

The Fox and the Crow, A Fable

by La Fontaine

One morning Crow sat high in a tree holding a piece of cheese in his beak. He had just stolen the cheese from a farmer's kitchen, where the window had been left open.

On the ground below, Fox searched with his sharp claws for something to eat. The hungry Fox saw Crow sitting in the tree above. That was nothing unusual, for he had seen Crows before. But this Crow had a piece of cheese in his beak. That interested Fox. He wanted Crow's cheese.

"Good day, Crow," called Fox. But Crow said nothing. He held the cheese in his beak.

"You are such a lovely bird!" the Fox said. "I have never noticed what beautiful feathers you have. They are so smooth and black. You must be the finest bird of all!"

Crow tilted his head to the side, suspicious of Fox. Yet he was quite interested in what Fox said.

"Ah, yes," Fox continued. "You are indeed a charming creature. You must certainly have a voice whose beauty equals that of your feathers."

The Crow was flattered that someone would think he had a beautiful voice.

"What a shame I cannot hear your song," said Fox.

The Crow had been flattered too much! He took a deep breath and opened his beak to sing.

"Caw, caw!" came loudly from his beak.

The cheese fell straight down to the Fox and into his mouth.

"You may be beautiful," said Fox before he dashed off. "But you certainly are not wise!"

(The flatterer can easily trick those who listen to his words.)