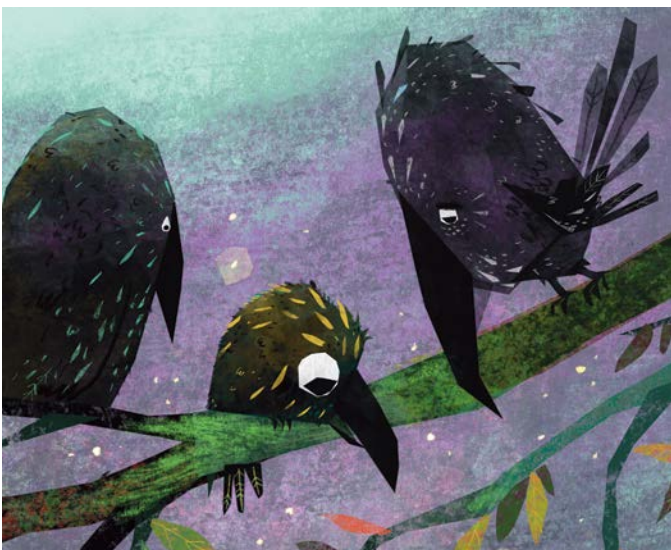


# WHAT THE CROW SAW BELOW

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Sometimes life is scary,  
like a journey yet unmapped.  
But it's important not to let  
our worries keep us trapped.

## Embracing New Experiences, Gaining New Perspectives A Discussion and Activity Guide



*What the Crow Saw Below* tells the story of a little crow who struggles to balance her desire to fit in with the other crows, who constantly look down to watch for danger, with her eagerness to explore the world. At first, she heeds the warnings of the group, but soon she begins to wonder: Is everything dangerous? What might happen if she looks up?

This seemingly simple story resounds with lessons about challenging our assumptions as we explore and learn about the world. This guide includes questions and activities to help readers reflect on the book's themes. Access this guide online at [www.flyawaybooks.com/resources](http://www.flyawaybooks.com/resources), where you can follow the links for more information.

# Discussion Starters



**Rustle, rustle. “What’s that noise?” the crows began to call. They cried out, “Danger! Caw, caw, caw! Caw, caution, one and all!”**

When the elder crows hear a strange noise, they immediately believe they are in danger, even though the noise is made by a squirrel gathering nuts.

- Why do you think the crows are scared before they know what’s making the noise? Why didn’t they consider that the noise might be caused by something completely harmless?
- Can you think of a time when you were scared without knowing exactly why? How did you react?
- What used to scare you that doesn’t frighten you anymore? What changed your mind?
- Think about something that you’re afraid of now. What do you think is causing your fear? What might take that fear away?
- Because the elder crows are fearful, they are missing the experience of flying freely up above the trees. Have you ever missed out on something because you were afraid? What was it?



**“Puppy, puppy!” one crow screamed, “It’s looking for our eggs!”  
“Leave us alone,” another yelled, “you monster on four legs!”**

The elder crows assume the puppy is there to steal eggs. In fact, it’s only looking for a lost ball, yet the crows feel certain that the puppy is there to harm them.



- Why do you think the crows are so quick to distrust the puppy?
  - Do you ever have difficulty trusting others? If so, why?
  - Can you think of a time when you distrusted someone at first but gradually learned to trust them? What changed your mind?
  - Can you think of a time when you were right to distrust someone? How did you know they weren’t trustworthy?
  - Has someone ever distrusted you? How did that make you feel? Were you able to earn their trust over time? How did you change their mind?
- Can you think of a situation where distrust between you and someone else led to a serious misunderstanding? What happened? How could you have avoided the misunderstanding?

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**So maybe if these dangers weren't real dangers all along, could up above be safe? Could all the other crows be wrong?**

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At first the little crow constantly watches for danger as the other crows do. But soon she realizes that they aren't *a/ways* in danger, which gives her the courage to explore.

- Sometimes it's hard to think independently and form ideas that differ from everyone else's. Do you have views that don't match those of the people around you? What are they?
- When our ideas differ from those of others, it can be hard to speak up and explain our thoughts. Why do you think that is?
- If you have opinions that don't match those of your friends, are you comfortable sharing your views? Why or why not?
- If you're not comfortable sharing your ideas, what might help you overcome your hesitation?
- What are the advantages of speaking up and sharing our views, even if others may disagree? What are the disadvantages?



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**Of course, there's still a need to call, "caw, caution," here and there. But these days things are looking up from up here in the air.**

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Sometimes caution is necessary. If a person threatens you or says something that's scary or makes you uncomfortable, it's good to be careful and confide in a trusted adult.

Yet sometimes we worry about trying new activities or meeting new people simply because they're unfamiliar and we can't control the outcome. For example, if you've never painted before, you might think that you'll be disappointed if your painting doesn't look the way you'd hoped. Or you might hesitate to introduce yourself to a new classmate because you're worried they won't want to be friends. In those kinds of situations, try not to be overly cautious. Having new experiences and meeting new people is how we grow. It's true that not everything will work out as we hope—and that's okay! The important thing is to keep trying.

- Think about a time when you worried needlessly about having a new experience. What was the situation? How did you find the courage to move ahead? What helped you to be brave?
- Now think about a time when you were right to hesitate. What was it that worried you? How did you know that it was appropriate to be cautious?
- Is there something you're nervous about trying now? Do you think your worry is warranted? If so, why? If not, what might help you overcome your nervousness?
- The little crow teaches the other crows to balance their caution with courage. Have you ever helped a friend in a similar way? What did you say that helped? Has a friend ever helped you be more adventurous? How did they reassure you?

## Activities

- Watch the video "[Sesame Street: Fear](#)," which explores common fears and offers suggestions for how to handle them. Now think again about *your* fears and worries. What are some simple ways you can address them?
- Play [Monster at the End of This Game](#). This game, starring Grover from *Sesame Street*, is about persevering even when you aren't sure what will happen! Does Grover's caution remind you of any of the characters in the book? Which of the book's characters do you represent as you play the game?
- Try some playacting! Get together with friends and act out the story. Take turns playing the parts of the cautious older crows and the little crow who helps them become braver. You can even make up your own story about friends helping each other overcome their fears and worries.
- Rewrite the story! Imagine how the story might have ended if the little crow had followed her elders' advice and stayed hidden among the trees. What kinds of experiences would she have had? Do you think she could have conquered her fear without flying into the sky? How?
- Write down a few things that you're worried about attempting to do. Below each of your worries, make two columns—one for the best outcomes that might result from you having that new experience and one for the worst. Which column is longer?

