

# THE CROW AND THE CHERRY BLOSSOM

## 小黑與櫻花

*The crow and the cherry blossom meet at the beginning of spring, and part at the end of spring. In the shortest of friendships, each learns to appreciate the other's beauty, and a beautiful memory is created.*

Spring has come. When the crow wakes and opens his eyes, he discovers that the cherry blossom throughout the town has opened too – all except one little bud, which is still sleeping. He waits patiently for the bud to unfurl and flower. After a thunderstorm, the crow's feathers are soaked through, but the cherry blossom is still intact. In the quiet of early morning, the crow tells the cherry blossom about his dream. He looks forward to meeting him again next spring. But can that really happen?

*The Crow and the Cherry Blossom* is an elegant and poetic picture book. The gentle narrative style and the detailed pencil drawings offer a calm and comforting reading experience. The crow is black, and the cherry blossom is pink. One moves, one is still. The crow and the cherry blossom are so different, yet they gradually open up to each other, and enjoy a friendship that is short, but deep.

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Born in 1992, Ni Shao loves oceans and unicorns. She loves travelling too, and when she can't travel, she turns to books and movies. A graduate of the Department of Motion Pictures, National Taiwan University of Arts, she continues to experiment with different forms of visual narrative.



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Translated by Helen Wang

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I remember, it was a very special morning. When I opened my eyes, I thought I was in a dream. The city's cherry trees had burst into flower overnight. Mum said, "Spring's here."

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I stopped on the cherry tree by the river, and noticed a bud that was still fast asleep.

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His curled up little body was quivering slightly, as though he might be carried away by the wind at any moment. I waited by the river for the last cherry bud of spring to blossom.

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On a particularly warm day, he slowly started to relax his tight little body. The petals unfurling in the sunlight were the softest pink colour.

"Hello, you are the most beautiful cherry blossom I have ever seen."

"Hello, you are the most beautiful crow I have ever seen."

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"But I don't like how I look."

Before I could finish, dark clouds gathered in the sky, and thunder roared. Raindrops drummed on my body. My sodden feathers grew heavier and heavier, but I wasn't scared.

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At some point, the dark clouds drifted apart, and the sun lit up the world again.

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Rain-battered petals were scattered all around, but my cherry blossom was still on the branch, intact, fluttering in the breeze.

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That night, my feathers turned the same soft pink as the cherry blossom. I flapped my wings and headed for the river, but my feathers kept dropping one by one.

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In the dark before dawn, I woke in fright from this horrible dream. I saw my pitch-black feathers, and gave a sigh of relief.

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I wanted to tell him about this dream.

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In the early morning, when even the wind was still, it seemed we were the only creatures in the world.

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I spoke softly, and he listened quietly, until the sun woke up, and new green shoots poked their heads above the ground.

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Then a gust of wind came,  
And the petals scattered.

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"I'll come and look for you here next spring."  
"I won't be here next spring."

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I flapped my wings as hard as I could, and caught the last petal. It was a bitter-sweet taste.

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Afterwards, although I saw many more springs, I never saw that cherry blossom again.

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But I do remember seeing the most beautiful flower in the world.