



Learn English Through Stories

Panchtantra Tales

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16. The Blind Vulture



Once upon a time, there was a hill that sloped down to the banks of a river. At the bottom of the hill, there was a tree which made the shelter for many birds. One day, a blind old Vulture came to live in the hollow of the tree. The birds welcomed the blind vulture and decided to give him a share of their food since he was old.

When the Blind Vulture saw birds' concern for him, he was overwhelmed with gratitude. He thought to himself, "As these birds are being so kind to me, it has become my duty to protect their young ones when they are away gathering food". After this, the Vulture used to get his food from the birds and in return, he took care of their young ones while they were away. So like this, all of them were passing their days happily.

One day, a cat passed by that tree when the birds were away. Hearing the noise of the young ones, she came near the tree with the hope of catching and eating the baby birds. But when the young ones saw her coming, they made a chirrup. The blind Vulture heard them and shouted, "Who is there?" On seeing the Vulture, the Cat got frightened and said to herself, "O God! I am as good as dead. But I need to be brave. I should try to gain his confidence".

At once, the Cat replied, "O wise one! I just came to pay my homage to you". The Vulture asked, "Who are you?" The Cat answered, "I am a Cat". The Vulture shouted, "Go away otherwise I'll eat you up". The Cat was clever and she made quick responses to the Vulture. She innocently said to the Vulture, "Sir, Listen to me first then you can decide further. It is not good that you are discarding me as I belong to a particular race".

The Vulture decided to listen to her. The Cat said, "I live on the other side of the river. I don't eat meat and take bath every day in the river. I am doing great penance for my sins. I have heard much about your intelligence from

the birds on the banks of the river. They told me that I should learn more about religion from you as you possess all knowledge. So, I came here to become your disciple and seek your blessings.”

She further said, “But, I don’t feel what the birds told me is true, when you got ready to kill a poor cat. You should have treated me well, after all guests are form of God. Even if you don’t have any food to offer me, at least you could say something kind to me.” The Old Vulture replied, “How can I trust you since you are carnivorous and young birds reside here.” The Clever Cat was well-versed in tantrums.

She touched the ground and her ears as a sign of her honesty and replied, “I've read all scriptures and came to know that killing is immoral. The entire forest is full of herbs and vegetables. So why should I commit sin by killing birds?" The Vulture believed her and allowed her to stay with him in the hollow of the tree. With the passing days, the Cat started eating the young birds one by one without the knowledge of the Vulture.

When the birds found that their young ones were missing, they started looking for their kids. As soon as the Cat realized that situation is not in her favour, she quietly slipped away. Unknown about the happening, the blind Vulture lay down near the hollow of the tree where the Cat had thrown the bones of some of the birds eaten by her. When the Birds saw the bones of their young ones, at once they shouted, “The blind Vulture has eaten our innocent kids.”

All of them got enraged by the ingratitude of the Vulture and they pecked him to death. The poor Vulture didn’t even get the chance to defend himself.

Moral: Never treat someone whom you hardly know as a friend.

Version 2

Once, there was a tree which was home to many birds. One day, a blind old vulture came to live in a hollow in that tree. The birds welcomed him and decided to give him a share of their food since he was old.

The blind vulture decided to protect their little babies in return. So they lived happily.

One day, a cat passed by the tree and heard the baby birds chirping happily. But, as soon as they saw the cat, they began to cry with fright!

The blind vulture shouted, "Who is there?" Now, the clever cat knew the only way he could eat these tasty tiny birds was if he became good friends with the vulture.

He said to the vulture, "I had heard so much about your intelligence from the birds on the banks of the river that I had to come and meet you. Sir." The vulture was delighted to hear this.

He asked. "Who are you?"

"I am a cat."

The vulture shouted. "Go away, otherwise I'll eat you up."

But the cat was smart.

"I live on the other side of the river. I don't eat meat and take a bath in the river, every day," he said. "And I don't think a wise one like you would eat a guest."

The old vulture replied, "How can I trust you, you eat birds!"

"Oh! Not anymore. Sir!" said the cat. "God punishes those who kill others. I would never kill for food when there are such tasty fruits and herbs to eat in the forest."

The vulture believed him and allowed him to stay in the tree hollow. Now every day the bad cat would eat a baby bird and the blind vulture didn't even know. Soon, the older birds found that their children were missing! They began to look for them, and as soon as the cat came to know of this, he left the tree and disappeared into the forest. When the birds came to the old vulture to question him, they found him sleeping. And what did they find there? A huge

pile of bones! The cat would eat the baby birds and leave the bones in the vulture's hollow.

All the parents were very angry with the vulture. They thought he had fooled them and broken their trust. Now their poor babies were dead! They cried and shouted in anger and attacked the sleeping vulture. The poor vulture didn't even know why the birds were hurting him.

Finally, the vulture was thrown out with no home and no friends.

17. The King Elephant and the Wise Hare

A long time ago the great king of elephants ruled over the forest. Once, during his rule, all the lakes dried up as there was no rainfall. So, all the elephants came to the king for help.

The elephant king said, "Please don't worry! I am your king and so it is my duty to take care of all your needs. You will never have to live without water again. I know of a hidden lake that is always full of water. Let's go there."

While the elephants marched to the lake, they trampled thousands of hares that had been living there for years. Hundreds of them died and many hares were injured.

The hares were very angry and worried. One of them said, "Elephants are so huge and heavy, we are like tiny ants to them. They will continue to trample us every day, on their way to the lake! If we don't do something quickly, we will all be killed. We have to find a way to stop them from coming to the lake. The problem is they are very thirsty and they will never listen to us.

A smart hare came up with a clever plan and that night he went to the elephant king. He had to be very careful, for if the king became angry they could all be killed!

So, the hare bowed down to the elephant king with great respect and said, "The Moon God has sent me, Your Majesty. This lake belongs to him and he has forbidden all of you from drinking water from it."

"But where is your lord, the Moon?" asked the surprised king.

The hare took the elephant king to the lake, and pointed at the reflection of the moon in the lake, said, "Here he is, the Moon God! Can you see him?"

The elephant king looked down in the lake and replied humbly, "Yes, I can."

"Move quietly and salute him. Otherwise, he may get very angry and great harm could come upon you and your subjects," said the clever hare. Believing the hare, the elephant king saluted the reflection and left quietly. The elephants never came back to the lake again and the hares lived happily in their homes.

18. The King Cobra and the Ants



Once upon a time, there lived a huge King Cobra in a dense forest. When he was small, he liked to eat small creatures. But, when he grew up, he started eating lizards, eggs, frogs, and rabbits. Further, when he grew up more, he even started eating small snakes.

As he began to grow more and more, his pride began to grow with him. All the other animals in the forest also began to fear the King Cobra. This also boosted King Cobra's pride each day.

Soon, the King Cobra began to think he was the most powerful creature and the king of the forest as all other animals in the forest feared him. Being the most powerful creature and king of the forest, he thought that he should now move from his small hole to a bigger and more decent place. So, he started searching for a place that would suit his size and status.

After some time, he finally came across a big tree. He selected the tree as his house. But suddenly, he observed an anthill near the tree. He thought, "Why should there be an ugly ant hill near my big house?"

Seeing the anthill near his royal house, he started shouting with full force "I am King Cobra, the most powerful creature and king of the forest". He ordered the ants to leave the place immediately. There was no reply from the ants' side. This made him angry. So, he got wild and struck the ant's hill.

Strangely, within minutes, thousands of ants swarmed up the King Cobra biting him everywhere. King Cobra struggled hard for some time and at last, died a painful death.

Moral of the Story the King Cobra and Ants

The moral of the story is that "We should not be proud of anything as pride goes before fall." The story also teaches that sometimes even the strong and powerful cannot face the smaller ones when they are large in number. Hence, we should never underestimate the power of any individual.

19. The Disobedient Kid



Once upon a time, there was a goat and her little kid who lived together. One sunny morning, the kid went skipping and hopping towards the jungle. The mother goat tried to stop her kid from going alone into the deep, dark jungle, saying there are lots of beasts there. “Don’t go alone,” she warned. “Don’t worry, mother. I won’t go too far in,” the kid said.

The little frisky kid was so lost in his games that he did not see how deep into the jungle he had come.

Soon, it turned dark and he wanted to go home to his mother. But the poor, frightened kid could not find his way back.

He was lost and he didn’t know what to do. He cried for his mother and his cosy warm home, thinking he should have listened to what his mother said.

Then a wolf arrived there and said “Aha! I shall feast on the delicious kid tonight.” The wolf saw the kid and gobbled him up.

The poor kid paid the price for not listening to his mother.

The moral of this story is that we should always listen to our parents or guardians because they have more experience and knowledge than us and they always want what’s best for us. They may warn us of dangers that we are not aware of, so it’s important to trust them and follow their advice. It’s also important to be aware of our surroundings and not wander off too far from safety.

20. The Talking Cave



There lived a lion in a forest.

One day, the lion wandered the whole forest, but he did not find any prey. Soon he was tired.

The sun was about to set, but the lion still could not find a prey. "Oh! I had to fast today. Never mind," said the lion, with a deep sigh, trying to console himself.

As the lion was returning to his cave, he saw another cave.

"Ah! Let me go and see if I can find a prey in that cave," thought the lion, as he walked into the cave.

But the cave was empty.

The lion sighed.

Suddenly, he had an idea. He thought, "The sun is about to set. The animal, which lives in this cave, should come here soon. Let me hide inside the cave. I will get a prey without any effort. That should satisfy my hunger."

Thinking this, the lion hid himself inside the cave and waited for the animal to come.

The cave belonged to a fox.

After some time, the fox came there. The fox is a clever and cunning animal. As he walked he looked towards the cave, around cautiously, pricked his ears to hear the slightest sound and twitched his nose to smell an animal.

Even in the faint light of the setting sun, the fox spotted some marks on the ground.

"Ah! The footprints of a lion," said the fox, surprised.

“These footprints lead to the cave. But there are no footprints coming out of the cave,” thought the fox. “This means that the lion is still inside, waiting for the prey to enter the cave. It was a good thing that I came now. Had I come here late, I would not have spotted the lion’s footprints.”

The fox thought of a plan. He shook his tail happily and said, “O cave! O cave!”

Having said this, the fox remained quiet for some time.

Once again, the fox said, “O cave! O cave! Why are you quiet today? Every day, when I call you, you greet me saying, “Welcome friend! How was the day?”

The lion, who was hiding inside the cave, thought, “I think the cave must be welcoming the fox with these words every day, but today, my presence here has frightened it and so it does not open its mouth. Let me speak instead of the cave.”

“O cave! O cave!” said the fox again.

“Welcome friend! How was the day?” said the lion as softly as he could.

But a lion can never suppress his majestic voice. The cave echoed with his voice. All the animals living in the surrounding area were alerted by his roar.

The lion thought that the fox would enter the cave. But he heard the fox saying, “O lion, can a cave ever talk? Well, goodbye.”

The lion peeped out of the cave.

He saw the fox running away to save his life.