

The Crow That Could, and Would

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It has been said that during the centuries of time, there have been sails of make-believe, that had often penetrated the waters of reality, and prevailed. This has been such a time.

This story takes place on Grand Street, on the south side of Williamsburg Brooklyn New York, saddled between South third and South fourth Streets, where many immigrants came to roost, set up shop, and live their lives in harmony.

Many keeping their traditions from the old country alive, finding it hard to shed, while others blended in many cases with ease, and Joey, a seventeen-year-old Christian boy, trying to avoid failing grades. Contented to enter any college, that may accept him with struggling grades. And his relationship with Marsha a Jewish girl, well-educated, who will eventually breeze to the college of her choice, and who

had worked in the families Deli, directly across the street from Joey's home, and a crow who had literally flown into their lives.

It was on a Friday morning, in the month of September, Joey was in his bedroom, with the window slightly opened, dressing before breakfast, when a big black crow would make his appearance, squeezing in on the window.

“Good morning young man, are you getting ready for school?”

Joey somewhat surprised, answered, “Yes I am, and who are you?”

“Just an old crow, looking for a friend.”

“You can consider me a friend crow; do you have a name?”

“Not really, never needed one, just call me crow.”

“How about if I call you Billy, that would be a nice name, do you like the name?”

“I can live with it.”

“My name is Joey, and I’m glad to make your acquaintance.” Just then Joey’s mom called out, “Joey, could you cross the street to Abe’s and get a bottle of milk for breakfast!”

“I will mom, right away,” and he immediately exited his bedroom, passed through the kitchen, wished his mother good morning, down the steps, and out the front door to Abe’s. I Hope Marsha was working today he was thinking, sometimes she would be kept home on Fridays to help run the Deli. As Joey entered Abe’s, he spotted Marsha at the register, and Abe, her father not far away, talking to Saul, a friend and customer remarked “There’s that Gentile Joey, why doesn’t he shop at the A & P down the street. Probably, because of your daughter, better watch out Abe.”

“And why do you shop here Saul? No doubt it’s because that I extend credit to you, and your family, and if you were sixty years younger, it would be my daughter, now let me help my customers, and end this foolishness.” Abe walked towards his daughter, who was talking to Joey, after ringing him up. Good morning Mister Wiseman, I just purchased a bottle milk for breakfast, before school.”

“Morning Joey, and have a fine day, and give your mother my regards.”

“That was very nice to say Daddy, and I hope you meant it.”

Why didn’t you think I didn’t?

“I saw you talking with Saul, and he is the biggest bigot I know.”

“I meant every word I said to Joey and his mom, and if Saul wasn’t a cousin, he would not

be my friend. I have to filling the shelves; we'll continue this conversation later at home."

"Yes dad."

Back at the O'Donnell family, Joey had finished breakfast, and returned to his bedroom to gather up his books for school and check up on his new friend. "Billy you're still here, are you hungry?"

"No Joey, I have all the food I need outside, and as long as your able to leave the window a little bit opened, I will be able to eat and do my business."

After dinner Abe excused himself from the table and asked Marsha to accompany him to the living room, and as they entered asked her to sit with him to continue their chat. "Marsha, you know I love you, and always want the best for you. I just realized, at the store when you

called me Dad, and not Papa, you were not my baby anymore.

“Papa, I’ll always be your baby.”

They then hugged, and while Abe wiped a tear that was hesitating from freeing itself from his eye, he composed himself at the moment, while thinking he hasn’t shed a tear for a long time, and continued. “Marsha, about Joey, I know you kids like each other, I see it when you look at each other when he enters the store. I know times are changing, and I really like the O’Donnell family, their good people. I prayed much on this, and decided that if Joey passes his S A T’s for college, I will permit you to date, and give my blessings. Only one condition, don’t tell your mother, she won’t understand.”

“She just may Dad,” as her mother was standing by, shaking her head in agreement,

and said, "Listen Marsha it's only S A T's, your dad isn't asking for much for his baby."

Marsha, full of excitement, ran to the phone to call Joey to tell him the good news.

"College, that's easy for you to say Marsha! That means I have to score high on my S A T's, I need a miracle."

"Aren't I worth it Joey?"

"You sure are Marsha, I'll think of a way, let me get started love you, bye."

"Me to Joey"

Worried, Joey rushed to his bedroom to inform Billy of his predicament, like he would be of help.

After he had informed Billy, "Don't worry it Joey, it's a piece of cake, if you have a good friend who will write down the questions and

answers and give them to you. By the way, when are the S A T's?

"They would start in two weeks, a two-day affair, and I'm on the second day."

"You 'd better start finding someone real soon who takes it on the first day to give you the questions and answers."

"Isn't that cheating Billy?"

"Kind of Joey, but you gotta do what you gotta do, I'm not a goody-goody Swan, Joey, but a mischievous old crow."

I've advised this before, it's not my first rodeo Joey, so start preparing your part." Joey had the right person in mind, who would probably do it with little coaxing, and a few dollars. He would talk to him on Monday. For now, Billy had gone, and he was going to sleep.

His friend agreed for twenty dollars, supplied by Billy, that he snatched from a hooker, trying

to make an honest living, but crows don't have any decency at all. It sure paid off, Joey received a four on his S A T's, and ran directly to Abe's with the good news.

Joey ran into the Abe's excited, "Mr. Wiseman!"

"What's wrong Joey, is your mother alright?"

Nothing like that, I received a four, on my S A T's, and I'll be college bound."

"Mazel tov, Joey, and you should let my daughter hear the great news, I'm sure she'll be happy, and indeed she was.

Joey entered NYU and as they continued dating, till Joey wanted to pop the question.

Billy was still around when Joey decided.

"Joey, take Marsha to the Jewelry store on South Third and give me the receipt."

No no, Billy I'll take care of it, but I will go to the jeweler on Third.

“That’s an excellent choice Joey, let me know when you go.”

That weekend Joey popped the question, at Abe’s with Abe and Saul present. Marsha jumped with joy, and streaked “yes!” and Abe said aloud over and over mazel tov, mazel tov, dancing throughout the store.

Saul said, “Let’s open a bottle of Manischewitz and toast, I’ll even pay.”

“Now it’s truly a day of celebration,” Abe cried as he reached for a bottle to open, and poured the wine, “Ichaim to all!”

Saul graciously approached the happy couple, and Abe wishing all, “Mazel tov, from my heart, and God bless Joey.”

Abe stepped up to face Saul, and hugging him said, "Thank you cousin."

Joey asked Abe, if Marsha could leave the store to go with him to pick out an engagement ring.

"As long as you go to the Third Avenue Jewelry Store, and tell Mel, your future father-in-law Abe sent you, and you should get a deal.

"Funny Abe, that's where I was going to go."

"How come?"

"A little bird had advised me to, but that's another story, for another time."

At that moment Billy was at the South Third Street Jewelry Store, talking to Mel. "Mel if Abe's daughter, Marsha comes in here with Joey to purchase an engagement ring, give them the best, and I'll take care of it, and don't let on. When it's ready let me know the usual way, and I'll deliver it myself.

"You bet."

Just then as Billy exited, not to soon for comfort, as Marsha remarked to Mel, as the happy couple reached the counter “Was that a black bird flying out of the store?”

And Joey lifted his head, rolled his eyes and said, “Oh no.”

And Mel replied, “Oh yes, “and business begun.

When Joey returned home and informed his mother what he had done, his mother said, “Congratulations, Joey and I will congratulate Marsha and Abe when I go to the store.”

. Joey, after talking with his mother went to his room, to face Billy, and ask him if it were him at the store. Billy swore up and down, it wasn't he, but Joey knew or should have known, you can never believe a crow by any name.

When the ring was ready, Mel notified Billy in his usual way, and Billy picked it up with his feet and flew to Joey and Marsha as stood

together in an embrace, inside the Deli. Marsha picked up the ring which was accompanied with a paid in full receipt. Marsha being surprised, ran to her father to tell him what had happened, and he said to her, “What bird Marsha, I didn’t see a bird, and looked at Joey and smiled. Billy was not heard of or seen again.