

The Fox and the Crow

An Adapted Fable

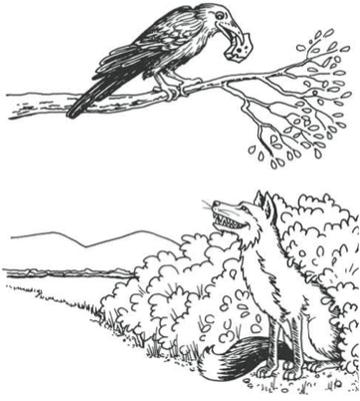
The crow ruffled his feathers and strutted up and down on the branch of his favorite tree. It was dinnertime, but no berries, bugs, or worms would do for this crow. The other crows could eat that common food. This crow was a clever thief, and he had decided to steal a special delicacy for dinner.

The crow flew from the branch, circled over a nearby farm, and then landed near the barn. Inside the barn, on a shelf, were bricks of aging cheese. The crow pranced around the cheeses, eyeing each brick and, every now and then, stopping to peck at one. When he had almost reached the last brick, the crow finally found the perfect flavor.

The crow looked around and listened to make sure he was alone. The farmer was milking a cow in another part of the barn, and the farmer's wife was singing in the kitchen, so the crow boldly pulled off a large piece of the cheese. Hearing the noise from the crow's flapping wings, the farmer came running. He chased after the crow, waving his arms and shouting, but the crow flew above the trees in the orchard, and the farmer couldn't catch him.

The crow flew back to his branch. It wouldn't do to eat such a treat right away. He would wait until the rest of the flock returned so they could envy his tasty treasure. They would be back soon, arguing about which of them had found the most bugs and worms in the farmer's freshly plowed field, and it would be worth the wait to show off the cheese and devour it in front of them.

From her hiding place in a nearby thicket, a hungry fox spied the crow.



“I shall have that tasty morsel for myself,” she declared. “It would be a shame for such a treat to be wasted on a crow. Besides, that bird thinks too well of himself. I’ve heard him boast about his skill as a thief to all the creatures in the forest. It will be easy to take his dinner away. Then let’s see how much boasting he does.”

The fox crept out of the thicket and sat under the crow’s branch. She looked up and smiled, showing all her teeth.

“Ah, dear crow,” she said, “I see that you have outfoxed the farmer again. I have never encountered a thief as clever as you are. We foxes are thought to be the wiliest animals on earth, but we can claim that title no longer. You, dear crow, are far more cunning than the slickest of us.”

The crow moved his head from side to side, showing off the cheese.

“And you are as handsome as you are clever, friend crow,” the fox continued. “Your feathers glisten in the sunlight. I see iridescent shades of green and a rainbow of colors dancing on your wings, and your eyes sparkle like jewels. How I would love to replace my feet with yours so I could perch on a tree branch and watch the world below me. There is no creature in the forest that can compare to you.”

The crow flapped his wings and looked down at the fox.

“Believe me, dear crow,” the fox went on, “I cannot praise you enough. And I can see that you know I am being truthful. Many animals say that the voice of the crow is the most unpleasant sound they have ever heard, but indeed, they are mistaken. How could any animal as handsome and as talented as you are make unpleasant sounds?”

The crow nodded in agreement.

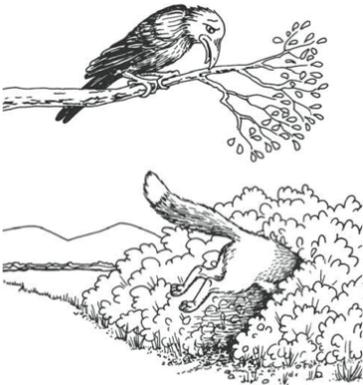
“I don’t wish to interrupt your dinner,” said the fox, “not for one minute, but as a favor to this poor fox who will never be able to imitate your soothing, melodious tones, please sing a few notes. Every creature in the forest will enjoy your musical talent. You could serenade us with a long concert or enrich our lives with a trilling lullaby. I foresee a great musical future for you.”

The crow was pleased to hear the fox’s flattering remarks.

“Well?” asked the fox. “Will you sing for us, dear crow?”

“How can I refuse such a great admirer as the fox?” thought the crow.

As the crow opened his beak to sing the first caw, his piece of cheese fell to the ground, and the fox gobbled it up. Then the sad, hungry crow watched the fox disappear into the thicket.



Questions About *The Fox and the Crow*

1. Why didn't the crow want to eat berries, bugs, or worms?
2. The fable calls the crow "a clever thief." Do you agree or disagree? Use details from the story to support your opinion.
3. Did the fox like the crow? Explain why or why not.
4. List three things the crow did in the story that showed he was conceited, or vain.
5. Why did the crow drop the cheese?
6. What is another way that the fox could have gotten the crow to open his mouth?

Vocabulary

Write the number of each word next to the correct definition.

- _____ having a shiny array of shifting, rainbowlike colors
- _____ to poke or jab in quick movements with a beak
- _____ to eat quickly and eagerly
- _____ to stop an activity that is in progress
- _____ walked in a swaggering or conceited way
- _____ to want someone else's good fortune for yourself
- _____ a rare or special kind of food
- _____ a dense group of bushes or small trees
- _____ a small piece of food

1. envy
2. interrupt
3. morsel
4. delicacy
5. peck
6. thicket
7. devour
8. strutted
9. iridescent
10. ruffled

Synonyms

1. Write each word listed below on the line next to its synonym.

<i>imitate</i>	<i>serenade</i>	<i>glisten</i>	<i>boast</i>
<i>pranced</i>	<i>melodious</i>	<i>spied</i>	<i>common</i>

copy
spotted
musical
glitter
ordinary
brag
sing
danced

2. List three synonyms that the fox uses in the story to describe how clever the crow is.

Prefixes

1. Add one of the following prefixes to each root word below to make a word that can be found in the story. Then use the meaning of the root word and the meaning of the prefix to write a definition for the new word.

dis not; opposite

en to make or cause to be

fore earlier; in advance; in front of

im, in no; not; without

mis wrong; bad or badly

re again; back or backward

un not; opposite of or contrary

a. appear

b. place

c. see

d. taken

e. rich

2. Write the underlined word in each sentence that correctly answers the question.

a. Was the fox patient or impatient while she was talking to the crow?

b. Was the fox polite or impolite to the crow?

- c. Do many animals say that a crow makes pleasant or unpleasant sounds?
- d. Was the crow pleased or displeased with the fox's remarks?
- e. Did the crow want to eat foods that are common or uncommon for birds?
- f. Did the fox tell the crow that he was comparable or incomparable to other creatures in the forest?

What Makes It a Fable?

A fable is a story that teaches a moral, or lesson. The main characters are animals that have human traits, and one of the characters usually has a weakness, or flaw. The main action, or plot, of a fable is about a conflict, or problem, between the characters.

Answer the following questions about The Fox and the Crow to tell why it is a fable.

1. What human traits does the fox have?
2. What human traits does the crow have?
3. Which character has a flaw? What is the flaw?
4. What is the conflict, or problem, in the story?
5. What is the moral of the story?

True or False?

Flattery is false or insincere praise. The fox uses flattery to get the crow to drop the cheese. Find five examples of flattery in the story and write them on the lines below.