## The Peacock's Earrings

Many a year ago there lived a handsome and well to do Fox. He was the local jewel merchant and he lived on a magnificent estate, which he had inherited from his father. He was equally recognizable for his impeccable dress and flamboyant manner. Whether attending a dinner party, the opera, or a croquette tournament, he was always dressed to perfection.

One morning he strolled down the main street with his walking stick under his arm. He wore a silk top hat, velvet tailcoat, a maroon waistcoat, with a silk cravat. No matter where he was or to whom he spoke, furthering his finances was always his priority.

On this particular day a spectacular peacock strutted into his shop. With greed aroused, Fox instantly went to work. "My good sir, what magnificent feathers you have. I have long wished to use such articles in my work. But surely such a great cock as your self would never consider parting with such beauty." Peacock who loved compliments, replied, "Thank you sir. I have come searching for a gift for my sweet heart, but I have lost my purse and have no money." Seeing an opportunity, Fox pounced. "My dear friend, we shall make a trade." With a flick of his tail and tip of his hat Fox said, "Anything you choose will cost but a few feathers."

Not believing his good fortune, Peacock began to examine the wondrous treasures in the shop. Cases upon case of magnificent jewelry lined the walls.

Finally after searching for many minutes, Peacock chose a necklace and pointed it out to Fox. In horror, Fox realized that it was one of his most valuable pieces. Acting quickly, he said, "But my friend surely this piece is not worthy of your true love.

You can see it is cheaply made." Disappointed he did not notice the poor craftsmanship of the piece, Peacock moved on.

After some time, he came to a beautiful brooch with a large sapphire at the center and proudly showed it to Fox. Seeing another of his treasures, Fox exclaimed: "Good Sir, this piece is so common that everyone in town has one! Surely your bride to be deserves something unique. Something her friends will not have."

With a flourish, he pulled out a pair of earrings. Despite the fact that they were plain and tarnished in appearance, Fox, always the actor, paused to admire them. He pointed out their many attributes. Peacock, not being very bright, was taken in by the ploy, and began gazing at them longingly.

"Oh!" exclaimed Peacock. "I must have them. Would five feathers be enough?" Fox chuckled, "My dear friend, with your trained eye you can surely see the fine craftsmanship." Peacock, embarrassed said "Of Course, forgive me for my ignorance, would ten feathers suffice?" Fox in a show of anger, slammed his cane into the floor and said, "Now you mock me! Do you not realize how rare and valuable these are?" Suddenly, fearful of loosing the chance to obtain the earrings Peacock turned around displaying his tail to Fox. "Take what you will."

Smiling to himself Fox relieved Peacock of his entire tail. Quickly he packaged the earrings, presented them to Peacock and ushered him out the door.

Joyously Peacock went straight to the home of his Peahen unaware of his missing tail. Enthusiastically, Peacock knocked on her door. It was not a good day for Peacock. His Peahen was excited upon seeing him but was quickly disappointed by his gift. "You fool," she exclaimed "does it look like I have ears to wear earrings." Her disappointment soon turned to disgust when Peacock turned around displaying his exposed rump. "Get out" she said "you are nothing better than an old crow."

They say that the foolish old Peacrow stayed away from jewelry and jewelers alike from that day on.

Beware the flatterer.