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The Heron and the Crane



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Once upon a time, in a swamp, there lived a heron and a crane.
They didn't live together: the heron had built her scrappy nest on a dry mound at one end of the swamp, and the crane had built his, which looked very much the same, at the other end.

One day, as the crane was standing gazing at himself in the shallow muddy water, it occurred to him that he was rather lonely.
He scratched his right leg with his left foot for a while, and then said to himself, “It’s high time that I got married.”
But who could be his wife?
It didn’t take him long to decide on the heron, because she was the only unmarried bird who was roughly the same shape and size as he was. There were some elderly lady ducks, but they were out of the question.





And so, after grooming himself very carefully, the crane stepped gracefully through the still water until he came to the other end of the swamp, where the heron lived.
“Good morning, Heron,” said the crane, feeling a little embarrassed because he still hadn’t quite decided how to put his suggestion.





"Good morning, Crane," replied the heron, who had no idea why he was visiting her. "Won't you come in?" She would have invited him to sit down but there wouldn't have been room for all the legs.
"Will you marry me?" asked the crane suddenly.
He had meant to lead up to this subject rather gradually, but in his excitement he couldn't think of anything else to say.

The heron was very taken aback: she just wasn't prepared for such a question. She lost her head and cried,
"Marry you! Goodness gracious, what a ridiculous idea! Just look at you: you're all legs and neck! And those awful knobbly knees!"
The crane was very hurt by this outburst. He cast a sad look at his knees. They *were* rather bony.
"And what's more, you just couldn't keep me in fish!"

