



# THE GOSHAWK AND THE ARROW

by Lindsay Bovill

*The pigeon feathers are attached. I really like the trailing edge profile!*

All of a sudden, birds scattered everywhere, voicing alarm calls and scrambling for the deep cover of bushes and shrubs, or the long grass up near the edge of the field. Wrens found the potato vine hedge, and sparrows disappeared into the bay tree. The pigeons made for a nearby stringybark: all except one lone pigeon, who decided to perch in the centre of a large Golden Ash instead. This would have been a fantastic idea in summer: but being mid-winter, the bird stood out like a sore thumb.

The shape of a raptor appeared from the East and scythed towards the pigeon. About 30 yards out it slowly lowered a leg, like a fighter lowering its undercarriage, and it was this leg that thwacked the pigeon as the raptor shot right through the Ash tree, without seeming to shed any speed at all. The timing of the attack was perfect: the way the raptor had used the cover of other trees and shrubs on approach was breathtaking. Pigeon feathers sifted down to earth, as if unrelated to the violence which had just occurred. I didn't see if the pigeon fell dead, flew away injured, or was carried away: it was just gone.

For my part, I was just out carrying milk to the calves with my stepson, Alec. Right place, right time. We ran over to where the feathers were dropping, marvelling at the huge area over which they had been scattered. There was no sign of the raptor, only a noise in the thick hedge a few feet away which we thought at first was a cat: and then out of the hedge popped a goshawk, yellow eye gleaming, deranged, running headlong through the hedge chasing wrens.

It then shot up and away down the lane, its progress marked by the scalding of songbirds. I was amazed at what the goshawk could do, and what small spaces it could inhabit, no hiding place was safe from that thing! I assume the pigeon must have got away or fallen dead and irretrievable into the long grass near the fence line.

Alec and I went about collecting as many pigeon feathers as we could find. We got a good handful, and then thought about what to do with them. In the end, I figured I'd build a special arrow. Some of the pigeon feathers looked fine, but on closer

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