



## Chapungu

(A Zimbabwean folktale retold by Tawona and Ernest Sithole)

The chapungu is a rare bird of prey native to Zimbabwe, and is regarded as sacred by some people.

A long time ago, a man misbehaved and stole an egg from the chapungu nest. The chapungu only lays one egg and it builds the nest in a very safe place to protect this precious egg. The nest is built in a location almost impossible to reach, usually high up on a cliff.

Somehow, this greedy and mischievous man got to the egg and he returned home with it. The man had many domestic animals that he kept, including chickens. When he got home he carefully hid it amongst the chicken eggs.

The hen noticed the strange egg but it still lay on the eggs and finally they hatched. All the chicks looked normal except one whose appearance was totally different from the rest, but the chickens looked after the chapungu as one of their own.

In the meantime the man checked to see how the chapungu was coming along, he was very pleased with himself.

The chapungu chick had a tough time growing up with the chickens despite them being very loving and giving due care to it. He lived and behaved like the other chicks but the food made him sick, and he just had a funny feeling that something wasn't right - after all he looked different from the other chicks. But he couldn't complain about the way he was treated, so he went on with his life.

It came one day that the chickens were out in the yard, scratching around for food and stretching their legs. Suddenly, they heard a loud cry from the sky, a distinct birdcall that rang through the whole surrounding area.

The chapungu stood and listened. There was something strangely familiar about that sound even though he had never heard it before. Before he knew it, he was already in flight, up! up! and away towards the sound...

*Can you make your own ending to the story?*

