

1 The Crow and the Pitcher



A thirsty crow found a *pitcher* with some water in it, but so little was there that, try as she might, she could not reach it with her *beak*, and it seemed as though she would die of thirst within sight of the *remedy*.

At last she hit upon a clever plan. She began dropping *pebbles* into the pitcher, and with each pebble the water rose a little higher until at last it reached the *brim*, and the knowing bird was enabled to *quench* her thirst.

Necessity is the mother of invention.

pitcher [ˈpɪtʃər] (n.) a large jug

beak [bi:k] (n.) the hard, pointed part of a bird's mouth

remedy [ˈremɪdi] (n.) a cure for an illness or something bad

pebble [ˈpebl̩] (n.) a small, smooth stone

brim [brɪm] (n.) the top edge of a cup, glass etc

quench [kwentʃ] (v.) to drink enough to take away one's thirst



USE YOUR WITS

THE CROW & THE
PITCHER

Now the cunning old
Crow got his drink
When 'twas low in the
pitcher, just think!
Don't say that he spilled it!
With pebbles he filled it,
Till the water rose up to
the brink.



2 The Lark and the Farmer



A lark nested in a field of corn, and was *rearing* her *brood* under cover of the ripening grain. One day, before the young were *fully-fledged*, the farmer came to look at the crop, and, finding it yellowing fast, he said, “I must send round word to my neighbors to come and help me reap this field.”

One of the young larks overheard him, and was very much frightened, and asked her mother whether they hadn’t better move house at once.

“There’s no hurry,” replied she; “a man who looks to his friends for help will take his time about a thing.” in a few days the farmer came by again, and saw that the grain was overripe and falling out of the ears upon the ground.

“I must put it off no longer,” he said; “This very day I’ll hire the men and set them to work at once.”

The lark heard him and said to her young, “Come, my children, we must be off: he talks no more of his friends now, but is going to take things in hand himself.”

Self-help is the best help.

lark [lɑ:rk] (n.) a small brown bird which is known for its beautiful singing

rear [rɪə] (v.) to feed and care for a family, animals etc while they grow up

brood [bru:d] (n.) a number of baby birds all hatched at one time
fully-fledged: (a.) completely developed or trained





3 The Milkmaid and Her Pail



A farmer's daughter had been out to milk the cows, and was returning to the *dairy* carrying her *pail* of milk upon her head.

As she walked along, she fell a-musing *after this fashion*: “The milk in this pail will provide me with cream, which I will make into butter and take to market to sell. With the money I will buy a number of eggs, and these, when hatched, will produce chickens, and by and by I shall have quite a large *poultry-yard*. Then I shall sell some of my *fowls*, and with the money which they will bring in I will buy myself a new gown, which I shall wear when I go to the *fair*; and all the young fellows will admire it, and come and make love to me, but I shall *toss* my head and have nothing to say to them.”



Forgetting all about the pail, and suiting the action to the word, she tossed her head. Down went the pail, all the milk was spilled, and all her fine castles in the air vanished in a moment!

Do not count your chickens before they are hatched.

dairy [ˈdeəri] (n.) the place on a farm where milk is kept and butter and cheese are made
pail [peɪl] (n.) a bucket
after the fashion: to some extent
poultry [ˈpoʊltri] (n.) farmyard birds
fowl [faʊl] (n.) a bird, especially a hen, duck, goose etc
fair [feə] (n.) a large market held at fixed times
toss [tɒs] (v.) to throw, fling, or heave continuously about