

A Fledgling (Part 1)

Ricardo came downstairs to get a snack from the kitchen and saw Sniff barking and snarling in a strange way. Sniff was in front of the sliding glass door that opened onto their raised wood deck. Sniff was frantic to get out. Luckily, Ricardo hesitated before opening the door. Then he saw what Sniff was concentrated on, a large black bird hopping from one flower pot to another.

There was no doubt in Ricardo's mind that if Sniff were to be let out, he would attack the bird. In fact, Ricardo wondered if Sniff had already attacked this bird and injured it in some way. The bird was hopping strangely and seemed to be stuck on the deck. Could it be that Sniff had damaged one of its wings?

Ricardo's mom was already on her way home from work, so Ricardo decided to wait with Sniff in the house.

When Ricardo's mom got home, she called the county wildlife rescue center and was thrilled when someone answered her call. She put the phone on speaker so that both she and Ricardo could listen.

The man at the rescue center, Roger, did not think the bird was hurt. "He's hopping around on the deck in a quirky way? How big is this bird?"

Matt's mom replied, "Well, it looks big to me...maybe it's a crow?"

The man at the rescue center said, "I will come and check it out, but I think you just have a fledgling."

Ricardo said, "What is a fledgling?"

"A fledgling is a baby bird who can't fly yet. His mother kicked him out of the nest, and he is trying to fly, but his wings are not strong enough. If this a fledgling, he will be gone in a week."