

WATER PARK  
TALES

# Sienna Sand Martin



Sienna the Sand Martin had flown all the way from Africa to spend the summer in the Water Park.

The journey had taken her several days and Sienna was feeling very tired.

She was looking forward to seeing all her old friends but first, she needed to make herself a nice new home.

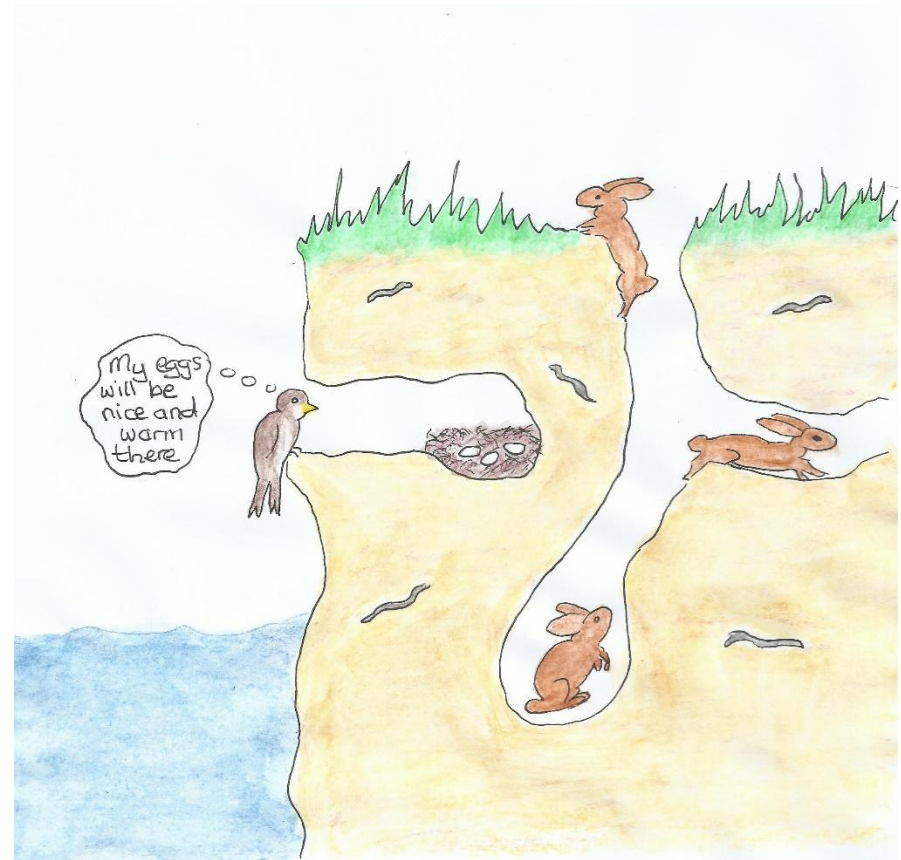


Sienna set to work, digging out a tunnel in the river bank and building herself a lovely, new nest. It was lined with feathers, grass and leaves and it was very cosy.

She settled down to lay her eggs.

One. Two. Three. Three beautiful white eggs.

Sienna knew that she had to keep her eggs warm. She sat on the nest and tucked the eggs underneath her wings. It was raining outside but Sienna didn't mind. The eggs were warm and dry beneath her.



The next day it was *still* raining. It rained and it rained and it rained. In fact, it didn't stop raining for a whole week.

Sienna peeped out of her tunnel. The level of the river was getting higher and higher then suddenly:

'WHHHOOOOOOSH'

A big wave swept Sienna out of her tunnel and threw her into the water.

"Help!" she cried. She flapped her wings quickly and, with a huge effort, she managed to fly up into the sky.



Looking down, Sienna gasped. Her tunnel had disappeared.

Even the river bank had disappeared.

Water had flooded the whole park and it looked just like one enormous lake.

Sienna could only think about her eggs.

“My eggs” she cried. “My poor eggs have all been washed away by the floods. What am I going to do?”





Gradually the rain stopped and the sun shone brightly over the park.

The water dried up and the river bank reappeared.

Sienna began to build another nest. She worked hard and, by the end of the day, the nest was finished. Once more she settled down to lay some eggs.

One. Two. Three. Three beautiful white eggs.

She settled down in her nest to keep the eggs warm.



Outside it began to rain.

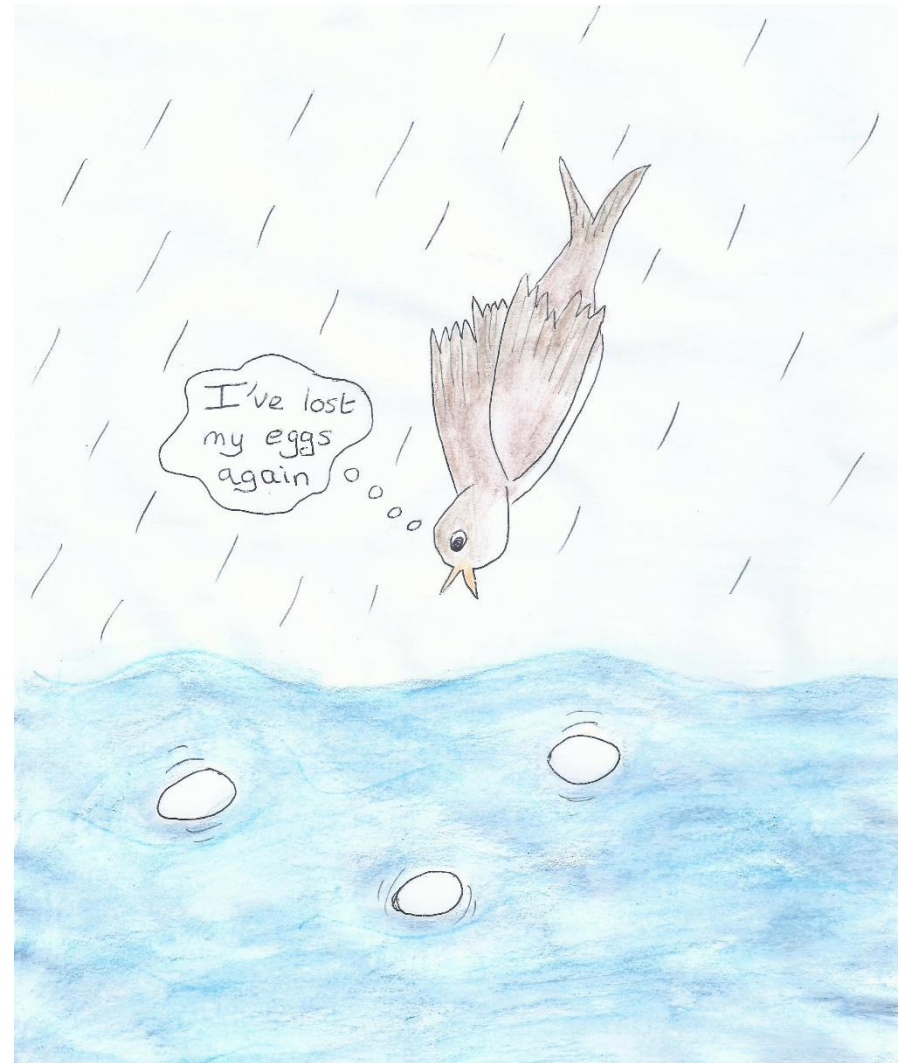
It rained and it rained and it rained.

Sienna peeped out of her tunnel.

WHHHOOOOOOSH!

The water swept her out of her tunnel and carried her along on a huge wave. Flapping her wings quickly, she rose high above the water.

She looked back but it was too late. Her tunnel had been flooded and her precious eggs were disappearing rapidly down the river.



Sienna's friends were all very sad.

"I've lost all my eggs" sobbed Sienna.

"Me, too" said her friend, Sula. "I've lost all my eggs, too. The river took them away."

"Our tunnels have all disappeared under water again" said her friend, Sebastian.

"How can we build nests if the river keeps washing them away?" they all asked.





Sofia Swallow was flying past. 'The sand martins all look very sad' she thought to herself.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

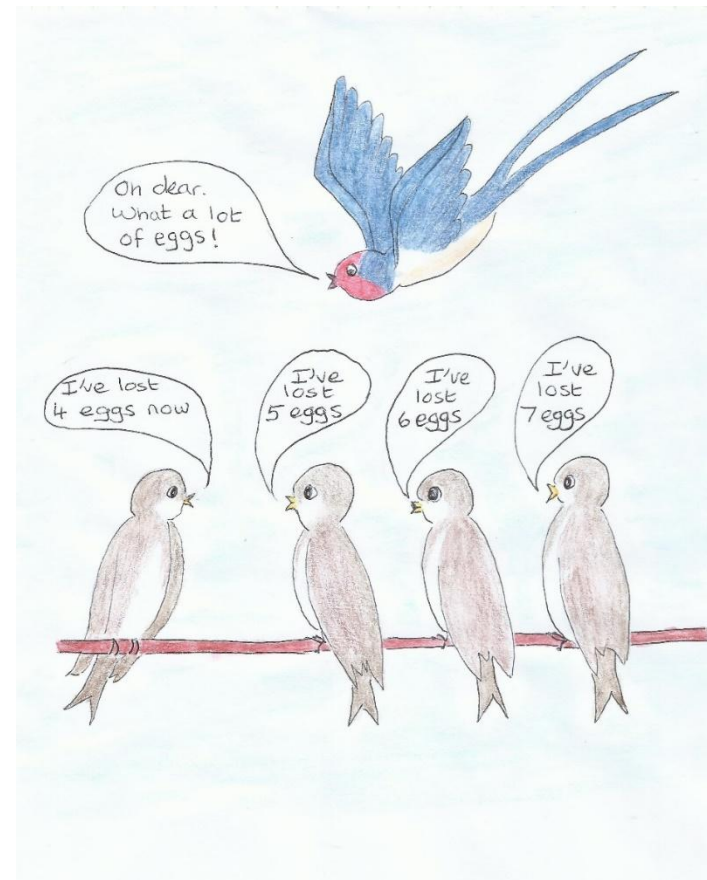
"The river has taken our tunnels" Sienna and her friends all answered at the same time "*and* it has taken our eggs, too."

"Oh dear" said Sofia. "I wish I could help."

Sienna shook her head, sadly.

"You can't bring our eggs back" she said.

"No, I can't" agreed Sofia "but I have an idea...."



“You could build your nests in a barn, like me” Sofia suggested. “The river wouldn’t reach you there. Come and see.....”

The sand martins followed Sofia.

Along the beams in the barn Sienna counted one...two...three...four....*five* nests. Baby swallows were peeping out of some of the nests.

Sofia’s nest was in the corner. Her babies were cheeping loudly. They seemed to be very hungry.

“It’s a lovely nest” said Sienna “and your babies are beautiful but the barn wouldn’t be right for us. Sand martins like to make their nests in tunnels.”



“Mmmmm. You have to have tunnels?” Sofia tilted her head to one side thoughtfully.

Suddenly she jumped up.

“I know where you can build your nests” she said. “Follow me.”

Sofia flew across the park to a big mound of earth next to a lake. Sienna thought it looked a bit scruffy.

“It’s a *sand martin* bank” Sofia said, proudly. “I know it’s a sand martin bank because I heard the Rangers say so.”

“They said that it wouldn’t flood, either” Sofia added.



The sand martins all flew closer.

There was a huge wall in front of the earth mound and there were lots of small holes that looked like tunnels.

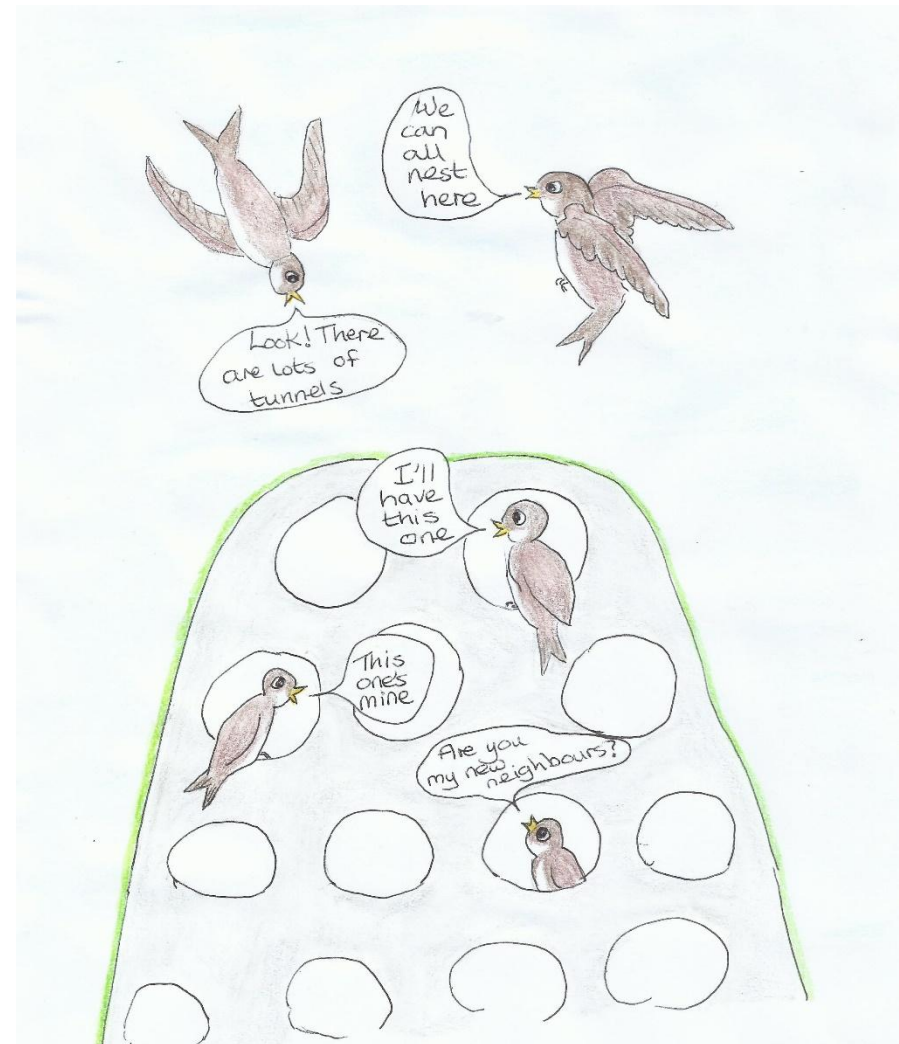
"Well-I-I, it looks suitable for us" Sienna said, cautiously.

The other sand martins agreed.

Sienna peered into one of the holes.

"I think this will do" she said excitedly. "There's plenty of room for us all to make nests here."

The sand martins agreed.





And that's exactly what they did!

Sienna made her nest in the sand martin bank then settled down to lay her eggs.

One. Two. Three. Three beautiful, white eggs.

She kept them warm and cosy in her tunnel until, one day, they all hatched out and Sienna had three beautiful baby sand martins.





By the time the autumn came, it was getting very cold and the days were getting darker.

The baby sand martins could all fly well. Sienna decided that it was time to fly back to Africa.

She said goodbye to her all friends and set off on the long journey.

And, right behind her, were one, two, THREE excited young sand martins.





Sand Martins like to live in colonies, nesting safely away in tunnels. In flight they look like smaller versions of swallows, swooping down to catch flying insects. After raising their young in the UK, they set off in autumn to make the long journey to Africa for the winter.