

quacking

by Estelle Bruno

Every summer, I hear the quacking of a duck beneath my window,
under a large bush. After a week or so the quacking stops.

But this summer was different, after 16 years of gigantic tree
growth and
bushes so tall they reach my windows.

The owner of this apartment complex decided to rectify all the
growth and

hired a crew to chop and cut down all this nasty overgrowth. I
thought, fine.
About time.

But in spite of all the chopping and hammering noise, I suddenly
began to hear
a quacking under my window. I ran out to look and there she was,
this beautiful
duck with her 4 beautiful babies, under my bush.

I ran to the noisy crew and told them they were frightening the
mother and her
babies. They promised they wouldn't go near the bush until she
delivered her
babies.

Each day, I broke up pieces of bread and put a pan of water under
the "mother
bush."

Suddenly I saw only the mother duck, quacking nervously. I
searched for the

babies, but they were no where to be seen. I called to one of the
workmen and

asked him if he saw the babies. He walked me a short distance away from the mother and he knelt down on the ground and put his ear over the sewer grate which had holes all over the top. In his accent, he said look there's the mother duck and pointed down over the sewer.

I became panicked when I realized he was telling me the babies were down in the sewer. The noise of all the machinery must have frightened them. Mother duck was distraught, she kept quacking and looking at the grate.

I ran inside, grabbed my cell phone and called the fire department which was a block away. They said no, no, they couldn't come.

After trying another fire department, I got the same response. Desperately I dialed 911 and managed to get a woman with a heart. I told her if she didn't send someone to rescue these babies, I'm going to drop dead right on this spot.

Within five minutes a gigantic police van pulled into my street. Two wonderful policemen managed to lift the heavy iron grate off the sewer. They had a pole with a net on the bottom, the kind fishermen use to pull up crabs. With a flashlight they kept trying to look into that black sewer hole, and finally managed

to see one of the little baby ducks. They lifted it out and brought it to the mother duck. At least she has one, I thought sadly.

When I got in touch with the wild life society, and they told me to stop feeding the ducks or they would never leave, and never learn to fend for themselves.

After three days, the mother and lone duck were gone. The sewers run across the highway to the golf course a block away. My hope is that the other three crossed the sewer and wound up at that golf course which has a pond. Where perhaps they were re united with their mother.

