

***The Tarantula in My Purse* by Jean Craighead George**

When Pete could fly, he graduated to the preteens. He was both independent and dependent. He went out the door, enjoyed the garden, but always came back to be fed and comforted. At this stage, he was a beautiful friend.

In July he brought me a chickadee. It happened this way: On a warm afternoon Pete flew in through the sunporch door and perched on the watering can. Suddenly, with a whirl and flash of black and white feathers, a chickadee followed him in. The bold adventurer hovered in the air in front of my face, scolding me severely. I saw that the bird feeder was empty and picked up a sunflower seed from the feed bag and held it between my fingers.

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The pretty bird hovered over my hand and, still on wing, took the offering in his beak. He sped out the door to the apple tree. There he held the seed with his toes and cracked it open with his beak. He ate, wiped his beak clean, and flew back in the door. I picked up another seed. This time he alit on my fingers, his tiny feet feeling cool and weightless. His black eye glistened as he tipped his head and looked at me. I was enchanted. I had heard that chickadees come to know the people who live on their territories and will eat out of their hands, but this was the first time it had happened to me.