



Learn English Through Stories

Panchatantra Tales

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The Elephant and the Sparrows – Version 2

Deep in a vast jungle, far from human eyes, a diverse community of animals thrived. Creatures of all sizes coexisted: some swam in sparkling rivers, others perched in towering trees, and many roamed the lush ground. Life was generally peaceful, with older animals sharing wisdom and young ones bringing energy. New offspring arrived regularly, ensuring the cycle of life continued without interruption.

Among these inhabitants was a devoted pair of sparrows, husband and wife. They had decided it was time to start a family. Building a home for their future chicks required patience and effort. For days, they diligently gathered twigs, soft leaves, and feathers, weaving them into a sturdy, cosy nest high in a tall tree. Once complete, the female laid several delicate eggs. Both parents took turns incubating them, warming the eggs while the other foraged for food. Their excitement grew daily—they could hardly wait to hear the tiny chirps of their newborns.

However, trouble loomed nearby. Adjacent to their tree lived a massive elephant, the most formidable creature in the jungle. He was immensely strong and took great pride in his power. To maintain his dominance, he performed rigorous exercises, swinging his trunk to uproot heavy logs or stomping to shake the earth. Unfortunately, this arrogance made him boastful; he loved to show off, often disregarding the fear he instilled in smaller animals. Birds, in particular, trembled at his approach, knowing his trunk could snap thick branches or his feet could topple entire trees.

The sparrows prayed he would steer clear of their home. But one sunny morning, the elephant, in high spirits, decided to demonstrate his might again. He positioned himself beside their tree and began vigorously shaking it with his trunk. Leaves cascaded down like rain, followed by smaller branches. The sparrows fluttered in panic, pleading desperately: "Please stop! Our eggs will fall and shatter!" Yet, the elephant turned a deaf ear to their cries. Blinded by his pride, he continued until the nest plummeted to the ground, crushing the precious eggs beneath.

Devastated, the sparrows mourned deeply, their hearts broken. They wept for hours until a wise owl, residing in the same tree, noticed their sorrow. Known throughout the jungle for her sagacity, the owl offered consolation and help. "You cannot lay new eggs while this bully roams free," she advised. "He must

learn a lesson first, or history will repeat itself." Hope flickered in the sparrows' eyes—they trusted the owl's reputation for clever strategies.

The following day, the owl returned with an ingenious plan and three unlikely allies: a tiny mosquito, a diligent bee, and a clever frog. The sparrows were sceptical—how could such diminutive creatures challenge the mighty elephant? But the owl reassured them: "Do not underestimate the power of unity and wits. Even the strongest can be humbled.

"Everyone knew the owl's plans were brilliant, so anticipation spread through the jungle. That afternoon, after the elephant had devoured a hearty meal of fruits and leaves, he lay down for a rest, feeling contented. The mosquito approached stealthily and began buzzing a soothing melody near his ears. The tune was hypnotic, lulling the elephant into a deep slumber as he closed his eyes.

Once he was fast asleep, the bee swooped in and stung him sharply on both eyelids. The pain was excruciating; he awoke roaring in agony. His eyes swelled rapidly, burning fiercely, rendering him temporarily blind. Desperate for relief, he stumbled towards the nearby pond, eyes squeezed shut.

By the pond sat a beehive, with the frog positioned cleverly beneath it. Spotting the approaching elephant, the frog let out loud croaks. Mistaking the sound for water, the blinded elephant charged towards it—straight into the hive. Enraged bees swarmed out, stinging him relentlessly across his body. Overwhelmed by the onslaught, he collapsed, groaning in torment. For days, he lay immobilised: eyes too swollen to open, legs throbbing from stings, strength sapped completely.

In this vulnerable state, the elephant finally grasped the harsh truth. He realised that pride goes before a fall—his arrogance had blinded him to others' needs, and now small creatures had taught him humility. He felt profound remorse for destroying the sparrows' nest and vowed never to bully again. The incident was a blessing in disguise; it transformed his character.

Touched by his suffering, the other animals showed compassion. The frog fetched cool water, the sparrows dropped ripe fruits, and the bees offered healing honey. With their aid and rest, the elephant recovered swiftly. Soon, he could see and walk again.

As soon as he regained his strength, he sought out the sparrows. "I am truly sorry," he confessed humbly. "My pride made me thoughtless." To make amends, he assisted in rebuilding their nest, using his trunk to gather the finest materials. While they foraged, he stood guard protectively.

Before long, new eggs were laid, and they hatched into healthy chicks. Joy returned to the jungle. The elephant, now gentle and considerate, used his immense strength to help rather than harm. He became a protector of the small and weak.

The jungle flourished with harmony. Trees swayed gently in the breeze, rivers sparkled, and animals played freely. The sparrows' family grew, their chicks learning to fly under watchful eyes. The elephant moved carefully, always mindful of nests and burrows. When a young calf was born to another herd, he shared his wisdom: "True strength lies in kindness."

The owl observed from her perch, satisfied that unity had prevailed. The mosquito, bee, and frog became regular visitors, sharing stories of their triumph.

This tale illustrates timeless lessons: even the mightiest can be humbled, and pride often leads to downfall. Yet, remorse and change can turn enemies into friends. In the end, compassion unites all, proving that small acts of wisdom and teamwork can overcome any obstacle.

Comprehension Questions

Question 1: Where does the story take place?

Question 2: What are the sparrows preparing to do at the beginning of the story?

Question 3: Why do the smaller animals fear the elephant?

Question 4: What does the elephant do that destroys the sparrows' nest?

Question 5: Which animal offers to help the sparrows and is known for her wisdom?

Question 6: Name the three small animals that join the owl's plan.

Question 7: What does the mosquito do to make the elephant fall asleep?

Question 8: Why does the elephant run towards the pond with his eyes closed?

Question 9: What idiom in the story means that being too proud can lead to failure?

Question 10: How does the elephant change after he recovers?

Answers

Answer 1: Deep in a vast jungle (far from human eyes).

Answer 2: Start a family (by building a nest and laying eggs).

Answer 3: Because he is immensely strong, boastful, and shows off his power without caring about others (he breaks branches and shakes trees).

Answer 4: He shakes the tree vigorously with his trunk until the nest falls and the eggs are crushed.

Answer 5: The owl (known for her sagacity/wisdom).

Answer 6: A mosquito, a bee, and a frog.

Answer 7: It buzzes a soothing/hypnotic melody near his ears.

Answer 8: Because the bee stings his eyelids, causing them to swell and burn, so he cannot see and needs water for relief.

Answer 9: Pride goes before a fall.

Answer 10: He feels remorse, apologises, makes amends by helping rebuild the nest, and becomes gentle and protective (using his strength to help rather than harm).

Inference Questions

Question 11: Why do you think the elephant ignored the sparrows' pleas when he was shaking the tree?

Question 12: What does the owl's decision to involve very small animals tell us about her character?

Question 13: How do you think the sparrows felt when they first saw the mosquito, bee, and frog as helpers?

Question 14: Why was the elephant's suffering described as "a blessing in disguise"?

Question 15: What can we infer about life in the jungle after the elephant changed his behaviour?

Inference Answers

Answer 11: Because he was arrogant/boastful/proud and only thought about showing off his strength; he did not care about the feelings or safety of smaller animals.

Answer 12: It shows she is wise, clever, and believes in the power of intelligence/unity over physical strength (she values brains more than brawn).

Answer 13: They probably felt doubtful, surprised, or sceptical because the helpers were very small/diminutive and did not look strong enough to challenge the mighty elephant.

Answer 14: Because although the suffering was painful at the time, it taught him an important lesson, made him feel remorse, and helped him become a kinder and better animal in the end.

Answer 15: Life became more peaceful and harmonious; all animals (big and small) felt safer, helped each other, and lived together happily without fear or bullying.