



## THE SWAN AND THE CROW

Once upon a time, there was a big lake. From far away, it looked like a huge mirror that reflected everything around. On the surface of the lake, there were beautiful, majestic swans. There wasn't a more elegant, more graceful creature anywhere. They spent the whole day on the water, because their dense white feathers never got wet and they protected them from the cold.

Around the lake, there were tall poplar trees with crows nesting in them. They would go hunting for food by the lake and their cawing could be heard far and wide.

However, one of the crows didn't come to the lake just for food. She also liked watching the swans, admiring their grace and beauty, until one day she decided she wanted to become one of them. Even though she had a comfortable life in a solid, dry nest with the other crows, she didn't like the way she looked. She thought that only when she started living like the swans, she would be happy with herself.

And so, she left her nest in the tree and started doing the same things the swans did. She got into the water and tried to learn to swim as they did. She tried to hold herself up the same way as them, to look like a swan from far away. Each day, she rubbed her feathers on the pebbles on the shore to make them whiter.

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She even started eating the same food as the swans. None of it helped. She was still not content with herself and she also started feeling quite unwell.

Her wings felt very weakened, because she kept soaking them in water and her feathers fell out and became thin. Swan food gave her bellyaches and she was becoming sickly and weak. Soon, she couldn't even fly properly. She could only hop around the lake.

It took her too long to realize that she could never be a swan. But what was even more important, she understood that to be happy with herself, she needed to accept who she was. She was a crow, and not a swan. She came back to her nest with the other crows and began to recover and gain her strength back.