

There's Still A Purpose



The tragedy came soon after first light; before most of the world had stirred. Death and bereavement shadowed our house, defying the hope of sunrise. It happened so quickly, yet the trauma, the agony, the desolation was long and drawn out.

At the wrong moment, a chick raised its head to peer from a fragile nest into a beautiful new world. A lone seagull, following an empty refuse lorry, swooped suddenly, like a raiding aircraft to its target, skilfully evading poles and wires to strike a single deadly blow. In an instant a whole season's labours and dreams were destroyed.

The house martins, recovered after their long flight from the south, had spent days dismantling their old nest and rebuilding under the eaves. Tiny bricks of mud and saliva built up the walls at an astounding speed. Agitated twitters suggested that he might not always be putting the clay just where she wanted it, and that only a male would make an entrance that low! In no time at all four tiny blue eggs lay secreted in the lining of straw and feathers, and with the emergence of the chicks the proud parents began the endless task of flying and diving, to and from the nest with food for the ever-open beaks.

Excitement mounted as the young birds grew, stirred in their nest and prepared for flight. But they were not to fly. Only to fall. Four little fluffy bodies lay on the grass amid the rubble of their fallen home. Two lay panting their last breath, while distraught parents, unable by nature to help them, swooped over and around, helplessly trying to ward off the persistent diving of gulls and crows.

In the next hours the four bodies disappeared. Gulls made a meal of little more than a beak-full of fluff. For the rest of the day the house martins wheeled in the sky, occasionally resting on the broken edge of their shattered home. No-one but their creator knew their sorrow, or shared their pain.

Next morning the birds were twittering in the eaves once more. Already pellets of mud were being stuck on the remaining part of the nest, and grasses laid to line it. There was time still to rear another brood before they felt the call of warm Sahara sands.

They would build again among the ruins. Life was precious; the reason for their being; their hope for the future; life was their purpose and nothing could destroy that.