

Crows

La-chee. The crows always want something they shouldn't want. My grandfather used to call them "stealers of the corn." Grandmother would put up blankets and old clothes that would flap in the wind to scare the crows away from the corn.

—Betty Mae Jumper

Once, among all the flying birds in the beautiful forest, there were two special birds. They had very colorful feathers that shone brightly under the sun as they flew around. All the other birds admired and envied them. And the songs they sang were out of this world. When these birds sang, the others in the forest would quiet down and just listen to them.

One day, as these two birds were flying around, they saw a strange thing coming up in the air. It was not a cloud. They looked and looked from up in the air, but they couldn't make out what it was. One said to the other, "Let us fly a little ways farther and see what it is."

"I'm scared," said the other, but he followed his friend halfway to the strange thing. Then both stopped in a tree and looked and looked.

"What is that orange color below and that strange black color going in the air?" asked the one bird, begging his friend to go closer. So they flew right to the edge of where the forest was burning—something the birds had never seen before. They sat a long time watching it. Then one bird said, "Let us fly to that black tree and see the burning from the top."

The other said, "No. Let us go back. We have seen enough." But the other kept it up, wanting to fly to the top of the tall black tree. As usual, he won the argument, and they flew to the top of the tree and tried to sit on a limb.

But the limb broke, and the birds fell to the ground into the black soot, which burned their beautiful feathers into charcoal. And their voices were gone. They couldn't get any sound out, until one day they learned to say, "Caw. Caw." For this, they were ashamed and never returned to the beautiful forest they once knew.

