A rugged sheriff had a comely wife, whom he loved fiercely, rarely leaving her side. One day, urgent business required him to track a notorious outlaw to a neighboring town. Before leaving, he visited a traveling merchant’s wagon and bought a talking crow, known for its sharp memory and ability to repeat conversations. He gave the crow to his wife, asking her to keep it in the saloon and ensure its safety while he was gone. With a sigh, he rode off.

Upon his return, he asked the crow about any trouble during his absence. The crow’s words angered him, leading to a sharp rebuke of his wife.

She, suspecting a townsfolk’s tale, learned it was the crow. Determined to silence it, she schemed. When the sheriff next left for a day, she ordered one deputy to stoke the saloon’s stove beneath the crow’s cage, another to splash water from above, and a third to wave a shiny silver plate before its eyes, reflecting the lantern’s glow. They carried out this act for part of the night with dedication.

The following day, the sheriff returned and questioned the crow. The bird squawked, “My loyal master, the inferno of heat, deluge of water, and blinding reflections plagued me all night, leaving me unable to recount the chaos.” The sheriff, knowing no such weather had struck, deemed the crow a liar. In a fit of anger, he threw the bird to the dusty ground, ending its life. Later, he realized the crow had spoken the truth, and guilt weighed heavy on his heart.