In the valley, March winds tossed the branches of trees ready to burst into leaf. A squirrel, feeling the touch of spring, barked his mating call from one of the trees. Then he chased another squirrel among the leafless boughs while a large bird watched from a treetop. It was a bald eagle. In his five years of life, Baldy had seen springs come and go, but this spring had a new meaning for him. He had reached the breeding age and wanted to find a mate.

The sun beat down upon his snowy-white
head as he sat in the treetop. It warmed his white collar and his black-brown feathers. It even touched his white tail feathers.

Baldy yawned in the sunlight and then was all attention. He saw another bald eagle circling low over the trees. Soon she was flying directly above Baldy, her wings tipped upward and her white tail feathers spread out like a fan. Was she planning to land on the treetop? Baldy could not take his eyes away from her, wondering what she was going to do. She flapped her wings and sailed upward.

Quick as a flash, Baldy left his perch and chased after her. He cried out to her, his voice sounding like excited twitters, but it was loud enough for her to hear him. She rose higher into the sky.
This did not discourage Baldy. He rose just as high and made several loops in the air to get her attention. She dipped and then swept the sky in a big circle.

Baldy still chased after her. As she glided easily on her broad wings, he caught up with her. He soared and swooped around her. They grasped claws for a second. Then, with wing tips almost touching, they flew together like one huge arc in the sky. Baldy had found and won a mate.
The two eagles, looking for a nesting site, circled above a dead oak tree on the shore of a lake. It was a tall tree, towering ninety feet above the ground. The forked branches at the top would make a perfect support for an eagle’s nest.

Baldy and his mate did not search further. They started to build their nest, or *eyrie*, right away in the ancient oak tree. Back and forth they went, gathering sticks and branches along the shores of the lake and flying with them in their strong, curved claws to the nesting site. Some
branches were six feet long. The female eagle placed them here and there until they fit into the fork of the tree.

From a high perch close by, Baldy turned his head to the right and to the left. He was looking for more nest material. Some driftwood at the far end of the lake caught his attention, and he decided to investigate it.

As he flew across the water, a loon, seeing the eagle’s enormous shadow overhead, quickly dove
out of sight. Baldy kept on toward the shore. With wings outspread and legs down, he made a perfect landing on the wet sand near some raccoon tracks. Then he walked clumsily over to the driftwood and poked around with his beak. Bugs scooted in all directions to get out of his way. Baldy poked around some more.