences for certain insects—such as ants and flies—reveals her instinctual understanding of food safety, as she avoids consuming grubs and wasps.

Robert's bathing rituals also stand out. Unlike many birds, quails bathe in dirt rather than water; the narrator learns that Robert prefers damp soil, specifically from the geranium bed. The narrator describes the entertaining process of Robert throwing dirt over herself, creating an amusing scene of her staggering about post-bath, akin to someone recovering from intoxication. These scenes are infused with humor and highlight the intimacy and amusement of the narrator's relationship with Robert.

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Fear is another prominent theme in the chapter. Robert displays a deep instinctual fear of flying birds—a behavior observed even without parental guidance, hinting at intrinsic survival instincts common among quails. This instinct contrasts sharply with her curiosity and lack of fear toward ground

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Chapter 9 Summary: Callers

Chapter 9: Callers

The narrative centers around a memorable Sunday on August 9, when the protagonist welcomed numerous guests, eager to meet Robert, the charming quail who had captured their hearts and minds. The news of Robert's presence had spread, resulting in a whopping nineteen callers that day, including seven at once. Throughout it all, Robert showcased her delightful personality, endearing herself to everyone present.

As a quail, Robert had a peculiar fondness for sunflower seeds, especially when cracked open for her enjoyment. The protagonist quickly learned, however, that moderation was key. Despite her cooperation, Robert occasionally overindulged due to the eagerness of her visitors. This led to moments of distress, wherein she exhibited her discomfort through a unique, silent gesture that resembled a refined belch, prompting the protagonist to realize the importance of keeping track of her treats.

After a long day entertaining guests, Robert became tired and was gently put to bed, falling asleep almost instantly. This routine introduced a much-needed schedule, which included afternoon naps together, enveloped in cozy blankets while the protagonist read. Robert would often respond to

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the telephone's ringing with alarm, clearly indicating her growing attachment.

The influx of visitors drew people for various reasons—curiosity, disbelief, and sincere interest in Robert's remarkable behavior. Each encounter revealed the thrill of witnessing a quail, typically shy and elusive, come forth to greet them eagerly. The protagonist, facing a steady stream of visitors, found that maintaining a tidy household was made easier by the allure of Robert; guests paid little attention to any mess, entranced instead by the bird's charm.

Among the callers was a skeptical ornithologist from Canada, who was ultimately convinced of Robert's unique story after some persuasion. Contrarily, there was an artist visiting with her son who remained seemingly unconvinced of Robert's appeal. Still, her son's photographs of Robert eventually garnered attention when one was featured on a postcard, showcasing the bird's charm and bringing publicity.

Robert's distinct personality shone through during tea gatherings, where she delighted in socializing and tasted a variety of treats, though she adamantly refused bananas. The growing popularity of Robert resulted in many appointments to see her, while spontaneous drop-ins were not uncommon, leading to longer visits as guests became enamored by her undeniable charm.

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One notable encounter involved two brothers, one of whom was a skilled bird carver. Their visit turned into an in-depth examination of Robert, leading to a surprising friendship after a delightful afternoon spent marveling at her vivacity and features.

The protagonist typified the warmth and friendliness of connections formed through Robert. The presence of the quail not only enriched the lives of many visitors but also birthed friendships and unexpected publicity. A chance meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Pope, where Mrs. Pope expressed her delight over meeting Robert, resulted in further exposure for the quail in national publications.

As summer progressed, the protagonist reflected on the rewarding impact Robert had on her world, illustrating how five ounces of bird life could foster profound relationships and leave a lasting impression on many. The chapter encapsulates the joy of shared experiences and the bond formed through the interactions with a remarkable, endearing quail.

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Chapter 10 Summary: Just the Two of Us

In Chapter 10, titled "Just the Two of Us," the narrator reflects on the deep bond formed with her quail, Robert, highlighting how living closely with animals reveals their unique personalities. Robert, a playful and affectionate quail, reserved her most enchanting behaviors for moments alone with the narrator. One notable aspect of her character was her penchant for games, particularly "Chase Me," where she would entice the narrator into playful pursuits around the house, showcasing her intelligence and spirited nature.

The chapter takes a serious turn when Robert inadvertently swallows a piece of red bias binding. The narrator is filled with anxiety as she navigates the potential health risks associated with Robert's mischievous act, especially in the absence of her partner, Tommy, who is far away. She receives unsolicited advice from an elderly lady with farming experience, which offers a mix of comfort and concern. The narrator learns that birds have a remarkable ability to handle foreign objects, but her worry lingers until a visiting ornithologist reassures her that Robert's crop can manage almost anything. Despite the initial scare, Robert's health remains unaffected, demonstrating the resilience of nature.

Humorous episodes abound, especially as Robert finds joy in unexpected situations, such as playing with flour during baking or causing trouble by spilling V-8 juice on important documents. These moments underscore her

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quirky personality and intelligence, contrasting with the occasional mischief that springs from her playful nature.

As news comes of Robert's family's impending return from a trip, the narrator experiences growing anxiety about reuniting them in good health. The long-anticipated reunion exceeds her expectations, as Robert instantly recognizes her owners and resumes her life at home seamlessly, except for one quirk: she refuses V-8 juice unless it is served in her favorite glass. This amusing revelation reflects her distinct preferences and habits.

The chapter concludes with Robert's subsequent visits, notably around Thanksgiving, where she adapts to having two homes. The narrator poignantly notes that the change in environment does not disrupt Robert's love and happiness, a sentiment that resonates with the universal need for variety and comfort in life. Overall, this chapter captures the joys and challenges of nurturing a pet while exploring themes of adaptation, affection, and the unpredictable nature of life with animals.

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Chapter 11 Summary: NBC Television

In Chapter 11, titled "NBC Television," the narrative begins with a touching anecdote about a young girl from New York City's underprivileged neighborhoods who had a transformative summer spent on the beach. Among her favorite experiences was the thrill of the telephone ringing, which symbolized the excitement of the unknown. This sets the stage for the author's unexpected phone call in February 1964 from an NBC program arranger who wanted to feature her pet quail, Robert, on a television show. Thick with disbelief yet motivated, the author insists on consulting Robert's "parents" before making any commitments.

With discussions among Robert's caretakers—including Mildred, who would accompany them to New York—a flurry of concerns arise regarding Robert's wellbeing amidst the pollution of city life and the tension surrounding the potential stress posed by studio lights. Ultimately, expert advice tips the scales against Robert's participation, specifically citing the dangers posed by the studio's intense heat.

Nevertheless, the author agrees to send professional photographs of Robert and personally attend the show. They capture various stunning images, particularly one with a blue Delft bowl, which is deemed the standout shot. The author prepares for the show by crafting intriguing facts to read aloud while the show's panel guesses key words about Robert.



As the television experience unfolds, the bustling studio atmosphere is alive with activity, coffee, and rehearsal. On the actual day of filming, the author manages to keep track of pronouns and ensures Robert's quail egg is safely in the possession of a NBC employee. After a successful taping, complete with enthusiastic panel responses, the author unexpectedly wins three hundred dollars—a nice bonus, considering NBC covers expenses.

When the episode airs, Robert becomes a local sensation in Orleans, Massachusetts, igniting an avalanche of letters from across the country. Many viewers feel compelled to write, some even enclosing dollar bills for postcards of Robert. The correspondence reveals that they are not alone in their unconventional bond with a quail, as other domesticated quails across the United States write back, forming unique friendships—proving the charm of Robert resonates widely.

Interestingly, the chapter also recounts the story of another quail, Bumble, who had a similarly unconventional adoption experience but faced challenges integrating back into the wild. While Bumble exhibited signs of recognizing her human family even after being reintroduced to nature, her journey emphasizes the complexities of wildlife rehabilitation and the emotional ties that form between humans and animals.

This chapter explores themes of unexpected serendipity, connection, and the

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sometimes-challenging dynamics of blending domestic and wild lives, all framed by the delightful experience of television that bridges the gap between small-town life and the broader world.

Chapter Title	Summary
NBC Television	The narrative describes a young girl's transformative summer and an unexpected phone call in 1964 from NBC wanting to feature the author's pet quail, Robert. Concerns arise about Robert's wellbeing in the city environment, leading to a decision against his participation in the show. Instead, the author sends photos and attends the taping, where Robert's charm shines, resulting in him becoming a local sensation after the episode airs. The chapter also features Bumble, another quail with a complicated adoption story, highlighting themes of connection between humans and animals and the dynamics of wild vs. domestic lives.

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Chapter 12: He Loves Me

Chapter 12: He Loves Me

As Robert's second birthday approached, her ability to vocalize had become a normal occurrence for Mildred and Tommy. However, they observed a new development: Robert seemed to be practicing her speech. They watched her intently as she bobbed her head and fluttered her throat, attempting to form words. After many attempts, Robert finally crowed out "Bob White," echoing the call of a quail, which pleased her immensely. She repeated it several times throughout the day, but eventually, the utterance faded from her repertoire.

In the following week, the true mating call of a male quail intruded into Robert's space. This persistent suitor showcased his charms through the screen of the patio, calling and displaying his plumage as he approached, even venturing closer when Robert was outside with the family. Despite his efforts, Robert remained uninterested, leaving the quail disheartened after weeks of courtship.

The cycle of nature continued with an unexpected twist. On June 9, coinciding with the Kienzles' wedding anniversary, Robert laid her first egg at Mildred's feet. Over the next few weeks, three eggs were laid, with one

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landing in Tommy's lap. Although the family considered making a nest for Robert, she showed no interest in nurturing her eggs, indicating a preference for her human surroundings rather than the instincts typical of her kind.

A crisis soon arose when Robert began to exhibit signs of distress, crying out in pain and behaving erratically. Mildred discovered a wet spot on the floor that revealed a broken egg inside Robert. After a tense period, a normal egg was laid, and Robert returned to her usual self. By mid-July, she had laid thirteen eggs, a mix of playful moments and endearing gifts to family members, marking the end of an unusual but poignant chapter in their lives together.

Life remained unpredictable as Robert's curiosity once again led to an unexpected dilemma. When Mildred hurried to drop off several packages, she accidentally dislodged the sliding door, causing an accident that resulted in the loss of a diamond from her engagement ring. Realizing that Robert was likely the culprit, as the bird delightedly swooped down on the item that had fallen, panic set in. Thomas joined the search, but ultimately, they knew the diamond was within Robert.

To their dismay, as they scoured the area and examined Robert's droppings, the diamond seemed lost for good. Despite the frustration, Mildred and Tommy remained optimistic, recalling memories of observing other birds and their remarkable eating habits. They were confident Robert would

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manage, noting that she had consumed other non-digestible items before. Eventually, a new diamond was set in the ring while Robert unknowingly kept the old stone, illustrating the quirky bond between the human family and their feathered companion.

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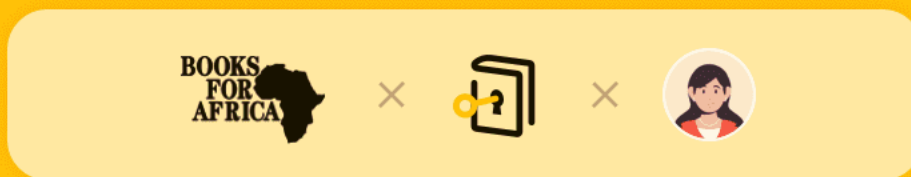




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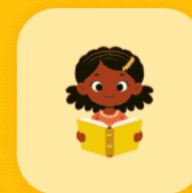
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Chapter 13 Summary: Robert Asserts Herself

In Chapter 13, titled "Robert Asserts Herself," the narrative explores the fascinating dynamics of individual reactions to emotional stimuli, particularly focusing on the behaviors of animals in comparison to humans. The chapter begins with a psychological observation on how different beings, including both people and animals, cope with feelings of neglect or hurt. One shining example is Robert, an extroverted bird, who typically craves attention and affection. Unlike some animals that may sulk or harbor resentment, Robert's reactions are more outwardly expressive, as she yearns for interaction and acknowledgment.

Robert's social behavior parallels that of the beloved poodle Jackie, who, when snubbed, exhibits a resigned demeanor, contrasting starkly with Johnnie Beals, another poodle who's more persistent. These behaviors highlight how emotional responses can be deeply influenced by environmental factors, including the nurturing atmosphere provided by the Kienzle family, who lovingly care for Robert.

The chapter introduces Monika, Don's German bride, whose intrinsic love for animals resonates with the Kienzles. During her two-month visit, Monika's companionship enriches Robert's atmosphere, showcasing the strong bonds formed over shared affection for wildlife. The focus then shifts to the anticipation of a visit from the Kienzles' elder son, Tom, who seeks

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quietude to concentrate on completing his Ph.D. thesis. Unlike his brother Don, Tom exhibits a more matter-of-fact approach to pets, yet he acknowledges Robert's uniqueness, albeit with less emotional investment.

When Tom arrives, Robert feels the shift in dynamics, realizing she isn't the focal point of attention as she typically was. Her initial efforts to reclaim her status through gentle antics during dinner evolve into more audacious attempts to draw attention, culminating in humorous chaos. In a series of misadventures, she leaps into a dish of broccoli and butter sauce, resulting in comedic messiness that leaves Tom exasperated. This incident, while humorous, exemplifies Robert's yearning for recognition and the lengths she will go to assert herself, even in a moment of disgrace, as this is the first time she's ever been disciplined.

The narrative also reflects on the changing attitudes toward pets in American society, especially how the relationship has shifted from utilitarian views in Midwest agricultural settings to the more affectionate bonds seen in the East and West coasts. This shift is underscored by the spending patterns on pet care, which indicate a significant increase in emotional investment in household pets compared to previous generations.

The chapter concludes with two friends from the Midwest, who discover and adapt to this new cultural perspective on pets. They come to terms with their own views, showing that transformation in attitudes toward animals is

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certainly possible, marking Robert's story as a microcosm of broader societal changes regarding the roles and affections we afford our beloved pets. Thus, the chapter encapsulates the common themes of love, attention, and the evolving concept of companionship between humans and animals.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Emotional expression is vital for connection.

Critical Interpretation: In the dance of life, much like Robert's bright antics to seek attention, remember that your emotional expressions are key to forming deep connections with those around you. When faced with feelings of neglect or hurt, don't shy away; instead, embrace your own quirks and reaches out for interaction and acknowledgment. Just as Robert's playful spirit brings joy and laughter, your openness can cultivate meaningful relationships, reminding you that vulnerability is not a weakness but a bridge to understanding and companionship.

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Chapter 14 Summary: An Anxious Week

Chapter 14: An Anxious Week

Robert, a lively and healthy bird for the first two and a half years of her life, faced an unexpected health crisis on April 1, 1965. Prior to this, she had experienced minor mishaps and even a small surgery to remove an annoying growth at the corner of her beak. Mildred and Tommy, her caretakers, had been attentive, ensuring her well-being through these minor incidents. However, this time was different.

On that fateful April day, Robert exhibited worrying symptoms: lethargy, a reduced appetite, and unusual behavior. Mildred quickly noticed that Robert seemed unable to see properly. Alarmed, she summoned Tommy, and they confirmed that both of Robert's eyes were filled with a gelatinous fluid, impairing her vision. The once active bird now struggled to navigate familiar surroundings, which was heart-wrenching for her caregivers.

During a visit, the narrator observed Robert's troubling condition firsthand. Her movement was slow and cautious, and she struggled to drink water because of her impaired eyesight. The emotional toll on her caretakers was significant; the narrative reflects on the feelings of helplessness that arise when caring for a sick animal. Overwhelmed by fear and sadness, the

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narrator found it difficult to return and face Robert during this precarious week.

Tommy, despite being a pillar of strength, voiced concerns about the possible causes of Robert's condition, suspecting it might be a result of previous injuries. The uncertainty only heightened the anxiety surrounding her health, prompting the narrator to seek help from Fran Leach, a friend who had experience with sick birds. Although Fran didn't have definitive answers, she did recommend vitamins to bolster Robert's strength. Mildred and Tommy struggled to feed Robert properly, as she resisted typical food. However, with patience, they found a way to administer vitamins using a more palatable powder mixed with cooked grains.

As word of Robert's illness spread, friends expressed their concern, demonstrating the affection that many had for the little bird. Meanwhile, Tommy obtained special eyedrops that needed to be administered multiple times a day, an endeavor that Robert despised. The weather remained dreary, limiting outdoor exposure that might have helped uplift her spirits.

After several anxious days, the sun finally shone, allowing Mildred the opportunity to take Robert outdoors. To everyone's surprise, the bird instinctively engaged in a dirt bath, a sign of her returning vitality. However, Robert still struggled with the sticky residue in her feathers from her eye troubles.

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On the seventh day of her illness, a moment of joy arrived when Robert suddenly regained her sight and began pecking at her favorite seeds with enthusiasm. The entire household celebrated this turnaround, marking the end of a harrowing period. The exact cause of her illness remained a mystery, but the combination of vitamins, sunshine, and, perhaps, collective prayers seemed to work wonders.

Robert's health took a turn for the better, allowing her to eat with vigor and joy once more. This experience served as a poignant reminder of the fragility of health and the deep bond between the bird and her caretakers. Their capacity to worry for Robert contrasted with the notion that animals experience life without anxiety about the future—an unsettling thought for those who deeply cared for her. The narrator concluded that while humans may bear the burden of worry, they are also gifted with appreciation, especially in moments of relief and recovery. The nervous week ultimately highlighted the value of health and the connections we forge with our companions, furry or feathered.

Aspect	Details
Context	Chapter 14: An Anxious Week
Main Character	Robert, a quail
Health Crisis	April 1, 1965

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Aspect	Details
Start	
Initial Symptoms	Lethargy, reduced appetite, impaired vision
Caretakers	Mildred and Tommy
Observation of Illness	Robert had gelatinous fluid in her eyes; struggled to drink and navigate
Caretakers' Emotions	Feelings of helplessness, fear, and sadness
Concern and Advice	Tommy suspected previous injuries; friend Fran Leach recommended vitamins
Feeding Challenges	Robert resisted food; caregivers used a palatable vitamin mixture
Community Support	Friends expressed concern for Robert
Treatment	Special eyedrops applied multiple times daily
Turning Point	Sunshine and a dirt bath revived Robert's spirits
Recovery	Robert regained her sight and appetite on the seventh day
Theme	Fragility of health; bond between caretakers and animals; appreciation of recovery



Chapter 15 Summary: The Last Chapter

Chapter 15: The Last Chapter

As autumn approached, Robert, the pet quail, thrived in her familiar setting. She was to spend ten days at my home while the Kienzles visited Lexington to welcome a new family member. Robert had always felt at home with me, so I anticipated her stay with ease, though I perhaps underestimated her changing needs.

On her first night, Robert insisted on altering our usual bedtime routine, displaying a discontent I hadn't noticed before. After multiple attempts to settle her in, I remembered a little Swiss music box, which I brought along and played. The soothing melodies captivated her, allowing her to sleep soundly. This ritual became a nightly necessity, even as I tried without it later in her visit. Interestingly, when the Kienzles tried their own music box, Robert rejected it outright, revealing her unique bond with mine.

During this visit, Robert also discovered a new perch on a chest beneath a window, leading her to enjoy the view of her beloved solarium and venture outside more independently. She no longer waited at the door for me to let her out but would buzz through the open window whenever she pleased. Observers noted a shift in her demeanor; she seemed more mature and less



playful, often choosing to rest quietly on my shoulder rather than meddle with my typing.

Yet, her health began to decline as a spur-like growth appeared at the corner of her beak, making it difficult for her to eat and groom herself. Mildred dedicated countless hours to assist Robert in eating, demonstrating deep devotion unmistakable even among pets. Despite her challenges, Robert's spirit remained bright. Remarkably, she began to explore new heights, taking flights to the roof and enjoying her view, a striking behavior for a quail, typically ground-loving creatures.

Mildred, after attending a thought-provoking lecture, reflected on her own nurturing bond with Robert. She saw the power inherent in their relationship, akin to the transformative impacts of Moses' rod and Lincoln's pen, believing Robert had inspired many to cherish and understand birds rather than hunt them.

During Thanksgiving, I hesitated to present Robert to our guests due to her declining condition. Nonetheless, she surprised us all by being her cheerful self, welcoming the visitors and charming them with her antics despite her fragile state. Their admiration reaffirmed her beauty and legacy, allowing Robert to shine one last time.

On December 2, Tommy found her nestled under his chin, content yet

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weary. She participated in her morning routine but displayed signs of fatigue. That afternoon, while soft music played, she seemed to lift her spirits, swaying and singing in harmony, reminding us of her vibrant nature. However, that night, for the first time, she tucked her head under her wing and drifted off to sleep.

The following morning, Mildred asked me to take her out while Tommy stayed behind with Robert, who remained peacefully asleep. After delivering Mildred home, I prepared a cozy strongbox for Robert, anticipating the inevitable. Soon after, Mildred called with the heartbreaking news: Robert had passed away, still in a comfortable position, her head under her wing.

I could only reflect on her final resting place in the yard, surrounded by love and memories, guarded by carved stone quails from Japan. As I remember Mildred's poignant words from years past—how deeply we would miss her—I am left to ponder the impact Robert had on our lives and the lasting memories she created. Her departure left a void, but her spirit and influence will endure in our hearts.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The power of nurturing relationships and the bonds we create with others

Critical Interpretation: Just as Robert the quail transformed the lives of those around her, inspiring deep devotion and understanding, you too can foster meaningful connections in your life. The care and attention you give to your relationships can create a profound impact, encouraging growth and resilience. Robert's ability to cherish moments and embrace change shows that love can transcend even the hardest challenges, reminding you of the beauty in nurturing bonds and the lasting legacies they leave behind.

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