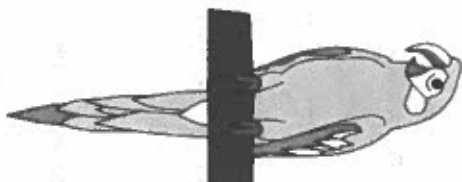


JACK



John walks into a pet store. He wants to get a pet. Maybe a cat or a dog. John is not sure. He wants to talk to a sales clerk about it.

"Hello!" somebody yells.

John looks around him, but he doesn't see anybody. There are a lot of animals in the store – dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, fish. There are also turtles and snakes. But John doesn't see any people. So who is speaking?

Then a sales clerk comes. "Good morning," he says. "Can I help you, sir?"

"Yes, please. I want to get a pet," John says. "I feel lonely sometimes. You know? I want a friend."

"Well," the clerk says. "Dogs are usually good friends. I can sell you a Labrador. This one costs \$1,000. Cats are also good friends. I can sell you a Persian cat. This one costs \$500. And if you are too busy, I can sell you a gold fish. This one costs \$100."

"Hello!" somebody yells.

"Who is that talking?" John asks.

The sales clerk smiles. "That's Jack – the parrot over there."

John looks at the parrot. It is a big parrot. It is red, green and blue.

"Are parrots good friends?" John asks.

"Well," the sales clerk says. "They can be."

"How much is the parrot?" John asks.

"This parrot is free. Take him if you want."

John takes the parrot. He brings him home. He can't understand why the parrot was free. He is so beautiful, and he can speak!

John wakes up in the middle of the night. He hears his alarm clock. He gets up and looks at his alarm clock. It's 3:30 in the morning. He doesn't understand. He set his alarm clock for 6:30.

Then he hears the alarm clock again. But the sound is not coming from his alarm clock. It's Jack.

"Hello!" Jack yells. "Good morning, John!"

"Good morning, Jack," John says. Now he understands why Jack was free. He is a little joker. He can imitate the alarm clock. John is not very happy about this, but he can't say he feels lonely.