



Learn English Through Stories

Adapted and modified by

Kulwant Singh Sandhu

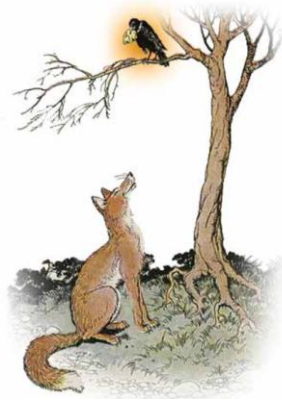
<https://learn-by-reading.co.uk>

Contents

26. The Fox and the Crow

27. The Ant and the Dove

26. The Fox and the Crow



One bright morning as the Fox was following his sharp nose through the wood in search of a bite to eat, he saw a Crow on a branch of a tree overhead. This was by no means the first Crow the Fox had ever seen. What caught his attention this time and made him stop for a second look, was that the lucky Crow held a bit of cheese in her beak.

"No need to search any farther," thought sly Master Fox. "Here is a pretty bite for my breakfast."

Up he trotted to the foot of the tree in which the Crow was sitting, and looking up admiringly, he cried, "Good-morning, beautiful creature!"

The Crow, her head cocked on one side, watched the Fox suspiciously. But she kept her beak tightly closed on the cheese and did not return his greeting.

"What a charming creature you are!" said the Fox. "How your feathers shine! What a beautiful form and what splendid wings! Such a wonderful Bird should have a very lovely voice, since everything else about you is so perfect. Could you sing just one song, I know I should salute you Queen of Birds."

Listening to these flattering words, the Crow forgot all her suspicion, and also her breakfast. She wanted very much to be called Queen of Birds. So she opened her beak wide to utter her loudest caw, and down fell the cheese straight into the Fox's open mouth.

"Thank you," said Master Fox sweetly, as he walked off. "Though it is cracked, you have a voice sure enough. But where are your wits?"

The flatterer lives at the expense of those who will listen to him.

The Fox and the Crow: Version 2

It was a crisp Sunday morning, the kind where the sun spilled golden light over the world and a playful breeze rustled the leaves. On the balcony of a modest flat, a young girl sat enjoying her breakfast—beans on toast, crowned with a generous wedge of cheddar. The aroma of melted cheese wafted into the air, catching the attention of a sleek, black Crow perched on the parapet. “What a feast,” the Crow mused, her beady eyes glinting with envy. “Oh, to be part of that family!”

As if the universe had heard her wish, the girl stood, brushing crumbs from her lap, and slipped inside to fetch a cup of tea. The plate sat unguarded. Quick as a shadow, the Crow swooped down, snatched the cheese in her sharp beak, and soared off with a triumphant flap of her wings. She didn’t stop until she reached the tallest branch of an ancient oak, where she settled, clutching her prize.

Meanwhile, a Fox prowled the woods below, his stomach growling like a distant storm. His amber eyes scanned the undergrowth for a meal, but the forest offered nothing—until he glanced up. There, silhouetted against the sky, was the Crow, the cheese gleaming like a treasure in her beak. “Cheese!” the Fox thought, licking his chops. “That’s breakfast sorted—if I can just get it.”

He paced beneath the tree, his cunning mind whirring. “She won’t drop it willingly,” he reasoned. “But if I can make her talk...” A sly grin spread across his face. He cleared his throat and called up in his smoothest voice, “Good morning, Miss Crow! Isn’t it a splendid day?”

The Crow tilted her head, peering down at him. She clutched the cheese tighter and stayed silent.

“Good morning, I said!” the Fox tried again, raising his voice. “Perhaps you’re too high up to hear me?”

The Crow’s eyes narrowed. She wasn’t born yesterday. Suspicion kept her beak shut.

“Hmm,” the Fox muttered to himself, scratching his ear. “Tougher than she looks.” But he wasn’t one to give up. He flashed his most charming smile and tried a new tack. “You know, Miss Crow, you’re truly a vision up there. Your feathers shimmer like polished coal, your eyes sparkle with wit, and that beak—why, it’s the very picture of elegance!”

The Crow blinked but didn't budge. The cheese stayed firmly in place.

Undeterred, the Fox pressed on, his voice dripping with honey. "I've heard tales of your voice—sweeter than a nightingale's, they say. A song from you would be a gift to the world! Please, just one little tune, and I'll proclaim you the queen of all birds to anyone who'll listen!"

That did it. The Crow's chest puffed up with pride. Queen of all birds? She liked the sound of that. A tiny smile tugged at her beak, then grew into a wide, self-satisfied grin. She couldn't resist—she had to prove her magnificence. Opening her mouth, she let out a loud, croaking "Caw!"—and down tumbled the cheese.

The Fox snapped it up in mid-air, gulping it down with a smug chuckle. "Delicious!" he crowed, wiping his muzzle. "Thank you for breakfast, Miss Crow. Enjoy your day—and let's hope our paths cross again!" With a jaunty wave of his tail, he sauntered off into the woods.

The Crow stared after him, her beak still agape, and her pride now as empty as her stomach.

**"It is a maxim in the schools,
That flattery is the food of fools."**

The Fox and the Crow: Version 3

It was a sunny Sunday morning. The air was cool, and the wind played with the leaves. A girl sat on her balcony, eating breakfast—beans on toast with a big piece of cheese on top. The smell of the melted cheese floated through the air. A black Crow watched from the edge of the balcony. “What a yummy meal,” the Crow thought. “I wish I could have some!”

The girl stood up, brushed crumbs off her clothes, and went inside to get tea. The plate was alone now. Fast as a flash, the Crow flew down, grabbed the cheese with her beak, and flew away. She landed on a high branch of an old oak tree, holding her prize.

Down below, a Fox walked through the woods. His tummy was empty and growled loudly. He looked for food but found nothing. Then he looked up and saw the Crow. The cheese in her beak shone in the sunlight. “Cheese!” the Fox thought. “That’s my breakfast—if I can get it.”

He stood under the tree and thought hard. “She won’t give it to me,” he said to himself. “But maybe I can trick her.” He smiled and called up, “Good morning, Miss Crow! It’s a nice day, isn’t it?”

The Crow looked down at him. She held the cheese tight and said nothing.

“Good morning!” the Fox said louder. “Can you hear me up there?”

The Crow didn’t trust him. She kept her beak closed.

“Hmm,” the Fox said quietly, scratching his head. “She’s smart.” But he didn’t give up. He smiled big and tried again. “Miss Crow, you look so pretty up there. Your feathers are shiny, your eyes are bright, and your beak is perfect!”

The Crow looked at him but didn’t move. The cheese stayed in her beak.

The Fox kept going, his voice sweet like sugar. “People say your voice is amazing—better than any bird. Sing for me, please! Just one song, and I’ll tell everyone you’re the best bird ever!”

That worked. The Crow felt proud. The best bird ever? She liked that. She smiled a little, then a lot. She wanted to show off. She opened her beak and shouted, “Caw!”—and the cheese fell.

The Fox caught it in his mouth and ate it fast. “Yum!” he said, laughing.
“Thanks for breakfast, Miss Crow. Have a good day—see you next time!” He waved his tail and walked away.

The Crow stared at him. Her beak was open, but her cheese was gone. She felt silly and hungry.

27. The Ant and the Dove



A Dove saw an Ant fall into a brook. The Ant struggled in vain to reach the bank, and in pity, the Dove dropped a blade of straw close beside it. Clinging to the straw like a shipwrecked sailor to a broken mast, the Ant floated safely to shore.

Soon after, the Ant saw a man getting ready to kill the Dove with a stone. But just as he cast the stone, the Ant stung him in the heel, so that the pain made him miss his aim, and the startled Dove flew to safety in a distant wood.

A kindness is never wasted.

The Ant and the Dove: Version 2

Once, in a quiet corner of the forest, there lived a pair of doves—He Dove and She Dove. Their home was a snug, twig-woven nest perched high in an oak, where they raised their brood of soft-feathered chicks. Each morning, as the first light spilled through the leaves, He Dove would prepare to leave, gathering food for his family. Before departing, he'd brush his beak gently against She Dove's in a tender farewell kiss.

On one such morning, as their beaks touched and he opened his mouth to say goodbye, She Dove sprang up, her feathers ruffling with purpose. "Wait," she said firmly. "You stay home today. I'll gather the food."

He blinked, startled. "But it's my duty to provide," he protested, puffing out his chest. "I'm the breadwinner."

She tilted her head, her eyes glinting with quiet resolve. "Those days are behind us. I'm as capable as you—wings, beak, and all. Stay with the chicks. Tell them those sweet stories you once whispered to me when you were wooing my heart."

He hesitated, but the strength in her voice softened his resistance. With a reluctant nod, he settled back into the nest as she spread her wings and took flight.

It was a glorious morning—the sun beamed from its golden throne, and a cool breeze danced through the trees, carrying whispers of peace from the heavens to the earth below. She Dove soared with a quiet pride, her wings cutting through the air like a lioness stalking the plains. She scoured the forest floor, plucking worms and seeds with deft precision, until her beak brimmed with bounty. Pausing to rest, she alighted on a branch of a copper-barked beech tree, its leaves shimmering in the light. Below, a brook rushed over smooth stones, its waters glinting like liquid silver.

A sudden ripple caught her eye. An Ant, tiny and frantic, thrashed in the current, her legs kicking against the relentless flow. Without a second thought, She Dove swooped down, snatched a few blades of grass in her beak, and dropped them into the stream. The Ant, desperate as a drowning soul grasping at hope, seized a blade and clambered atop it, riding the makeshift raft to the safety of the bank.

An hour later, as She Dove preened her feathers on the branch, a shadow fell across the glade. A hunter stepped into view, his eyes narrowing with delight as he spotted her. With practiced ease, he drew an arrow from his quiver and notched it to his bowstring, the taut cord humming with intent. She Dove froze, her heart hammering against her ribs.

But just as the hunter's fingers loosened to release the arrow, the Ant—now safe and watching from the grass—darted forward and sank her tiny jaws into his foot. He yelped, his aim faltering, and the arrow sailed wide, thudding harmlessly into the trunk of the beech. Startled, She Dove launched into the air, her wings beating a frantic rhythm as she sped homeward.

She landed breathless in the nest, greeted by the eager chirps of her chicks and the wide-eyed concern of He Dove. Between gasps, she recounted her tale—how the Ant's small act had spared her life. The family huddled close, feathers brushing in quiet relief.

He Dove nuzzled her gently, his voice soft. "When I was a chick, my grandmother told me stories with morals to carry through life. One stuck with me: a kindness is never wasted."

She Dove smiled, her eyes warm. "Today, I lived that story."

The Ant and the Dove: Version 3

Once, there were two doves—He Dove and She Dove. They lived in a cosy nest in a big oak tree with their little chicks. Every morning, He Dove got ready to find food for his family. Before he left, he always gave She Dove a little kiss.

One day, as he kissed her and started to say goodbye, She Dove stood up fast. “Wait,” she said. “You stay home today. I’ll get the food.”

He Dove was surprised. “But I’m the one who gets the food,” he said. “It’s my job.”

She Dove shook her head. “Not anymore. I can do it too. Stay here with the chicks. Tell them the fun stories you told me when we met.”

He Dove wasn’t sure, but he stayed. She Dove flew off into the bright morning. The sun was shining, and a cool wind blew softly. She felt strong and proud, like a brave bird ready to hunt. She picked up worms and seeds with her beak and then sat on a branch of a tall tree. Below the tree, a little stream ran fast over rocks.

Suddenly, She Dove saw an Ant in the water. The Ant was trying hard to swim but couldn’t. She Dove flew down, grabbed some grass, and dropped it into the stream. The Ant climbed onto the grass and got to the shore safely.

Later, a hunter came. He saw She Dove on the branch and smiled. He took an arrow and aimed his bow at her. She Dove was scared. But just then, the Ant bit the hunter’s foot. The hunter jumped, and his arrow missed. It hit the tree instead.

She Dove flew home as fast as she could. Her chicks and He Dove were happy to see her. She told them everything—how the Ant saved her life. They all sat close together, feeling safe.

He Dove said, “When I was little, my grandma told me stories. One said: being kind always helps.”

She Dove smiled. “Today, that was true.”