

FREE
Iroquois
Folk Tale



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"One who carries and tells the stories"

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Why Crows are Poor



After the Great Spirit had made the Indians and had given them this beautiful land in which to live, he sent them a great gift—the gift of the corn.

Ga gaah, the Crow, claims it was he who brought this gift. He says he was called to the wigwam of the Great Spirit in the sky. A grain of corn was placed in his ear, and he was told to carry it to earth, to the Indians.

Therefore, as **Ga gaah** brought the gift, he claims he has a right to pull what corn he needs. **Ga gaah** says he does not "steal" corn. He simply takes what belongs to him, his rightful share.

And surely **Ga gaah** is not greedy! He never takes more corn than he wants for himself. He never hides or stores it away. He takes just what he wishes to eat at the time, and no more, for crows never think of tomorrow.

In summer, they are happy in the cornfields, guarding the roots from insect enemies, and pulling the tender blades whenever they are hungry.

But when winter comes, the crows are sad. Many councils are held. Sometimes a council tree will be black with crows. All are so poor and so hungry that they get together to try to plan a better way to live.

There is much noise and confusion at a crow council, for all the crows talk at once. All are saying, "No bird is so poor as the crow; he is always hungry. Next summer, let us plant and raise a big crop of corn, and gather and

save it for the winter. Next winter, crows will not be hungry; they will have food.

"We will no longer take from the fields of the Indians just enough corn for a meal today. We will raise our own corn, and lay by a store for the winter."

And having agreed that this is a wise plan, the council ends.

A few days later, another council will be called. At this, the crows will plan how and where to plant the corn. Some will be appointed to select a field, others to find seed, and still others to plant and tend the corn.

But, alas! When spring comes, and skies are blue, and the sun shines warm, the crows forget the hunger of the winter, and the councils in the tree. They remember only that the skies are blue, and the sun shines warm, and now there is plenty of corn.

Happy and content, they walk up and down the fields of the Indians.

"We have all we want today," they say, "Why should we think of tomorrow, or next winter? We had a good meal this morning, and we are sure of one tonight. Is not this enough for a crow? What more can he ask?"

And the next winter comes, and finds the crows as poor and as hungry as they were the last. Again they are holding noisy councils in the council tree. Again they are laying plans for the great crop of corn that they will raise next summer!

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Lorrie