



The Crow's Tale

Naomi Howarth

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In the dark depths of winter, snow is falling and the animals are freezing and famished. Brave Crow sets out on a dangerous journey to find the Sun, and beg for warmth. Will Crow succeed, and what will happen to his colourful rainbow feathers?

Inspired by a Lenape Native American myth, this beautiful debut picture book shows how courage and kindness are what really matter.

The Crow's Tale Details

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Author : Naomi Howarth

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From Reader Review The Crow's Tale for online ebook

G Beulah says

I initially chose this book, based on a Native American legend, because of a personal interest in storytelling traditions in other cultures and the way in which we, as humans, have used stories to understand the world around us. I also liked that it was a story with a positive moral, that (as the book puts it) “it’s not [about] how you look) but how you behave.” This ties into long traditions of moral storytelling in Children’s Literature which would allow the chance to introduce other texts to a class, (the moral is delivered in “explicit maxim” style, such as in Aesop’s fables).

The book has beautiful and engaging illustrations, featuring animal characters that I think would appeal to children. As the book is written in verse, I knew that it would be ideal for reading aloud and could be used to teach about verse, meter, and storytelling through poetry. Although it is in a “picture book” format, the language used is quite advanced, with a broad vocabulary and creative choices of language. However, as a result of the illustrations, it would still be possible for children to follow the story, even if they had not encountered certain words before.

James Benham says

A beautiful book that appears to be an amalgamation of the story of Icarus and a reverse Ugly Duckling. Some beautiful images and wonderful rhymes throughout.

Christina Reid says

Gorgeously illustrated retelling of an old Native American legend. When the animals are suffering during a cold winter, rainbow crow goes to the land of the sun to beg for some heat. Yet carrying the flame back to Earth chars his colourful feathers and roughens his singing voice...so poor crow feels as if he will lose his friends. His expression is so bereft that I doubt you will be able to read this book without feeling sorry for him! The rhyming is a little clunky in places, but the illustrations make this a book to be savoured.

Children's Literature Centre at FSU says

Through vibrant, watercolor illustrations and rhythmic text, Howarth brings a Native American legend to life for children. It shows children that looks are not everything; even when the crow lost its beautiful feathers, it was still beautiful because of its courage and bravery. The rhyming text and vivid illustrations make it a great choice to teach young children about Native American culture and also to teach them about the importance of bravery and courage!

Review written by Monica Pennington

Denise says

I loved this Native American tale about a beautiful bird who saves the day and finds out that it's about his personality and what's inside over his feathers. Such a wonderful story that rhymes, is shorter (perfect for storytimes), and has a great message for kids to accept themselves on the outside and appreciate who they are in the inside.

Jessica Adams says

This book is a good one to use when exploring the idea that even when you're different you shouldn't be left out or treated differently. Everyone can be friends with everyone what ever you look like.

I used this book during one of my placements in PHSE lesson on friendship. They read the book whilst sat in circle, then they got given two blocks meaning that they had to choose two people in the class to say what they like about them. This can also be done with wool, so the wool is thrown across the circle and whoever the wool is passed to the person who passed it has to say what they like about the person they passed it to. once everyone has had the wool and said what they like about someone else, a friendship web is created. You can then tell the children that friendships sometimes break so by cutting some of the wool it shows that they break but then the web shows that everyone is still linked and are still friends showing that friendships that break can be mended. The children were then given a feather which they had to write something they like about someone else in the feather.

Kate Yates says

I love a rhyming picture book!

Angela Groves says

with beautiful illustrations and a heartwarming story letting children know it's what is inside that makes you beautiful and special, this book has a wonderful moral. and added bonus, it rhymes!

Orla Thompson says

Beautifully written book with rhyming throughout. Lovely illustrations with a powerful message behind inner beauty and about who you are.

Would be brilliant to use in a class for PSHE.

d followedby c says

Fantastic present for my young niece to grow up with.

Shannon Futrell says

This book is about a brave crow that has to try to save the animals during harsh winter. This book makes a lot of symbols from the native american tradition come to life. This book is also great for helping students understand how important a crow and the sun can be to Native Americans.

Ellie Labbett says

A courageous crow goes on a selfless journey to meet with the sun and help his friends survive a freezing blizzard. With this journey comes a cost, and whilst the crow does good for those that he loves, he sacrifices something else as a result.

A lovely story that teaches the reader that appearances are not always an indication of who is underneath.

Jo says

Read aloud to kiddo. Beautiful illustrations and cute story - he fell asleep, but I enjoyed it!

Sandy Brehl says

I was familiar with this traditional aboriginal tale, and it is well told and iridescently-ly illustrated. It can serve as a mentor text example for writers working research creation stories as models for retelling and/or original work. Overall, I found it appealing and I have no doubt kids will, too.

With the recent publishing industry focus on creating and sharing diverse stories, this seems a welcome addition to current offerings. A wise editor, one very attuned to and proactive in the effort to make everyone's stories available to a wider population, recently shared this cautionary note:

Before non-members of a cultural group attempt to share traditional tales, permission should be sought from members of that group. In some situations and traditions certain stories should be told by individuals with specified roles, or only in particular seasons or settings. I am so familiar with traditional stories, written by well-meaning "others", that this startled me but impressed me. The first thing I did was turn to back matter to see if references were cited or if a native authority included background or context. Lacking that, the narration in rhymed verse also seemed unnatural to me for the subject matter.

It's certainly a frame of reference I will consider in the future.

Lindsay says

Beautifully done.
