

The Wolf & The Crane

A fable by Aesop (6th century BCE)

Wolf had been feasting greedily on an animal he had killed, and a bone became stuck crosswise in his throat. He could get it neither up nor down, and of course he could not eat a thing with the bone stuck in his throat. This was not a good situation for the greedy Wolf to be in.

Desperate he started to ask every animal he came across to help him get the bone out of his throat. "I will give you anything if you would just take it out," he cried. He could find no one willing to help. Finally, completely desperate, he ran to find Crane. He was sure that she, with her long neck and bill, would easily be able to reach the bone deep in his throat and pull it out.

"I will reward you very handsomely," said the Wolf, "if you pull this bone out for me Crane."

Crane, as you can imagine, was very uneasy about putting her long thin neck and pretty head in Wolf's mouth and down his throat. But she was a kind and helpful creature by nature so decided to do what Wolf asked her to do.

Crane told Wolf to open his mouth as wide as he could and stretch his neck out very straight so she could put her whole head and long thin neck into Wolf's mouth and down his throat. She found the bone in his throat, clamped down on it with her beak and pulled it all the way out of Wolf's throat.

When Wolf felt that the bone was gone, he closed his mouth and started to walk away. "Wait!" called Crane anxiously, "What about my reward?"

"What!" snarled Wolf, whirling around. "Haven't you got it? Isn't it enough that I let you take your head out of my mouth without snapping it off?"

The Moral of This Fable Is...

If you think a wicked person will reward you for a job well done, you are making two mistakes: first, you are helping someone who doesn't deserve it, and second, you will be lucky to escape unharmed.