**How the Mockingbird Became the Best Singer - A Mayan Legend**

When X-chol-col-chek, the mockingbird, was young, her family was very poor, and she could only dress in dingy feathers. Since she was hatched, however, X-col had displayed a magnificent voice. She wanted to take singing lessons but could not afford them.

The mockingbird was fortunate to obtain work with a rich and noble family of cardinals. That winter, a famous singing professor, Dr. Xcau, the melodious blackbird, came to Maya Land. The father cardinal immediately imagined that his daughter, Col-pol-che, could become a fine singer. She was lazy, vain and hated to study. But by promising her many fine gifts, the father convinced her to try singing lessons.

When Col-pol-che went with Dr. Xcau to a quiet part of the woods to begin her music course, X-col followed and hid in the bushes to listen and learn. Then she raced back to finish her chores. For weeks, the professor tried to make the girl cardinal sing sweetly, but without success. He soon realized she had neither the voice not the ambition. He was afraid to tell her wealthy father after such a long time, having accepted a lot of money. So, he finally flew far away an forgot the whole affair.

Meanwhile, X-col had been practicing. One morning, Col-pol-che happened to hear her and was very surprised at her little maid's ability. That same day, the father cardinal decided his daughter should give a concert for their friends. The indolent girl was terrified, yet she dared not tell her parents that she couldn't sing. She thought of the mockingbird's lovely voice and decided to ask for help.

The two birds asked Colote, the woodpecker, to bore a hole into the tree trunk where Col-pol-che would perch. Then the mockingbird would hide  
inside. While Col-pol-che pretended to be singing, the real voice would come from X-col within.

On the day of the concert, all the noble singers, artists and musicians among the birds came. Col-pol-che hopped out on a limb of the  
purple-flowering tree chosen by her father, bowed to the audience and opened her bill. The most exquisite voice ever heard in the Maya World came pouring out and echoed through the woods. The birds in the audience flapped their wings and cried for curtain call after curtain call.

The father, however, was not applauding. He had discovered the truth just before the concert began when he saw X-col crawl into the little hole. When the applause ended and the cardinal finished many bows, her father flew up beside her and asked for silence. He hopped over to the hole and called the mockingbird to come out.

The small, colorless bird was trembling with fright, but Col-pol-che's father gently led her to a perch in front of the entire audience. Then he explained that his daughter had tricked everyone, including him.

"It was really this shy little 'nightingale' who sang the whole time," he announced.

The crowd went wild and demanded that X-col sing again. This time outside and free of her fright, the mockingbird sang as never before and won every bird's heart. From that time on, all her descendants inherited her lovely voice, but the cardinals have never learned how to sing.

"The moral of this legend is about ability, identity and the pursuit of dreams."