

17 Camels and 3 Sons:

Long ago, there lived an old man with his three sons in a deserted village, located in the vicinity of a desert. He had 17 camels, and they were the main source of his income. He used to rent out camels as a means of shipping in the desert. One day, he passed away. He had left a will, leaving his assets for his three sons.

After the funeral and the other obligations were over, the three sons read the will. While their father had divided all the property he had into three equal parts, he had divided the 17 camels in a different way. They were not shared equally among the three as 17 is an odd number and a prime number, which cannot be divided.

The old man had stated that the eldest son will own half of the 17 camels, the middle one will get one third of the 17 camels, and the youngest one will get his share of camels as one ninth!

All of them were stunned to read the will and questioned each other how to divide the 17 camels as mentioned in the will. It is not possible to divide 17 camels and give half of the 17 camels to the eldest one. It is not possible also to divide the camels for the other two sons.

They spent several days thinking of ways to divide the camels as mentioned in the will, but none could find the answer.

They finally took the issue to the wise man in their village. The wise man heard the problem and instantly found a solution. He asked them to bring all the 17 camels to him.

The sons brought the camels to the wise man's place. The wise man added a camel owned by him and made the total number of camels 18.

Now, he asked the first son to read the will. As per the will, the eldest son got half the camels, which now counted to $18 / 2 = 9$ camels! The eldest one got 9 camels as his share.

The remaining camels were 9.

The wise man asked the second son to read the will. He was assigned $1 / 3$ of the total camels.

It came to $18 / 3 = 6$ camels. The second son got 6 camels as his share.

Total number of camels shared by the elder sons - $9 + 6 = 15$ camels.

The third son read out his share of camels: $1 / 9$ th of the total number of camels - $18 / 9 = 2$ camels.

The youngest one got 2 camels as his share.

Totally there were $9 + 6 + 2$ camels shared by the brothers, which counted to 17 camels.

Now, the one camel added by the wise man was taken back.

The wise man solved this problem smartly with his intelligence.

Intelligence is nothing but finding a common ground to solve an issue. In short, every problem has a solution.

A Merchant and his Donkey:

One beautiful spring morning, a merchant loaded his donkey with bags of salt to go to the market, in order to sell the salt. The merchant and his donkey were walking along together. They had not walked far when they reached a river on the way.

Unfortunately, the donkey slipped and fell into the river. As it scrambled up the bank of the river, it noticed that the bags of salt loaded on his back had become lighter.

There was nothing the merchant could do except return home, where he loaded his donkey with more bags of salt. As they reached the slippery riverbank again, the donkey fell into the river, this time deliberately. Thus the salt was wasted again.

By now the merchant knew the donkey's trick. He wanted to teach the animal a lesson. As he returned home the second time with the donkey, the merchant loaded bags of sponges on its back.

The duo set out on their trip to the market a third time. On reaching the river, the donkey very cleverly fell into the water again. But now, instead of the load becoming lighter, it became heavier.

The merchant laughed at the donkey and said, "You foolish donkey, your trick has been discovered. You should know that you cannot fool anyone too many times."

Change Yourself and not The World:

Long ago, people lived happily under the rule of a king. The people of the kingdom were very happy as they led a very prosperous life with an abundance of wealth and no misfortunes.

Once, the king decided to go visiting places of historical importance and pilgrim centres at distant places. He decided to travel by foot to interact with his people. People of distant places were very happy to have a conversation with their king. They were proud that their king had a kind heart.

After several weeks of travel, the king returned to the palace. He was quite happy that he had visited many pilgrim centres and witnessed his people leading a prosperous life. However, he had one regret.

He had intolerable pain in his feet as it was his first trip by foot covering a long distance. He complained to his ministers that the roads weren't comfortable

and that they were very stony. He could not tolerate the pain. He said that he was very much worried about the people who had to walk along those roads as it would be painful for them too!

Considering all this, he ordered his servants to cover the roads in the whole country with leather so that the people of his kingdom can walk comfortably.

The king's ministers were stunned to hear his order as it would mean that thousands of cows would have to be slaughtered in order to get sufficient quantity of leather. And it would cost a huge amount of money also.

Finally, a wise man from the ministry came to the king and said that he had another idea. The king asked what the alternative was. The minister said, "Instead of covering the roads with leather, why don't you just have a piece of leather cut in appropriate shape to cover your feet?"

The king was very much surprised by his suggestion and applauded the wisdom of the minister. He ordered a pair of leather shoes for himself and requested all his countrymen also to wear shoes.

Moral: Instead of trying to change the world, we should try to change ourselves.

Unhelpful Friends:

Bunny rabbit lived in the forest. He had many friends. He was proud of his friends. One day Bunny rabbit heard the loud barking of wild dogs. He was very scared. He decided to ask for help. He quickly went to his friend deer. He said,

"Dear friend, some wild dogs are chasing me. Can you chase them away with your sharp antlers?"

The deer said, "That is right, I can. But now I am busy. Why don't you ask bear for help?"

Bunny rabbit ran to the bear. "My dear friend, you are very strong. Please help me. Some wild dogs are after me. Please chase them away," he requested to the bear.

The bear replied, "I am sorry. I am hungry and tired. I need to find some food. Please ask the monkey for help."

Poor Bunny went to the monkey, the elephant, the goat and all his other friends. Bunny felt sad that nobody was ready to help him.

He understood that he had to think of a way out by himself. He hid under a bush. He lay very still. The wild dogs did not find the bunny. They went chasing other animals.

Bunny rabbit learnt that he had to learn to survive by himself, not depending on his unhelpful friends.

Moral: It is better to rely on yourself than depend on others.

Greedy Boy:

Sam and Tom were identical twins. They were so identical that even their mother found it difficult to distinguish one from the other, at least during their initial days on earth.

However, they were very different from each other when it came to everything other than their appearance. Sam had no friends, while Tom was a great friendship maker. Sam loved sweets, but Tom loved spicy food and detested sweets. Sam was mommy's pet and Tom was daddy's pet. While Sam was generous and selfless, Tom was greedy and selfish!

As Sam and Tom grew up, their father wanted to share his fortune equally amongst them. However, Tom did not agree and he argued that whoever proved to be more intelligent and strong would have to get a bigger share of the wealth.

Sam agreed. Their father decided to organize a competition between the two. He asked the two sons to walk as long as they could, and return home before sunset. The wealth would be divided in proportion to the distance covered. As a rule of the competition, they were not permitted to carry a watch to keep track of the time.

The following day, Sam and Tom set out to walk. It was a rather sunny day. Sam walked slowly and steadily, while Tom broke into a sprint as he was bent on winning the race and also winning a greater portion of his father's wealth.

Sam knew that it would be ideal to walk as far as possible till noon and start for home at noon as it would take the same amount of time to walk back home.

Knowing this, Sam decided to turn back for home at noon so as reach home on time.

However, Tom, with his greed to earn more wealth, did not attempt to return home even after mid-noon. He walked twice as long as Sam, and thought he would still be able to return home before sunset. He hurried back when he saw the sun turn orange. Unfortunately, he could not even make it half way home as the sun started to set. Slowly darkness engulfed his path and he had to drag his tired feet back home.

He had lost the race. Only because of his greed. Greed leads to loss.

Strong or Weak:

There was a proud teak tree in the forest. He was tall and strong. There was a small herb next to the tree.

The teak tree said, "I am very handsome and strong. No one can defeat me." Hearing this, the herb replied, "Dear friend, too much pride is harmful. Even the strong will fall one day."

The teak ignored the herb's words. He continued to praise himself.

A strong wind blew. The teak stood firmly. Even when it rained, the teak stood strong by spreading its leaves.

During these times, the herb bowed low. The teak made fun of the herb.

One day, there was a storm in the forest. The herb bowed low. As usual, the teak did not want to bow.

The storm kept growing stronger. The teak could no longer bear it. He felt his strength giving way.

He tried his best to stand upright, but in the end, he fell down. That was the end of the proud tree.

When everything was calm again, the herb stood straight. He looked around. He saw that the proud teak had fallen.

Moral: Pride goes before a fall.

The Crystal Ball:

In the south of Spain, there was a small village whose people were very joyful. The children played under the shades of trees in the gardens of their homes.

A shepherd boy named Nasir stayed near the village with his father, mother and grandmother. Each morning, he took his herd of goats up the hills to find a suitable place for them to graze. In the afternoon he would return with them to the village. Each night his grandmother would tell him a story - the story of stars. This story really interested Nasir.

On one of those days, as Nasir was watching his herd and playing his flute, he suddenly saw a wonderful light behind a flower bush. When he approached the bush, he saw a transparent and very beautiful crystal ball.

The crystal ball was glittering like a colorful rainbow. Nasir carefully took it in his hand and turned it around. With surprise, suddenly, he heard a weak voice coming from the crystal ball. It said, "You can make a wish that your heart desires and I will fulfill it."

Nasir could not believe that he had actually heard a voice. When he made sure that he had indeed heard that voice from the crystal ball, he was very confused. He had so many wishes that he could not decide upon one particular wish. He said to himself, 'if I wait till tomorrow I will remember many things. Then I will make my wish.'

He put the crystal ball in a bag and, gathering the herd, happily returned to the village. He decided that he would not tell anyone about the crystal ball.

On the following day also, Nasir could not decide what to wish for, because he really had everything he needed.

The days passed as usual, but Nasir was still unable to make his wish. But he appeared to be very cheerful. The people around him were amazed to see the change in his disposition.

One day, a boy followed Nasir and his herd and hid behind a tree. Nasir, as usual, sat in one corner, took out the crystal ball and for a few moments looked at it. The boy waited for the moment when Nasir would go to sleep.

When Nasir did fall asleep after a while, the boy took the crystal ball and ran away.

When he arrived at the village, he called all the people and showed them the crystal ball. The citizens of that village took the crystal ball in their hands and turned it around with surprise. Suddenly they heard a voice from inside the crystal ball, which said, "I can fulfill your wish." One person took the ball and screamed, "I want one bag full of gold." Another took the ball and said loudly, "I want two chests full of jewelry." Some of them wished that they would have their own palace with a grand door made from pure gold, instead of their old houses. Some others wished for bags full of jewelry.

All their wishes were fulfilled, but still the citizens of the village were not happy. They were jealous because the person that had a palace had no gold and the person that had the gold had no palace. For this reason, the citizens of the village were angry with each other and stopped speaking to each other. The gardens in the village where children used to play were no more. There were palaces and gold everywhere. The children became terribly unhappy. Only Nasir and his family were happy and contented. Every morning and afternoon he would play the flute.

One day the children of the village took the crystal ball to Nasir. The children said to Nasir, "When we had a small village, we all were happy and joyful." The parents also spoke. They said, "In one way or another, all of us are unhappy. The luxurious palaces and jewelry only bring us pain."

When Nasir saw that the people were really regretful, he said, "Even though the crystal ball asked me to wish for something, I have not done it so far. But if you really want everything to return to its own place, then I will wish for it."

Everyone happily agreed. Nasir took the crystal ball in his hand, turned it around and wished that the village would become the same as it was before. In a moment, the palaces disappeared, the green gardens appeared, and the same old village full of trees was there.

Once again the people started to live happily and the children played under the shade of trees. Nasir continued his contented life every day, playing his flute at sunset. Its sweet sound was heard throughout the beautiful green village.

Moral: We should be happy with whatever we have and not be greedy.

The Devoted Mother:

A mother duck and her little ducklings were on their way to a lake one day. The ducklings were very happy following their mother and quack-quacking along the way.

All of a sudden, the mother duck saw a fox at a distance. She was frightened, and shouted, "Children, hurry to the lake. There's a fox!"

The ducklings hurried towards the lake. The mother duck wondered what to do. Then she began to walk back and forth dragging one wing on the ground.

Short Stories - Devoted Mother 2 When the fox saw her, he became happy. He said to himself, "It seems she's hurt and can't fly! I can easily catch and eat her!" He ran towards her.

The mother duck ran, leading the fox away from the lake. The fox followed her. Now he wouldn't be able to harm her ducklings. The mother duck looked towards her ducklings and saw that they had reached the lake. She was relieved, so she stopped and took a deep breath.

The fox thought that she was tired and he came closer, but the mother duck quickly spread her wings and rose up in the air. She landed in the middle of the lake and her ducklings swam to her.

The fox stared in disbelief at the mother duck and her ducklings. The mother duck had tricked him cleverly. Now he could not reach them because they were in the middle of the lake.

The Greedy Mouse:

A greedy mouse saw a basket full of corn. He wanted to eat it. So he made a small hole in the basket. He squeezed in through the hole. He ate a lot of corn. He felt full and was very happy.

Now he wanted to come out. He tried to come out through the small hole. He could not. His belly was full. He tried again. But it was of no use.

The mouse started crying. A rabbit was passing by. It heard the mouse's cry and asked, "Why are you crying, my friend?"

The mouse explained, "I made a small hole and came into the basket to eat the corn. Now I am not able to get out through that hole."

The rabbit said, "It is because you ate too much. Wait till your belly shrinks."
The rabbit laughed and went away.

Short Stories - Greedy Mouse
The mouse fell asleep in the basket. The next morning his belly had shrunk. But he wanted to eat some more corn. He forgot all about getting out of the basket. So he ate the corn and his belly was really big again.

After eating, the mouse remembered that he had to escape. But obviously, he could not. So he thought, "Oh! Now I will go out tomorrow."

The cat was the next passerby. He smelt the mouse in the basket. He lifted its lid and ate the mouse.

The Ant and the Grasshopper:

One summer's day, in a field, a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along with great effort an ear of corn he was taking to his nest.

"Why don't you come and chat with me," asked the Grasshopper, "instead of toiling your life away?"

"I am helping to store up food for the winter," said the Ant, "and I recommend you to do the same."

"Why bother about winter?" said the Grasshopper. "We have got plenty of food at present."

Short Stories But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil.

When winter came, the Grasshopper found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing, every day, corn and grain from the stores they had collected in summer.

Then the Grasshopper knew...

Moral: Work Today And You Can Reap The Benefits Tomorrow!

The Hare and the Tortoise:

There once was a speedy Hare who bragged about how fast he could run. Tired of hearing him boast, the Tortoise challenged him to a race. All the animals in the forest gathered to watch.

The Hare ran down the road for a while and then paused to rest. He looked back at the tortoise and cried out, "How do you expect to win this race when you are walking along at your slow, slow pace?"

The Hare stretched himself out alongside the road and fell asleep, thinking, "There is plenty of time to relax."

The Hare and the Tortoise Story The Tortoise walked and walked, never ever stopping until he came to the finish line.

The animals who were watching cheered so loudly for Tortoise that they woke up the Hare. The Hare stretched, yawned and began to run again, but it was too late. Tortoise had already crossed the finish line.

Moral: Slow and steady wins the race.

This is the story that we have all grown up with. But recently, two additions have been proposed to the story.

Addition 1

After being defeated by the tortoise, the hare did some soul-searching. He knew that though he had tried hard in the beginning, he was not consistent, and had grown overconfident. He was determined to undo his mistakes, and invited tortoise for another race. This time, the rabbit was careful to run the whole distance, and of course, emerged the winner.

Moral: Fast and consistent may be better than slow and steady.

Addition 2

Well, after emerging the loser in the second race, the tortoise thought long and hard. He knew that in any traditional terrain, the hare would win, if he was fast and consistent. Therefore, he thought of a non-traditional terrain for the race. Then he invited the rabbit for another race. This time the rabbit laughed out loud, thinking that the tortoise was out of his head. But the tortoise insisted that there should be another race and the terrain would be decided by the tortoise. The rabbit agreed to the idea.

The race began. The rabbit was leading in front, with the tortoise far back trundling along. Around half way through the race, they came across a river. The rabbit halted on the bank of the river, wondering how to cross the river. Meanwhile, the tortoise approached the river slowly, got in to the water, swam across, climbed up on the other bank, ran the last few kilometers, and won the race.

Moral: when your capabilities are below par, choose a playing ground that gives you a natural advantage.

Proud Red Rose:

One beautiful spring day a red rose blossomed in a forest. As the rose looked around, a pine tree nearby said, "What a beautiful flower! I wish I was that lovely." Another tree said, "Dear pine, do not be sad. We cannot have everything."

The rose turned and remarked, "It seems that I am the most beautiful flower in this forest."

A sunflower raised its yellow head and asked, "Why do you say that? In this forest there are many beautiful flowers. You are just one of them."

The red rose replied, "I see everyone looking at me and admiring me." Then the rose looked at a cactus and said, "Look at that ugly plant full of thorns!"

The pine tree said, "Red rose, what kind of talk is this? Who can say what beauty is? You have thorns too."

The proud red rose looked angrily at the pine and said, "I thought you had good taste! You do not know what beauty is at all. You cannot compare my thorns to that of the cactus."

"What a proud flower," thought the trees.

The rose tried to move its roots away from the cactus, but it could not move. As the days passed, the red rose would look at the cactus and say insulting things, like 'this plant is useless. How sorry I am to be his neighbor.'

The cactus never got upset and even tried to advise the rose, saying, "God did not create any form of life without a purpose."

Spring passed, and the weather became very warm. Life became difficult in the forest, as there was no rain. The red rose began to wilt.

One day the rose saw sparrows stick their beaks into the cactus and then fly away, refreshed. This was puzzling, and the red rose asked the pine tree what the birds were doing. The pine tree explained that the birds were getting water from the cactus.

"Does it not hurt when they make holes?" asked the rose.

Short Stories - Sparrow "Yes, but the cactus does not like to see the birds suffer," replied the pine.

The rose opened its eyes in wonder and exclaimed, "The cactus has water?"

"Yes, you can also drink from it. The sparrow can bring water to you if you ask the cactus for help."

The red rose felt too ashamed to ask for water from the cactus, but finally it did ask for help. The cactus kindly agreed. The birds filled their beaks with water and watered the rose's roots.

Thus the rose learned a lesson and never judged anyone by their appearance again.

The Rope:

The night fell heavy on the heights of the mountains and the man could not see anything. There was zero visibility; the moon and the stars were covered by the clouds.

When he was just a few feet below the top of the mountain, he slipped and fell into the air, falling at great speed. He could see only black spots as he went down, and feel the terrible sensation of being sucked in by gravity.

He kept falling, and in those moments of great fear, all the good and bad episodes of his life came to his mind. He was thinking now about how close death was getting, when all of a sudden he felt the rope tied to his waist pull him very hard. His body was hanging in the air. Only the rope was holding him. In that moment of stillness he had no choice other than to scream, "Help me God."

All of a sudden, a deep voice coming from the sky answered, "What do you want me to do?"

"Save me God."

"Do you really think I can save you?"

"Of course, I believe you can."

"Then cut the rope tied to your waist."

There was a moment of silence. The moment passed, and the man decided to hold on to the rope with all his strength.

The rescue team says that the next day, the climber was found dead and frozen, his body hanging from a rope, and his hands holding it tight. He was only one foot away from the ground.

How attached are we to our ropes? Will we let them go?

Don't ever doubt God.

We should have enough faith to cut the rope, if that is what God tells us to do, even when it seems to be the most foolish thing to do.

The Tree and the Travellers:

Once, there was a huge tree with a broad trunk and innumerable branches right in the middle of a dry land. The tree gave rest and shelter to hundreds and thousands of travelers. Being located near four towns, and many villages, the tree was an ideal meeting point for travelers.

One day, two travelers reached the tree after a long time of walking. Their destination was one of the towns nearby. It was a hot and sunny day, and the travelers were very happy to take a rest under the tree. Exhausted, they slumped under the tree. They slept for a while, enjoying the cool shade and the soft breeze.

After a while, one of the travelers got hungry. They had no food with them. The hungry traveler looked up at the tree, to see if there was any fruit. Finding none, he began to curse the tree. "Oh, this is just a useless tree and it has nothing to feed us, not even a fruit or even nuts! It is of no use!"

The other traveler comforted him and asked him to stay cool. However, the hungry man continuing cursing the tree.

The tree, which could not tolerate the cursing words of the traveler, said in a sad yet strong voice, "You can't be so ungrateful to me. Just think of your condition when you reached here in the hot and dry sun! I offered you a cool and comfortable place to rest and sleep with a soothing breeze. If I was not here, you would have died now! I saved your life from the hot sun, but you humiliate me!"

The traveler realized his mistake and apologized to the tree. Be grateful for your blessings.

The Three Cows:

Once, three cows lived in a green and fresh pasture near a forest: a white cow, a black cow and a reddish-brown cow. The cows were kind to each other. They used to graze in the meadow together and sleep near each other.

One day, a reddish-brown lion happened to take a stroll out of the forest onto the meadow. It was hungry and looking for a prey. On catching sight of the cows it became glad, but couldn't attack them, because they were together. So, the lion sat behind a boulder and patiently waited till the cows would separate from each other.

However, the cows were too clever to separate from each other. They knew that if they were together, no predator could attack them. The lion lay in ambush nearby for two or three days. But the cows continued to remain together, and wouldn't separate from each other. The lion became impatient.

It thought of a plan. It went towards the cows, greeted them and said, "How are you my friends? Are you fine? I have been busy lately, so could not come and visit you. Today I made up my mind to pay you a visit."

The reddish-brown cow said, "Sir, your coming has really pleased us and brightened our pasture."

Both the white and the black cows were troubled by what their friend, the reddish-brown cow said, and were grieved at its thoughtlessness. They said to each other, "Why does the reddish-brown cow believe what the lion says?

Doesn't it know that lions seek other animals only to prey on them?"

As the days passed by, the reddish-brown cow became more and more attached to the lion. The black cow and the white cow advised it against a friendship with the lion, but their efforts were in vain.

One day, the lion said to the reddish-brown cow, "You know that the color of our bodies is dark and that the color of the body of the white cow is light. You also know that light color is the opposite of the dark color. It will be very good if I eat the white cow, so that there will be no difference among us any longer and we will be able to live together well."

The reddish-brown cow accepted the lion's argument and started talking to the black cow to keep it busy, so that the lion could eat the white cow. The white cow was left alone and was killed, while the black and the reddish-brown cows were busy in idle talk.

Two or three days passed since the lion devoured the white cow. It became hungry again. It called the reddish-brown cow. The cow answered: "Yes sir!"

The lion said, "The color of my body and the color of your body are both reddish-brown, and black does not go with our color. It will be very good if I eat the black cow, so that in this forest we all will be of the same color." The reddish-brown cow accepted this argument and moved away from the black cow.

The lion attacked and devoured the black cow soon. And as for the reddish-brown cow, it was so filled with joy that it didn't know what to do. It roamed and grazed and said to itself, "It is only me who has the color of the lion."

A few days passed later, the lion was hungry again. It roared and said, "O the reddish-brown cow! Where are you?" The reddish-brown cow, shaking with fear, went forward and said, "Yes sir!"

The lion said: "Today it is your turn. Get yourself ready, I am going to eat you."

The reddish-brown cow, with great fear and horror, said, "Why sir, I am your friend. I did whatever you asked me to do. Still why do you want to eat me?"

The lion roared and said, "I have no friends. How is it possible that a lion makes friendship with a cow?"

No matter how much the reddish-brown cow begged and entreated, the lion didn't accept its words. Finally the cow said, "Mr. Lion, please allow me to cry out three times before you eat me."

The lion said, "Ok. Quickly, quickly!"

The reddish-brown cow cried out, "I was eaten the very day the white cow was eaten. I was eaten the very day the black cow was eaten. I was eaten the very day I made friends with the lion."

The lion devoured the reddish-brown cow very quickly. Then it said to itself: "I have finished my job in this forest. Now I had better go to other forests."

Any group without unity will easily be destroyed.

Health is Wealth:

Once upon a time, there lived a generous and kind-hearted king. But the people weren't happy with their king because the king was very lazy and would not do anything other than eating and sleeping.

He spent days and weeks and months in his bed either eating something or sleeping. The king became a potato couch and the people started to worry about the king.

One day, the king realized that he couldn't even move his body, not even his foot. He became very fat and his enemies made fun of him, calling him 'fatty king', 'bulky king' etc.

The king invited expert doctors from various parts of his country and offered them generous rewards to make him fit. Unfortunately, none could help the king gain his health and fitness. The king spent enormous amounts of money but everything went in vain.

One fine morning, a holy man visited the country. He heard about the ill-health of the king, and informed the minister at the palace that he could easily cure the king. Hearing these promising words, the minister became very happy. He requested the king to meet the holy man to get rid of his problem.

The holy man resided at a distant place. Since the king could not move his body, he asked the minister to bring the holy man to the palace, but the holy man refused. He said that the king had to go to him, in order to get cured.

After strenuous efforts, the king met the holy man at the latter's residence. The holy man complimented the king saying that he was a good ruler, and said that he would soon regain his health. He asked the king to come for treatment the next day. He told the king also that the king would be treated only if he came on foot to the holy man's residence.

The King was unable to walk even a few steps on the road, but aided by his followers, he reached the holy man's place. Unfortunately, the holy man was not available there and his devotee requested the king to come and meet him the next day for treatment.

This was repeated for two weeks and the king never met the holy man, and never had any treatment.

Gradually, the king realized that he felt a lot lighter, lost a considerable amount of weight and felt more active than before. He realized the reason why the holy man asked him to reach his place by walking.

Very soon, the king regained his health, and the people were very happy in his kingdom.

Health is Wealth!

The Hidden Treasure:

Once, there was an old man who had four sons. All four of them were very lazy.

One day, the old man fell sick and was counting his last days in bed. He worried a lot about his sons' future as the young men hesitated a lot to work. The sons believed that luck would favour them.

The old man's health deteriorated every day and he decided to talk to his sons about their future. However, his sons did not listen to him.

Finally, the old man decided to play a trick to let his sons realize the importance of work. He called all his sons and let them sit near him on his bed. He said that he had a treasure box with gold coins and expensive gems for them and wanted to share the treasure equally among the four of them.

The young men were very happy and asked where his father had placed the treasure. The old man replied, "I cannot exactly remember the place where I have hidden the treasure. However, the treasure box is buried in our land. I'm really not sure about the place where I have hidden the treasure box."

Even though the lazy young sons were happy, they were sad that the old man had forgotten the place where the treasure was hidden. After a few days, the old man died. The sons decided to dig the land to find the treasure box.

They worked very hard and dug their land. They could not find any treasure box in the land. Finally, they decided to dig a spot in their land that was a bit different from the rest of the area. The sons believed that the treasure was buried in that spot. They dug the specific spot deeply, but got nothing but water.

A passerby who noticed the land and the water flowing from the spot talked to the sons about farming. Upon his advice, the four sons sowed vegetable seeds, and planted greens and flowering plants in their land. Since the land was very fertile with abundant water, within a few weeks, it became a fertile garden with nutritious vegetables and greens. The four sons sold the vegetables at a good price and earned a good amount of money.

Then they realized that it was hard work that was referred to as 'Treasure Box' by their father. Gradually, the four sons overcame their laziness, worked hard, earned more money and lived happily. Hard Work Always Pays.

Don't desire to walk when you have wings to fly:

Once upon a time, there lived a generous and kind-hearted king. He was fond of birds and animals, and had a huge bird sanctuary in his kingdom. He disliked harming the animals and birds. He did not kill them even for meat.

In appreciation of his generosity and kindness towards birds, the king was gifted two beautiful falcons by a businessman. Those two falcons were used to different climatic conditions. The king thanked the businessman and ordered the Head bird trainer to provide all the facilities to those beautiful falcons and make them feel comfortable in their country. The Head trainer took care of the birds. Gradually, the birds got adapted to the country's climate.

One day, the king wanted to see the falcons fly as he had heard that one of those falcons could fly to great heights at very high speed. The bird trainer let the falcon out of the enclosure. It flew very high, very quickly, and came down to the enclosure within minutes.

The king was quite surprised, and rewarded the bird trainer with a handful of gold coins. He enquired about the other falcon. The bird trainer stated with regret that the other falcon had not moved even a step from day one and had just sat on the branch. The trainer also added that he had tried everything he could but still failed to make the bird move.

The king consoled him and told him that he would bring someone more experienced than him to try to train the other falcon.

Soon, the king announced that he needed someone to make the falcon move and fly.

Hearing this announcement, an old man reached the King's palace and assured him that he would make the bird fly like the other one.

The king asked the head trainer to take the old man to the sanctuary to train the falcon. He said that he would visit them the next day to see if there was any change.

The next day, the king was very surprised to see the other falcon fly like the first one to great heights in rapid speed. The king was very happy and gifted the old man a handful of gold coins.

Then the king asked the old man what he had done to make the bird fly in a day. The old man simply replied, "I just cut down the branch of the tree where the falcon used to sit."

Many of us are like this. We have wings to fly; we know how to fly, and where to fly. Still we sit doing nothing or doing something that makes us inferior to others.

Don't sit still when you have wings to fly!

Real Vs Fake

Minnu was a sweet, lovable and beautiful girl, aged six years. She was an adorable kid as she always obeyed her elders. Minnu's parents loved her for her amazing behaviour.

One day, Minnu's mother took her for grocery shopping. As they passed the shops, Minnu noted a cute plastic pearl necklace in dazzling pink! She asked her mother to buy her the necklace. Her mother told her that it cost quite a few pennies. She asked her to do some chores, so that for every completed piece of work Minnu would get some money and she could buy the pink necklace.

Minnu prepared a to-do list and assisted her mom with all the chores. Her mom was very happy, and she paid enough money to buy the pink necklace.

Minnu happily purchased the necklace and wore it just everywhere, every time, except while taking bath. Her mother said that her neck would turn pink and the pearls would lose their sheen if she wore it while bathing. But all other times, Minnu wore it, even while sleeping.

Minnu's father used to tell her bed time stories frequently. One night, after completing a story, her dad asked how much she loved him. Minnu replied, "You know how much I love you."

Dad asked, "Then give me your pearl necklace please!"

Minnu replied, "Please daddy, I love you so much but please don't ask for these pearls. I will give you the pink Barbie which you bought me a month ago."

Dad replied, "Fine, sweetheart."

After a few days, the conversation was repeated between Minnu and her dad. Again, Minnu refused to give her pearl necklace and instead asked her dad to take her pet. Dad kissed her and left with smile.

This was repeated several times.

pink-pearl-necklaceOne day, Minnu slept while her dad was reading her a story. She was holding the necklace in her hands. Her dad took the pearl necklace from her hand. The next moment, she woke up and asked, "Dad, what are you doing?"

Dad quickly opened a jewel box placed near her bed and handed her a real precious pink pearl necklace. He said, "Sweetheart, this is your real necklace. I wanted to take away the fake one all this while to give you this real one."

She replied, 'Thank you dad!'

Minnu immediately gave up her fake necklace for the real one.

God wants us to give up all the fake and cheap things we consider very precious in our life. It can be habits, hatreds, harming relationships, activities, negative thoughts, etc. He will provide us with genuine things if we give up the fake!

When Adversity Knocks:

Mary was a young girl. She used to get annoyed with everything. She had a negative attitude towards life.

Once, when she felt that life was unbearable, she asked her father what to do. She told him that if she was able to manage and solve one problem, another one followed quickly.

Her father consoled her and took her to the kitchen. He asked Mary to take a potato, an egg and two spoons of tea leaves. Mary was surprised, and asked her father, "Do you want me to cook?"

"No," her father said.

He then took three vessels and poured one cup of water in each vessel. The vessels were placed on the stove. Once the water started to boil, he dropped the potato in a vessel, egg in the second one and the tea leaves in the third one.

"Why are you doing all these things?" Mary asked, really annoyed with her father.

"Just wait fifteen minutes," said her father.

The impatient daughter managed to wait for around 15 minutes.

Father removed the potato from the pot and placed in a plate. He did the same with the eggs. He filtered the tea decoction using a cup.

Now, he placed the two plates, one with the potato and the other with the egg, and the cup of tea in front of Mary.

He asked Mary, "What do you see?"

"Potato, egg and a cup of tea," said Mary.

"No, you are wrong," said her father. "Look at it closely and answer me."

Mary replied the same.

"Now touch it and answer me."

The potato was cooked and was soft, the egg was boiled hard, and the tea carried a nice aroma.

Mary couldn't find the correct answer.

Her father said, "The potato was so hard and strong before it was boiled; now it has turned soft and smooth. Also, the egg was delicate but after boiling it became hard. Sip the tea. It is delicious!"

Mary asked, "What does it mean father? I don't understand!"

"Each object responded differently to water. Each object was put under the same kind of circumstances, faced similar adversities, but reacted differently. The potato, when put in boiling water, became very weak. The soft egg became very hard when we put it in boiling water. And the tea leaves are unique. It changed the water itself, giving it a unique flavour and aroma! It gave something new."

Mary understood that we can create something new and unique even when we experience adversities.

So, what are you? A potato, an egg, or a tea leaf?

Powerful Prayers:

Kim and Ray were very close companions. They were neighbours, classmates at school, and later, colleagues at work.

One day, they decided to go on a sea voyage to explore strange lands. They began their voyage in a cruise ship, and travelled far and wide. However, in the course of their trip, the weather turned very destructive. The ship was wrecked in the middle of the ocean. Most of the passengers were killed, but Kim and Ray could swim to a nearby island.

The island was deserted; not even a tree was there. Kim and Ray realized that they could not survive on the island without divine intervention. They decided to pray to God. They wanted to see whose prayer would be more powerful. Kim moved to the eastern tip of the island, knelt down and began to pray there. Ray went to the western tip of the island and prayed there.

Kim prayed to God to give him food to survive. Surprisingly, he got a pile of food, fruits and vegetables on the sea shore.

After two days, he requested for a beautiful girl as his wife, as he was feeling very lonely on the island. In a few hours, there was a ship wreck near the island and a lone survivor; a beautiful girl. Kim married the girl.

Whatever Kim prayed for, was granted to him.

Almost a month after the ship wreck, Kim decided to move back to his hometown. He prayed to God to send him a ship to take him home. Sure enough, there came a ship to take Kim and his wife home.

As the couple was about to enter the ship, Kim heard someone speak to him. It was just a voice. "Are you going alone, leaving your companion of life here?"

Kim was surprised, "May I know who is this and whom you are referring to? I have my wife with me!"

The voice said, "I'm the one to whom you offered your prayers, whom you requested to save your life, and whom you requested food and shelter and of course, a wife!"

Kim knelt down in awe and said, "Thank you God!"

Then Kim remembered about Ray, whom he had forgotten all this time. He was overcome with guilt.

God said to him, "I was not answering your prayers. I was only fulfilling Ray's prayers. He prayed for only one thing! He said 'Please fulfill all of Kim's prayers'. That was his only prayer."

Kim was in tears and rushed to the other side of the island. He realized that he had not even thought about his best friend Ray, and was happily enjoying his own life.

He could not find Ray there. He asked God, "Where is Ray?"

God replied, "I took him with me. The man with the golden heart should be with me! But I will fulfill all your prayers as I promised him to do so!"

Kim was completely broken. He realized why his friend's prayers were more powerful. It was because Ray's prayers were totally selfless.

Moral: Selflessness is the highest form of prayer.

A Unique Experience:

It was a cold and windy night. My friend and I had met after a long time, and were chatting for hours. We did not notice the time passing by, and soon it was close to ten in the night. We decided to take an auto rickshaw to go to our house.

It started raining, and we hurried to get into an auto rickshaw and reach our place. None of the auto rickshaws stopped for us, except one.

The driver asked us where we wanted to go and we told the place. Without saying anything about the fare, he said, "Please get in!" We thanked him and got in.

Since it was very cold, I asked the driver to stop at any small restaurant or a tea shop. We wanted to have a cup of hot tea. The driver stopped near a small restaurant.

We ordered tea, and asked the driver to join us and have a cup of tea. The driver refused. I insisted, but he refused again politely.

My friend asked, "Will you not take tea from this shop or what?"

The driver replied, "No Sir, I don't feel like having tea now."

I asked again, "But, why? A cup of tea will do no harm."

Smiling, the driver replied, "Thank you sir, but I'm sorry."

My friend asked, "Are you against eating or drinking outside?"

The driver said, "No!"

I was really surprised at his behavior and asked my friend not to compel him.

In 15 minutes, we reached our house. We paid the fare and the driver thanked us.

On an impulse, I stopped him, as I really wanted to ask him why he refused to drink tea with us at the restaurant.

He thought for a moment and replied, "Sir, my son passed away this noon in an accident. I don't have enough money for his funeral. So I took a vow not to drink even water, until I earn enough money for my son's funeral. That's why I didn't drink tea when you offered. Please don't misunderstand."

We both were shattered and offered him more money for his son's funeral.

He politely refused, "Thank you for your generosity sir. In one or two hours, if I get one or two more customers, I will earn the money I need." And he left the place.

We were amazed at his strength of character and integrity.

The Strange Bird with Two Heads:

Once upon a time, there lived a strange bird with two heads; one facing the left and the other facing the right. The two heads used to fight and argue with each other, even for very simple reasons. Though they shared the same body, the two heads behaved like rivals!

The strange bird lived in a big banyan tree, along the bank of a river.

One day, while flying over the river, the left head of the bird saw a beautiful tree that had a bright red fruit. The left head of the bird wanted to eat the fruit and the bird flew down to pick the fruit from the tree.

The bird plucked the sweet smelling fruit, and sat by the banks of the river and started eating it. The fruit was eaten by the left head. While it was eating, the right head asked, "Can you give me a piece to taste?"

The left head said, "See, we have only one stomach. So even if I eat in my mouth, it will go only into our stomach."

"But I want to taste the fruit, so you should give me."

The left head replied in anger, "I saw the fruit and hence, I have the right to eat it without sharing with anyone."

The right head felt sad and became silent.

A few days later, while the bird was flying over the river again, the right head saw a beautiful pink fruit in a tree. The bird flew down near the tree and tried to pick the fruit and eat it.

The other birds living in the tree said, "Don't eat it. It is a poisonous fruit. It will kill you."

The left head shouted, "Don't eat it. Don't eat it."

However the right head did not listen to the left head. The right head said, "I will eat it, because I saw it. You have no right to stop me."

The left head shouted, "Please don't eat it. We will all die."

The right head said, "Since I saw it, I have the right to eat it." Clearly, the right head was trying to take revenge on the left head for not sharing the red fruit with it earlier.

Finally, the pink fruit was eaten by the right head, and in a few minutes, the strange bird with the two heads dropped down dead!

Moral: A quarrel by the individuals in a family will affect the whole family badly.

A Glass of Milk:

Once, there was a poor boy who made a living by selling various objects from door to door. This was the way he earned money to pay for his school.

One day, as he was walking from house to house as usual, he felt very hungry and weak. He felt that he couldn't walk even a few steps. He decided to ask for food at a house. He knocked on the door and was stunned to see a beautiful young girl open the door. With much hesitation, he asked the girl for a glass of water.

The young girl understood his condition and offered him a huge glass of milk. With an astonished look, the boy drank the milk very slowly.

"How much do I owe you for this milk?" he asked her.

The girl replied, "I do not want any money for this."

The boy thanked the girl from the bottom of his heart and left the place.

Years passed by. The young girl grew up. In her youth, unfortunately, she fell ill and was diagnosed with the rarest kind of nervous disorder. Many experienced doctors were baffled at her condition, and she was admitted in the city hospital with the most advanced facilities.

The Wolf and the Lamb:

Once, a little lamb was grazing on a meadow, along with a flock of sheep. Being very mischievous, the little lamb wandered some distance away from the sheep. It began to enjoy the fresh and delicious grass that it found there. It had come a long way from its group, but was unaware of that.

The lamb was also unaware of another fact: a wolf was closely following it!

When the lamb realized that it had lost its way and was far away from the flock, it decided to return and join them. However, the lamb was stunned to see a hungry and cunning wolf standing behind it.

The lamb realized that there was no option except to surrender itself to the wolf.

The lamb asked the wolf, "Are you going to eat me?"

The wolf said, "Yes, at any cost!"

The lamb said again, "But can you please wait for some more time? I have eaten a lot of grass now and my stomach is filled with grass. If you eat me now, you will feel as though you are eating grass! So please wait until the grass is digested."

The wolf agreed, "Oh yes, I will wait. You are here before me and I can wait for some more time!"

The lamb thanked the wolf.

After some time, the wolf got ready to kill lamb, but the lamb stopped him again.

"Dear wolf, please wait for some more time. The grass is yet to be digested. If you eat me now, you will see a lot of grass in my stomach! Let me dance and then it will be digested easily."

The wolf agreed.

The little lamb danced crazily for a while, and then suddenly stopped.

The wolf enquired what had happened.

The lamb said, "I cannot dance properly because there is no music. You see this bell around my neck? Can you untie this bell and ring it loudly? Then I can dance fast and the grass in my stomach also will get digested fast."

The wolf, overcome with the desire to eat the lamb, was ready to do anything. He removed the bell tied to the lamb's neck and rang it with all his might.

Meanwhile, the shepherd was searching for the little lamb and heard the bell ringing. He saw the wolf and the lamb. He ran towards the wolf with a stick. Seeing the shepherd with a stick, the wolf ran away, and the lamb was saved!

Physical strength is not sufficient. Sometimes, weaker people with smart minds can overcome the physically strong ones!

Dr. Kevin, a renowned neuro specialist was called in by the hospital to examine her. Even with his extraordinary expertise, Dr. Kevin found the girl's illness very hard to cure. However, with perseverance and hard work that lasted months, he was finally able to get the disease under control. With careful medication and monitoring, the girl was completely cured in the end.

Everyone praised the doctor, but the girl was quite worried about how much the hospital bill would come to. Her family had just a little money kept away in the bank, which was by no means enough to pay for such a long treatment in that reputed hospital.

The girl was given the hospital bill finally. With trembling hands, she opened it. She was stunned to see that the bill had been crossed out and cancelled, and there was a note underneath signed by Dr. Kevin.

"Bill paid years ago with a glass of milk!"

Moral: One good turn begets another.

Jack and the Beanstalk:

Once upon a time there lived a poor widow and her son Jack. One day, Jack's mother told him to sell their only cow. Jack went to the market and on the way he met a man who wanted to buy his cow. Jack asked, "What will you give me in return for my cow?" The man answered, "I will give you five magic beans!" Jack took the magic beans and gave the man the cow. But when he reached home, Jack's mother was very angry. She said, "You fool! He took away your cow and gave you some beans!" She threw the beans out of the window. Jack was very sad and went to sleep without dinner.

The next day, when Jack woke up in the morning and looked out of the window, he saw that a huge beanstalk had grown from his magic beans! He climbed up the beanstalk and reached a kingdom in the sky. There lived a giant and his wife. Jack went inside the house and found the giant's wife in the kitchen. Jack said, "Could you please give me something to eat? I am so hungry!" The kind wife gave him bread and some milk.

While he was eating, the giant came home. The giant was very big and looked very fearsome. Jack was terrified and went and hid inside. The giant cried, "Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive, or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread!" The wife said, "There is no boy in here!" So, the giant ate his food and then went to his room. He took out his sacks of gold coins, counted them and kept them aside. Then he went to sleep. In the night, Jack crept out of his hiding place, took one sack of gold coins and climbed down the beanstalk. At home, he gave the coins to his mother. His mother was very happy and they lived well for sometime.

Jack and the Beanstalk Fee Fi Fo Fum! Climbed the beanstalk and went to the giant's house again. Once again, Jack asked the giant's wife for food, but while he was eating the giant returned. Jack leapt up in fright and went and hid under the bed. The giant cried, "Fee-fifo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive, or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread!" The wife said, "There is no boy in here!" The giant ate his food and went to his room. There, he took out a hen. He shouted, "Lay!" and the hen laid a golden egg. When the giant fell asleep, Jack took the hen and climbed down the beanstalk. Jack's mother was very happy with him.

After some days, Jack once again climbed the beanstalk and went to the giant's castle. For the third time, Jack met the giant's wife and asked for some food.

Once again, the giant's wife gave him bread and milk. But while Jack was eating, the giant came home. "Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive, or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread!" cried the giant. "Don't be silly! There is no boy in here!" said his wife.

The giant had a magical harp that could play beautiful songs. While the giant slept, Jack took the harp and was about to leave. Suddenly, the magic harp cried, "Help master! A boy is stealing me!" The giant woke up and saw Jack with the harp. Furious, he ran after Jack. But Jack was too fast for him. He ran down the beanstalk and reached home. The giant followed him down. Jack quickly ran inside his house and fetched an axe. He began to chop the beanstalk. The giant fell and died.

Jack and his mother were now very rich and they lived happily ever after.

A Farmer and His Wife:

A farmer said to his wife, "you are lazy. You work slowly and lethargically. You waste your time."

The wife was angry at the words of her husband.

She said to her husband, "You are wrong. Stay at home tomorrow. I will go to field. I will do your work there. Will you do my works at home here?"

The farmer said happily, "Very well. I will do your works back at home."

The wife said, "Milk the cow. Feed the pigs. Waste the utensils. Take care of our hen. Spin the yarn."

The woman went to the field. The farmer stayed back at home. He took a vessel and went to the cow to milk it. He tried to milk the cow. He received a good kick. He then went to the pig-sty. He hit his head against the beam. He went to feed the hen. He forgot to spin.

The wife returned from the field when it turned evening. The farmer hung down his head in shame. Thereafter, he did not find fault with his wife. They lived happily together for a long time.

A Father learns A Lesson from His Son:

Velan was a carpenter. He was living in a village. His mother dies a long time back. His aged father, Kuppan, lived with Velan. Kuppan was very weak. He could not even walk well. He was so weak. It was because Velan did not give him enough food. He had given his father a small earthen plate. Even a small quantity of rice in the plate appeared to be much. Velan was a bad man. He was a drunkard also. After taking drinks, he abused his father badly.

Velan had a son. His name is Muthu. Muthu was just ten years old. He was a very good boy. He loved his grandfather. He had great respect for his grandfather. He did not like his father's attitude and character, because his father was treating his grandfather cruelly.

One day Kuppan was eating his food out of earthen plate that his son had given to him. The earthen plate fell down. The plate broke into pieces. The food also fell on the floor. Velan was working at the other end of the room. He saw the broken plate. He was very angry with his father and used very harsh words to abuse his father. The old man felt bad about what happened. He was sorry for his mistake. Velan's words wounded him very deeply.

Velan's son, Muthu, saw this. He did not like his father. His father was ill-treating his grandfather. He was afraid to speak against his father. He was sad about his grandfather. But he was not powerful to stand in support of his grandfather.

The next day Muthu took some of his father's carpentry tools and a piece of wood. He worked with the tools to make a wooden plate. His father saw him working.

"What are you making, Muthu?" he asked.

"I am making a wooden plate!" replied Muthu.

"A wooden plate! What for?" asked his father.

"I am making it for you, father. When you grow old, like my grandfather, you will need a plate for food. A plate made from earth may break very easily. Then I may scold you severely. So, I want to give you a wooden plate. It may not break so easily."

The carpenter was shocked to hear this. Only now he realized his mistake. His father was kind to Velan. He had looked after Velan very well. Now, he was old. Velan was treating his father severely. Velan was now very sad about his own behavior. He realized his mistakes. He then became a different person.

From that day, Velan treated his father with great respect. He gave up drinking too. Velan learnt a lesson from his own son.

You should honor your parents at all times. It is your duty. It brings you their blessings

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A Powerful Story:

A man and a young teenage boy checked into a hotel and were shown to their room. The receptionist noted the quiet manner of the guests and the pale appearance of the boy. Later, the man and boy ate dinner in the hotel restaurant.

The staff again noticed that the two guests were very quiet and that the boy seemed disinterested in his food.

After eating, the boy went to his room and the man went to ask the receptionist to see the manager. The receptionist initially asked if there was a

problem with the service or the room, and offered to fix things, but the man said that there was no problem of the sort and repeated his request.

When the manager appeared, he took him aside and explained that he was spending the night in the hotel with his fourteen-year-old son, who was seriously ill, probably terminally so. The boy was very soon to undergo therapy, which would cause him to lose his hair. They had come to the hotel to have a break together and also because the boy planned to shave his head, that night, rather than feel that the illness was beating him. The father said that he would be shaving his own head too, in support of his son.

He asked that staff be respectful when the two of them came to breakfast with their shaved heads.

The manager assured the father that he would inform all staff and that they would behave appropriately.

The following morning the father and son entered the restaurant for breakfast. There they saw the four male restaurant staff attending to their duties, perfectly normally, all with shaved heads.

No matter what business you are in, you can help people and you can make a difference.

A True Servant:

A king had a large number of slaves. One of them was very black. He was true to the king. So, the king loved him greatly.

One day the king went out on a camel. Some slaves walked in front of the king. Others went behind the king. The black slave rode on a horse by the side of his master – The King.

The King had a box. There were pearls in it. On the way the box fell down in a narrow street. It broke into pieces. The pearls rolled on the ground.

The king said to his slaves. "Go and take the pearls. I do not want them any longer," said the king.

The slaves ran and gathered the pearls. They took those pearls. The black slave did not leave his place.

He was by the side of his master. He guarded his master. He cared for the life of his master. He did not care for the master's pearls. He was the true servant.

The king observed the attitude of the servant and gave him many gifts.

A Wise Deer and A Cowardly Tiger:

There was a dense forest on the sides of a mountain. Many kinds of animals lived in the forest. A deer was eating grass and leaves with her two young ones. The young ones wandered happily here and there. The deer followed her fawns. The young ones entered a cave. The deer was frightened. It was a tiger's cave. There were bones of dead animals all over the cave. Fortunately, the tiger was not inside the cave at the time.

The deer was trying to lead her young ones out of the cave. AT that time she heard a loud roar. She saw the tiger at a distance. The tiger was coming towards the cave. It was dangerous to go out of the cave now. She thought of a plan. The tiger had come closer to the cave. The deer raised her voice and shouted, "My deer young children do not weep. I shall capture a tiger for you to eat. You can have a good dinner."

The tiger heard these words. He was disturbed. He said to himself, "Whose is that strange voice from the cave? A dangerous animal is staying inside to capture me. I shall run away to escape death."

So saying, the tiger began to run away from there as fast as possible.

A jackal saw the running tiger. "Why are you running in great fear?" the jackal asked. The tiger said, "My friend, a powerful and fierce animal has come to stay in my cave. The young ones are crying for a tiger to eat. The mother is promising to capture a tiger for them. So, I am running away in great fear."

The cunning jackal was now sure. The tiger was a coward. It said to the tiger. "Do not be afraid. No animal is fiercer or stronger than a tiger. Let us go together to find out."

But the tiger said, "I do not want to take a chance. You may run away. I will be left alone to die. So, I will not come with you."

The jackal said, "Trust me. Let us know our tails together. Then I will not be able to leave you."

The tiger agreed unwillingly to this proposal. The jackal tied their tails in a knot. Now they walked towards the cave together.

The deer saw the jackal and the tiger coming together. She again raised her voice. She shouted towards her children standing inside the cave, "My dear children, I had requested her friend, the clever jackal, to capture a tiger for us. Now look the jackal has captured a tiger for us. He has tied the tiger's tail to his tail. This is to prevent the tiger from escaping. You will soon have the tiger for our dinner."

The tiger heard this. He was shocked. He was sure now. The jackal cheated him. So, the tiger decided to escape from the terrible animal standing inside his cave. He started running. He forgot about the jackal. He dragged the jackal over rocks and thorns. In the mad escape the jackal was caught between two rocks. The tiger pulled with all his might. His tail got cut. The jackal was killed in this incident. The tail-less tiger ran away to another part of the forest.

The deer and her young ones left the tiger's cave. They joined their herd safely.

Presence of mind and intelligence can save from dangerous situations.

Advising A Fool:

On a mango tree in a jungle, there lived many birds. They were happy in their small nests. Before the onset of the rainy season, all the animal of the jungle repaired their homes. The birds also made their homes more secure.

Many birds brought twigs and leaves and others wove their nests. "We should also store some food for our children," chirped one of the birds. And they collected food, until they had enough to see them through the rainy season. They kept themselves busy preparing for the tough times.

Soon the rains came. It was followed by thunder and lightning. All the animals and birds stayed in their homes.

It continued raining for many days. One day, a monkey wet in the rain came into the forest. He sat on a branch, shivering with cold, water dripping from its body.

The poor monkey tried his best to get shelter, but in vain. The leaves were not enough to save him from the rains. "Brrr! It is so cold!" said the monkey.

The birds were watching all this. They felt sorry for the monkey but there was little they could do for him. One of them said, "Brother! Our small nests are not enough to give you shelter."

Another bird said, "All of us prepared for the rainy season. If you had, you would not be in this piteous situation."

"How dare you tell me what to do?" said the monkey, growling at the bird. The monkey angrily pounced on the bird's nest, tore it and threw it on the ground. The bird and her chicks were helpless.

The poor bird thought, "Fools never value good advice. It is better not to advise them."

Always Follow Your Heart:

As a child, Monty Roberts was the son of a horse trainer and moved from stable to stable, from ranch to ranch, training horses. The boy's schooling was constantly interrupted. One day, when he was a senior, his teacher asked him to write about what he wanted to be when he grew up. He did not hesitate and wrote a seven-page paper about his aim to be an owner of a horse ranch. It was a detailed paper with the location of buildings, stables and even a house plan. Two days later he received his paper back with an F on the front page.

After class he asked his teacher why he received such a low score.

The teacher told him, "This dream is unrealistic for a boy like you, who has no money, no resources and who comes from an itinerant family. There is no possibility that you will reach this goal."

Then the teacher offered him the opportunity to rewrite the paper with a more realistic attitude.

The boy went home and asked his father how he should respond.

His father told him, "This is a very important decision, so you must come to your own conclusion."

After several days, the boy brought the same paper to his teacher. No changes were made.

He told his teacher, "Keep the F and I will keep my dream."

Monty Roberts went on to own a 4000 square foot house in the middle of 200-acre horse ranch. He framed the paper he wrote and hung it over his fireplace.

Always remember to follow your heart and never listen to those who do not believe in your ability to achieve your dreams.

An Old Lady in The Cruise:

A man asked why an old lady was all alone on a cruise ship. He noticed that although she was alone, all the staff, ships officers, Waiters and busboys were very familiar with her. So, he asked the waiter who the lady was, expecting to be told...she owned the line, but all the Waiter knew was that she was on the last four cruises, back to back.

As he left the dining room one evening he caught her eye and stopped to say hello. They chatted and he asked, "I understand you've been on this ship for the last four cruises."

She replied, "Yes, that's true."

He said, "I don't understand" and she replied, without a pause, "It's cheaper than a nursing home. So, there will be no nursing home in my future. I'm staying on this cruise; the average cost for a nursing home is \$200 per day. Here, I can get a long term discount and senior discount price of \$135 per day. That leaves \$65 a day for tips and extra cash. I have it made here. I can have as many as 10 meals a day of fantastic food or room service which means I can have breakfast in bed every day of the week. I get free pools, a workout room,

free washers and dryers and shows every night. I get free toothpaste, razors, and free soap and shampoo. They will even treat you like a customer, not a patient. An extra \$5 worth of tips will have the entire staff scrambling to help you. I get to meet new people every 7 or 14 days! TV broken? Light bulb need changing? Need to have the matters replaced? No problem! They will fix everything and apologize for your inconvenience. Clean sheets and towels every day and you don't even have to ask for them. There is always a doctor on board. This is how I want to live the end of my life".

An Apple Tree and Our Parents:

Once upon a time there was a huge apple tree. A little boy used to come to play near the tree. He would search for juicy apples. He would play alongside the tree and rest under the shade. The tree was overjoyed after meeting this little bundle of joy. One day, the tree was surprised to see that boy approaching it with a sad face.

"Come on little boy! Play with me," the Tree asked the boy.

"I am no longer a kid to play around tree like you," the boy scowled at the tree. "I need toys. I need money to buy toys of various designs and sizes," the boy told the tree.

"Sorry my dear boy! I do not have money to give you. But you can pick all my apples and sell them. That will give you adequate money to buy toys of your choices," replied the tree in soothing voice.

The boy grabbed all the apples and left happily. He sold the apples and got money. He bought toys of his choices.

Spring bid adieu and autumn came by but there was no sign of the boy.

One morning, the tree saw its friend. That little boy had grown up into a big man.

"Come and play with me" the tree said.

"I cannot play. I have family now. We need a house for shelters. Can you help me?" the man replied.

"Sorry! I do not have any house. But you can chop off my branches to build your house," the tree told the man.

The man cut all the branches of the tree and left happily. The tree was glad to see his friend smiling again.

The man returned one evening to the apple tree.

"Come and play with me," the tree asked the man.

"I am getting old. I want to go sailing to relax myself. Can you give me a boat," the man asked the apple tree.

"Use my trunk to build your boat," the tree told the man.

He cut off the trunk and made a boat out of it.

He went sailing and never showed up for a long time.

The man returned after many years.

"Sorry my boy! But now I do not have anything to offer to you. I have nothing for you anymore. No more apples....No more branches...no more trunks for you to climb on!" the tree said with a pain in its voice.

"No problem....I too do not have any teeth to bite and I am too old to climb trees," the man replied.

"I just need a place to rest after all these days," the man replied.

"Old tree roots are the best place to lean on. Come on and sit down with me and rest," the apple tree replied with a concern in its voice.

The old man sat down. The apple tree was glad and smiled with tears.

This Is The Story Of Every Person. The Tree Is Like Our Parents. When We Were Young, We Could Not Have Imagined Our Life Without Them. But As We Grow

Up, We Leave Them. No Matter What, Parents Will Always Be There And Give Us Everything To Make Us Happy.

Angry Snake:

A carpenter went home after shutting down his workshop. When he was gone, a poisonous snake entered his workshop. The snake was hungry and hoped to find its supper lurking somewhere within. It slithered from one end to another. Finally it bumped into an axe and got very slightly injured. In angry and revenge, the snake bit the snake with full force. What could a snake's bite do to the metallic axe? Instead the snake's mouth started bleeding. Out of fury and arrogance, the snake tried its best to strangle and kill the metallic axe - The object that was causing it the pain by wrapping itself around the axe. The next day the carpenter opened the workshop. He found the dead snake wrapped around the blades of the axe. Here the snake did not die because of someone's fault. But it faced these consequences merely because of its own anger and wrath. Sometimes when angry, we try to cause harm to others. But as time passes by, we realize that we caused more harm to ourselves. It is not necessary that we react to everything. Step back and ask ourselves if the matter is really worth responding to.

Bad Temper:

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence.

The first day, the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The days passed and the boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone.

The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never

be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry. The wound is still there."

Happiness Not Given By Others:

Only those who are capable of being alone are capable of love. The capacity to be alone is the capacity to love. It may look paradoxical to you, but it is not. It is an existential truth...only those people who are capable of being alone are capable of love, of sharing, of going into the deepest core of the other person – without possessing the other, without becoming dependent on the other, without reducing the other to a thing and without becoming addicted to the other. They allow the other absolute freedom, because they know that if the other leaves, they will be as happy as they are now. Their happiness cannot be taken by the other, because it is not given by the other.

Hard Work and Smart Work:

Mukesh and Anil joined a company together a few months after their graduation from university.

After a few years of work, their Manager promoted Mukesh to a position of Senior Sales Manager, but Anil remained in his entry level Junior Sales Officer position. Anil developed a sense of jealousy and disgruntlement, but continued working anyway.

One day Anil felt that he could not work with Mukesh anymore. He wrote his resignation letter, but before he submitted it to the Manager, he complained that Management did not value hard working staff, but only promoted only the favored!

The Manager knew that Anil worked very hard for the years he had spent at the company; even harder than Mukesh and therefore he deserved the promotion. So in order to help Anil to realize this, the Manager gave Anil a task.

"Go and find out if anyone is selling water melons in town?"

Anil returned and said, "yes there is someone!"

The Manager asked, "how much per kg?" Anil drove back to town to ask and then returned to inform the Manager; "they are R13.50 per kg!"

The Manager told Anil, "I will give Mukesh the same task that I gave you. Please pay close attention to his response!"

So the Manager said to Mukesh, in the presence of Anil ; "Go and find out if anyone is selling water melons in town?"

Mukesh went to find out and on his return he said: "Manager, there is only one person selling water melons in the whole town. The cost is R49.00 each water melon and R32,50 for a half melon. He sells them at R13.50 per kg when sliced. He has in his stock 93 melons, each one weighing about 7kg. He has a farm and can supply us with melons for the next 4 months at a rate of 102 melons per day at R27.00 per melon; this includes delivery.

The melons appear fresh and red with good quality, and they taste better than the ones we sold last year. He has his own slicing machine and is willing to slice for us free of charge.

We need to strike a deal with him before 10am tomorrow and we will be sure of beating last year's profits in melons by R223 000.00. This will contribute positively to our overall performance as it will add a minimum of 3.78% to our current overall sales target.

I have put this information down in writing and is available on spreadsheet. Please let me know if you need it as I can send it to you in fifteen minutes."

Anil was very impressed and realized the difference between himself and Mukesh. He decided not to resign but to learn from Mukesh.

As we begin this fresh year, let this story help us keep in mind the importance of going an extra mile in all our endeavors.

You won't be rewarded for doing what you're meant to do, you only get a salary for that! You're only rewarded for going an extra mile, performing beyond expectations.

Her Dream Bicycle:

Malar lived at Keeranur village in Pudukottai district with her family. Malar was studying in class VI. She was eleven years old. She had two elder sisters and a younger brother. His name was Arul. Malar's father was Kathirvel. Kathirvel was a hard-working farmer. Of late, the rains were irregular and he could not always cultivate the two acres they owned. Her eldest sister was Ponni. Ponni was married to a mason and lived in Mathur with her little son Vikram. Malar's second sister was Mallika. Mallika decided to do tailoring after Class X and was attending a tailoring course in Mathur. Attending the course also gave Mallika a chance to visit her sister Ponni. But walking all the way made her tired and she often missed the tailoring classes.

Her mother used to scold Mallika. "OH! Why are you so lazy? You must attend your classes regularly".

Mallika would reply, "I walk 9 kilometers everyday - 4 kilometers to the tailoring classes, 2 kilometers to fetch water and 3 kilometers to take lunch for father when you are busy. You can not call me lazy."

In fact, nobody in their home was lazy. Malar would walk 1 kilometer with her friends to school and back. She and her friends would chat and play all the way back.

One day, when Arul and Malar had just come back from school, her father came in looking upset. He said to his wife, "Shanthi, it seems that the collector is not satisfied with teaching only Math's and Tamil. She even wants women to learn cycling.

Malar was excited. She asked, "father, Is it only for mother? Can I learn?"

Mallika was interested too. She said, "If there is anyone who needs bicycle, it is me."

Arul said, "This is really good. I can teach both of you to cycle, if you buy me a cycle."

Their father was angry.

"Keep quiet!" he said. "No woman in my house will learn to cycle".

A week passed. What their father had heard was true. Women were being taught to cycle at all. In many homes across the villages in Pudukottai district, there was a lot of discussion on women learning to cycle.

In Keeranur too, women beginning to use bicycle to do many things. One day, Shanthi told Mallika softly, "Borrow Radhamma's old bicycle and bring it here. We are going to learn to ride it."

When Malar's father returned, he saw Mallika smiling widely and guessed why.

He said gruffly, "All right...But be careful."

He looked at Shanthi and smiled. "Have you started learning?"

"Yes." she said. "It takes things much easier."

Malar was busy, dreaming of the future. She saw herself riding a brand new bicycle along a smooth long road to school and to college and then who knows? May be even on a rainbow to the clouds.

[9:36 AM, 12/25/2021] gd:

Hercules:

Hercules was a strong and brave man. He lived in Greece. The King was jealous of Hercules. People might make Hercules the King. Therefore he wanted to get rid of Hercules. He set difficult tasks for Hercules to keep him away from the country so that he would not be a possible threat to him (the King).

Once he asked Hercules to get three golden apples. Some trees were said to bear golden apples. These trees were said to be in a place called Hesperides. But no one knew the way to Hesperides. So the King thought of Hesperides. Hercules would be away for a longer period.

Hercules set out on the journey. At first he met three maidens during the journey. Hercules asked them the way to Hesperides. They told him to ask the old man of the sea. But they also warned him, "Hold the old man of the sea tightly. Otherwise he will escape. No one else knows the way."

Hercules saw the old man. He was sleeping on the shore. He was looking strange. He had long hair and a beard. Hercules walked to him without making any noise. Then he seized him very firmly.

The old man of the sea opened his eyes. He was surprised. He changed himself into a stag. He tried to free himself from the grip of Hercules. But Hercules held him tight. Then the old man changed himself into a sea-bird and then to other animal forms. But he could not free himself from the clutches of Hercules, because Hercules was making his clutches tighter and tighter. Finally the old man said to Hercules, "Who are you? What do you want from me?"

Hercules replied, "I am Hercules. Tell me the way to Hesperides."

The old man said, "It is an island. Go along the sea-shore. You will meet a giant. He will show you the way to Hesperides."

Hercules continued his journey. He met the giant. The giant was very huge and strong. He was sleeping on the shore. Hercules woke him up. The giant was angry. He struck Hercules with a club. Hercules charged at the giant. He lifted the giant and threw him down. But the giant got up immediately. He had become ten times stronger. Hercules threw him down again and again. But each time the giant rose up much stronger. Then Hercules lifted the giant high up in the air. But he did not throw him down. The giant slowly lost all his strength. He now pleaded with Hercules to put him down on the earth. Hercules asked him to tell the way to Hesperides. The giant asked Hercules to meet Atlas. He told him the way to the place where Atlas was.

Hercules continued his journey. He, at last, met Atlas.

"Why do you want the golden apples?" asked Atlas.

"My King has ordered me to get him these three golden apples," said Hercules.

"It is a long way from here to that place. Only I can go there. Hold this sky for me. I shall get them for you," said Atlas.

Hercules agreed. He held the sky on his shoulders. Atlas walked away. He was back in a short time. He put down the three golden apples at the foot of Hercules. Hercules thanked Atlas. He requested Atlas to take back the sky from him.

"Take back the sky!" said Atlas cunningly. "I have held it for a thousand years. I shall come back after another thousand years!"

Hercules was astonished at what Atlas told him. But he did not express his astonishment. He recovered his senses and replied, "Oh! In that case, will you please hold the sky for a little while? I shall make a pad for my shoulders to support the sky. Then I shall take back the sky from you." Thus Hercules talked very quietly.

Atlas agreed. Atlas took back the sky from Hercules. Hercules immediately collected the three golden apples. He bid Atlas goodbye with a mischievous smile on his face. Then he walked away towards Greece leaving Atlas speechless and surprised.

Hercules reached his homeland Greece after many days of travel. He gave the three golden apples to the King. The King was surprised to have got the golden apples from Hercules. He was happy. But he pretended not to have been satisfied. But he secretly, he was planning to send away Hercules away on another perilous adventure.

Humanity:

Father and son, went to a temple.

Suddenly son shouted after seeing the pillars of Lions at the entrance of the temple.

"Run Dad, or those Lions will eat us."

Dad consoled him saying "they are just statues and won't harm us."

Son replied, "If those lion statues won't harm us then how could statues of God give us blessings."

The father wrote in his diary...

"I am still speechless on my child's answer and have started searching for God in Humans instead of statues. I didn't find God but I found humanity."

Infinity Kiss:

There are some things money can't buy. What's more valuable than money to YOU? I worked two jobs, was raising my 6-year-old alone and each week worried if I would make ends meet. In the evening, my son and I would spend a little time together, but he felt my stress even though I tried to hide it from him. One night we were sitting together and I was reading him a story. The story was about a family who had everything...a new car, beautiful home. It was so far from what we knew, it felt like make believe. Tears came to my eyes and I turned away from my son, I didn't want him to see me like this.

My young, but very wise little boy seemed to read my mind and said, "Mommy...don't cry. This family may have a lot of things, but you know we are rich too."

I looked at him not quite understanding what he meant. He went on to say, "We may not have a lot, but we have each other and we love each other. Money can't buy that."

I smiled and said, "Let me give you an INFINITY KISS." I kissed his cheek for a long time.

"This kiss will last forever, and ever and ever"

Last Journey:

The cab driver picked up his passenger in the dead of the night. An elderly woman stood outside the building with a suitcase. He smiled at her as walked her to the car and carried her case into the trunk of the cab.

As they settled into drive he asked her where she wanted to go...

After giving him the address she asked...Can we drive through downtown to get there?

It'll be longer...he said.

The woman smiled....I don't mind, I'm going to the hospice tonight.

The cab driver looked in the rear-view mirror. Her eyes were glistening....I don't have any family left....she continued. The doctor says I don't have very long.

He quietly reached over and shut off the meter.

They drove for two hours with the woman showing the cab driver various buildings where she grew up, where she worked, where she met her husband.

As the sun started rising, they stopped outside the hospice where two orderlies greeted them. The cab driver carried her suitcase to her and she was already seated in a wheelchair to be taken in.

How much do I owe you?....she said.

The cab driver said...Nothing at all.

You have to make a living.... She answered.

Oh, there are other passengers...He responded.

Almost without thinking, he bent and gave her a hug. She held onto him tightly.

Their hug ended with her remark....You gave an old woman a little moment of joy.

After a slight pause, she added....Thank you.

We never get to know the stories of the people we meet. A little kindness and love is all that is needed to make a difference in the world.

Man Overboard:

I stood on the deck of S.S. Rajula. As she slowly moved out of Madras harbor, I waved to my grandparents till I could see them no more. I was thrilled to be on board a ship. It was a new experience for me.

"Are you travelling alone?" asked the person standing next to me.

"Yes, Uncle, I'm going back to my parents in Singapore," I replied.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Vasantha," I replied.

I spent the day exploring the ship. It looked just like a big house. There were furnished rooms, a swimming pool, a room for indoor games and a library. Yet, there was plenty of room to move around.

The next morning the passengers were seated in the dining hall, having breakfast. The loudspeaker spluttered noisily and then the captain's voice came loud and clear. "Friends we have just received a message that a storm is brewing in the Indian Ocean. I request all of you to keep calm.

Do not panic. Those who are inclined to sea-sickness may please stay in their cabins. Thank you."

There was panic everywhere. An old lady prayed aloud, "Oh God! Have mercy on us. My only son is waiting for me in Singapore."

A gentleman consoled her, "Don't worry, Madam, it's only a warning. We may not be affected at all."

Another lady, who was sitting beside me, looked very ill. "Not rough weather! I'm already seasick.

A rough sea will be the end of me!"

I could not understand why all the elders were so upset. I remembered the several sea adventures I had read. Excitedly, I turned to the elderly gentleman sitting next to me. "Uncle, won't it be thrilling to face a storm on board a steamer? Have you ever been on a ship during a storm?"

"It can be quite unpleasant, you know," he replied rather severely. "I remember a time when the ship on which I was travelling ran off course.

We were wandering on the ocean for a couple of days."

I remembered my class teacher, an English woman, telling us in class one day, "When I crossed the English Channel on my way to Singapore, there was a big storm near Gibraltar. The ship rocked to and from. Everything in the cabins rolled up and down. Even the heavy pianos in the lounge went crashing against the walls."

This made my imagination run wild. Turning to Uncle again, I said, "Wouldn't it be fun if the storm broke when we have lunch? Then the tables, with all the food on them, would run away from us. And the chairs, with us sitting on them, would be a merry-go-round."

Everyone round the table stared at me in horror. I thought to myself, 'Oh, these adults, they've no sense of adventure. How dull they are!

The storm didn't break, but in the evening a strong wind started blowing. The ship rocked to and from, rocking and rolling to the music of the wind. Huge waves were dashing against it. Even though the deck was slippery, I was running around. That's when I noticed Uncle leaning over the railings. I ran up to him, thinking he too, was enjoying the experience. "Good morning, Uncle, isn't it lovely?" I asked him.

But he wasn't well at all. He was retching over the rails and looked rather blue about the mouth. I felt sorry for him. "Can I be of any help? Shall I call the doctor?" I asked him.

He couldn't reply, but only held up his hand.

As another bout of retching shook him he leaned over the railings. At the same time a huge wave lashed the ship. It lurched violently and the man tumbled over the railings into the wild sea. For a second I stood rooted to the spot. Then I ran like someone possessed, shouting, and "Help! Help!

Man overboard! Save him!" I must have made a lot of noise. I heard footsteps hurrying even that early in the morning.

Tears streaming down my face and shouting incoherently, I ran full pelt into an officer.

"What's the matter? Why are you making so much noise?" he asked in a stern voice, I was surprised to see it was the captain.

"Oh Sir!" I blurted out in relief. "A man fell into the sea. Please save him."

"Where?" he asked, immediately on the alert.

"There," I said pointing a finger.

He did not wait for more details but ran at once to a room full of officers. "Man overboard," he cried. "Stop ship. Drop anchor. Quick!" His instructions were immediately obeyed. The captain then raced to the upper deck. I kept trailing behind him. "Lower the life-boats and crew into the sea towards the helm," he said. "There is a man overboard." Here again the men quickly obeyed him.

People started crowding the deck. "What's happening?" somebody asked me.

Word soon went round. Everyone was tense.

Only an occasional, "There he is!" could be heard. Someone asked, "Who is he?"

Another replied, "Don't know."

Meanwhile two life-boats moved towards the man. I stood close to the captain. In his anxiety, he gripped my shoulder tightly and I winced.

"You're hurting me Sir," I protested.

"I am sorry, my dear. The sea is very rough today. I hope my men can reach him in time. My ship has never lost a passenger before," he said crossing himself. He was watching the rescue operations through a pair of binoculars that hung round his neck.

The boat was too far for me to see what was happening. I tugged at the Captain's sleeve.

"What are they doing, Sir? Have they rescued the man?" I asked him.

"They've caught him by the arms and are pulling him towards the boat." He was giving me a running commentary. "Oh what bad luck! A sudden current

has swept the man away dragging two of the sailors with him." He sounded nervous.

Just then he noticed the passengers crowding against the railings. "Keep away from those railings!" he shouted. "We don't want another accident." The ship had dropped anchor but was heaving up and down.

I borrowed the captain's binoculars. Now I could see the rescue operation clearly. The crew in the rescue boats threw a strong rope to the two sailors in the sea and shouted, "Catch". Both of them were good swimmers and soon had caught hold of the rope. Then, with powerful strokes, they swam towards Uncle. One of them caught hold of him, while the other tied the rope round his waist. With Uncle between them and the rope secure, the sailors swam back to the life-boats. The rescue team in the boats leaned over and heaved the three men into it. In a jiffy the boats were heading back to the ship.

"Thank God!" muttered the captain making the sign of the cross again, "They've managed to save him." He turned to the passengers thronging the railings. "Please do not crowd round the man when he is brought up. He will need immediate medical care." Then he saw the ship's doctor standing with a couple of nurses. A stretcher was also being brought close to the railings.

"Doctor! Is everything ready for the patient?" the captain asked.

"Aye, aye, Captain," nodded the doctor. The captain moved away to restore order on the ship. I edged close to the doctor and asked, "What will you do to him, doctor? Will he be all right?"

"Aye, I think so. All the water will have to be pumped out of him. He'll have to be given artificial respiration and kept warm."

"How do you pump the water out?" I asked.

"We put him on his stomach and massage him until he brings it all up," he replied.

As soon as the rescue team reached the ship, Uncle was placed on the stretcher and rushed to the hospital room. The captain then came to me and said, "Run along now and play with your friends. I'm busy, but will send for you when I'm through. I might even have a surprise for you."

When he turned away, I quietly sneaked into the hospital room to see what they were doing to the patient. Two nurses were scurrying to and from with trays full of medicines and syringes. Another was rushing off with Uncle's wet clothes. I stopped her and asked if Uncle was conscious. "Not yet," she replied, "but he's better now. He should regain consciousness in a little while."

The ship was still rolling, so I couldn't play any games. I went and sat in a cozy chair in the lounge and started reading a story-book. I was feeling drowsy and must have dozed off. The next thing I knew was somebody saying, "Wake up, child. You're Vasantha, aren't you? The Captain wants to see you in his cabin."

I looked up to see a sailor standing before me.

It took me a minute to recollect the rescue operation and the captain telling me, "I'll call you afterwards."

I followed the officer eagerly. He left me outside the captain's door, saying, and "Go right inside."

I knocked and entered. The captain was standing in the middle of the room. When he saw me, he came forward and literally swept me off my feet. He was still smiling when he put me down.

"You will have plenty to tell your friends, eh? Now close your eyes."

I did so. Seconds later, I heard him say, "See what I've got for you."

On opening my eyes, I saw a big brown box.

On it was written.... "WITH THE BEST COMPLIMENTS OF CAPT. LINDSAY."

I took the box and eagerly opened it. "Oh, what a lovely ship!" I exclaimed. "Does this really belong to me? Can I keep it?"

Lying snugly on a velvet backing was a most beautiful model of the ship. On it was inscribed "B.I.S.N. & Co. S.S. RAJULA." I placed the box carefully on the table. Then I threw my hands round the captain and hugged and kissed him.

He patted my cheek and smiled as he saw me lift the box and walk happily out of his room. I proudly showed my present to everyone I met.

"See what the Captain has given me. Isn't it lovely?"

"Yes, indeed," was the unanimous verdict?

I was the happiest person on board that day.

Monkey Story:

Once up a time there were three monkeys. Daddy monkey, Mummy monkey and Baby monkey. They lived in a tree on the plains in Africa. There was not much to do in their tree, they were bored.

"I'm bored" said Baby monkey.

"Let's go shopping," said Mummy monkey.

"Don't be stupid," said Daddy monkey, "we've not got any cash."

"We don't need cash," replied Mummy monkey. "We're monkeys."

"Now that is a good point," said Daddy monkey.

"So how do we get into town?" asked Baby monkey.

"Get the bus of course. How else. We can't drive a car," replied dad.

"A number 44, should be along fairly soon," said Mummy monkey. "We could get that. It goes right into the center of the city."

The monkeys wandered over to the bus top avoiding the lions who were looking very hungry that morning and waited for a bus.

Soon enough a number 44 came along and they jumped on.

"Fairs please," said the driver.

The monkeys just ignored the driver as they didn't have the correct change, because they didn't have pockets because they were monkeys.

Have you ever noticed the handles on straps on buses that hang down from the rails on buses? That's in case the bus ever stops in Africa and monkeys want to get on. Or South America, there are monkeys there and they have prehensile tails which means they can hang from them using their tails. However I have digressed.

The monkeys started swinging on the straps as monkeys are inclined to do. After all they are monkeys, but not using their tails as they were African monkeys.

"Oi," said the driver. "Monkeys stop that!"

The monkeys being monkeys just ignored the driver, after all they never do anything a human tells them. That's why they don't make good pets. So children never ask your mummy or daddy for a pet monkey. It will just wreck your house. Oops I've digressed again.

The driver stopped the bus, they were still in the middle of the savannah. "Right monkeys, off the bus," the driver shouted.

The monkeys jumped out of a window, as the driver was looking quite angry. The window had been left open because it was a really hot day, which it often is in Africa.

The three monkeys then went and sat on the roof. The driver didn't notice what the monkeys had done and soon the bus started off again. The monkeys could hear the driver mutter ruse words like 'poo' under his breath.

"Hey look" Baby Monkey shouted.

"What?" replied Mummy monkey.

"There's some giraffes"

"Well yes you get giraffes in Africa," Daddy monkey replied.

"Why don't we get any near our tree?"

"The lions scare them off."

"Can't we ask the lions not to eat them?"

"Well we don't want the giraffes coming and eating our leaves do we?"

"I suppose not," Baby monkey replied.

Soon they reached the city center and spotted a particularly large shop.

"I want to go shopping in there," said Mummy monkey pointing to that large department store and jumping off the bus roof.

"What are you going to get?" asked Daddy following.

"Shoes and a dress, I'm a lady monkey. What else do ladies get in the shops?"

"What are you going to get?" she asked.

"Don't know," perhaps the latest Manchester United top.

"Man United, I didn't know you liked football. Anyway, we don't live in Manchester, we live in Africa."

"Most Manchester supporters don't live in Manchester."

"Yes but you should support a local team?"

"Such as?"

"I don't know what they're called but some of the gazelles have taken to kicking some stones about."

"It's hardly the same is it?"

"No I suppose not, so what else are you going to get?"

"A big, flat screen tally."

"So how are you going to get that home?"

"On the bus of course."

"We don't have anywhere to plug it in, I don't know if you'd noticed but there aren't many sockets in our tree."

"I'm going to get a solar powered one."

"What about at night when the Man U are playing in the Champions league."

"We'll have to record it," Daddy monkey said and went and hung from a light fitting.

"What can I get," asked Baby Monkey.

"Whatever you like," replied his mother.

"I want a comic and an ice cream because I'm hot and I want a radio controlled helicopter to annoy the lions with and a lot of Lego to build a tree just like our, so we can live in a Lego tree and I want car and a train set and a Barbie doll."

"What do you want a Barbie for?" Daddy asked from his light.

"Let him have a Barbie," mother said.

"Cause she's a monkey doctor, that's her new job." Baby added, "Monkey doctor. She can cure you if you get an itchy bottom."

"I never get an itchy bottom." Daddy Monkey replied indignantly.

"Why do you keep scratching it then?" Mother asked.

"I'm a monkey, monkeys are supposed to scratch their bottoms."

Mummy monkey was no longer listening, she had spotted a pair of shoes and like most females, all thoughts went out of her brain at the sight of some shiny new shoes.

"I'm having those shoes," she said.

"Of course dear," Daddy monkey replied looking round the shop for some football tops and televisions.

Mummy monkey ran over and grabbed the shoes, but she was a monkey and had size one feet, whereas the shoes were size four and they didn't fit so as soon as she tried them on they just fell off.

Try stuffing a newspaper in them?" Father suggested.

"Oh good idea,"

Mummy monkey got a copy of Hello, and used the latest celebrity wedding to keep her shoes on.

"This isn't a funny comic." Baby monkey said picking up what he thought was a comic.

"That's because it's the News of the World," Daddy replied. "They're difficult to tell apart. Comics have better stories though."

"Oh no we've been rumbled." He shouted as he saw a group of humans coming towards them. Let's scarper."

Mummy monkey raced after her monkey husband in her three-inch high stilettos with pages of Hello trailing after her. They ran through to the next department, perfume.

"Oh I have to try these," she said.

Bouncing off the counters the three monkeys jumped and grabbed perfume bottles from the orange faced women. Each one was hastily applied by Mummy monkey and so Britney Spears' latest concoction soon mingled with parfum de monkey in an ever increasing assault to the nose.

Still being chased by an increasing number of humans the monkeys then ran through into the women's clothing department, which took up sixty percent of the store and Mummy monkey grabbed a small black cocktail dress as she bounced past.

The monkeys ran out of the store and onto the top of a number 27 bus going past.

"There's a 44 going back to our tree." Daddy shouted as bus went past in the opposite direction. The three monkeys jumped from the top of one bus to the other bus.

Mummy monkey nearly dropped her Hello covered shoes as they did.

An hour later the monkeys were sitting in their tree. Daddy monkey hadn't got his solar powered, flat screen tally or his football top.

Baby Monkey had got a rubbish comic that wasn't what he really wanted.

Mummy Monkey had got a nice black dress, a pair of shoes that don't quite fit and some perfume.

So all in all a pretty normal shopping trip then.

My Time is Coming:

An elephant and a dog became pregnant at same time.

Three months down the line the dog gave birth to six puppies.

Six months later the dog was pregnant again.

And nine months on it gave birth to another dozen puppies.

The pattern continued.

On the eighteenth month the dog approached the elephant questioning.

"Are you sure that you are pregnant? We became pregnant on the same date. I have given birth three times to a dozen puppies and they are now grown to become big dogs. Yet you are still pregnant. What's going on?"

The elephant replied.

"There is something I want you to understand. What I am carrying is not a puppy but an elephant. I only give birth to one in two years. When my baby hits the ground, the earth feels it. When my baby crosses the road, human beings stop and watch in admiration. What I carry draws attention. So what I'm carrying is mighty and great."

LESSON : Don't lose faith when you see others receive answers to their prayers.

LESSON : If you haven't received your own blessings, don't despair.

LESSON : Say to yourself - My Time is Coming. My blessings are being processed, prepared, packaged and wrapped up in God's glory.

Owning Mistakes:

Simon was a curious boy. He was fond of reading adventure stories. He lived with his grandfather. One night, he stealthily entered the store room where his grandfather kept his priceless antiques. Simon knew his grandfather did not like anyone to touch his rare collections.

Once inside the room, Simon stood on a chair. He lifted the box wherein his grandfather had kept many wrist-watches bought from different countries he had visited.

While getting down from the chair, Simon's elbow struck against the chair. The box slipped out of his hands and fell onto the floor. All the watches lay scattered all around. To his utter shock, he found the glass of his grandfather's favorite watch broken.

Simon got frightened lest his grandfather should come to know about the broken glass. He started picking up the pieces of glass.

Simon thought, "How will I tell my grandfather that his favorite watch had got broken? He will be angry with me. If I do not tell him, he will not come to know about it."

Simon got nervous. His heart started beating faster. He put the broken watch back into the box and placed the box back on the shelf. Afterwards, he went to

sleep. He tossed and turned in bed. He could not sleep in peace throughout the whole night.

The next morning, Simon got up early. He gathered courage to go and admit his fault to his grandfather. Reaching his grandfather's bedroom he told him everything. The grandfather looked thoughtful. He did not say anything to Simon. He went over to the store room. Simon kept standing with his head down.

Having returned from the store the grandfather said to Simon, "I felt very angry when you had broken my precious watch. Your grandmother gifted it to me on our first wedding anniversary. But you need not worry. Only the glass is broken. I shall have it replaced."

Simon felt relieved. After some time, his grandfather went into kitchen and bought a glass of milk for him.

While giving the milk to Simon, his grandfather said, "It was brave enough of you to tell me about the broken watch. You knew that I would scold you, did not you?"

Simon said, "I was scared at first. But I dared not tell a lie. I should not have touched your things without your permission."

Simon's grandfather further remarked, "When I was at your age, I also broke my mother's precious flower-case. I was scared to own up my mistake. But, when I went to confess, she said that she already knew about it."

It is brave to admit your mistake. You may be scared of being scolded. But it is the only way for you to be free from guilt.

Perceptive:

Two twin boys were raised by an alcoholic father. One grew up to be an alcoholic and when asked what happened, he said "I watched my father."

The other grew up and never drank in his life. When asked what happened, he said "I watched my father."

Two boys, same dad, two different perspectives.

Your perspective in life will determine your destination.

Today is a new day.

Positive Thinking:

Sometimes life can be tough, and it is easy to focus on the negative. However, those who are true to the positive and joys of life will see this story for what it really is — The true way we should view life and all its wonders.

Read the story below and let it change your thinking about life!

Two men are seriously ill and in the same hospital room. For an hour each day, the nurses would let the man closest to the room's only window sit up in order to help drain the fluid in his lungs.

The other man in the room spent all his time flat on his back.

As you can imagine, with little else to do, the men would talk for hours. They spoke about their families, homes, their lives in the military and where they had traveled.

And each day, the man sitting away from the window longed for the hour when his roommate would be able to sit up and describe the details of the world outside their room.

He would speak of children playing, of animals peacefully roaming and of happy families playing in the water.

Sadly, after months of this, the day arrived when the man closest to the window died in his sleep. After his body had been removed from the room and some time had passed, the other man asked if he could take the bed by the window. The nurses were happy to oblige him and they made the switch.

Once they were gone, the man slowly and painfully pulled himself up so he could take his first good look at the world outside the hospital room, the world whose description had brought him so much comfort.

To his dismay, he found that the view was not as vibrant as he'd been told; in fact, the window faced a blank wall.

Upset, the man called for the nurse and explained the situation.

"Why would he lie to me?" he questioned the nurse.

After thinking for a moment, the nurse looked at him and said:

"Maybe he just wanted to encourage you."

This should be a lesson to all of us that no matter our situation, we can do tremendous good for those around us by looking on the bright side of every situation.

Even when we're faced with what seems like an impenetrable brick wall, we can bring so much happiness and joy to those around us if we find positive ways of looking at the world.

The man in the story could just as easily have described the bland, brick wall that stood outside the window but instead of simply passing along his misery and grief, he shared whatever happiness he did have, doubling it.

Powerful Advice From A Dying Man:

I am only 24 years old, yet I have actually already chosen my last tie. It's the one that I will wear on my funeral a few months from now. It may not match my suit, but I think it's perfect for the occasion.

The cancer diagnosis came too late to give me at least a tenuous hope for a long life, but I realized that the most important thing about death is to ensure that you leave this world a little better than it was before you existed with your contributions.

The way I've lived my life so far, my existence or more precisely the loss of it, will not matter because I have lived without doing anything impactful you existed with your contributions.

Before, there were so many things that occupied my mind. When I learned how much time I had left, however, it became clear which things are really important. So, I am writing to you for a selfish reason....I want to give meaning

to my life by sharing with you what I have realized: you existed with your contributions.

Don't waste your time on work that you don't enjoy. It is obvious that you cannot succeed in something that you don't like. Patience, passion and dedication come easily only when you love what you do.

It's stupid to be afraid of others' opinions. Fear weakens and paralyzes you. If you let it, it can grow worse and worse every day until there is nothing left of you, but a shell of yourself. Listen to your inner voice and go with it. Some people may call you crazy, but some may even think you're a legend.

Take control of your life. Take full responsibility for the things that happen to you. Limit bad habits and try to lead a healthier life. Find a sport that makes you happy. Most of all, don't procrastinate. Let your life be shaped by decisions you made, not by the ones you didn't.

Appreciate the people around you. Your friends and relatives will always be an infinite source of strength and love. That is why you shouldn't take them for granted.

It is difficult for me to fully express my feelings about the importance of these simple realizations, but I hope that you will listen to someone who has experienced how valuable time is. I'm not upset because I understand that the last days of my life have become meaningful. I only regret that I will not be able to see a lot of cool stuff that should happen soon like the creation of AI or Elon Musks next awesome project. I also hope that the war in Syria and Ukraine will end soon. We care so much about the health and integrity of our body that until death, we don't notice that the body is nothing more than a box - a parcel for delivering our personality, thoughts, beliefs and intentions to this world. If there is nothing in this box that can change the world, then it doesn't matter if it disappears. I believe that we all have potential, but it also takes a lot of courage to realize it. You can float through a life created by circumstances, missing day after day, hour after hour. Or, you can fight for what you believe in and write the great story of your life. I hope you will make the right choice. Leave a mark in this world. Have a meaningful life, whatever definition it has for you. Go towards it. The place we are leaving is a beautiful playground, where everything is possible. Yet, we are not here forever. Our life is a short spark in this beautiful little planet that mess with incredible speed to

the endless darkness of the unknown universe. So, enjoy your time here with passion. Make it interesting. Make it count!

Ribbit The Rabbit:

Once there lived a foolish Rabbit named Ribbit.

"Oh, it is quite dangerous to live on land," Ribbit always thought.

Ribbit thought hard to find a safe place to live.

Finally, he thought of one.

"I will go and live in the river! He said.

So foolish Ribbit went to the river, and jumped into it!

"Help!" cried Ribbit. He did not even know how to swim.

A tortoise heard Ribbit crying and saved him.

That was the last time Ribbit ever went near the river.

Reward for bravery:

There was once a kind Duke. He was loved and respected by his subjects. This Duke had a wicked brother. His name was Frederick. Frederick rebelled against his brother. He drove away the Duke. The Duke was a peace loving person. He left the Dukedom. He went to the forest called Arden. His followers also went with him. There he led a peaceful life with his followers. Frederick became the Duke.

The Duke had a daughter. Her name was Rosalind. Frederick also had a daughter. Her name was Celia. Rosalind and Celia were fond each other from their childhood. Celia wanted Rosalind to be with her in the palace. Frederick allowed Rosalind to be in the palace with his daughter. This was for the sake of his own daughter, Celia.

Sir Rowland De Boys was friend of the elder Duke who was in the forest. Sir Rowland died leaving all his property to his eldest son whose name was Oliver. Oliver was jealous of his younger brother whose name was Orlando. Oliver did not give any part of the property or money to Orlando. He did not even educate Orlando either.

In Duke Frederick's court, there was a powerful wrestler. His name was Charles. No young man dared to challenge Charles. But Orlando accepted the challenge. Oliver met Charles secretly. He instructed Charles to do the worst to Orlando.

At the wrestling place there were many people. Duke Frederick was also there. In the earlier matches Charles threw little challengers one after another. All the three challengers had broken their ribs. They were struggling for life. Celia and Rosalind also had come there. Duke Frederick asked the girls to talk to the young man, Orlando. Frederick had felt that Charles would throw Orlando down in the fight. The girls approached Orlando. They requested him not to fight. Orlando refused gently. He said, "I have no one to care for me. I do not care even to die."

The match began. Orlando was much stronger than Charles. Orlando lifted Charles above his shoulders. Then he threw him down. Charles became unconscious after falling. Frederick and all others were happy. They congratulated Orlando. Orlando told Frederick, "I am the second son of late Sir Rowland de Boys."

Frederick did not like Orlando from that minute onwards, because Frederick had not liked Sir Rowland de Boys.

The two girls on the contrary praised Orlando. Rosalind was happy. Sit Rowland had been her father's friend. She then took out a chain from her neck and presented it to Orlando. This was the reward for his bravery.

Why the sky is far away:

Raman looked at the food in his lunch box and made a face. "Idli and chutney and chutney and idli again," he said to his friend Bhim."

Bhim gave his own lunch a critical look and frowned. "You think that's bad," he said, "I've got bread and jam again. It's the third time this week!"

They pushed the food aside. "We can get something at the burger place after school," Raman said. They concentrated on studying for their English test instead of eating. English was next period, and Mr. Frank had a reputation for giving difficult tests. When the bell rang, they dropped their uneaten lunches into the garbage. Mr. Frank was standing nearby. "Not hungry, guys?" he asked. They shook their heads and hurried off to class.

When the test was over, there were still ten minutes left in the period. Mr. Frank stood at the front of the class. "Before you leave today," he said, leaning against the desk, "I'd like to share an old African folktale with you. I think you'll find this one interesting. It's called 'Why the Sky Is Far Away'"

Long ago the sky was close to the Earth. Men and women did not have to plant their own food. Instead, when they were hungry, they just reached up and broke off a piece of the sky to eat. Sometimes the sky tasted like ripe bananas. Other times it tasted like roasted potatoes. The sky was always delicious.

People spent their time making beautiful cloth. They painted beautiful pictures and sang songs at night. The grand king, Oba, had a wonderful palace. His servants made beautiful shapes out of pieces of sky.

Many people in the kingdom did not use the gift of the sky wisely. When they took more than they could eat, the sky became angry. Some people threw the extra pieces into the garbage.

Early one morning the angry sky turned dark. Black clouds hung over the land and a great sky voice said to all the people, "You are wasting my gift of food. Do not take more than you can eat. I don't want to see pieces of me in the garbage anymore or I will take my gift away."

The king and the people trembled with fear. King Oba said, "Let's be careful about how much food we take." For a long time, all the people were careful.

But one man named Adami wasn't careful. At festival time, he took so many delicious pieces of sky that he couldn't eat them all. He knew he must not throw them away.

He tried to give the pieces to his wife. "Here, wife," Adami said. "You eat the rest."

"I can't," Adami's wife said. "I'm too full."

Adami asked all his children to help him eat the delicious pieces of sky, but the children couldn't eat one more bite. So Adami decided to try to hide the pieces at the bottom of the garbage pile.

Suddenly, the sky became angry and the clouds turned black. "You have wasted my gift of food again," yelled the sky.

"This time I will go away so you cannot waste me anymore."

All of the people cried, "What will we eat? We might starve!"

The sky said, "You will have to learn how to plant crops in the ground and hunt in the forests. If you work hard, you may learn not to waste the gifts of nature."

Everyone watched as the sky sailed away. From that time on, they worked hard to grow their food and cook their meals. They always tried to remember not to waste the gifts of nature.

The bell rang for the next period. "That's the end," Mr. Frank said, smiling. He looked at Raman and Bhim.

"What did you think of the story?" he asked. They slouched in their chairs and looked apologetic.

"We get the message," they said, smiling. "No more lunches in the garbage!"

When Papa Scolded Me:

"Baby, come for breakfast. Your milk is getting cold," called Bhaiya, my elder brother. I quickly put on my slippers, picked up my favorite doll, Beeta and rushed out into the verandah. It was a beautiful day. The morning air was most refreshing. "Ah, how lovely!" I said aloud, taking a deep breath. I ran across the verandah, with Beeta tucked under my arm.

While I gulped down the milk, I heard Papa calling out to the driver.

"Papa is still here, Bhaiya. He hasn't gone to the clinic, today," I said overwhelmed with joy.

Being engrossed in a magazine, Bhaiya did not reply, but I could see Papa talking to someone in his room, which was opposite the dining hall facing the verandah.

"Papa! Papa! I don't have to go to school, it's a holiday. Do you have a holiday, too? Look, Beeta has got fever," I said, all in one breath.

"No, my dear child, I don't have a holiday today. You go and play while I talk to Mr. Singh.

He is very ill. I'll ask the compounder to give your doll some medicine," Papa said lovingly.

It was quite unusual to find my father at home at that time. Normally he was in his clinic before I woke up. So I was very happy. My father wiped his spectacles with the kerchief as he listened to his patient carefully.

I was on the balcony when I heard, "Baby! Baby! Come here, see this." It was my brother from the verandah. He had spread himself on an easy chair and our dog, Tom, was dancing round on his hind legs. I burst out laughing.

"Papa will give medicine to Beeta," I said, showing off.

"And I'll ask Papa to give some medicine to his darling daughter, because. . . .Because she laughs and laughs," said Bhaiya, tickling me and sending me into fits of laughter. Being the youngest child in the family I received everyone's attention and affection. Papa of course, was the most affectionate.

I ran from one end of the verandah to the other and then onto the balcony, staying close to Papa's room to attract his attention while I played. I swung on the curtain, thumped on the door, tapped on the table, pulled and pushed the chair.

"Look, Bhaiya, what a variety of sounds they make," I said, pulling the chair, then leaping up and rapping on the door, clapping my hands, jumping all the while.

"Don't," pleaded Bhaiya, not taking his eyes off the book in his hand.

Racing back to the window of Papa's room, I saw him still busy with the patient. I loved to see him there before me, while I played. 'He must like it, too,' I thought, 'to see me play around in his room.'

I dragged a chair and climbed onto the table.

This at last drew Papa's attention.

"Baby, be careful, you'll fall down," he said tenderly.

"Look, Papa, I am taller than everyone," I grinned from ear to ear making my eyes disappear.

All one could see was a set of white teeth and chubby cheeks.

Both Mr. Singh and Papa smiled. Papa did not look convinced. So I said again raising my hands above my head. "Papa I'm a big girl, now."

He nodded with a smile and continued talking to the patient.

I touched all that I could reach with my hands till I got to the black switch. 'No, you should not touch it.' I was imagining what my mother would have said.

'If you touch it, you'll get hurt,' Bhaiya had told me once. This was a 'forbidden' article for me, but how attractive it looked — black against the light blue wall. Unable to resist the temptation to touch it, I pressed the switch and the light came on. I immediately switched it off. I was scared, I looked at Papa with large anxious eyes, but he was busy writing. He did not see me. I looked at Papa again and then at the switch which begged my hands to touch it again.

'I'll do it just once more, okay?' I said softly to myself. I repeated the mischief once more and was unable to stop myself from doing it again and again. I seemed to have disturbed Papa who concentrating on the patient's problem.

Without looking up from the book, he said in a serious voice, "Don't do that, you might get a shock."

The klick-klack of the switch and the glowing bulb fascinated me, "Baby, come here, let Papa do his work," called my brother.

I ignored everybody. This was the most fascinating game for me at the moment.

How fantastic! I press — the light is on, I push — the light goes off', I muttered.

The patient, obviously, had some serious problem.

My father sat with four books open in front of him. My running around had certainly disturbed him. Completely exasperated, he put down his pen and spectacles and shouted at me, "You're not listening to me. GET DOWN FROM THERE!"

His loud voice broke my trance. I gaped at him wide-eyed. He fixed his gaze on me, expecting to be obeyed instantly. I was shocked at being scolded so loudly by him — scolded by Papa. Papa, a very soft spoken person, who was known never to raise his voice, had SHOUTED in anger at his darling daughter. I was very angry with him.

I jumped down from the table with a loud thud and raced up and down the balcony. My breath quickened, my face went red with anger and my eyes felt hot with unshed tears. Throwing my hands about, I raced up and down wanting to destroy everything that came in my way.

Hearing the commotion Bhaiya came out.

"What is it?" he asked. My fury found a ready victim and I ran towards him and pushed him. I felt like bursting into tears. I rushed and pulled at the curtain in Papa's room, which came down with the force. I saw Papa talking to the patient with his usual patience.

How unthoughtful of him! He is not a bit bothered about my being so angry with him. I was fuming all the more.

I went back into the room, stamping my feet noisily in anger. Standing close to Papa, I raged vehemently, "Why couldn't you say it softly?"

Why did you speak so loudly to me?"

The next moment I came out on the balcony and stood beside the money-plant pot. My eyes were now full of tears. I plucked a leaf and shredded it to pieces. The sound of a chair being pushed in Papa's room reached my ears and then I heard his footsteps coming closer to me. I tried to run away in annoyance, but Papa caught me. He pulled my face towards his and picked me up. Tears came rolling down my plump cheeks. He patted my head lovingly and wiped my tears.

"Oh, you big cat!" said Papa, ruffling my hair.

This affectionate gesture melted my wrath. A moment later I was once again happy playing round the house.

What goes around comes around:

One day, a boy who was selling goods from door to door to pay his way through school, found he had only one thin dime left and he was hungry. He decided he would ask for a meal at the next house. However, he lost his nerve when a lovely young girl opened the door.

Instead of a meal he asked for a drink of water. She thought he looked hungry so she brought him a large glass of milk.

He drank it slowly and then asked, "How much do I owe you?"

"You don't owe me anything," she replied. "Mother taught us never to accept payment for a kindness."

"Then I thank you from the bottom of my heart," he replied.

As the boy left that house, he not only felt stronger physically, but his faith had been restored. He had been ready to give up and quit.

Year's later that young girl became critically ill. The local doctors were baffled. They finally sent her to the city, where they called in specialists to study her rare disease.

Dr. Howard Kelly was called in for the consultation. When he heard the name of the town she came from, a strange light filled his eyes. Immediately he rose and went down the hall of the hospital to her room.

Dressed in his doctor's gown he went in to see her. After meeting her, he went back to the consultation room determined to save her life. From that day he gave all his attention to her case.

After a long struggle, the battle was won. Dr. Kelly requested the business office to pass the final bill to him for approval. He looked at it, and then wrote something in the margin and the bill was sent to her room.

She feared to open it, for she was sure it would take the rest of her life to pay for it all. Finally she looked and something caught her attention on the side of the bill. She began to read the following words....

Paid in full with one glass of milk. Signed.....Dr. Howard Kelly.

Use All Your Strength:

To ask for help and support when we need it is not a sign of weakness, it is a sign of wisdom.

While walking along a forest path, Diana and her father came across a large tree branch on the ground.

Dad, if I try, do you think I could move that branch?

I am sure you can if you use all your strength.

Diana tried her best to lift the branch, but she couldn't move it.

You were wrong, dad. I can't move it.

The disappointment was evident in the little girl's voice.

Try again with all your strength.

Encouraged her father.

Diana tried again but failed.

Dad, I cannot do it!

Young lady, I advised you to use all your strength. You didn't ask for my help.

Our real strength lies not in independence, but in interdependence. To ask for help when in need is not a sign of weakness but a sign of wisdom.

Understand Your Anger:

There once was a young boy with a very bad temper. The boy's father wanted to teach him a lesson, so he gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper he must hammer a nail into their wooden fence. On the first day of this lesson, the little boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. He was really mad!

Over the course of the next few weeks, the little boy began to control his temper, so the number of nails that were hammered into the fence dramatically decreased.

It wasn't long before the little boy discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence. Then, the day finally came when the little boy didn't lose his temper even once and he became so proud of himself, he couldn't wait to tell his father.

Pleased, his father suggested that he now pull out one nail for each day that he could hold his temper.

Several weeks went by and the day finally came when the young boy was able to tell his father that all the nails were gone.

Very gently, the father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence.

"You have done very well, my son," he smiled, "but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same"

The little boy listened carefully as his father continued to speak. "When you say things in anger, they leave permanent scars just like these. And no matter how many times you say you're sorry, the wounds will still be there."

Two Poor Boys:

In New York there were Joe and Bill. Joe and Bill were close friends. But they were very poor. They did odd deeds to earn money. They swept and cleaned the streets for their living.

One cold morning, Joe was wandering along the streets of New York. He found an apple. He picked up the apple from the ground.

He asked his friend Bill, "What did you find today for our night food?"

"I got nothing today," replied Bill in anguish. Joe gave his apple to Bill and said, "Bill...you eat this apple."

Bill bit a small piece off the apple. Joe said, "No. Bite off more. Eat more. I am strong. I can bear hunger. You are weak. You can not bear hunger."

By these words of Joe, Bill was satisfied and he remained a good friend of Joe forever. Thereafter they remained good friends.

Two Headed Bird:

Once upon a time a strange bird lived by the side of a river. His name was Parundam. He had two heads and one stomach.

For the two heads there were two mouths one for each one.

One day the bird was wandering for his food. After a long time he got a prey. It was very happy.

The first mouth was about to eat the full prey. The second mouth stopped the first mouth and demanded half of the prey.

"I will not give you anything," said the first mouth and ate all the prey.

The other mouth got angry. In order to take revenge, it decided to do one thing. It searched and gulped the poison it found.

"Though the mouths are two, the stomach is only one...The same stomach...it not it?"

So the poison spread all over the body. The strange bird died.

So, unity is the strength.

Dream Big:

Lily is a little girl, who is shy and reserved. But she enjoys playing soccer. Her friends and classmates ridicule Lily for her interest in soccer. Nonetheless, she is determined to pursue her passion and become a successful soccer player.

Every day, after returning from school, Lily quickly finishes her homework and practices soccer. Her mother understands the love Lily has for the sport and supports her in every way.

When the interschool competitions are announced at the school, Lily decides to participate. She takes part in the selection trials, and her classmates mock her once again. But they are shocked when Lily performs well and the judges select her to represent the school. Lily's commitment and hard work mute every person who mocked her.

Tippy and Kitty:

Tippy Dog and Kitty Cat lived in Donny's home. Donny liked them both very much. But Tippy and Kitty always quarreled with each other. Tippy barked at Kitty whenever she saw her.

One night, a robber came to Donny's home. Tippy started to bark loudly. Suddenly, the robber took a stick and moved forward to beat Tippy. Kitty was watching this.

"Oh, no! The robber will harm Tippy and Donny," she thought. Kitty ran to the Robber, and scratched his leg hard. The robber shrieked in pain. Tippy barked loudly. Donny and his father came out and caught the robber.

Tippy thanked Kitty for saving her from the robber. Then, they both became good friends.

Tiger Story:

Once up a time there were three tigers. Daddy tiger, Mummy tiger and Baby tiger.

One day, Baby tiger turned to his parents, "I'm bored eating gazelles and antelopes. I want to eat something else."

"What dear?" his mother asked.

"I want chocolate."

"Chocolate!"

"Yes chocolate. I've heard it's very nice."

"Who told you that?"

"Nobody, I just heard it that's all."

"Have you been hanging about with those panthers again? I've told you about those panthers, they're no good."

"No it wasn't from the panthers, I just heard it, that's all. Can I have some chocolate?"

"I'll ask your father when he gets in from hunting."

Surprisingly Daddy tiger was all for going and getting some chocolate. "It would be good for our son to see a bit more of the jungle," he replied.

"Where do we get chocolate then? Mother tiger asked.

"Well there's a shop on the edge of the jungle. They've got all sorts of things and they're bound to have chocolate."

"All right," mother replied in a way that would have been cagily, except she didn't like cages.

The three tigers walked to the edge of the jungle to where there was a shop.

"How do we get the chocolate?" Baby tiger asked.

"Go in and get it." Daddy tiger said. He walked up to the shop and the doors slid open. Suddenly there were screams of "Tiger" and "Help" and "Oh No" and all the humans ran out of the shop via the back door.

Daddy tiger walked back out the front of the shop now, "I think we can get some stuff now all the people have kindly left."

"Where's the chocolate?" Baby tiger asked as they entered the shop.

"Over here. I think." Mummy tiger replied looking at a counter.

But baby tiger was no longer listening. He had found a trolley.

"Push me, push me, push me," he shouted jumping in.

"What are all these things?" Mummy tiger asked as she wandered round the shop.

"I don't know." Daddy tiger replied, beginning to push the trolley. "Just throw them into the trolley, we can sort it all out when we get home."

So the three tigers ran round the shop throwing various things into the trolley, while Baby tiger roared as they skidded round the corners. Soon the trolley was full of stuff.

"What do we do now?" Mummy tiger asked.

Daddy tiger would have shrugged his shoulders in reply if he knew how to do it, but he said, "go up to the tills," in reply.

The three tiger went up to the tills and Mummy tiger jumped onto the counter.

"Now what?" she asked.

"You open the tills and put something in it."

"What sort of thing?"

"I don't know, see what's already in it?"

Mummy tiger then used her claws to try and open the till. It fell on the floor.

"Oops," she said as piles of paper and round pieces of metal fell out.

"Well I don't have any round pieces of metal," Daddy tiger said.

"We could take some of the paper off the other things and leave them in the till." Mummy suggested.

"Is this chocolate?" Baby tiger asked picking up a Twirl.

"I think so." Daddy tiger replied.

"Why don't we take the paper off the chocolate and put them in the till." Baby suggested.

"Good idea," Mummy tiger replied. So the three tigers started unwrapping chocolate bars, until they had two piles, one of chocolate and the other of paper.

"Right help me put the till back on the counter," Daddy tiger said. So the two grownup tigers started tiger-handling the till back onto the counter. Meanwhile Baby tiger just stared at the slightly melting pile of chocolate.

"Here goes," Baby tiger said and he buried his head in the chocolate. "YUK! Chocolate is horrible, I don't like it."

"Never mind son," Mummy tiger said. "Remember we're tigers and we eat gazelles and antelopes, not chocolate. Get back into the trolley we'll push you back through the jungle."

So Baby tiger sat on the front of the trolley with a saucepan on his head, while his two parents pushed him through the car park and to the edge of the jungle where the wheels of the trolley got stuck in the mud.

"We'll just have to carry stuff from here." Daddy tiger said.

So the three tigers unloaded the contents of the trolley, and struggled back to their tiger-home in the jungle.

"What do you want for tea?" Mummy tiger asked. "Gazelle or Antelope?"

"What about ice-cream?" Baby tiger replied, "I've heard that's very nice."

The Wise Son:

Once there was a wise King. He had two sons. He appointed eminent scholars to teach them all arts. After a few years, The King fell ill badly. So he wanted to select the next king for his kingdom. He wanted to test his sons' abilities.

He called both of them and gave them a room to each one. He said, "You must fill your room completely with anything you wish. It can be anything! But there should not be any space left behind and you should not seek advice from other!"

The next day, the king visited the elder son's room. The room was completely filled with hay. The king sighed on the foolishness of the elder son.

Then he went to the room given to the younger son. But it was kept closed. The King knocked at the door. The younger son asked his father to get in and closed the door again. There was darkness everywhere and the king shouted at his son angrily.

But the younger son lighted a candle and said, "I have filled this room with light!" Now the king felt very happy and hugged his son proudly. He understood that the younger son would be the right person to rule the kingdom.

The Ungrateful Lion:

In a dense forest, lived a fierce lion. He was very cruel. One day the lion was caught in a hunter's trap. One by one many animals passed by. "Please help me!" pleaded the lion. But none of the animals listened to his plea.

After a while, a man happened to come into the forest. He saw the lion. The lion said, "I will die of hunger and suffocation. Please help me out, O! kind man." The man was thoughtful. "I assure you I will never harm you. Please help me now. The hunter will be anytime now," said the lion.

The man felt sorry for the lion and set the beast free. As soon as the lion was free, he let out a fierce roar. "I have been trapped in the cage for a long time. I am hungry. I will have to eat you," said the lion, looking at the man. "But you promised that you would not harm me," said the man, in a meek tone. "Yes, I said that. But only to convince you to free me. Now, I am terribly hungry," said the lion.

The terrified man thought quickly. He said, "Alright, you can eat me. But let a judge decide if you are right in eating the person who has rescued you."

The lion agreed. He was sure that no animal would speak against him. Just then a jackal came that way and the lion asked the jackal to be the judge. He addressed the lion, "Sir, would you please show me how it all happened?" The lion was only too willing. He entered the cage and closed the cage door. The jackal immediately bolted the cage from outside.

"Now the lion is trapped again. Run away, you foolish man! And never offer help to anyone without thinking," said the jackal. The frightened man ran for his life. And the ungrateful lion was trapped in the cage again. The hunter came and took the lion away to his circus.

The Ugly Tree:

Long, long ago, in a dense forest there were thousands of tall and beautiful trees. They were happy, but proud of themselves. Among them there also an ugly tree whose branches were badly twisted. Its roots had uneven curves. All the trees made fun of that ugly tree.

"How are you, hunchback?" the other trees always shouted and their laughter made the ugly tree feel sad. But, he never raised a voice against them. The ugly tree thought, "I wish I were as beautiful as the other trees. Why did God do this to me? Neither can I provide shade to the travelers nor can the birds make their nests on me. Nobody needs me."

One day, a woodcutter came to the forest. He took a look at the trees and said, "These trees are lovely. I must cut them." As soon as he picked up his axe the trees became frightened.

'Chop, Chop, Chop' went the woodcutter's axe and one by one the trees started to fall. "None of us is going to be spared," screamed one of the beautiful trees. Soon that tree too was brought to ground by the woodcutter's axe.

By now, the woodcutter had come near to the ugly tree. He had just raised his axe when suddenly he noticed how crooked the ugly tree was. "Hmm! This crooked tree seems to be useless for me. I cannot make long straight logs of this ugly tree," he thought. And he moved towards another beautiful tree. The ugly tree heaved a huge sigh of relief. He realized that by making him ugly, God had actually given him a boon.

From that day the ugly tree never complained. He was happy with his crooked branches. He never forgot how he was spared from the woodcutter's axe, only because he was crooked and ugly.

The Trees and The Lions:

Far away from a kingdom there was a huge jungle. In that jungle, there were thousands of trees. Among them two were very good friends. They stood side by side. The same jungle was the home of many lions. Those lions used to kill

other animals living in that jungle and eat them. The carcasses of the dead animals used to stink and a foul smell would hang in the air. The whole atmosphere was bad to live in.

One day, the two trees, who were friends, were talking. The first tree said, "These lions are polluting our jungle. We have to save our jungle from them. They must be driven out of this jungle."

"Yes," agreed the other tree.

A wise old tree, who was listening to the friends said, "They might be polluting the air. But these wild creatures are keeping us safe from woodcutters. No woodcutter will dare to come into the forest which has lions."

But, this advice did not go into the minds of the trees. The two friends decided to frighten the animals away. That evening, the two trees started shaking violently. "We will frighten the lions away. They will be so terrified that they will leave this jungle and never come back into this jungle," said the two friends and laughed aloud.

The whole forest echoed with their laughter. "Do not do that," shouted the wise tree.

But the two friends did not listen. They began moving in the wind and making eerie noises. All the other wild animals in the forest were scared, seeing the two trees and the sounds they were creating. "There is something happening in the forest. Let us run away," they said. All the animals fled the jungle.

The two friends were happy. "Huh! Now we can enjoy some fresh air," they said.

But their joy was short-lived. One day a woodcutter came to the forest and started felling the trees. "Now there is no fear of the ferocious lions," he muttered to himself. Soon there were other wood cutters. Seeing this, the wise tree said, "Now all of us will be doomed." The two friends cried out, "How foolish we have been. We should have listened to this wise tree."

A little later the two tree friends were brought down by the wood cutter's axe. The Trees and The Lions are must.

Day by day, more and more trees were destroyed by many woodcutters.

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The Strength of Ugliness:

It was a dense forest. Trees were found in all kinds. There were big trees and small trees, thick trees and thin trees and tall trees and short trees. There was this one tree which was a crooked one. The trunk was bent in all directions. It was a bit funny to look at. The crooked tree turned around and had a look at all other trees. There were all very up-right. They were standing straight. "See how ugly I am. I am good for nothing. All these fellow trees are straight and beautiful. I am not even one bit amicable." It lamented.

There came a heavy thunder storm. It started raining heavily. Strong winds started blowing. The wind gushed through the forest and water flushed away everything that lay on the ground. The soil all over was eroded. Trees fell one by one. First the thin ones fell, then small ones. Not only that, while the huge ones fell they cut-off the nearby trees also. So there were trees lying all over the place. All this time crooked tree shut its eyes and braced firmly biting its roots firm in the ground.

Slowly the storm subdued and there was silence. The crooked tree opened its eyes and alas, the whole place was a graveyard. All the beautiful trees were dead now. This crooked tree was one among the few survivors. Now this crooked tree understood the meaning of real strength.

The Selfish Crows:

Once upon a time, there was a very big forest. There on a huge banyan tree lived many crows. They were selfish and arrogant. They always quarreled with other birds. This behavior irritated other birds. They had no friends, as no one liked them.

When the rainy season came, dark clouds gathered in the sky. A small mynah was returning to her nest. When she was passing by the banyan tree, it started raining. "I will stay here for a while until it stops raining," thought the little mynah. And I took rest on the banyan tree for a while.

The selfish crows saw her perching on the tree. One of them shouted, "Get off the tree. This tree belongs to us." The mynah humbly pleaded, "The weather is bad and my nest is far off from this forest. Please let me take a rest for a while on this tree, brother. As soon as it stops raining, I will return to my nest."

"Leave this banyan tree at once. Or we will peck you," said the other crows. The merciless tendency of the selfish crows scared the mynah. The mynah found no other way except to fly off. Then immediately the mynah flew off to a nearby tree, where luckily she found a hollow in a broken branch. She took her shelter there.

Shortly after, the rain became heavy followed by thunderstorm. The wind was in high speed. Even the leaves and branches were not enough to give shelter to the crows. Many of the branches of many tree in which the crows had taken shelter were damaged and hurt by the hailstones. But the mynah was safe inside the hollow place in the tree.

One of the crows said, "Look at the mynah! How comfortable she is. Let us go there." Another crow said, "I do not think she will let us share the hollow. We did not have sympathy for her when she was in need of this tree." Then another crow said, "We should not have been so rude. We forgot that we may need help someday."

Suddenly the mynah called out, "Come! My friends! Come to this hollow. Or you will get hurt. The rain is not going to stop soon. It seems that it may rain for a long time"

The crows flew down to the hollow. They thanked the mynah. "We are sorry for having unkind, dear friend! Now we will never be so selfish."

Then the crows took shelter in the hollow place of the tree in which the mynah had taken her shelter. After some time, it stopped raining. All the birds flew to their respective nests happily as new friends.

The Prince and The Snake:

The kingdom of Vijaygarh had a wise and kind King. People were happy. But the King himself was sad and worried. A devilish snake had entered his son's body. Neither medicine nor magic worked to cure his son.

When the Prince grew up, he thought, "It is because of me that my father worried." And one day, he left the palace. Wandering, he came to another kingdom. He found a desolate temple and started living there. He begged for food.

The King of that kingdom was cruel. But he had a kind and beautiful daughter. The King was unhappy with his daughter. That girl was always ridiculing her father's hard work. The King thought, "She is always talking to me low of my hard work. I must marry her to a beggar. Then she will know what hard work is."

So, when the beggar Prince came to beg for food in the Palace, the cruel King forced him to marry his daughter. The Prince and his new bride started for the desolate temple. On their way, they stopped to take rest. The Princess went around in search of food, while her husband went to sleep.

When the Princess came back, she was shocked to see a snake sitting on her husband's mouth. On a mound nearby sat another snake. They were talking among themselves. "Why do not you leave the body of the Prince? He is so kind and gentle," said the snake sitting on the mound. "You too are evil! You attack passers-by. You should not be telling me what to do," replied the snake sitting on the mouth of the Prince.

The Princess killed both the snakes with all her courage. When her husband woke up, she told him about the two snakes. The Prince was happy. Then he told her who he really was. They set off to the Prince's palace. The King was delighted to see his son. When the King learned that the devilish snake was killed, his joy knew no bounds. The Prince and the Princess lived happily for a long time. After few years, the Kingdom celebrated the day on which the Royal couple gave birth to twins of one boy and one girl.

The Perfect Palace:

Thousands of years ago, there lived a King. His people loved him since he looked after their needs well. At the end of every month, he would invite some noble men of his Kingdom to analyze his work and advised him.

The King built many things. Every year he would rebuild his palace and every time it looked better than before. "Marvelous! Unmatched!!" the couriers would praise and the King would feel elated.

One day the King thought, "This year, I will build the perfect palace, with all comforts. It should be praised not only within my kingdom, but also by the people of the neighboring states."

The next day, the King worked out a perfect design for his perfect palace. After finalizing it, he handed it over to the builders and masons. In about a month, the perfect palace of the King's dream was ready. The King invited noblemen of his kingdom, as well as the neighboring states, to get their opinions about the palace.

"Unbelievable! Indeed, it is a perfect palace," cheered the noblemen in unison. But a saint standing in the corner was silent.

The King wondered why the saint was silent, when everyone was praising his palace. He walked up to the saint and said, "Please tell, O Saint, why you are silent. Is not my palace perfect?"

The Saint replied in a calm voice, "Dear King! Your palace is strong and will last forever. It is beautiful but not perfect, since the people living in it are mortals. They are not permanent. Your palace will live forever but not the people in it. That is why I am silent. Man is born with empty hands and so does he die."

The King thanked the saint for his wise words and never tried to build a perfect palace again.

The Palace and The Hut:

King Vikramaditya was known for his justice and kindness. Even Gods sought his help in setting issues. In his kingdom, no one was unhappy. His people loved him and were proud of him.

Once, the Vikramaditya decided to build a palace on the riverbank. He ordered his ministers to survey the site and start the work. The laborers were put to work and in a few days the palace was ready. Before bringing the King to show the palace, the minister decided to take a final look.

"Splendid!" the minister exclaimed, looking at the palace. Then suddenly his eyes fell on something and he shouted, "What is that? I did not see that before." All the laborers and the soldiers turned around. There was a hut just a few steps away from the palace gate. "What is this hut doing here?" shouted the minister and added, "And whom does it belong to?"

"Sir, it belongs to an old woman. She has been living here for a long time," replied a soldier.

The minister walked up to the hut and spoke to the old lady. "I want to buy your hut. Ask for anything," he said.

"I am sorry, Sir. I can not accept your offer. My hut is dearer to me than my life. I have lived in it with my late husband and I want to die in it," the old lady said.

The minister tried to tell her that her hut would spoil the charm of the newly constructed palace. But the old lady was strong in her stance and she was ready to face any consequences and any punishment. She refused to sell her hut to the King. The matter was then taken to the King.

The wise and generous king thought for a while, and then said, "Let the old lady have her hut where it is. It will only add to the beauty of the new palace." Then turning to the minister, the King said, "Let us not forget that what seems ugly to us may be precious to someone else."

The people then realized why their king was so highly respected by all the people and by all other neighboring kingdoms.

The Monkey and The Juggler:

In a mango orchard outside a village there lived a mischievous monkey. The whole day, he would jump from one tree to another. Thus the monkey kept on eating the ripe mangoes. The orchard-keeper tried to trap the monkey. But every time the monkey escaped the trap.

One day, the monkey wandered out to the nearby town. "The town people are so busy. There is so much crowd here," the monkey thought. Soon the monkey was sneaking into houses and running away with eatables. By evening, he had made life difficult for the town people. "The town is more fun than the orchard. I will live here," he thought.

Days went by and the monkey was looked upon by the town people with terror. "Here he comes again," they screamed when they saw the monkey.

One day, a juggler came to the town. The people of the town approached him. "We want you to help us get rid of that mischievous monkey," they said to the juggler. The juggler said in return, "Do not worry. Get me some jars with narrow necks,"

When the jars of the size were brought to him, he put peanuts into the jars and placed them out on a field.

The monkey became curious when he saw the jars. When he went and peeped inside the jars, he saw peanuts. "Yummy! Let me quickly grab the peanuts and run," he thought. He put his hand inside the jar and grabbed a big handful.

But he could not pull out his clenched fist, as the neck of the jar was so narrow. If the monkey dropped some peanuts back into the jar, he could have pulled his hand out. But he was greedy. So he did not drop some peanuts into the jar.

The town people trapped the monkey with his hand inside the jar. They got hold of the rope and tied him in a post. Then the monkey was sold to a zoo. That was the end of the greedy monkey.

The Making of A Lion:

Once upon a time there lived four friends in a hermitage. They learnt many divine slokas and the way to perform various poojas and yajnas. After completing their studies, they were walking through a forest. There they came across a skeleton of a dead lion. They looked at it for while.

Gyanendra, one of the four friends said to the other friends, "Friends, let us test our knowledge. I will put the bones together using a magical verse."

Anupam, the second friend, said, "I know a magical verse which can create all the organs at their usual place and cover the body of the lion with its skin."

Subber, the third friend, then said, "I can put life in the lion using my magical powers and verse."

At this point of time, the fourth friend, Gopi said to them, "Please...do not do that. Once the lion is alive, it will devour all of us."

But other three friends were stubborn and they did not listen to what Gopi said.

The other three friends went ahead with their words.

Gopi ran and hid himself behind a tree.

Subber then recited his verse and the lion immediately came to life. The three friends looked at each other and smiled in satisfaction.

The lion killed the three friends and Gopi saved his life and said, "Only if you had paid attention to what I said, you all would have remained alive. You should learn where and when to use the verses."

The Magic Pot:

Once upon a time a farmer, Gopi, lived in a village. He had few acres of land. One hot afternoon, the poor farmer was digging his field. All of a sudden, his spade hit something. Then he continued his digging. "It is a big metal pot," said Gopi. It was big enough to boil rice for more than hundred people. "It does not

seem to be of any use to me. I will dig deeper. May be I will find something else," thought Gopi. He continued to dig.

After he had dug for a long time, Gopi felt tired. "It is of no use. There is nothing in this field" he thought. Then at once, he threw the spade into the pot in frustration and sat under a tree to take rest for a while.

After a while, when he got up to leave, he could not believe his eyes. There were one hundred spades in the pot. "This is a magical pot. I will put this mango inside the pot and see what happens," Gopi thought. Then Gopi put a mango into the pot. To his astonishment, he found one hundred mangoes in the pot. Gopi carried the pot to his home and kept in a secret place so that no one would become aware of it.

After that, he put many things in that and everything became hundred folds. With that pot, he became a rich man. The King came to know of the pot and its whereabouts. The King was curious to know about it and he was a greedy King. "I want to find out the secret of the magical pot. If it is valuable, it should be in the King treasury," the King thought. Then at once, the King ordered his men to bring the farmer and his pot.

When the magic pot was brought to the King's chamber, he did not know what to do. The King thought, "Let me see what is there inside this pot which makes this pot so magical?" He peered inside. Inadvertently, he slipped and fell inside the pot. When he climbed out of the magic pot, he was shocked to find that there were one hundred Kings.

All the kings then started to climb the throne. They fought among themselves and died. The magic pot lay in the King's treasury. "The foolish King took away the magic pot from me out of curiosity and eventually he died. This magic pot has killed the King himself," said the farmer and he to be safe left the magic pot at the treasury of the King itself.

The Lost Wallet:

I stumbled on a wallet someone had lost in the street. Wanting to find the owner, I opened it, but it only contained 3 dollars and an old crumpled envelope. I opened the letter and saw a return address and dateline...1924. It had been written 60 years ago. It was signed Hannah.

I called information, maybe there was a phone listing for the address. The operator hesitantly told me there was a number, but the best she could do was call it and see if they wanted to be connected. I learned that Hannah was now living in a Nursing Home. And was given the number.

It seemed silly, wanting to contact someone over a letter written 60 years ago, but I felt impelled. I was told that Hannah was there and though it was fairly late I followed my instinct and went to see her.

She was a sweet silver-haired lady with a warm smile and a twinkle in her eye. I told her about finding the wallet and showed her the letter.

She took a deep breath and said, "Young man, this letter was the last contact I ever had with Michael."

She said softly "I loved him very much. But I was only 16 at the time and my mother felt I was too young. "If you should find him, tell him I still love him."

With tears in her eyes she told me she had never married because no one had matched up to him in her heart.

I thanked her and left. As I was waiting by the elevator the nurse there asked, "Was Hannah able to help you?"

I'd taken out the wallet as she was speaking and she said "Hey, wait a minute that's Michael Goldstein's wallet. I'd recognize it anywhere, he's always losing it."

My hands began to shake. "Who's Michael Goldstein?" I asked.

"One of the residents on the 8th floor. That's his wallet for sure."

I dashed up to the 8th floor and the nurse on duty told me he was still in the day room.

We went into the day room and as soon as Michael saw the wallet a smile of relief crossed his face. I confessed I'd read the letter in an attempt to find the owner of the wallet. The smile on his face disappeared.

"But I think you'll be happy I did," I said. I think I know where Hannah is.

He grew pale. "Where is she? How is she? Please tell me he begged. "She's fine I said quietly." "I was so in love with that girl and when that letter came, my life came to a halt. I never married. I guess I've always loved her."

I asked him to come with me and took him down to the 3rd floor where Hannah was sitting alone, watching television. The floor nurse pointed to Michael. "Do you know this man Hannah?" She adjusted her glasses but didn't speak. Michael whispered, "Hannah it's me, Michael. Do you remember me?"

She gasped. "Michael. Michael, I don't believe it. It's you! My Michael."

They walked towards one another and embraced. The nurse and I left with tears streaming down our faces.

About three weeks later I got a call from the nursing home. "Can you break away on Sunday to attend a wedding? Michael and Hannah are going to tie the knot!"

It was a beautiful wedding with all the people at the nursing home joining in the celebration. I was the best man!

The hospital gave them their own room and if you ever wanted to see a 76-year-old bride and a 79-year-old groom acting like two teenagers, you had to see this couple.

A perfect ending for a love affair that had lasted nearly 60 years.

The Lion and The Pig:

One day a lion felt very thirsty and came to a pond to drink water.

At the same time a pig also came to the same pond to drink water.

They stared at each other. "Who should drink first" was the question between them.

They started fighting with each other.

They fought heavily and soon became tired. They went to rest.

At the same time they saw the eagles flying eagerly above them. The eagles were waiting for a dead body.

Both The lion and the pig realized that if they fought with each other, one of them would die certainly. And they realized their mistake.

They said to each other, "it is better to be friends again than fall a prey to the eagles."

Then they became friends again forever.

"Challenge, fights are always dangerous." They realized the truth at last.

The Lion and The Cows:

Once upon a time, there lived four cows in the forest.

Every day, they used to graze together in a particular place.

One day a lion passed that way and saw the four cows.

The lion went near the cows.

When the cows saw the lion coming near to them, all of them fought together against the lion.

The Lion ran away.

After some days, the cows quarrelled with each other and began to graze in different directions and all alone.

This was noticed by the lion.

The lion thought that its turn had come and came there.

The lion killed all the four cows one by one.
Unitey is strength.

The Lamb and The Wolf:

Once there was a naughty lamb. His mother always loved her child so much that she worried about the safety of the child. His mother always warned him, "Be careful! You must not go into the forest. Wild animals live in there. They may threaten you. Sometimes they would eat you." But the mischievous lamb never listened. The lamb casually went into the forest and played there for a long time till it turned dark in the evening.

One day, as usual the lamb wandered far off into the forest. There he saw a spring. "I am thirsty. Let me drink some water," he thought. He decided to take water from the spring for his thirsty. While the lamb was drinking water in the spring, a wolf watched from behind a tree.

"A lamb! My lucky day!" the wolf thought, approaching the lamb. The lamb was not aware of the wolf for some time. There was no one besides these two animals to save the lamb from the wolf.

"You know this forest belongs only to wild animals like me. Why have you come in here to take water from this spring?" asked the wolf.

The lamb knew that wolves were dangerous animals. "Mother has warned me about wolves. I am sure this fellow wants to eat me for his lunch. This fellow is ferocious. I must escape from this animal," he thought.

The wolf continued, "You are also dirtying water. How will I drink this polluted water now?"

"But the spring flows from where you are standing down to where I am standing, Sir!" said the lamb, in a meek voice. The wolf was surprised to hear such an intelligent answer from the lamb. But the wolf was just looking for an excuse to kill the lamb. "How dare you argue with me? I think you are the same lamb who had abused me last year," the wolf shouted.

"Last year? Bur Sir, I was not even born then!" the lamb squeaked. The lamb feared that the wolf was looking after a pretext to kill the lamb. The lamb became cautious of its words and gestures. This way both the lamb and the wolf talked to each other cautiously.

The lamb heard some woodcutters. They were coming the way in which the lamb and the wolf were standing. "If I can keep talking to this wolf for a little while longer, the woodcutters will be here. They will chase him away," thought the clever lamb. So, he said, "Mr. Wolf, you are right. I have dirtied the water. But, I did not mean to upset you."

This way the lamb kept on talking for few more minutes. As the lamb spoke, the woodcutters arrived. They saw both the lamb and the wolf.

They caught the wolf and beat him before letting him go. The lamb was relieved to be safe. He ran back to his mother. He told her his mother what had happened in the forest with the wolf and the woodcutter. And then he promised his mother never to wander into the forest again.

The Judge Monkey:

Once upon a time, two cats were passing through a street. Suddenly they spotted a loaf of bread lying beneath a tree. Both pounced upon it and caught the loaf at the same time. "It is mine. I saw it first," claimed one cat. While the other said, "I pounced upon it first and so it belongs to me." After having fought for a while, one cat said, "Let us divide it into two and take one piece each." "Indeed, a good idea," said the other cat. "But how do we divide it now?"

A monkey sitting on the branch of the tree had watched all that happened between the two cats. "That loaf of bread looks good. I could do with it myself," he thought. Slowly he came down from the tree and walked up to the confused cats.

"Yes, my dear friends! Can I help you?" asked the monkey. The cats told the monkey what the problem was and said, "Why do not you be the judge between us?" When the monkey nodded, the cats said, "Please divide this loaf for us."

The clever monkey smilingly broke the bread into two pieces. But one piece was a little bigger than the other. "Oh no! I will take a little bite of this bigger piece to make both equal," said the monkey, slyly. He took a bite from the bigger piece. But, he had taken a big bite. "Uh oh! Now it has become smaller

than the other piece. I will just have to take a little bite from this piece now," said the clever monkey.

The Judge Monkey took another bite. The two cats sat in front of the monkey, seeing the loaf of bread they had found getting smaller and smaller. When the whole loaf was eaten by the monkey, the monkey said, "I am sorry. I was really difficult to divide that loaf. I must be going now." And the monkey jumped onto the tree and was gone. "If only we had not quarreled among ourselves, we would have remained united and we need not have to go to the monkey and to become hungry now," said the two cats.

The Iron Box:

Mohan Das was the son of a rich businessman. When his father died, Mohan Das was left with an iron box with valuables in it. One day, Mohan Das had to go to the city on some work. So, he took the iron box and handed it over to his moneylender friend. His name was Ramasewak.

"Please keep this box. My father gave it to me. I will return from city after few days and collect it from you," said Mohan Das to Ramasewak.

"You do not have to worry. I will keep this box safely," said Ramasewak.

Mohan Das started off his journey happily. He knew that his valuable iron box was safe with Ramasewak. A few days later he returned. He went to his friend Ramasewak and asked for the iron box. Ramasewak pretended to look a little surprised, "Oh, the iron box! The rats ate it up. I just could not stop them," he said.

Mohan Das realized that his friend had become greedy and dishonest. Ramasewak was trying to cheat him. Being an intelligent man, he kept quite. "I must figure out a way to get my iron box back from Ramasewak," thought Mohan Das.

Next day, Mohan Das went to Ramasewak and said, "Friend! Can you send your son with me? I need someone to look after my property."

Ramasewak thought for a while. He brooded. "Mohan Das seems to be a fool. May be he will reward my son for looking after his property," thought Ramasewak. Then, immediately he agreed and sent his son with Mohan Das.

Next morning, Mohan Das came running to Ramasewak and said, "Dear friend, a terrible thing has happened. A hawk has carried your son away."

Ramasewak was furious and demanded, "How can a hawk carry off my son?"

"In the same way as the rats can eat up the iron box," answered Mohan Das.

"I am sorry, my friend. I realize my mistake," Ramasewak said with a bit of concern in his voice. He felt ashamed of having tried to cheat his friend. He gave the box back to his friend. Both of them were happy and remained good friends forever.

The Hunter and The Doves:

Once there lived a group of doves who went for food and water all together.

On seeing their regularity, a hunter placed a trap in the field to catch the doves.

After some time, they got caught in the trap of the hunter.

Everyone tried to free himself, but all in vain.

In the meantime, a crow was passing.

He saw the doves caught in the net.

He went straight to the doves and advised them to make a united effort and fly away.

The doves took his advice and flew along with the net. Soon, they were all free.

Unity is strength.

The FOX or The LION:

Tired with the boredom of his normal life, Rama decided to go on a spiritual discovery. He decided to spend a few days in a Jungle close to the village. So, every day he meditated in the woods. Whenever he got hungry, he would come to the village. One day, while returning to the Jungle he noticed a severely injured fox. Its front legs were detached completely. Nature is not gentle to any kind of incapability. If you lose your legs, you lose your life. Yet, the fox looked well-fed and healthy. Rama was surprised. But he ignored it and focused on his meditation. As the sun set, Rama heard the roar of a lion. He forgot about his meditation and climbed up a tree. To his astonishment, a full grown male lion came with a piece of meat, dropped it in front of the fox and went away. Rama couldn't believe this...if furious lion is feeding a crippled fox. Next evening, the lion came again with a piece of meat, dropped it in front of the fox and went away. Rama took this as a message that God was sending him. He had his own interpretation....Even a crippled fox in this forest is being fed by a lion and you fool, just sit here and food will come to you.

One day. two days, three days, meditation became more like a struggle for Rama. By the seventh day, he was struggling between life and death. Just then a yogi was passing by. He heard Rama's desperate cries and started following the sound.

'What happened to you? why are you in this condition?' asked the Yogi.

"Oh yogi, please help me. A divine message came to me. I went by the message and I became like this."

"What happened?" the Yogi asked.

'Look a crippled fox is being fed by a furious lion every day. Isn't this a divine message?'

The yogi looked at him and said. "Definitely....this is a divine message, but why is it that you chose to be like the crippled fox and not like the generous lion?"

Thinking good thoughts is not enough. Doing good is not enough. Seeing others follow your good example is good enough.

The Fox and The Grapes:

There was this fox who wanted to eat a bunch of grapes. He was always lured by the violet colour and round shape of them. All he could do was just look at them from a distance. The vineyard owners all had a tight fence around it. He could not nudge his way into any of the vineyards.

One day by luck he was able to enter into one of the lush vineyards. He started gazing at the grapes hanging down. He started to reach them. But in vain only. He tried hard. He jumped harder many times. But nothing happened. He could not reach the ripe grapes.

Finally the dejected fox went away lamenting, "Oh! After all grapes must be sour and tasteless."

The Four Sons:

There lived an old man in a village. He had four sons. In spite of all his efforts, the old man could not make his sons earn for their living. In addition, they were always fighting among themselves.

The old man thought of a plan. He called his sons and said, "Look my dear sons, in the barren land we have at the farmyard, there is a hidden treasure. If you should work together, you may find it."

In a wish to find the treasure the four sons worked hard by digging and digging all through the land. They got frustrated and returned to their father.

"There is no treasure in the land. They complained to their father.

"Now that you have softened the land. Why should not you cultivate it?" was the reply of their father to their query.

Off went the sons. Soon the whole barren land was rich crops.

"This is the real treasure my sons" said the now proud father. Hard-work always is fruitful. The quarreling sons then on lived in harmony and became rich soon.

The Foolish Goats:

A goat had to cross a small river. A narrow plank was across the river. The goat was walking on it happily.

On the opposite side it saw another goat coming towards it.

"Go back" shouted the first goat. "Wait...I will cross the river first. Then you can come."

"Why should I?" cried the second goat. "I came first here so I should cross first," the second one said.

"No...I came first," shouted the first goat. It further added, "Go away or I will kick you," and added "Wait and see." The first goat said angrily.

"I will kick you first." The second goat also said angrily.

The two goats started the arguing. Both the goats got very angry. They attacked each other. At last both the foolish goats fell into the water running in the river.

The Foolish Fish:

In a huge pond, there lived many fish. They were arrogant and never listened to anyone. In this pond, there also lived a kind-hearted crocodile.

He advised the fish, "It does not pay to be arrogant and overconfident. It could be your downfall." But the fish never listened to him. "There is that crocodile, advising us again," they would say.

One afternoon, the crocodile was resting beside a stone near the pond, when two fishermen stopped there to drink water.

The fishermen noticed that the pond had many fish. "Look! This pond is full of fish. Let's come here tomorrow with our fishing net," said one of them. "I am surprised we have not seen this place before!" exclaimed the other.

The crocodile heard all this. When the fishermen left, he slowly slipped into the pond and went straight to the fish. "You all had better leave this pond before dawn. Early morning those two fishermen are going to come to this pond with their net," warned the crocodile.

But the fish just laughed and said, "There have been many fishermen who have tried to catch us. These two are not going to catch us either. Do not you worry about us, Mr. Crocodile," they said in a mocking voice.

The next morning, the fishermen came and threw their net in the pond. The nets were big and strong. Very soon all the fish were caught. "If only we had listened to Mr. Crocodile. He had only wanted to help. For our arrogance we have to pay with our lives," said the fish.

The fishermen took the foolish fish to the market and sold them for a good profit.

The Farmer and The Golden Duck:

A farmer had many ducks in his house.

One of the ducks would lay a golden egg everyday.

He sold the golden egg and became rich.

One day, he thought that there would be more golden eggs in the stomach of the duck.

If he cut the stomach, he could take all the golden eggs and he would become rich in a very short period of time in stead of waiting for those eggs for many more days.

So, without any second thought, he took a knife and cut the stomach of the duck. But he found only one golden egg and felt very sad for his greedy attitude.

Moral : Greed leads to huge loss.

The Diamond Ring:

An old man gave his money and gold to his sons. He showed them his diamond ring and said to them, "I am not giving this ring to you now. Go out and do some noble deeds. Then come to me. Tell me your deeds. Then I will give this diamond ring to one of you. The ring will be the reward for the noblest-deed."

The sons went out. They did noble deeds. After some time, they returned to their father.

One of the sons said, "Father... Give me the ring. I have done a great and noble deed. A man left all his money with me. He traveled many countries. Then he came to me. He wanted his money back. I returned his money to him."

Another son said, "A child fell into a river. The water was carrying the child away. I jumped into the river. I saved the child."

The third son said, "Father....please listen to me. My enemy was sleeping on the edge of a huge rock. I went to him and woke him up."

The father said, "All the people love their friends. But you loved your enemy. You saved him from his death. Yours is the noblest deed. Take this ring."

The Curse of The Bullock:

Long time ago, in a small village lived an old woman with her daughter. While the old woman was hard working, her daughter was lazy and selfish. They had a bullock. "We should take proper care of our bullock." The old woman would say. "Hah! Animals should serve us, not we serve them," the daughter would reply.

There was a pond, at some distance from the old woman's house. Every afternoon, she used to take the bullock to the pond to have a bath and to drink water. Meanwhile the lazy daughter would eat and sleep.

One day, the old woman fell ill. She requested her daughter to take the bullock to the pond. "It is very hot today, dear! The bullock must be thirsty," said the old woman. "Look! I have some sweets here. I know you love sweets, dear.

Take the bullock for a drink. While he is drinking water, you can eat these sweets," the old woman added, handing a box of sweets to her daughter. The greedy girl agreed.

But as soon as she was out of her mother's sight, the lazy girl tied the bullock to a tree and sat down to eat the sweets. The thirsty bullocks waited for the daughter to finish eating the sweets. "I hope she eats fast. I am really thirsty," thought the bullock. But after having eaten all the sweets, the daughter returned home and lied to her mother that she had taken the bullock to the pond and that the bullock drank water from the pond.

The bullock was extremely angry. He cursed the daughter, "In your next birth, you may be born as a Chatak, a bird that drinks water when only it rains. As you kept me thirsty today, so will you remain thirsty."

The Curse of The Bullock came true. In her next birth, the daughter was born a Chatak. It is said that a Chatak is a bird that waits for rains, remaining thirsty throughout the year, despite having water all around.

The Clever Fox:

There once lived a crow. One day he was very hungry. He had not been able to get any food the previous day. "If I do not get anything to eat I will starve to death," he thought.

As the crow was searching for food, his eyes fell on a piece of bread. He quickly swooped down, picked it up and flew off. Far away in a lonely place he sat on a tree to enjoy the bread.

Just then a hungry fox saw the crow sitting on the tree holding the bread in his mouth. "Yummy! That bread looks delicious. What I would give to get that piece of bread," the fox thought.

The fox decided to use all his cunning means to get the piece of bread from the mouth of the crow. He sat under the tree. The crow saw him and thought, "I guess this fox wants to eat my bread. I shall hold it carefully." And he held on to the bread even more tightly.

The clever fox spoke to the crow politely. He said, "Hello friend! How are you?" But the crow did not say anything.

"Crows are such lovely birds. And you are very charming too," said the fox, flattering the crow.

Then the fox said, "I have heard that besides being beautiful you also have a sweet voice. Please sing a song for me."

By now the crow started to believe what the fox was saying. "The fox knows true beauty. I must be the most beautiful bird in this whole world. I will sing him a song," thought the crow.

As soon as the foolish crow opened his mouth to sing the bread fell from its beak and into the ground. The Clever fox, which had just been waiting for this very moment, caught the bread in his mouth and gulped it down his throat.

The crow had paid a heavy price for his foolishness.

The Clever Bull:

There was a forest with many birds and animals. Once, a bull wandering in the forest came upon a cave. Near the cave was a big pond and lush green grass. "This is an ideal place for me to settle down," the bull thought. So, he made the cave his home. Many days passed. The bull became quite healthy, grazing in the meadows. The bull was happy and peaceful living in that cave. He had made many friends in that forest.

One day, the bull was resting outside his cave house. A lion happened to come by that way. The lion was happy to have spotted a bull after a long time. "Aha! A bull! He is so healthy too," thought the majestic lion, licking his lips in anticipation of a good meal. The bull too noticed the lion. He could sense danger. "I must be on my guard now," the bull thought and decided to do something to hide himself from the lion.

When the lion came close to the bull, the clever bull looked into the cave and called out, "Darling, do not cook anything for dinner. I have just spotted a lion. I am waiting for it to come near." When the lion heard the bull, he returned around and ran for his life.

A jackal saw the lion running breathlessly. "Why are you running, Mr. Lion?" asked the jackal. The lion told him all that had happened. "The bull has made a fool out of you," replied the jackal. And the jackal added, "Come with me. Together we can feast on the bull." But the lion was too scared to believe the jackal.

The jackal understood why the lion was hesitating to come with him. "Alright then! Tie your tail with mine and let me lead you to the cave of the bull. In case the bull attacks, then I will be the one who will get caught first," the jackal said.

The lion agreed to this plan of action prepared by the jackal. And then the lion and the jackal tied their tails together. They set off to the bull's cave.

Both the lion and the jackal went near the cave where the bull was. When the bull saw the lion coming with the jackal, he thought, "I am sure that cunning jackal knows I fooled the lion. Without panicking, the bull cried out to the jackal, "I had asked you to bring me two lions. Do you want me to keep my children hungry?"

Even this time the lion did not realize that the bull was again fooling him. He was terrified. He ran as fast as he could run dragging the jackal with him over stones and thorns. The clever bull outwitted his enemies and saved himself from its enemies.

Both the lion and the jackal never returned that way. Thereafter the bull lived a peaceful and happy life with his wife and children.

The Brahmin and His Enemies:

Long ago, a poor Brahmin lived with his family in a small house. His disciples would help him with food and clothes. He somehow managed to pass his days.

One day, the Brahmin received two calves as a gift from one of his disciples. He was overjoyed. Though he had difficulty in arranging for fodder and grain for the calves, he managed to feed the two calves. Years passed by and the calves grew up into two bullocks.

A thief had seen the bullocks. "The foolish Brahmin does not even know the proper use of these bullocks. I will steal the bullocks and sell them," he thought.

That evening, the thief started for the Brahmin's house. While on his way, the thief was stopped by a fierce demon. "I am hungry. I will eat you," said the demon, in a thundering voice. "Wait! Wait, dear friend! I am a thief I am on my way to the Brahmin's house to steal his bullocks. You can eat the Brahmin instead of me," said the thief.

The demon agreed. The thief and the demon proceeded towards the Brahmin's house. Reaching the house of the Brahmin, the thief said, "Let me take the bullocks and go. Then you can eat the Brahmin."

"No! Let me eat the Brahmin first. I am hungry," roared the demon. The two started to quarrel.

The noise woke up the Brahmin. As soon as he saw the demon, he started chanting some mantras. The demon uttered a sharp cry, "AAIEE!" and disappeared.

Then the Brahmin got hold of a thick stick, "You tried to steal my bullocks, did you?" said the Brahmin. And he thrashed the thief. Thus the Brahmin saved himself from the demon and eventually punished the thief.

The Brahmin and His Enemies were separated from each other.

The Boy of The Farmer:

One dark night a lame boy went to the house of a farmer. He said to the farmer, "I am not a begger. I will work for you. I will plough your lands. I will sow. My father is dead. My mother is poor. I am hungry. Please give me some food."

The farmer's wife was sorry for the boy. She said to the farmer. "Do not drive away this boy."

She turned to the boy and said, "Stay here. We will give you food."

The farmer's daughter liked the boy. She said to her father, "Do not drive him away. He is not an idle begger."

The boy lived with the farmer. He worked hard in the fields. The farmer and his wife loved the boy.

The boy grew up. He became a man. After some years the farmer died. Then his wife also died. The boy married the farmer's daughter.

"I am now a happy man. I came to this house on a lucky day," said the boy.

The Bonded Donkey:

In a small village, there lived a potter. He had a donkey. Everyday his donkey would carry soil from the field to his house. Since the field was quite far off, the potter would rest under a tree midway, tying his donkey nearby.

One day, the potter forgot to take the rope with which he tied the donkey everyday. When he reached the tree, he thought, "How do I tie this donkey today? He might run away if I sleep." The potter decided to tie down holding the donkey's ears so that the donkey would not run away.

But this way neither the donkey was comfortable nor the potter was able to take rest. A saint, who happened to be passing by, saw the potter holding on to the donkey's ears. Then the saint wanted to know what the problem of the potter was. When the potter told the saint what the problem was, the wise saint said, "Take the donkey to the place where you tie him everyday. Pretend to tie him using an imaginary rope. I assure you he won't run away." The potter did what the saint had said.

He left the donkey and went to take a nap. When he woke up, to his surprise and relief, he found the donkey standing in the same place.

Soon the potter prepared to leave for home. But the donkey did not move. "What is wrong with this donkey!" exclaimed the potter in frustration.

Luckily, the potter saw the wise saint again. He ran up to the saint and told him about the donkey's strange behavior. The saint said, "You tied up the donkey,

but did you untie him?" Go and pretend to untie the rope with which you had tied the donkey." The potter followed the saint's advice.

Now the donkey was ready to leave for home. The potter understood that donkey was the bonded donkey. The potter thanked the wise saint and went home happily with his donkey.

The Bear and The Travelers:

Two travelers were walking across the forest.

Before they entered the forest they promised to help each other in times of danger. They were going into the forest.

After a while, they unexpectedly face a big bear.

The first traveler forgot his promise. He climbed up a tree without caring for his friend.

The second traveler does not know how to climb a tree. To face the bear alone was also not possible.

He thought for a second and fell on the ground. He acted like a dead man.

The bear came close to him. It smelled him and went away thinking that he was dead.

After the bear left, the man on the top of the tree came down and asked the fellow traveler, "What did the bear tell you?"

"Do not believe a friend who lets you down in times of danger" said the second traveler.

The promises of the coward do not stand a test.

Foolish Imitation:

Long ago, a hawk lived on the top of a hill. At the foot of the hill there was a banyan tree on which a crow used to perch everyday. The crow was very foolish. He would imitate everyone.

The hawk atop the hill would fly down everyday in search of food. The crow watched the hawk circling in the air for long hours and swooping down when he saw his prey. The hawk gifted with eyes that could see long distances would spot his prey from the hill top and then fly down to pounce upon the prey.

The crow watched the hawk thinking, "Hunh! If the hawk can do that, I too can. What does he think? One day, I will show the hawk that I can do the same thing."

A few days later, as the hawk was circling in the air, the crow decided to do the same. Suddenly a baby rabbit came out of the bushes. The hawk saw it and the crow too saw the rabbit.

Before the crow could move, the hawk swooped down, caught hold of the rabbit in his strong sharp talons and flew away. "Swoosh!" was all the crow heard as the hawk disappeared in the sky with his prey. "Hmmp! That is no great skill," thought the crow, angrily.

Next moment he spotted a big fat mouse coming out of a hole. Without wasting time, the crow swooped down. Like the hawk he tried to catch the mouse in his claws.

But the mouse saw the crow and moved away, the crow crashed against the hill. "Eeeaaa!" cried the crow in pain.

Just then the hawk came flying down. "I hope, now you know it is not easy to hunt and it is not easy to imitate, either," said the hawk and flew away.

There after, the crow never imitated any one in its life. It lived happily with the god-given abilities.

Taking Responsibility:

Two families lived nearby. One family was constantly fighting while the other one lived quietly and friendly. One day, feeling jealous about how nicely the neighboring family got along, the wife told her husband....Go to the neighbors and look to see what they are doing for their well-being.

The husband went, hid and began watching. He saw a woman who was cleaning the floor. Suddenly something distracted her and she ran to the kitchen. At that time, her husband rushed into the room. Not noticing the bucket of water, he kicked it and spilled water all over the floor.

His wife came back from the kitchen and said to him...I'm sorry, honey! It's my fault. I didn't move the bucket out of the way.

The husband replied...No, I'm sorry, honey! It's my fault, because I did not notice it.

The man returned home and his wife asked him if he found out what their secret is.

Go By Heart:

This brought me to tears. What a powerful lesson on time.

A rich man was retiring when an angel of death came to him. He had worked long and hard to acquire massive wealth and retire in luxury, and could not believe that his time was up. Being a very wealthy person, he decided to buy some more time from the angel of death at any cost. He bargained for a long time but the angel was unmoved. Desperate, the rich man made the last proposal to the angel... Give me just one hour of my life, so that I could admire the beauty of this earth for the last time and spend some time with my family and friends whom I haven't seen for a long time and I will give you all of my wealth. But the angel refused again. Finally, the man asked if the angel could give him at least one minute so that he could write a goodbye note. His wish was granted and he wrote a note....

"Spend your time, which was given to you, in the right way. I couldn't buy even an hour of life with all of my wealth. Listen to your heart and check if the things surrounding you have a true value. Cherish every minute of your life." I think the difference is that we always seek to be right, while they seek to take responsibility for their part.

Having peaceful relationships mean taking personal responsibility for our own part.

The Sad Peacock:

This beautiful story about making the best of what you have is our first pick for this list. Though ambition is not a bad thing, there is usually a very thin line progressing to greed. It can run both ways, parents may end up pushing their children so hard, that kids end up frustrated. On the other hand, kids may end up demanding for more, without regard to what they have already. Here is a wonderful story about a peacock who almost went the same way.

here was this once a beautiful peacock who was all, but dancing on a rainy day. While he was busy admiring his plumage, his rough voice reminded him of his own shortcomings. All the joy beaten out of him, he was almost in tears. Suddenly, he heard a nightingale singing nearby.

Listening to the nightingale's sweet voice, his own shortcoming once again became very evident. He began wondering why he was jinxed in such a manner. At that moment, Juno, the leader of the Gods, appeared and addressed the peacock.

"Why are you upset?" Juno asked the peacock.

The peacock complained about his rough voice and how he was sad because of it. "The nightingale has such a beautiful voice. Why don't I?"

After listening to the peacock, Juno explained, " every living being is special in his or her own way. They are and made in a certain manner that serves the greater purpose. Yes, the nightingale is blessed with a beautiful voice, but you are also blessed – with such a beautiful and glittering plumage! The trick is acceptance and making the most of what you have."

The peacock understood how silly he had been in comparing himself to others and forgetting his own blessings. He realised that day, that everyone was unique in some way or the other.

Moral: Self-acceptance is the first step to happiness. Make the best of what you have, rather than being unhappy about what you don't.

Dream Big:

Lily is a little girl, who is shy and reserved. But she enjoys playing soccer. Her friends and classmates ridicule Lily for her interest in soccer. Nonetheless, she is determined to pursue her passion and become a successful soccer player.

Every day, after returning from school, Lily quickly finishes her homework and practices soccer. Her mother understands the love Lily has for the sport and supports her in every way.

When the interschool competitions are announced at the school, Lily decides to participate. She takes part in the selection trials, and her classmates mock her once again. But they are shocked when Lily performs well and the judges select her to represent the school. Lily's commitment and hard work mute every person who mocked her.

Moral: Determination, strong will, and focus can help you achieve even the toughest of goals, in spite of ridicule by others.

The Turtle and the Hare:

This story has been told and retold over the ages, but is certainly a story that will teach your child an important lesson that will stay for life. You can stick to the classic or make your own version with different variables that will nonetheless impart the valuable lesson that your child needs to learn.

The hare is not only a beautiful little creature but is known for its speed and cleverness. Turtles, on the other hand, are amphibians that are more down to earth and, of course, slower in all aspects of life.

One fine day, the hare bragged and came up with the idea of holding a race with the turtle. The turtle agreed, and the race began.

The hare managed to get a good lead over the turtle because he was an excellent runner. However, such was the ego of the hare that he not only raced way ahead of the turtle, but decided to take a nap at some distance, just before the finish line. He was convinced that he would easily win, even if he slept for some time.

The turtle, on the other hand, was far slower than the hare. However, he kept up with the race, without cutting corners. The turtle managed to reach the finish line, just as the hare was waking up! He, nevertheless won the race, even though he was a far slower runner than the hare, and not once, did he rub his victory in the hare's face.

Moral: As long as you are steady and determined, you will always win, no matter what your speed is. Laziness is your enemy, as is pride.

The Two Gardeners:

Letting go is probably one story lesson that can teach, both the child and the parent valuable lesson. Children are hands down very impressionable and sensitive, and there are times when you, as a parent, might not want to accept that a line needs to be drawn, as children need to become independent.

Here is a story that talks about the challenges of learning to do things on your own, through stronger roots.

Once, there lived two neighbours who used to grow the same plants in their respective gardens. One neighbour was fussy and took extreme care of her plants. The other neighbour did what was required, but left the leaves of the plants alone to grow as they pleased.

One evening, there was a huge storm, accompanied by heavy rainfall. The storm destroyed many of the plants.

The next morning, when the fussy neighbour woke up, she found that the plants had been uprooted and destroyed. However, when the more relaxed neighbour woke up, she found that her plants were still firmly rooted in the soil, having weathered the storm.

The plant of the relaxed neighbour had learnt to do things on its own. So, it had done its bit of work, grown deep roots, and made a place for itself in the soil. Thus, it had stood firm even in the storm. However, the fussy neighbour used to do everything for the plant, thereby not teaching the plant how to sustain on its own.

Moral: Sooner or later, you have to let go and become independent. Unless you stop fussing, nothing will work on its own.

You are as brave as you think:

A mahout uses elephants to conduct circus shows. He has five elephants and keeps them chained through a single rope held not so tight. As the elephants are huge and strong, they could have broken the rope and escaped.

One day, a man who visits the circus, asks the mahout why the elephants are not trying to escape when the rope is not strong enough to hold them. The man is amazed to hear the reply: the mahout says, since their young years, the elephants have been conditioned to believe they were not capable of breaking the rope and they lacked the strength. And that is the reason why these elephants never tried to escape.

Moral: Our limitations and strengths lie within us. We can achieve anything if we believe we can achieve.

Potato, egg and coffee beans:

A little boy named John lives in a beautiful home with his parents. One day, his father finds him crying and asks if something is wrong. John says meekly, "I have so many problems in life," and talks about his 'problems'.

John's father patiently listens to him. Then he brings a bowl and places a potato, an egg and some coffee beans in it. He asks John to touch and feel the ingredients in the bowl, and tell what he feels about them. John describes how he feels about each of them on touching.

The father smiles and asks John to place them all in three different bowls and pour water in them. He then boils them all. After a few minutes, the father turns off the stove and places all the bowls on the counter to cool them down.

When they have cooled down, John's father asks him to touch them once again and feel the egg, potato, and coffee beans. John has a different answer this time. And he says, the potato's skin is easier to peel as it has turned very soft, the egg has hardened, and there is a fresh coffee aroma coming from the beans.

Listening to John, his father smiles and tells him how the potato, egg, and coffee beans reacted to adverse situations. The potato has become soft, the egg turned very strong, and the coffee beans have changed their form completely during their testing time in the boiling water.

Moral: Problems are a part of life. How we react to them makes us a better individual.

Hard work is the key to success:

In a faraway village, lives a hardworking farmer who has grape fields. Year after year his graperies give rich harvest, and the farmer becomes very successful. He has three sons, who are young and energetic but never bother to work. As the farmer grows old, he begins to worry about his sons' future.

Then he falls very ill and realizes his death is fast approaching. He calls the sons and tells them,

"Dear sons, I see my death nearing me, but before I bid goodbye to all of you, I want to share a secret. There is a treasure hidden under the fields. Dig the entire field after my death, to find it."

The old farmer dies, and his sons perform the last rites. The sons begin to dig for the treasure without leaving any part of the field but find nothing. However, their digging of the field leads to a healthy crop and results in huge earnings. These earnings make the sons realize what their father meant.

Moral: Hard work always pays off. Fruits of hard work are always sweet whether or not they are in the form you desire.

Shake it off:

On an unfortunate day, a man's favorite donkey falls off a large cliff. He tries to pull the donkey out, but all his efforts go in vain. Disheartened, the man decides to bury the poor donkey.

He starts to pour soil and sand from above. The donkey, which is stuck down, feels the load of the soil and shakes it off his body. The man pours the soil again. And, once again the donkey shakes it off. The man notices that the donkey is shaking off the soil and is stepping on the soil bed, which is acting as a form of elevation. He realizes the donkey is slowly inching closer to the top. With every load of soil that is poured, the donkey rises higher.

Several hours pass by, and the man continues to pour the soil until the donkey is united with him again.

Moral: Face your hardships courageously as no problem is big enough to stop you from rising.

Three friends and a fisherman:

A large pond has many fishes living in it. Of all these fishes, three are best friends, who are always together. They never leave the side of each other. One day, a fisherman comes to this pond. Seeing lots of fishes, he invites other fishermen to cast nets. The three fishes worry about getting caught and killed by the fishermen.

The wise fish amongst them says, "We must find another pond and quickly move from here." While one fish agrees, the other one is reluctant as he feels that this pond is their home. He says, "We should not behave cowardly, this pond is our home."

The other two fish try hard to convince their friend, but they fail. So they decide to part ways and leave in search of a new pond. On the following day, when the fishermen arrive, the fish, who was unwilling to leave, gets caught and dies.

Moral: Always look at the bigger picture and let go of temporary attachments in crisis situations.

Value and self-worth:

At a workshop for students, a motivational speaker begins his speech by showing a twenty dollar note. He asks, "Who wants this \$20 note?"

On seeing everyone raise their hands, the speaker crushes the note. And he asks again, "Who would still like to have it?"

Once again, everyone in the hall raises their hands. Eventually, the speaker throws the twenty dollar note on the floor and stamps on it with his shoes. He picks it up and asks again if anyone wants it now?

All the hands go up.

He concludes by saying, no matter what he does to the note, it is still desirable as there is no decrease in its value.

Moral: No matter how difficult life circumstances get, we should never lose our self-confidence. Our worth should never be impacted by the hardships in life.

