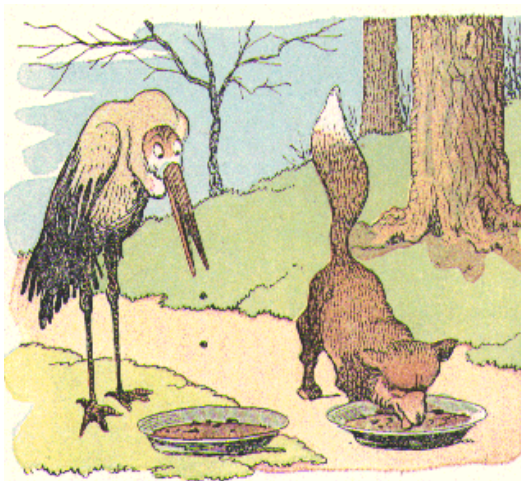


The Fox and the Crane



A Fox decided to play a joke upon a Crane. In order to do this he invited the bird to dinner in his den. When the Crane arrived, the Fox served a delicious soup in a flat dish.

“Mm, this soup tastes good,” said the Fox, lapping it greedily from the dish, his nose only a few inches from it. “What do you think of it, my friend?”

“How can I tell?” asked the Crane bitterly, pecking vainly at the flat dish with her long beak. “This dish is too flat. I cannot get any soup into my mouth at all.”

This was just what the sly old Fox had hoped would happen. He had upset the Crane and made her look silly. He thought this very funny and finished the soup himself with a sly smile upon his face. The Crane made one or two more efforts to peck at the soup, but then gave up and went home, deciding to get her own back on the Fox.

(continued overleaf)

A few days later the Crane had made her plans. She invited the Fox to come and have dinner with her in her home by the water's edge. She too, prepared soup for the meal. She served it in a jug which was wide at the bottom and narrow at the top.

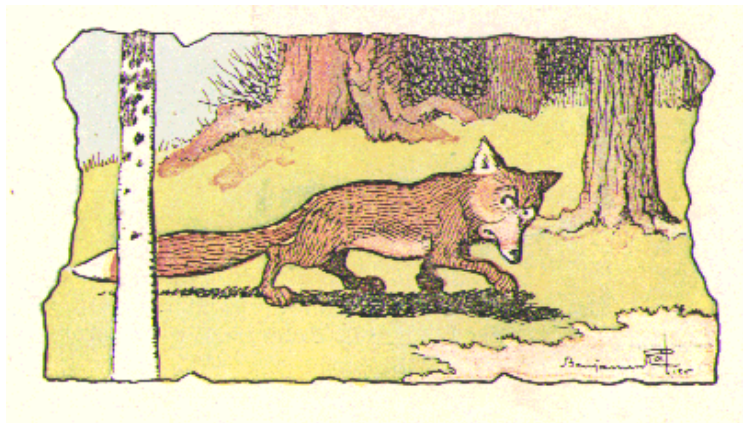
"Let us begin," said the Crane, dipping her head into the jug and taking a long sip. "Mm, this is good! What do you think of it, my friend?"

"How can I tell?" grumbled the Fox, trying in vain to get his head into the mouth of the jug. "I cannot reach the soup to lap it up!"

"What a shame," said the Crane calmly.

She said nothing else, but finished the soup herself, while the Fox looked on in a bad temper.

In the end, the Fox went home in a bad mood. The tables had been turned on him, but for some reason he did not think it was funny.



MORAL: Something which seems funny when it happens to someone else may not seem as funny when it happens to us.

Alternative version (translated from Aesop's Fables)

At one time the Fox and the Crane were on visiting terms and seemed very good friends. So the Fox invited the Crane to dinner, and for a joke put nothing before her but some soup in a very shallow dish. This the Fox could easily lap up, but the Crane could only wet the end of her long bill in it, and left the meal as hungry as when she began.

"I am sorry," said the Fox, "the soup is not to your liking."

"Pray do not apologise," said the Crane. "I hope you will return this visit, and come and dine with me soon."

So a day was appointed when the Fox should visit the Crane; but when they were seated at table all that was for their dinner was contained in a very long-necked jar with a narrow mouth, in which the fox could not insert his snout, so all he could manage to do was to lick the outside of the jar.

"I will not apologise for dinner," said the Crane...

(MORAL: "One bad turn deserves another.")

