



The Grain of Corn

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Indian

Intermediate
5 min read

Once upon a time a farmer's wife was winnowing corn, when a crow, flying past, swooped off with a grain from the winnowing basket and perched on a tree close by to eat it. The farmer's wife, greatly enraged, flung a clod at the bird with so good an aim that the crow fell to the ground, dropping the grain of corn, which rolled into a crack in the tree. The farmer's wife, seeing the crow fall, ran up to it, and seizing it by the tail, cried, 'Give me back my grain of corn, or I will kill you!'

The wretched bird, in fear of death, promised to do so, but, lo and behold! when he came to search for the grain, it had rolled so far into the crack that neither by beak nor claw could he reach it.

So he flew off to a woodman, and said—

'Man! man! cut tree;

I can't get the grain of corn

To save my life from the farmer's wife!'

But the woodman refused to cut the tree; so the crow flew on to the King's palace, and said—

'King! king! kill man;

Man won't cut tree;

I can't get the grain of corn.

To save my life from the farmer's wife!

But the King refused to kill the man; so the crow flew on to the Queen, and said---

'Queen! Queen! coax King;

King won't kill man;

Man won't cut tree;

I can't get the grain of corn

To save my life from the farmer's wife!

But the Queen refused to coax the King; so the crow flew on till he met a snake, and said---

'Snake! snake! bite Queen;

Queen won't coax King;

King won't kill man;

Man won't cut tree;

I can't get the grain of corn

To save my life from the farmer's wife!

But the snake refused to bite the Queen; so the crow flew on till he met a stick, and said---

'Stick! stick! beat snake;

Snake won't bite Queen;

Queen won't coax King;

King won't kill man;

Man won't cut tree;

I can't get the grain of corn

To save my life from the farmer's wife!

But the stick refused to beat the snake; so the crow flew on till he saw a fire, and said---

'Fire! fire! burn stick;

Stick won't beat snake;

Snake won't bite Queen;

Queen won't coax King;

King won't kill man;

Man won't cut tree;

I can't get the grain of corn

To save my life from the farmer's wife!

But the fire refused to burn the stick; so the crow flew on till he met some water, and said---

'Water! water! quench fire;

Fire won't burn stick;

Stick won't beat snake;

Snake won't bite Queen;

Queen won't coax King;

King won't kill man;

Man won't cut tree;

I can't get the grain of corn

To save my life from the farmer's wife!

But the water refused to quench the fire; so the crow flew on till he met an ox, and said---

'Ox! ox! drink water;

Water won't quench fire;

Fire won't burn stick;

Stick won't beat snake;

Snake won't bite Queen;

Queen won't coax King;

King won't kill man;

Man won't cut tree;

I can't get the grain of corn

To save my life from the farmer's wife!

But the ox refused to drink the water; so the crow flew on till he met a rope, and said---

'Rope! rope! bind ox;

Ox won't drink water;

Water won't quench fire;

Fire won't burn stick;

Stick won't beat snake;

Snake won't bite Queen;

Queen won't coax King;

King won't kill man;

Man won't cut tree;

I can't get the grain of corn

To save my life from the farmer's wife!

But the rope wouldn't bind the ox; so the crow flew on till he met a mouse, and said—

'Mouse! mouse! gnaw rope;

Rope won't bind ox;

Ox won't drink water;

Water won't quench fire;

Fire won't burn stick;

Stick won't beat snake;

Snake won't bite Queen;

Queen won't coax King;

King won't kill man;

Man won't cut tree;

I can't get the grain of corn

To save my life from the farmer's wife!

But the mouse wouldn't gnaw the rope; so the crow flew on until he met a cat, and said—

'Cat! cat! catch mouse;

Mouse won't gnaw rope;

Rope won't bind ox;

Ox won't drink water;

Water won't quench fire;

Fire won't burn stick;

Stick won't beat snake;

Snake won't bite Queen;

Queen won't coax King;

King won't kill man;

Man won't cut tree;

And I can't get the grain of corn

To save my life from the farmer's wife!

The moment the cat heard the name of mouse, she was after it; for the world will come to an end before a cat will leave a mouse alone.

'So the cat began to catch the mouse,

The mouse began to gnaw the rope,

The rope began to bind the ox,

The ox began to drink the water,

The water began to quench the fire,

The fire began to burn the stick,

The stick began to beat the snake,

The snake began to bite the Queen,

The Queen began to coax the King,

The King began to kill the man,

The man began to cut the tree;

So the crow got the grain of corn,

And saved his life from the farmer's wife!

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