

The Crane that Started it All

Sam and Samantha were flying low over the water looking for dinner. Sam was going on about flying fish being tasteful and how if you catch them in flight, you can avoid a mouthful of salty water. “There’s sure to be a school off the inlet just a little further on. You can see the reeds along the shore from here.”

Samantha was hungry. “And since when is no fish better than salty fish? You said there were sure to be *exocoetidaes* at the mouth of the last inlet. So this inlet is going to be any better?”

She was trying to show off using the scientific name for flying fish. “And you know I read where they can reach speeds of over forty miles an hour given the right conditions. How are we ever going to catch them?”

Sam ignored her irony and attempted to mollify her. “We just have to come around the other way and open our beaks. They’d fly right in and we wouldn’t even have to swallow.”

“You’re always trying to make a joke of things. It’s a good thing we mate for life; otherwise you’d have to find another nest.”

Sam kept quiet. The last thing he needed was hearing her go on about how some great, great etc. crane cousin of his wounded a flying fish who then with its dying breath told a fish that on dry land it would not have water in its eye. It took eons but that fish eventually evolved into man. And man, as Samantha always reminded him, was kind neither to animals nor to the environment.

This time she started on about how the myth their own ancestors had spread about storks delivering babies only worked to protect them for just so long. “And now these so-called civilized people, who can’t tell the difference between a stork and a crane, shoot us for sport or for a few white feathers! Really, Sam, that was a stupid thing back then and we’re paying for it now. I think we should leave the flying fish alone.”

Sam was about to say something in his defense when a shot rang out from behind a hunting blind on the shore. Red drops followed Sam into the water.

PROVING that those who hunt, one day will be the hunted.