



Aesop's Fables

27. THE EAGLE AND THE JACKDAW

By Sue Reid

'Oh my, look at that bird!' a Jackdaw exclaimed to her husband one day. High above the nest a great eagle was soaring.

'Oh isn't he magnificent,' she sighed watching him circle and swoop. She leant over the nest to take a better look. Perched next to her was her husband who pushed back his shades and looked out to see what the fuss was all about.

'Hmm. He's just an eagle,' he grumbled. 'I'm as fine a bird as him!'

The nest was full of things he'd collected. Rings, bottle tops, feathers. The Jackdaw smiled, looking at the glittering heap. 'Mrs Jackdaw,' he said to his wife. 'You are a lucky bird. Look at all the beautiful things I've brought you.'

'Humph!' grumbled the Jackdaw's wife. 'What use is it? You can't eat feathers and bottle tops! If only you brought back something useful for a change.'

The Jackdaw was very cross. He stared at the eagle as it swooped downwards. Suddenly he heard a bleat. The eagle had seized a lamb that had got separated from the flock in the pasture below.

The lamb bleated and struggled. But it was no use. The eagle had him firmly gripped in his talons. Up and up he flew again, higher and higher, the lamb swinging from his claws.

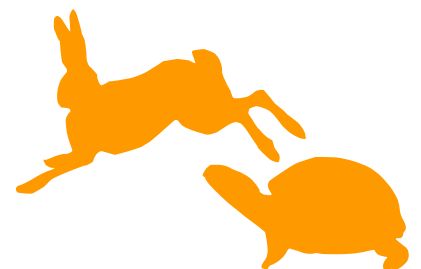
The Jackdaw had had enough. 'I'll show her,' he muttered to himself. 'I'm just as big and strong as that eagle. She'll see.'

He hopped out of the nest. Then flapping his wings he flew down to a bush.

His eyes gleamed as they lit on the farmer's prize ram. 'Won't she be surprised when I bring that ram back for tea?' he chuckled. And putting on his fiercest expression down he plopped, onto the ram's back.

'Up we go!' he cawed happily, flapping his wings and rising up into the air again. But all that was swinging from his claws was a bit of wool.

He dropped down again and tugged a bit harder. But he couldn't budge the ram. Up and down the Jackdaw jumped, furiously flapping his wings and tugging at the ram's woolly coat. But he couldn't lift the ram.





‘Silly old bird,’ said Mrs Jackdaw, who was watching. ‘He thinks he’s an eagle!’

The Jackdaw pulled and he tugged, but the more he tugged and the more he pulled the more his claws got caught in the ram’s woolly coat until he could hardly move at all.

Leaning by the gate, a shepherd had been watching. He ran up to the ram.

‘Silly old bird,’ the shepherd said taking out a pair of scissors to clip his wings. ‘I’m taking you home with me. Can’t have you messing with my flock.’

When he got home that night the shepherd put the Jackdaw down on the table.

‘Come and see what I’ve brought you,’ he said to his children. The children crowded round the table.

‘What sort of bird is it, father?’ one of them asked.

‘Well I call it a jackdaw, but he thinks he’s an eagle,’ the shepherd chuckled. He gave the Jackdaw a stern look. ‘Perhaps you’ve learned your lesson now,’ he said.

The Jackdaw hung his head.

Up in the Jackdaw’s nest, his wife stretched out happily. ‘I’ve seen the last of him,’ she said. ‘And good riddance too. Useless bird. Fancy thinking he was an eagle!’