

01 The Fox and the Crow

One day, a large black crow sat in a tree near a cottage. Through a window, she saw some cheese on a table. She quickly flew down, stole the cheese, and then flew back up into a high tree to eat it.

A sly, handsome fox was passing by. He noticed the crow. He sat down and began to praise her beauty.

“You are very beautiful,” he said. “I have never seen such shiny black feathers. And you have the most perfect shape!” The crow was very vain, so she was delighted with the fox’s words.

The fox continued, “I think that you must have a lovely voice. Indeed, it must be as beautiful as you look. Surely no-one else can compete with you. Are you the Queen of the Birds?”

The crow was so pleased that she almost fell out of the tree with the cheese in her beak. Actually, she had never sung before but she thought, “This gentleman is very educated. I see that he knows a lot about beauty and good music.” Then she thought, “Yes, I can sing beautifully, but I am sure that

this gentleman does not know how excellent my singing really is.” She was so excited that she decided to show him immediately. So, she opened her beak and began to croak as all crows do. At that moment, the cheese fell to the ground.

The sly fox snatched it up and ate it. When he had finished, he wiped his whiskers slowly and looked up at the crow. “Madam,” he said, “I have spoken about your beauty, but remember, I said nothing about your brains.”