



Learn English Through Stories

Adapted and modified by

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11. The Crow and the Pitcher



Once upon a time, there lived a crow in a forest near a small village. It was a very sunny day and the weather was dry. The crow was flying for a long time so he was very thirsty. It was a very difficult situation because the crow was not able to find any water but after searching for water for a long time the crow reached the village.

In the village, the crow saw a pitcher and he couldn't believe his eyes as he saw some water in the pitcher. The crow was very happy and was not able to think of anything else. The crow put his head inside the pitcher but the poor crow was not able to reach the water.

Now the problem was that the pitcher was high and had a narrow neck and no matter how much he tried he was not able to reach the water level. The crow became very sad and disappointed but you know what, the crow was very clever.

So the crow thought a lot and started searching for ideas because he was in a deadly situation but the good thing about the crow was that he was very clever and did not give up when he faced a different situation. This attitude of the crow helped him and he got an amazing idea.

The crow saw some pebbles lying on the floor. He thought that if he threw the pebbles in the pot then the water in the pot would rise up and then he would be able to drink the water and fly back to the forest. This idea gave him hope and he started searching for pebbles, flew towards the pebbles, and put one in his beak then he flew back to the pot and dropped the pebble in the pot. The crow did this again.

He put a Pebble in his mouth and came back to the pitcher and dropped the Pebble in the pitcher. After some time the crow tried to drink the water but he still couldn't reach the water level.

Now the crow had become more thirsty and tired but still, he did not give up and after repeating this process for a long time the water level rose so much that the crow was able to drink the water.

The crow then put his beak in the pitcher and started drinking the water very fast and with every sip of water he felt more alive. After drinking enough water the crow flew back happily to his forest.

Moral: Don't give up at the first sign of failure. In fact, never give up! Any obstacle can be overcome, and often little by little does the trick.

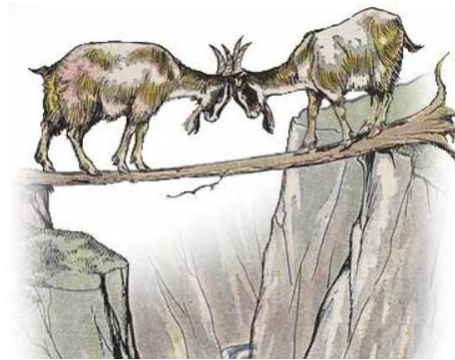
The Crow and the Pitcher – Version 2

In a spell of dry weather, when the Birds could find very little to drink, a thirsty Crow found a pitcher with a little water in it. But the pitcher was high and had a narrow neck, and no matter how he tried, the Crow could not reach the water. The poor thing felt as if he must die of thirst.

Then an idea came to him. Picking up some small pebbles, he dropped them into the pitcher one by one. With each pebble the water rose a little higher until at last it was near enough so he could drink.

In a pinch a good use of our wits may help us out.

12. The Two Goats



Two Goats, frisking happy on the rocky steeps of a mountain valley, chanced to meet, one on each side of a deep chasm through which poured a mighty mountain torrent. The trunk of a fallen tree formed the only means of crossing the chasm, and on this not even two squirrels could have passed each other in safety. The narrow path would have made the bravest tremble. Not so our Goats. Their pride would not permit either to stand aside for the other.

One set her foot on the log. The other did likewise. In the middle they met horn to horn. Neither would give way, and so they both fell, to be swept away by the roaring torrent below.

It is better to yield than to come to misfortune through stubbornness.

The Two Goats – Version 2

Once upon a time, there was a large river in a village that cut across a deep gorge. The town's people built a small, narrow bridge across the river to cross it now and then. The bridge being narrow, could only accommodate one person crossing it at a time.

One day a goat was crossing the bridge. At the other end of the bridge, he saw that there was another goat coming from the opposite direction. Since the bridge could only accommodate one person at a time, it was impossible for both the goats to cross it simultaneously.

The goats stood in their place and waited for the other to retreat. But neither of them was willing to back down to let the other pass. The first goat then said, 'I am the older goat, so you should allow me to pass first.' The other goat denied and said, 'I am the stronger one, so I can cross the bridge faster. You will only amble along because you are old.'

The first goat took offence to what the other one said and continued, 'Although I am older, I am stronger than you.' The second goat did not want to accept that, and both the goats soon got into a fight to prove to each other their strength.

The goats locked horns and fought fiercely on the narrow bridge. In no time, they lost their balance and fell into the river. The strong currents swept the goats away, causing them to drown and disappear into the deep waters.

After the incident, two other goats faced one another in a similar situation. These goats also got into an argument about who should be the one to cross the bridge first. Just when it looked like things would take a turn for the worse, one of the goats stops the argument. He said, 'Stop! This bridge is too narrow for us to settle our dispute with a fight. If we continue this, we will both fall into the river and die instead. I have a plan.'

The wise goat went on to explain the plan. He said, 'I will lie down on the bridge while you walk over me. That way, we can both make it to the other end.'

The other goat understood the logic behind the idea and realised it was the sensible thing to do. He did exactly as the first goat instructed, and both of them made it across safely.

Moral

The first lesson is about conflict, wherein the two goats that tried to cross the bridge first were stubborn and unyielding. They failed to think about working together and long-term outcomes. Instead, they chose to resolve their conflict through a fight without considering the consequences. Because of their conflict, both the goats paid for their poor decision.

13. The Wild Boar and the Fox



A Wild Boar was sharpening his tusks busily against the stump of a tree, when a Fox happened by. Now the Fox was always looking for a chance to make fun of his neighbours. So he made a great show of looking anxiously about, as if in fear of some hidden enemy. But the Boar kept right on with his work.

"Why are you doing that?" asked the Fox at last with a grin. "There isn't any danger that I can see."

"True enough," replied the Boar, "but when danger does come there will not be time for such work as this. My weapons will have to be ready for use then, or I shall suffer for it."

Preparedness for war is the best guarantee of peace.

The Wild Boar and the Fox – Version 2

The Fox, while traversing in the forest, observed a Boar rubbing his tusks against a tree. Why how now, said the Fox, why make those preparations of whetting the teeth, since there is no enemy near that I can perceive?

That may be, said the Boar; but you ought to know, Master Reynard, that we should scour up our arms while we have leisure: for in time of danger we shall have something else to do; and it is a good thing always to be prepared against the worst that can happen.

14. The Heron



A Heron was walking sedately along the bank of a stream, his eyes on the clear water, and his long neck and pointed bill ready to snap up a likely morsel for his breakfast. The clear water swarmed with fish, but Master Heron was hard to please that morning.

"No small fry for me," he said. "Such scanty fare is not fit for a Heron."

Now a fine young swam perched near.

"No indeed," said the Heron. "I wouldn't even trouble to open my beak for anything like that!"

As the sun rose, the fish left the shallow water near the shore and swam below into the cool depths toward the middle. The Heron saw no more fish, and very glad was he at last to breakfast on a tiny Snail.

Do not be too hard to suit or you may have to be content with the worst or with nothing at all.

The Heron – Version 2

Once upon a time, in a quiet pond surrounded by reeds and lush greenery, lived a Heron. The Heron was a proud and elegant bird, with long legs and a sharp beak that made it easy for him to catch fish. Every day, the Heron would stand in the shallow water, waiting patiently for its prey to swim by.

One day, as the Heron was waiting for his meal, a small fish swam past. The Heron quickly seized it with his beak, but upon closer inspection, he realized that the fish was very small and not worth eating. He released the fish back into the pond, thinking that a larger, more satisfying meal would soon come his way.

As the day went on, the Heron continued to wait, and another fish swam by. This fish was a bit bigger than the first, but still not large enough to satisfy the Heron's appetite. Once again, the Heron let the fish go, confident that an even bigger fish would come his way.

The sun began to set, and the Heron was growing increasingly hungry. Finally, a third fish appeared - the largest he had seen all day. Excitedly, the Heron prepared to strike, but just as he was about to catch the fish, it slipped through his beak and disappeared into the murky water.

Disappointed and hungry, the Heron realized that his day of waiting and searching for the perfect meal had left him with nothing to eat.

15. The Fox and the Stork



The Fox one day thought of a plan to amuse himself at the expense of the Stork, at whose odd appearance he was always laughing.

"You must come and dine with me today," he said to the Stork, smiling to himself at the trick he was going to play. The Stork gladly accepted the invitation and arrived in good time and with a very good appetite.

For dinner the Fox served soup. But it was set out in a very shallow dish, and all the Stork could do was to wet the very tip of his bill. Not a drop of soup could he get. But the Fox lapped it up easily, and, to increase the disappointment of the Stork, made a great show of enjoyment.

The hungry Stork was much displeased at the trick, but he was a calm, even-tempered fellow and saw no good in flying into a rage. Instead, not long afterward, he invited the Fox to dine with him in turn. The Fox arrived promptly at the time that had been set, and the Stork served a fish dinner that had a very appetizing smell. But it was served in a tall jar with a very narrow neck. The Stork could easily get at the food with his long bill, but all the Fox could do was to lick the outside of the jar, and sniff at the delicious odour. And when the Fox lost his temper, the Stork said calmly:

Do not play tricks on your neighbours unless you can stand the same treatment yourself.

The Fox and the Stork– Version 2

A rather large bird was wandering round the wood, looking a bit lost. It had long legs, a long thin neck and a very long bill for eating, that clattered away as it searched for nice things to eat.

‘Hey there, big bird!’ cried the little birds in the trees above. ‘You’re new round these parts, aren’t you?’

‘Indeed I am,’ replied Stork. ‘And I’d like to make some friends.’

‘I’ll be your friend,’ purred a soft voice from behind a bush. Out slunk Fox with his shiny red coat and soft paws.

‘Oooo, we wouldn’t make friends with old Foxy if we were you,’ chorused the birds. ‘He’s a bit of a joker.’

‘Oh, ignore them’, Fox purred reassuringly. ‘Please, allow me to show you round the woods...’ Fox and Stork were soon laughing and chatting as if they’d known each other forever.

‘What do you like to eat, Stork?’ asked Fox.

‘Frogs, fish, insects and earthworms are my favourites,’ replied Stork.

‘Mine too - oh, leaving aside frogs,’ said Fox. ‘I eat nuts and berries too - and I’m very partial to the occasional little bird.’

‘Boo, hiss!’ cried the birds from above.

‘Only joking,’ said Fox rather too quickly.

‘Would you like to come around my house tomorrow for supper, Stork?’

‘It’s a trick, it’s a trick!’ chorused the birds.

‘Thank you, Fox, I’d love to!’

That night, Stork flew over to Fox’s house.

‘Come in!’ cried Fox as he showed Stork into the dining room. ‘I hope you like fish soup with mashed earthworms.’

Stork was expecting to see two bowls full of lovely steaming soup - but instead, two flat plates covered in a thin layer of liquid lay on the table. Stork tried her hardest to eat the soup with her bill, but it was impossible.

Fox meanwhile was already licking his bowl clean. 'Oh, dear, is there a problem?' he asked with a smirk.

'Not at all,' replied Stork. 'It's just - well, I had rather a large tea before I came and my tummy's full.'

'Tea - I like the sound of that,' purred Fox.

'Well, why don't you come to my home tomorrow and join me?' suggested Stork.

'I shall look forward to it,' replied Fox.

Stork flew home that night with a heavy heart.

'We warned you, we warned you!' chorused the birds.

'I know, my so-called friend tricked me,' replied Stork. 'But I may yet have the last laugh.'

The next day, Fox set off for Stork's house. 'Shame on you!' cried the birds as he slunk under their tree.

'Stork can take a joke,' Fox replied. 'And after all, she's invited me over for tea.'

'Hee, hee!' sniggered the birds.

'Come in!' said Stork to Fox. 'I've cooked roast rabbit on a bed of grass with berry and nut sauce.'

'Mmm, my favourite,' said Fox as Stork carried in a tray.

He stared at the tall jar Stork had placed in front of him. It was long and thin and the food lay right at the bottom.

Fox watched in frustration as Stork stuck her long bill into her jar and gobbled up the meal. 'Oh dear,' said Stork. 'Is there a problem?'

‘None at all,’ growled Fox. He stuck his nose as far down the jar as he could, but he still couldn’t reach his dinner.

And now there really was a problem.

‘Yowl! The jar’s stuck to my face!’ came Fox’s muffled cries.

‘Hee hee! Serves you right, Foxy,’ chorused the birds who were watching on the window sill. For once, Fox couldn’t answer back.

‘I’ll pull it off with my wings,’ offered Stork kindly.

‘Hmmm, I guess I deserved that after the joke I played on you,’ said Fox sheepishly.

‘Never mind,’ said Stork. ‘I’ve got plenty of food in the kitchen. This time we’ll have it on proper plates - and our little feathered friends can have some too.’

‘Wee, hee!’ cried the birds.