



THE PEACOCK AND THE CRANE

Once there was a peacock living by a small pond. Every day, he proudly strolled along the shore, spreading his magnificent feathers whenever he met another bird. The giant fan full of colours and patterns shimmering in the sunshine was admired by everyone who lived nearby. When there was no admirer in sight, the fowl himself feasted his eyes on his reflection on the lake. Sometimes he even kicked a pebble into the water to ruffle the surface and admire his own beauty in movement. Over time his pride turned into arrogance and haughtiness. In his eyes, other birds were not beautiful enough to be worth talking to or, heaven forbid, pal around with. Everyone around was pretty much irked by it, so the other birds came up with a plan to play a joke on the puffed-up fowl.

The task was given to a crane, the most mundane and unexceptional bird compared to the peacock, what with his scrawny body, grey colour and skinny legs. Far and wide, there was no bird so dull and forgettable as the crane.

A beautiful morning came. Sparrows were chirping and the sun was shining. Once the crane noticed the peacock admiring his own reflection and smoothing out his colourful feathers, he set out for a little walk to meet the vain fowl. When they met, the peacock instantly started mocking the crane.

“Oh, crane, why don’t you do something with those feathers of yours! Don’t

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you wish to look at least a bit more interesting? Look how boring and drab you are! Look at that dismal, bland colour, that drooping tail, those ridiculously bony legs,” he scoffed at the crane, knowing that his beauty must have been even more apparent now that he was standing right next to the grey bird.

But the crane just kept walking patiently around, even coming back a few times to give the peacock enough opportunity to add some more of his snide remarks. After some time the crane paused for a bit and said: “You may have the most beautiful feathers in the world, and sure enough, everyone who meets you has to admire your tail, no doubt. But I have never seen you fly. I guess that’s because your feathers are as weak and fragile as they are beautiful. They could never keep you up in the air since they would break easily. My feathers may be grey as dust, but they are also strong enough to carry me high into the sky and wherever I want. You, however, are doomed to stay on the ground forever.”

And as he finished, he fluttered his wings and disappeared.