

The Two Crows and the Sun

a fable

From A Tangle of Tales
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In grade 2, when the child is 8 or thereabouts, fables begin to speak to them. Fables are one step more 'earthly' than fairytales and lead the child to ponder the relationships between things and beings. Aesop wrote out of his time, and it interests me what fables we can, or should, write for ours. Here's one fable that tries to fit that bill.

Two crows sat on a wall: one white, one black. The white one was rare, the black one was common, and they both said, 'caw'.

"Caw!" said the white crow, and the black crow replied: "Caw!"

It was dark. They were waiting for someone. Someone they knew. He was called Sun.

"I wish he'd hurry up," said the white crow. "He always takes his time."

"Yes," said the black crow, "he keeps us waiting on purpose. You'd think he'd have better things to do."

The white crow nodded. "He thinks he's a bright spark," he said.

"He thinks he's bright all right," said the black crow. "A real smarty pants! All he does is jump into the sky every day."

"That's right," said the white crow, "he's a showoff."

The crows sat hunched up, watching the sky intently.

"It's getting late," said the black crow.

"Late, and getting later," said the white crow.

The crows hopped from foot to foot impatiently.

At last the sky lightened.

"Here he comes," said the black crow, hopping sideways.

"Caw! Caw!" said the white crow, wiping his beak on the wall. "Not long! Not long!"

A breeze came up and ruffled the crow's feathers. There were clouds in the sky, layers of them, with gaps of blue shining through. The clouds became red, then rosy-pink.

"Soon! Soon!" said the black crow.

"Caw!" said the white crow.

The sun came up. It lit the sky, and the clouds glowed in many colors. Up the crows flew, flying at the sun.

"Caw! Caw! Caw!" they crowed, flapping wildly into the sky as the sun rose ever higher. Up and up they flew until they were mere specks.

They were gone for a long time. At last they flew back and landed on the wall.

"That showed him," said the white crow.

"Sure did," said the black crow, and they wiped their beaks in satisfaction.