Sometimes, you might fall down, down, down,
before you learn to fly up, up, up . . .

A charming and innovative tale about a plucky little bird,
from the award-winning author of Fox the Tiger.
Corey R. Tabor

Mel Fell

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One day, when Mama was away, Mel decided it was time to learn to fly. She had been in the nest long enough.

“Aren’t you scared?” asked her sister, Pim.

“Yes,” said Mel. “But I won’t let that stop me.”
She looked down.

"It sure is a long drop," said her brother, Pip.

"Well," said Mel, "I've got wings."

Mel was scared and it was a long drop, but today was the day she would fly.
“See you soon!” she told her siblings. She jumped. She flipped. She spread her wings. And then . . .

she fell.
Mel fell and fell.
The squirrels tried to catch her. They really did. They’d grown quite fond of those squeaky little chirpers upstairs.

Blast!

Nuts!

Oof!

Aieeeeeee!

But it was no use. They missed her by a whisker.
“Zzeezill zzayzzoo!”*
said the bees.
But they barely slowed her down.

**“We will save you!”**
Even the spider lent a hand. (Eight of them.)
But still, Mel fell.

Do...not...fear...
helpless...little...
bird,...I...will...
catch...you...!

She fell and fell.
Oh no!
SPLASH
Mel dived into the water.

She snapped her beak and caught a fat little fish. She wiggled her tail feathers.

She spread her wings. And then...
She flew!
Mel flew and flew.
As Mel flew by, the spider clapped her hands. All eight of them.
The bees said, "Huzzzzah! Huzzzzah!"
The squirrels raced her to the top.
Mama was waiting when she got there.
“I flew! I flew!” said Mel.
“I knew you could!” said Mama.
“I knew I could, too,” said Mel.
AUTHOR’S NOTE

Mel is a kingfisher. Kingfishers catch fish by diving into the water from tree branches or wires. Many kingfishers nest in tunnels they dig in earthen banks near water, while others nest in tree hollows (some even live in old termite nests). A young kingfisher probably doesn’t catch a fish the first time they leave the nest. But then, Mel is a very special bird.

For Mandy and Will