



Clever Crow and the picnic in the park

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Author: *Else Röhrs*

Artwork colour: *Meghan Janse van Rensburg*

Theme: *The impact of alcohol abuse*

Appropriate age group: *All ages*



Right in the middle of the big city there's a beautiful park with tall trees and lots of green grass. It's a good place for picnics. Early in the morning before the gardeners and the strollers arrive, the park is full of birds from all over the city.

This morning Hardy, the hadeda bird, is the first to arrive. You see, his Granny always told him: "The early bird gets the worm". The park lawn is his favourite place for slurping up juicy worms but today Hardy spots a table with leftovers from a picnic – lots of chips, sandwiches, a hamburger, half a muffin and a funny bottle of red "cooldrink" without a top. Hardy lands on the table, clumsy as usual, and knocks over the bottle. The red "cooldrink" spills onto the food. In his excitement Hardy calls "Ha-dee-da, ha-dee-da, ha-dee-da!" very loudly and then tries to slurp a soaking wet sandwich.

Suddenly the picnic table is full of birds who want to join in the fun – pigeons and starlings, sparrows and weaver birds. There's plenty of food here – all sopping wet from the spilt "cooldrink". The birds don't know it but the "cooldrink" is actually red wine. At first they don't like the funny taste and smell of the wine but they soon get used to it and they start to enjoy it.

Then some very strange things start happening. The birds begin to feel a bit wobbly and shaky. They can't walk straight and they keep bumping into each other. Hardy falls off the table and makes a huge racket: "HA-DEE-DA, HA-DEE-DA, HA-DEE-DA!" Two little weaver birds fall on top of Hardy and one breaks a wing. Hardy wants to fly away but his wings and legs won't work. When he manages to take off he flies bang into a tree. The sparrows fall asleep in a puddle of red wine. The pigeons and starlings start fighting, pecking and scratching and hitting each other with their wings. It's chaos with feathers flying through the air and lots of noise.

Crow arrives late for the party. She's surprised to see what's going on but as soon as she spots the wine bottle she figures it out. "Stop fighting", she yells. "You're all drunk!" The other birds stop what they are doing and stare at Crow with their beaks open. Crow tries to explain: "You usually drink water and that's fine – but today you've been drinking wine and it's made you drunk. The wine had soaked into the food." One of the starlings shouts out: "But what's wrong with drinking wine? It makes me feel great. What do you know about it anyway, Crow?"

"Cool it", says Crow. "The trouble is wine contains lots of alcohol so it can make you wobbly and shaky. It can make your wings and your legs go to sleep. It can make you do silly or dangerous things. It can make you aggressive. That's why some of you felt like fighting. You were squawking at each other, falling off the table and you couldn't even fly properly." A small weaver bird chirps a question: "So what must we do now?" Crow answers:

"The best thing is to sleep it off. If there's a next time, remember that alcohol can make you behave badly and do strange things".

Soon the drunk birds are all fast asleep under a big shady tree. Crow looks at them, shakes her head and says: "They are safe for now but they'll be sorry when they wake up with terrible headaches." At that moment she notices the big meat patty on the hamburger. She hops onto the table to inspect the patty. She can see and smell that the wine hasn't touched it. While the others are snoring, Crow enjoys her delicious food.



Possible discussion points:

Discuss the different ways alcohol can affect people.

What lessons can you learn from this story?