Billy Peck, Tightrope Waddler

Educational Value

Friendship and sincerity

Moral of the story

True friends always tell us the truth, even if it's something we won't enjoy hearing. Those who give us false praise are not worthy of our trust.

Story

Billy Peck was a farm duck whose big dream was to become a tightrope walker. Every day he spent hours out on the rope, practicing, encouraged by his faithful friend, Artie Quack. Artie was an older duck who, when young, had practiced that very same art. Both of them were a bit flap-footed at it, but they had never let that get in the way of doing all they could to keep training and hopefully improve.

One day, a new ram arrived at the farm. Soon after noticing the ducks' tightrope practice, he came over and began praising them. He said they were doing great, and he bet they could cross any precipice on that rope of theirs. This left Billy feeling highly encouraged, despite Artie commenting that he hadn't noticed any real improvement.

A few days later, Billy found himself with the ram, looking across a ravine. The gap was so wide that no one could jump it. You could only cross it using a tightrope. Artie tried to talk his friend out of it. He wanted him to realise that he wasn't such a great tightrope walker, and this thing with the ravine would be really dangerous. The ram disagreed, assuring them that Billy Peck was the best tightrope walker in the whole region, and that Artie Quack was just jealous of him. Both ducks got angry, and Artie refused to help with the tightrope walk.

On the ravine, the ram egged Billy on, to reach the other side. But as soon as he had stepped out onto the rope Billy lost his balance, and fell. Fortunately he landed on a small ledge, but when he asked the ram to help him up, he discovered that he had disappeared. Billy Peck had to spend quite some time there, and even worse, his leg was broken.

He realised that his old friend Artie had been telling him the truth all along. He saw that it couldn't have been easy for Artie to tell him that he wasn't a good tightrope walker, and Billy was grateful to have such a good friend who would always tell him the truth...

And Artie really was a good friend, because, knowing what was about to happen, he had gone straight off to find a group of wild ducks - old friends of his. These wild ducks flew much better than the poor old farm ducks. Artie prepared a rescue operation with the wild ducks.

Billy asked Artie to forgive him, and Artie happily did so. And, while being rescued, and flying high, Billy could see that over on the other side of the ravine there was a load of well-hidden and delicious delicacies. Billy realised that that was all the greedy ram had been interested in. He wanted those foods, but couldn't cross the ravine himself, so had tried to use Billy to get them.

Billy felt foolish, but also fortunate, because helped by his new duck friends they managed to gather all that wonderful food, take it to the farm, and have a big party among real friends.

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