

Hummingbird and Crane

retold by David Borgenicht

Hummingbird and Crane were always arguing.

If it wasn't one thing, it was another, but it usually came down to this: Crane thought that she owned the river, and Hummingbird thought that she did.

They agreed to settle matters once and for all in a great race.

"We will race for four days," said Crane, sounding superior, "and on the fourth day, whoever reaches the dead tree at the bank of the river first will own all the water in the river."

Hummingbird buzzed in agreement. She knew that she was faster than Crane, even though she was smaller. But she didn't realize that Crane had more energy, and could fly for days without resting.

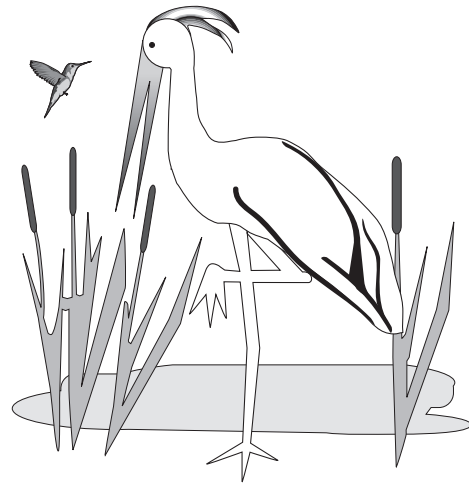
The time came for the race, and off they flew. Crane immediately took off into the air at full speed. Hummingbird took her time, flitting from flower to flower, tasting each blossom as she pleased. She knew that she could overtake Crane at any time.

When Crane was way ahead, Hummingbird decided to pass her. She buzzed by, almost clipping Crane in the head. Hummingbird flew out of sight.

I will never win this way, thought Crane.

But Crane didn't have to worry for long. Hummingbird had found a colorful field of wildflowers, and was tasting every one. Crane flew past again. Not long after, however, Hummingbird overtook Crane once more.

Night was coming, so Hummingbird rested and slept in a patch of bluebells. But Crane travelled all night. She was long past



Hummingbird's resting spot when Hummingbird woke the next day.

Hummingbird was so swift that she caught up with Crane by the time the sun had reached the sky's midpoint. She kept her lead—until she found more flowers. Then Crane passed her. After a time, Hummingbird passed Crane again. The race went on like this until the eve of the fourth day, when Hummingbird rested again.

I have no need to worry, she thought to herself. *Even though it is almost the fourth day, I will beat Crane in the morning.* So she slept soundly.

The next morning, when Hummingbird woke, she fluttered casually toward the dead tree across the river. After stopping once more, Hummingbird reached the tree—and found Crane sitting below it.

"All of the water is now mine," said Crane. And she went to drink in her river. From then on, Hummingbird drank only from the flowers she passed.

And it is still that way today.

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