

**Folktales (including Animal Fables and Fairytales)  
and a Legend**

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## 1) "The Bull Called Delightful"

### A Jataka Tale

Once the Bodhisattva was born as a calf. This calf had been bred for strength and was bought by a wealthy man. The man became very fond of the gentle animal, and called him Delightful. The man took good care of Delightful and fed him only the best.

Delightful grew up to be a big fine strong bull. One day Delightful thought to himself, "I was raised by this generous man. He gave me good food and constant care. Now I am a big grown-up bull and there is no other bull who can pull as heavy a load as I can. Therefore, I would like to use my strength to give something in return to my master."

So he said to the man, "Sir, please find a merchant who is proud of having many strong bulls. Tell him that your bull can pull one hundred heavily-loaded bullock carts."

Following Delightful's advice, the wealthy man went to such a merchant and struck up a conversation. After a while, he brought up the question of who had the strongest bull in the city.

The merchant said, "Many have bulls, but no one has any as strong as mine."

"Sir, I have a bull who can pull one hundred heavily-loaded bullock carts," the wealthy man replied.

"I don't believe it!," said the merchant. "I will bet a thousand gold coins that your bull cannot do that."

So the bet was made, and they agreed on a date and time for the challenge.

On the appointed day, the merchant attached together one hundred big bullock carts. He filled them with sand and gravel to make them very heavy.

The wealthy man fed the finest rice to Delightful. He bathed and decorated him, hanging a beautiful garland of flowers around his neck.

When the time came for the competition, the man harnessed Delightful to the first cart and climbed up onto it. He cracked a whip in the air, and yelled at the faithful bull, "Pull, you dumb animal! I command you to pull, you ignorant beast!"

The bull called Delightful thought, "This challenge was my idea! I have never done anything bad to my master, and yet he insults me with such hard and harsh words!" So Delightful remained in his place and refused to try to pull the carts.

The merchant laughed and demanded his winnings from the bet. The wealthy man had to pay him a thousand gold coins. The wealthy man returned home and sat on a chair on the front porch of his house. He was saddened by his lost bet, and embarrassed by the blow to his pride.

The bull called Delightful peacefully walked home on his own. When he arrived, he saw his master sitting in a slumped, dejected manner. He asked, "Sir, why are you sitting there like that? You look sad."

The man said, "I lost a thousand gold coins because of you."

The bull replied, "Sir, you called me dumb and ignorant and worse. You even cracked a whip in the air over my head. In all my life, have I ever broken anything, stepped on anything, or behaved badly in any way?"

"No, my pet," the man answered.

Delightful said, "Then sir, why did you insult me by calling me bad names, in public no less? The fault is yours. But since I would like to improve the situation, please go again to the merchant and make the same bet – but this time for two thousand gold coins. And at the time of the challenge, please remember to use only the respectful words I deserve so well."

The man went back to the merchant and made the bet for two-thousand gold coins.

The merchant thought it would be easy money. Again he set up the one-hundred heavily loaded bullock carts. Again the wealthy man fed and bathed the bull, and hung a garland of flowers around his neck.

When all was ready, the man touched Delightful's forehead with a lotus blossom, having given up the whip. Speaking to Delightful in a humble and gentle tone of voice, he said, "Dear Delightful, please do me the honour of pulling these one hundred bullock carts."

Lo and behold, the wonderful bull pulled with all his might and dragged the heavy carts, until the last one stood in the place of the first.

The merchant's mouth was wide open in shock. He had to pay the two thousand gold coins. The onlookers were so impressed that they honoured the bull and his owner with gifts.

But even more valuable to the wealthy man than his winnings was the lesson he learned.

What do you think that lesson was?

## 2) "The Crow and the Peacock"

### A Jataka Tale

Once there was a crow who wished to be colourful like some other birds.

So the crow went to parrot and told the parrot what was on crow's mind.

The parrot said, "The peacock is the most colourful bird, so talk to a peacock."

The crow went to a peacock and told the peacock what was on crow's mind.

The peacock replied, "You are the luckiest bird! You have been never caged! You are always free! Many peacocks and other birds who have colourful feathers are caged for their entire lives, just because someone wants to look at those feathers."

After listening to this, the crow realized the crow's mistake and thanked Mother Nature for making crows the way they are. Then the crow flew away happily.

### 3) "The Little Bird Who Saved the Forest"

#### A Jataka Tale

Once there was a forest and in that forest there was a tree. In this tree lived a little bird. The little bird loved the little bird's home. The little bird loved the leaves, the branches, the tree and the entire forest.

One day the little bird smelled something strange. The little bird flew up, high over the canopy and saw in the distance a fire, a great mass of flames and smoke coming towards the little bird. The little bird called down to the little bird's friends, "It's a fire, we must do something!"

But all of the little bird's friends fled. "Run away with us," they called, "otherwise you will die."

But the little bird loved the little bird's home and would not leave it to be destroyed. The little bird flew down to a stream by the tree in which the little bird lived and dunked in the water. The little bird then returned to the sky and when the little bird was over the fire, the little bird shook, so that drops of water fell down. The water hissed and fizzled away in the flames in an instant.

The little bird flew back to the stream and again dunked in the water and then returned to above the fire, and shook. The little bird did this again and again, with the fire getting closer and closer to the little bird's tree.

A great eagle who was flying by, high in the sky, looked down and saw what was happening. Filled with admiration for the little bird, the great eagle swooped down and closely observed as the little bird flew between stream and fire.

The great eagle was so filled with compassion that large tears began to drip from the great eagle's eyes. These were big tears and soon there were many of them. At last the fire was put out. The part of the forest where the little bird lived had been saved.

The great eagle flew onward and the little bird returned to the little bird's tree.

#### 4) "The Rabbit Who Thought the Sky was Falling"

##### A Jataka Tale

Once a rabbit was sleeping under a palm-tree. The rabbit heard a loud, "Thud!," and felt the earth shake a little.

The rabbit woke up suddenly and thought with alarm, "The sky is falling! I've got to run, run as fast as I can. Maybe I can escape from the disaster area."

As the rabbit was running, the rabbit was spotted by a monkey who was sitting on the branch of a tree. The monkey called out, "Rabbit, why are you running so fast?"

The rabbit stopped short, looked up at the monkey, and shouted, "Run for your life! The sky is falling! Run, run!" And with that, the rabbit was off running again.

The monkey swung from tree to tree on vines, calling out to the other monkeys, "Hey, everybody! The sky is falling! Run, swing, jump – get your family, and get away from here as fast as possible!"

Within moments, many monkeys were frantically running and swinging, trying to get as far away as they could.

One monkey, in haste, accidentally swung directly into the side of an elephant. This elephant had been peacefully munching on some tall grass. Now the elephant carefully looked at the monkey who had swung into elephant's side, and the elephant asked the monkey, "What are you doing?"

The monkey replied, "I am trying to get away! Haven't you heard? The sky is falling! Run! Run for your life!"

The elephant was shocked. The elephant raised the elephant's trunk to make the elephant trumpet sound, and then promptly started running, calling upon the other elephants to run also, which they quickly did.

Now when elephants run, which is known as a stampede, the earth shakes.

Lions are known as the kings and queens of the jungle. At this moment a lion was sitting in front of the lion's cave on the side of a nearby mountain. The lion felt the earth shake. The lion looked out at the plain in the distance, and saw many elephants running here and there, as if in a panic. The lion requested a minister of the lion, a fox, to go down to the plain, make contact with a leader of the elephants, and bring that elephant to the lion.

The fox did so, and soon returned with an elephant.

The lion asked the elephant, "Why are the elephants running?"

The elephant replied, "Haven't you heard? The sky is falling! We are trying to get away."

The lion asked, "Did you see the sky falling? Did any elephant see the sky falling?"

"I believe we were alerted about the situation by a monkey," replied the elephant.

Said the lion, "Minister, please bring to me a leader of the monkeys."

Soon a monkey was standing before the lion. The lion demanded of the monkey, "Why did one of you tell the elephants that the sky is falling? Did one of you see the sky falling?"

"A rabbit told us," said the monkey.

"Bring that rabbit to me," the lion said to the lion's minister.

When the rabbit appeared, the lion said to the rabbit, "I want to get to the bottom of this. Why did you tell the monkey that the sky is falling? Did you see the sky falling?"

"Well," said the rabbit timidly, "I *heard* the sky falling, and I felt it."

"Please take us to the place where this occurred," said the lion. "We are going to conduct a proper investigation."

So the group of them – the lion, the fox, the elephant, and the monkey, all led by the rabbit – walked to the place where the rabbit had been sleeping under a palm-tree. Nearby a big coconut was on the ground.

The lion looked at the coconut, and then looked at the rabbit. The lion asked the rabbit, "Is it possible that this one coconut fell to the ground, and you supposed that the entire sky was falling?"

The rabbit stammered nervously, "It's, it's possible."

The lion then said to all who were assembled there, "Let this be a lesson for all of you: don't jump to the conclusions, and don't believe unfounded rumours. Rabbit, you acted foolishly, and you made fools out of many of your neighbours. Next time, all of you, please act more wisely."

All agreed to follow the lion's suggestion.

## 5) "The Talkative Turtle"

### A Jataka Tale

A turtle lived in a pond. Two wild geese also lived there. The three of them were friends.

One day, one of the geese said to the turtle, "We're going on a vacation. Would you like to come with us?"

The turtle replied, "Yes, but how could it be possible? I can't fly like the two of you."

"That's easy," replied one of the geese, "We'll hold the two ends of a stick with our feet, and you hold onto the middle of the stick with your mouth. But the important thing is, once we get off the ground, just remember – do not open your mouth!"

The next day, the three friends set off.

All was going well until some other turtles, in another pond, happened to see the turtle hanging from the middle of the stick, dangling, swinging back and forth.

One of those turtles exclaimed, "Look, look! It's a flying turtle! Did you ever see anything so ridiculous?!"

The turtle looked down and began to say, "Please mind your own – "

But the moment the turtle opened the turtle's mouth to speak, the turtle started to fall from the sky. Down, down, down the turtle fell, until finally the turtle plopped with a big splash into the pond in which those other turtles lived.

The turtle was not injured, but was very disappointed about not being able to go on the trip with the turtle's geese friends.

The other turtles in the pond all laughed at the turtle.

However, once the two geese realised that their friend had fallen, they circled back and landed near the pond into which the turtle had fallen.

The turtle saw the two geese and walked as fast as possible to where they were waiting.

One goose said, "Ok, let us try this again. But this time, turtle friend, do not open your mouth no matter what! Next time you might not be so lucky as to fall into a pond."

The turtle nodded the turtle's head emphatically in agreement. And the three friends reached their destination, and later returned home, safely.



## 6) "The Barber and the Ghost"

### A Panchatantra Story

Sanju was a barber. He would roam from place to place to find clients who wanted a haircut or a shave. He carried all his tools safely in a small box. Inside the box were a pair of scissors, shaving blades, combs, and a mirror.

Sanju used to take the box wherever he went. "You can never tell when someone will need a shave or a haircut," he would tell his wife. "One day I'll save enough money and open my own hair-cutting salon."

One morning, Sanju left home with the small box in hand. At noon, he took a nap under a shady tree. Unfortunately, that tree was home to a ghost. It was lunch time and the ghost was hungry. The ghost was thrilled to see Sanju under the tree. The ghost jumped down, threw the ghost's arms wide open, and sang and danced excitedly, "I'm the ghost of this tree! Please give food, delicious food for my tummy!"

Sanju got up. He quickly thought of a plan to turn the situation to his advantage. He started singing as well, "I'm happy, so happy! There'll be one more ghost in my box, one more ghost in my box!"

"What do you mean?," asked the ghost of the tree.

"I already have one ghost in the box," Sanju said, showing his box to the ghost of the tree. "That ghost wants company. You will join that ghost."

"I don't believe you. You are a liar!," screamed the ghost.

"Let me show you the ghost I have in the box," said Sanju, opening the box, reaching into it, and holding up the mirror. The ghost was shocked to see what it thought was another ghost already in the box, a ghost who looked very familiar to the ghost of the tree. This confused the ghost of the tree. The ghost of the tree didn't realise that it was seeing its own reflection.

"I don't know how you got that ghost in there, but please don't do it to me too! Please don't put me in there!," the ghost begged. "I'll give you this bag of gold coins if you leave me alone" – and so saying, the ghost handed a bag to Sanju.

Sanju thanked the ghost for the bag of gold coins and headed home. Sanju's wife was happy to see him. The very next day Sanju opened his hair-cutting salon, complete with life-size mirrors and high seats.

## 7) "Birds Together Lift a Net"

### A Panchatantra Story

Once a flock of birds was flying through the sky, searching for delicious food. The birds spotted a mouth-watering assortment of nuts, seeds, and grains on the ground beside a tree, and swooped down for a feast. But it was a trap. Moments after they landed and began pecking at the seeds and grains, a hunter who had been hiding in the tree's branches, tossed down a large heavy net which covered the entire flock.

In panic, some of the birds flapped their wings, trying to escape. But their individual efforts were to no avail: the net was too wide and too heavy

The bird who was the leader of the flock called out, "Everyone, please listen to me! We have to do this in a coordinated way. We have to act as one. I'll count to three. When I say, 'three,' flap your wings and try to fly straight upward."

When the bird leader said, "three," all the birds did as instructed. Slowly, up, up, up came the birds, carrying the net above them.

"Come," shouted the leader, "let's fly to our favorite shade tree, the one with many branches and leaves, and lower the net onto that tree's branches. Then we could fly out from under the net."

The birds did as their wise leader suggested.

The hunter tried to follow the birds but could not keep up, and lost sight of where they were going. So the hunter did not get the birds, and lost the net also.

## 8) "The Blue Jackal"

### A Panchatantra Story

Long ago there lived a jackal who strayed into a village in search of food. Soon the jackal was being chased by a group of dogs. The jackal entered the house of a dyer, fell into a tub of indigo (blue) dye, and was stained blue from head to tail – thus becoming the Blue Jackal.

The Blue Jackal escaped from the house and went back into the forest. All of animals were surprised at the jackal's appearance: they could not figure out who or what this being was.

The Blue Jackal thought of a way the Blue Jackal could play the situation to Blue Jackal's advantage. The Blue Jackal proclaimed to the animals, "Behold! I am Vishnu, the Blue God, incarnate! I have come to earth to rule over you."

The animals believed the Blue Jackal.

The first thing the Blue Jackal did was to banish all of the other jackals, for the Blue Jackal was afraid they might recognise the Blue Jackal as an ordinary jackal with dyed fur and tell the other animals the Blue Jackal's true identity.

Then the Blue Jackal gave instructions to the various animals regarding what food they should bring to the Blue Jackal at what times, and the other duties they should attend to. For some time all went according to the Blue Jackal's plan.

But then one day, from a long distance, the howling of a pack of jackals could be heard. Without thinking, the Blue Jackal joined in the howling. Hearing this howl, the animals immediately recognised it as a jackal's howl, and they realised that they were being ruled over by a mere jackal. They chased the Blue Jackal away, and the Blue Jackal was lucky to escape in one piece.

## 9) "An Elephant Makes Friends"

### A Panchatantra Story

Once upon a time, an elephant entered a forest. This place was new to the elephant, so the elephant was looking to make friends.

The elephant approached a monkey and said, "Hello, monkey! Would you be my friend?"

The monkey replied, "You're too big to swing on vines like me, so I can't be your friend."

The elephant then went to a rabbit and asked the same question.

The rabbit replied, "You're too big to run under the bushes like me, so I can't be your friend."

The elephant went to a frog, who lived in a pond, and asked the same question.

The frog replied, "You're too heavy to jump like me, so I can't be your friend."

The elephant was very sad because it seemed that the elephant could not make any friends.

Then one day, the elephant saw that many animals were running around frantically in an open field. The elephant asked a bear, "Why are the animals running?"

The bear said, "A lion is running after everyone."

The elephant went to the lion and said, "It is understood that you need to kill and eat animals in order to live. But there is no reason for you to terrorise the entire population."

The lion said to the elephant, "Step aside and don't bother me."

Then the elephant got angry and gave the lion a hard push on the lion's side, knocking the wind out of the lion. For a few moments, the lion was gasping for air. All the other animals rejoiced that the elephant had stood up to the lion. They all went to the elephant and said, "You are the perfect size to be our friend!"

## 10) "The Rabbit and the Lion"

### A Panchatantra Story

Once there was a lion who was killing animals just for sport. This lion was killing many more animals than the lion needed to eat to stay alive and healthy.

The kinds of animals who were under attack held a meeting to discuss the situation. An elephant chaired the meeting. A zebra, giraffe, antelope, buffalo, and numerous other big and important animals were there.

The elephant began, "Brother and sister animals, we are meeting today to try to figure out how to stop one lion from destroying our communities. As we all know, this lion is killing many more animals than the lion needs to eat. Does anyone have any suggestions?"

Nobody said anything.

Then a small white rabbit stepped forward and said, "I have an idea."

The zebra said to the rabbit in an annoyed tone of voice, "You're just a little animal. You shouldn't even be at this meeting. But if you are going to attend the meeting, at least please be quiet and stop wasting our time."

The rabbit replied, "It is true that I am small, but that has nothing to do with it. You shouldn't speak to me with such lack of respect. I have a good idea, and it's going to work. You'll see. Just wait and watch."

The next day, the rabbit went to the lion and said, "Mr. Lion, Sir, Hello Sir!"

The lion looked at the rabbit.

The rabbit continued, "Now please don't eat me, Sir. I have come to tell you something. There is another lion who has come to the neighbourhood, and he says he is the new king of this jungle."

"What?! How dare him?! Take me to this lion at once," the lion commanded.

The rabbit took the lion to a nearby well, and motioned for the lion to look down into the well. Deep in the well, the lion saw his own reflection in the water, but the lion thought it was another lion, a lion other than himself.

The lion demanded of his own reflection, "Who are *you*?!"

His own voice echoed back to him, "Who are *you*?!"

The lion thought it was the lion in the well who was saying this, and the lion proclaimed, "I am the king of this jungle, and you must leave immediately!"

His voice echoed back to him, "I am the king of this jungle, and you must leave immediately!"

This was too much for the lion. In his fury at what he thought was the lion in the well, the lion forgot that he did not know how to swim, and he leapt into the well, so as to attack what he thought was the lion in the well.

However, when he reached the water in the well, the lion just splashed through his own reflection on the surface of the water.

"Help, help!," cried the lion. "I don't know to swim. I am going to drown!"

A number of the other animals had been watching this entire episode, and now gathered around the top of the well. The elephant called down to the lion, "If we rescue you, do you give your word of honour that you would return to being a proper lion, and only kill the animals you need to eat?"

"Yes, I give my word," gasped Lion.

Upon that, the animals at the top of the well lowered one end of a rope into the well, deep, deep, so that the lion could grab hold of it, climb up it, and escape from the well.

And I am happy to report that the lion kept his word, and that for the rest of his long life he ruled over the other animals of the jungle with wisdom and justice.

As for the rabbit – the other animals who had been at the meeting thanked the rabbit for saving their lives.

## 11) "The Loyal Mongoose"

### A Panchatantra Story

A long time ago there lived a farmer, his wife, and their new-born child.

One day, while returning from the fields, the farmer saw a small mongoose lying beside the road. The farmer picked it up and brought it home. He told his wife that the mongoose could be a good pet for their child. His wife did not like the idea of having a mongoose near their child but she accepted her husband's suggestion.

The little child and the mongoose started growing together.

One day the farmer's wife had to go to the market. She put her child in the child's cradle and helped the child go to sleep. Then she asked her husband to look after the child. Her husband assured her that he would do so.

Soon after his wife left for the market, the farmer was called by a business associate, and the farmer felt he had to go to meet that person. The child was sleeping and thus the farmer felt he could not take the child with him.

After some time, the farmer's wife came back with a heavy basketful of vegetables. She found the mongoose waiting for her outside the house. She was shocked to see that the face and paws of the mongoose were covered with blood. "You horrible creature, you have killed my child!," she cried and slammed her basket of vegetables down onto the mongoose.

She ran inside and was relieved to find the child sleeping peacefully in the child's cradle.

On the floor next to the cradle lay the body of a big black snake. The snake was dead. Its body was torn in numerous places and was bleeding.

The farmer's wife realised what had happened. The snake must have been approaching the cradle, and realising that the snake might harm the child, the mongoose must have attacked the snake to prevent it from hurting the child.

"What have I done?!", the farmer's wife thought to herself. She rushed back outside and lifted the heavy basket off of the mongoose. But the damage had been done – the mongoose had been crushed, and it was dead. With tears in her eyes, the farmer's wife said, "Oh mongoose, I am so sorry! Thank you for protecting my child!"

## 12) "The Monkey and the Crocodile"

### A Panchatantra Story

A monkey liked to sit on the branch of a berry tree on the bank of a river. Once the monkey saw a crocodile in the water near the tree. The crocodile looked hungry and tired. The monkey threw some berries down to the crocodile, and the crocodile thanked the monkey.

The monkey gave berries to the crocodile almost every day. One day the crocodile took some of the berries home to the crocodile's spouse. The crocodile's spouse asked, "Where did you get these berries?"

The crocodile answered, "A monkey on a tree has been giving the berries to me."

The crocodile and the crocodile's spouse looked at each other and both had the same thought: If this monkey had also been eating these berries, the monkey would be very sweet. Then and there, they decided they would like to eat this monkey.

The next day, the crocodile went to the monkey and said, "My spouse and I want to invite you home for dinner."

The monkey agreed. The crocodile carried the monkey on the crocodile's back across the river. When they were halfway across, the monkey asked the crocodile, "By the way, what are we having for dinner?"

Without thinking, the crocodile replied, "You!"

The monkey had to think quickly if he was going to save himself – and that is just what the monkey did. "You should have told me earlier," said the monkey. "The best-tasting part of me is my heart, and I left my heart back on the branch of the berry tree. If you want to taste the best of me, let's go back to the tree and I'll get my heart."

The crocodile turned around and swam back to the tree. Once they reached the tree, the monkey jumped up, grabbed hold of a branch, and climbed up to the branch upon which he often sat.

"Come on," called the crocodile, "We'll be late for dinner!"

"Oh," said the monkey, "You better go ahead without me. It turns out my heart is just not into going out for dinner tonight."

From that day on, whenever the monkey saw the crocodile, the monkey kept in mind that a monkey is a monkey, a crocodile is a crocodile, and crocodiles eat monkeys.



### 13) "Moocha Raja Finds His Soulmate"

#### A Panchatantra Story

One day, a monkey climbed up to the open window of Moocha Raja's bedroom. The monkey sat on the window sill and watched a maid fanning the king, who was sleeping.

The maid left the room to do some other work. The monkey jumped into the room, picked up the fan, and started fanning the sleeping king.

When the king woke up, he saw the monkey fanning him. The king blinked. He thought that the maid had changed into a monkey! Just then, the maid walked in and saw the monkey with the fan in the monkey's hand. Shrieking loudly, she ran out of the room.

The monkey grinned. Moocha Raja laughed.

Moocha Raja took a liking to the monkey. The monkey seemed to be his soulmate!

Overcome by love for the monkey, Moocha Raja threw a banana to the monkey, which the monkey caught smartly.

Later, when Moocha Raja dressed up to leave for the court, the monkey ran and brought Moocha Raja his shoes. Moocha Raja patted the monkey and threw a mango to the monkey, which the monkey accepted happily.

Moocha Raja called the royal tailor and asked the royal tailor to stitch pants and a coat for the monkey. Dressed up in the pants and coat and with a cap on his head, the monkey accompanied Moocha Raja wherever he went.

The minister was concerned about Moocha Raja's trust in a monkey. The minister said the king, "You can never tell how these monkeys are going to behave – "

But Moocha Raja cut the minister short, saying, "If you utter one more word against this monkey, the monkey will replace you as minister!"

The minister was silent, and withdrew.

That afternoon, Moocha Raja took a nap. The monkey sat beside him with the fan. The monkey saw a fly coming into the room through the window. The monkey eyed the fly suspiciously. The fly ignored the monkey and buzzed towards the sleeping king. The monkey shooed the fly away with the fan. But the fly was not easily put off. The fly came again, buzzing. The monkey chased the fly away, only to find the fly once again buzzing above the sleeping king, refusing to obey the monkey.

Finally the fly sat on the nose of Moocha Raja. Furious at the fly, the monkey raised the monkey's fist and brought it down hard on the fly – and on Moocha Raja's nose! The fly flew away just in time. But Moocha Raja jumped in pain, holding his broken and bleeding nose.

Alarmed at the sight of the blood, the monkey jumped out of the window, never to be seen again in the vicinity.

Moocha Raja said to his minister, "I must thank you for your good advice."

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#### 14) "The Three Fish"

##### A Panchatantra story

In a lake, there were three fish who were great friends. The first fish was very smart, the second fish was good at finding ways to get out of trouble, and the third was stubborn and hated change.

The first fish overheard a conversation between fishermen about one of them coming back the next day and fishing in the lake.

This fish said to the other two fish, "Let us leave this lake for some days. On one side of our lake there is a small river through which we could travel to another lake."

The second fish said, "I will stay here and find a way to escape if I'm caught." And that fish devised a plan that the fish intended to use if the fish would be caught.

The third fish said, "I don't think anything is going to change. I am going to live in this lake just as always."

The first fish moved out that evening. The next day, a fisherman arrived and caught the other two fish in nets. The second fish put its plan into action, pretending to be dead – the fisherman threw that fish back in the water thinking it might not be healthy to eat a fish that was already dead when caught. The third fish was cooked, and was eaten by the fisherman for his dinner.

## 15) "The Ant and the Grasshopper"

## An Aesop's Fable

Once on a bright summer's sunny day, a grasshopper was singing.

Then the grasshopper saw an ant. The ant was working hard, collecting food – carrying various grains and blades of grass.

The grasshopper said to the ant, "Why do you work so hard? Summers are for fun, relaxation, and enjoyment. Come let us sing together."

The ant said, "I am collecting food to eat during the winter. Please come and help."

The grasshopper said, "There's plenty of food at present. Why bother about winter now?"

The ant ignored the grasshopper and continued transporting food.

Winter came. The land was covered with snow, and the grasshopper had no food to eat. The grasshopper saw the ant and asked, "Could I have some of your food?"

The ant replied, "When I was collecting food in the summer, you didn't help. Why should I give food to you now?"

If you were the grasshopper, what might you say in reply?

## 16) "The Boy Who Cried Wolf"

## An Aesop's Fable

Once there was a boy who had a duty to look after a group of goats.

Every day he watched over the goats at the foot of a mountain near a dark forest.

It was rather lonely for the boy all day, so he thought up a plan by which he could get a little company and some excitement.

One day he started shouting, "Wolf, wolf!"

Upon hearing this, the villagers ran towards him to help, carrying sticks and other weapons.

But when the villagers reached the boy, he laughed and said to them, "There's no wolf. I just wanted to trick you!"

The next day, again the boy called out, "Wolf, wolf!"

And again the villagers came running. And again the boy told them there was no wolf.

Some days later, a wolf actually did come out from the forest, near the boy and his goats. The wolf began to chase the goats. Of course, the boy cried out "Wolf, wolf!"

But no one came this time. The villagers all thought the boy was trying to trick them again, so they stayed where they were.

The wolf killed all of the goats, one by one, and dragged their bodies into the forest.

The boy learned his lesson, and never tricked anyone for sport again.

## 17) "The Crow and the Tall Glass of Water"

## An Aesop's Fable

It was a hot day, and a crow was very thirsty. This crow saw a tall glass of water on a picnic table beside a house.

The crow flew to the table and landed on it. The tall glass of water was directly in front of the crow. However, the tall glass was only half full of water, and the glass was so narrow that the crow's head could not go down into the glass far enough to get to the water. No matter how much the crow tried, the crow's beak could not reach the water.

Finally, the crow stopped trying to reach the water and stepped back away from the glass. The crow stood motionless and took a deep breath – then the crow had an idea!

There were many small stones on the ground nearby. The crow hopped down from the table and gathered a bunch of these stones, placing them on the table beside the glass of water.

Then, one by one, the crow dropped the stones into the glass. With the introduction of each stone, the water level in the glass rose – the stones went to the bottom of the glass, and the water came up. When the glass was half full of stones, the water came to the top of the glass, and the crow had a delicious and very satisfying drink of water.

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18) "The Fox and the Crane"

## An Aesop's Fable

A fox invited a crane to supper and provided some soup, which was served in broad flat dishes.

The fox lapped the soup out of the fox's dish. However, the crane's long beak was not able to take in the soup from the crane's dish.

"This is frustrating!," exclaimed the crane.

The fox was very amused by the crane's predicament.

Some days later, the crane invited the fox to supper. There, the crane set before the fox a tall, narrow carafe full of soup. The crane could easily insert the crane's long beak into a carafe and enjoy the soup. However, the fox was unable to get the fox's tongue into the tall carafe, and could not even taste the soup.

What could we learn from this series of events?

## 19) "The Goose Who Laid the Golden Eggs"

### An Aesop's Fable

In the countryside, one day a man went to the nest of his goose. There in the nest, the man found an egg – but it was different from a regular egg. This egg was gold in colour, and it was heavy.

The man took the egg to a metal worker and was informed, to his shock, that the egg was solid gold!

Every morning the same thing occurred, and the man soon became rich by selling the golden eggs.

But the man thought to himself, "Why should I go and collect only one egg each day? It is too much work. I would prefer to get a large number of eggs all at one time." So the man took a big knife and cut the goose in half, killing it.

However, the man could not find any eggs, golden or otherwise, inside the goose's body, and the man exclaimed, "Oh no, I've killed the goose who laid the golden eggs!"

## 20) "The Rabbit and the Turtle"

## An Aesop's Fable

One day a rabbit was boasting to the other animals about the rabbit's speed, "I have never yet been beaten in a race! I challenge any of you to a race."

A turtle said quietly, "I accept your challenge."

"What a joke!," exclaimed the rabbit. "I could dance around you all the way, and still I would cross the finish line first."

"Hold your boasting until you've beaten me," replied the turtle. "Shall we race?"

A course was fixed. The contestants had to run around a pole some 100 metres from the starting line, and return to the starting line – which then became the finishing line – and cross it.

Many animals of the forest gathered to watch the race.

"On your marks, get set, go!" said a goat, who was acting as the race judge.

The rabbit darted away and opened up a huge lead. The rabbit reached the pole and turned back towards the starting line. The turtle had just gotten started.

Seeing how far ahead the rabbit was, the rabbit thought, "I'm so far ahead, I think I'll stop here and take a rest. There is plenty of time to relax." The rabbit sat down and leaned against a tree. Within moments, the rabbit fell asleep.

The turtle kept plodding along. The turtle's nickname was "Slow and Steady," by the way. After some time the turtle reached the pole and began walking back towards the finishing line.

The turtle saw the rabbit sleeping near the path and thought, "What a strange way to run a race!" The turtle considered waking up the rabbit, but decided against doing so. The turtle just kept on going, slowly and steadily.

Eventually the turtle was nearing the finishing line. The other animals cheered the turtle on.

The loud cheers woke up the rabbit. The rabbit opened the rabbit's eyes and immediately understood the situation. The rabbit jumped up and dashed towards the finishing line.

But it was too late. The turtle crossed the finishing line first – by a nose!

The other animals gathered around the turtle to give congratulations. A squirrel said, "Slow and Steady, you won! Hurray for Slow and Steady!"

The rabbit walked away, with head down. What do you imagine the rabbit might have been thinking?

## 21) "The Lion and the Mouse"

## An Aesop's Fable

Deep in the forest, a mighty lion was sleeping. A little mouse came by and observed this mountain of a lion. The mouse could not resist the fun of climbing up onto the lion and walking around. The mouse admired the lion's big head, luxurious mane, and muscular paws.

The lion awoke and gave his body a shake, causing the mouse to fall off. Instantly the lion caught the mouse between the lion's paws.

The lion was about to swallow the mouse in one gulp, but the mouse exclaimed, "Please don't eat me, Mr. Lion! If you spare my life, I would certainly repay your kindness someday!"

The lion laughed, "You are so small! How could you ever help me? But just because I appreciate your ability to speak up for yourself, I'll let you go. Now run – before I change my mind!"

The lion released the mouse, and the mouse scampered away.

Some days later, the lion was caught in a trap set by some hunters. The lion was covered by a heavy net made of ropes.

The mouse happened to be passing by, and saw the situation. The mouse gnawed the ropes with the mouse's teeth and set the lion free. The mouse then said to the lion, "Now you know that it is possible for even a mouse to help a lion."

The lion replied, "Dear friend, I was foolish to ridicule you for being small. Thank you for saving my life!"



## 22) "The Merchant and the Donkey"

## An Aesop's Fable

A merchant went to the seashore to buy salt, leading his donkey. The road home crossed a small river. When walking across this small river, the donkey made a false step, and accidentally fell into the water. The water melted the salt in the sacks that were laid across the donkey's back. So when the donkey rose up again, the donkey's load was considerably lighter.

The merchant, with the donkey, retraced the merchant's steps to the seashore and refilled the sacks.

When the donkey again came to the small river, the donkey fell down again in the same spot (but this time the donkey fell on purpose). Regaining his feet with the weight of his load much diminished, the donkey brayed triumphantly.

The merchant recognised that the donkey had played a trick and led him for the third time to the seashore, where the merchant bought a cargo of sponges instead of salt. The donkey, again playing the fool, fell down on purpose as he was crossing the small river, but the sponges became swollen with water, greatly increasing his load.

Thus the donkey's trick turned out to be a trick on himself, for he now carried on his back a double burden (the sponges, and the water absorbed by the sponges).

## 23) "The Bear on the Mountain"

## A Folktale from the Himalayas

"Help, help! I am freezing to death!"

These words were heard by a big black bear. This bear had been sleeping on a bed of leaves, in a cave high on the side of a very tall mountain. Outside the cave, snow was falling thickly. In fact, it was a snowstorm. In a snowstorm, you can only see a few inches in front of you. Everything is white.

The bear had been sleeping soundly, but now the bear had been woken up.

"Help, help!," the voice called again. It sounded like a man.

"Oh yes!," the bear thought, "This is probably the voice of a man who has come hunting for me. I have heard that the king in the valley has offered a huge reward, one crore rupees, for my fur. He wants to make a rug from my fur. Well, what should I do? If I rescue that man, he would likely tell the king where I live, and I would have to run for my life. But if I do not rescue him, it seems the man is going to die. The sun is going down. It is going to get very cold out there. What should I do?"

The bear decided to get up, get out of bed, and save the man. The bear went out into the snowstorm, and found the man.

You can imagine the man's shock, when he saw, suddenly appearing out of the snow, the big face of a bear. The bear said, "Come with me." The man followed the bear. The bear led the man back to the bear's cave.

The man asked, "Could I have a cup of water?" The bear said, "We will have to melt some snow." So the bear made a fire, put some snow in a cup, and held the cup over the fire. The snow melted, and the man drank the water. Then the man and the bear went to sleep.

In the morning, the bear said to the man, "I saved your life last night. Now, please go down the mountain, and don't tell people where I live. Don't even tell anyone you met me. Do you promise?"

"I promise," said the man. And so the man climbed down the mountain, and returned to his farm. For he was a farmer, a poor farmer. He grew just a small amount of vegetables. His wife was waiting at the gate, and when she saw him she waved, and called out in joy. When he reached the gate, she asked, "What happened? When you didn't come home last night we were so worried. Where did you sleep last night?"

"I can't tell you," the man said.

"You can't tell me? You have to tell me! I am your wife!" she said.

"Ok," the man said, "I slept in a bear's cave. That bear saved me. But I promised to the bear I would not tell anyone that I met the bear."

The man and his wife sat and thought about things. Most of all, they wanted to be able to send their daughter to a good school. But they didn't have the money for tuition, uniforms, or books. So finally they decided the man would go to the king, tell him where the bear lives, and ask for the reward.

So that is what the man did. The king sent his soldiers to get the bear, and indeed they found him. They grabbed him, and dragged him down the mountainside.

The bear was thrown at the king's feet. The bear stood up on his back legs and said to the king, "Oh king, if you are a good and just king, you will let me go. I am only here because I saved that man's life. Please let me go."

The king thought for a moment and said, "You are right. And you know, I don't really need another fur rug to walk on. I have learned my lesson. Go back to your mountain. No one will bother you."

So the bear went back up the mountain.

But the farmer went to the king and said, "King, it is very nice that you decided to let the bear go, but what about my reward? Please give it to me."

But the king said, "Reward? I think you should be punished. You lied to that bear. You betrayed him."

"Oh king, I did it for you, to get what you wanted," said the man.

"I think you did it for yourself," said the king.

"Please," said the man, "Please give the reward you promised!"

"Ok," said the king, "I will give you the reward. One crore rupees. But, I will also fine you one crore rupees, for lying to the bear. So you end up with nothing."

"Oh no, no!," the man sobbed.

The king felt mercy towards the man. He said, "Well, I understand you would like your daughter to attend one of our finest schools. I will arrange it. All expenses will be covered. This way, she can study, and learn the difference between right and wrong, just like I have."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!," said the man.

And all lived happily ever after.

## 24) "The Bird Who Had a Broken Wing"

Source Unknown.

Told by Ruth Stotter in Chennai, Oct 2009.

Once a flock of birds was flying south. You know, in the northern part of the world, it can get very cold during one part of the year. They call that "winter." When it gets cold like that, birds often form a flock, in a V formation, and fly south for the winter.

So a flock of birds was flying south. They decided to take a rest, so they all landed on some trees, in a forest area. And they had a meeting.

One of the birds asked, "How is everyone doing? Is everyone ok?"

There were a few moments of silence. Then one young bird said, "I have to say something. The other day, I was playing with my friends, and I accidentally hurt my right wing. I have been flying with it today, but it hurts a lot. I think it may be broken. So I can't fly any further. I will camp out here. You all, go on to the south. When the cold weather time is over, come back and find me here."

This bird's best friend said, "I will stay here with you!"

But the best friend's mother said, "No, it's too dangerous. It's going to get very cold here. You cannot risk your life like that."

At that moment, three animals who had been listening on the ground from behind a tree, came out from behind the tree. They were a deer, a rabbit, and a squirrel.

The deer said, "Hello brother and sister birds! Welcome to this forest. We could not help overhearing your discussion. We will take care of the young bird who has a broken wing."

So that was it. All of the other birds said goodbye to the bird who had a broken wing. One by one, they re-assured the young bird, "Don't worry! We'll be back soon."

And then, they started flapping their wings, up they went, and they were gone.

The bird who had a broken wing felt it was suddenly very quiet in the forest.

But the bird decided to try to begin to make a nest. The bird couldn't fly, so the bird climbed down the tree and gathered some leaves and twigs in the bird's beak. Then the bird began to climb back up the tree.

But the tree said, "Stop! What are you doing?"

"I am making a nest on one of your branches, with your permission," answered the bird.

The tree said, "To tell you the truth, I would prefer that you do not make a nest on a branch of mine. I find that birds often make a lot of noise, chirping and singing. And there is often a big mess, with all of the twigs and all. So please do not make a nest on me. There are many other trees. Please go and make a nest on one of them."

The young bird climbed down to the ground and walked to a second tree.

The bird began climbing up this tree, but this tree also said, "Stop! What are you doing?"

The bird explained. This tree also said the bird could not stay and make a nest.

So the bird climbed down. Now the bird was beginning to get worried. The bird knew the bird's chances to survive would be much less if the bird could not find a tree on which the bird could make a nest.

At this moment, the rabbit approached the bird, and said to the bird, "There is a tree a short distance from here that has a hollow space in its trunk. Perhaps this tree might let you make a nest in its hollow space."

The rabbit led the bird to this tree. The bird asked the tree, "Oh tree, I am in need of shelter. I would be very quiet and neat. Could I possibly make a nest in your hollow space, and stay there during the approaching time of cold weather?"

The tree agreed!

So the bird made a nest inside the tree. The bird brought many leaves to make a soft warm bed. With the help of the deer, the rabbit, and the squirrel, the bird also gathered – and put away in the hollow space – many nuts and seeds that the bird would be able to eat once the weather might turn cold and snow might cover the ground.

A few days later, the weather really did turn cold. And soon the snow came down from the sky. But the young bird was safe, warm, and dry in the hollow space. The bird spent hours and hours just looking out at the silent snow-covered world. But the bird wasn't lonely – for one thing, the squirrel and the squirrel's friends often came to visit. Sometimes the bird would go on walks, leaving footprints in the snow.

After some months, the weather began getting warmer, and the snow began to melt.

And soon after that, the flock of birds returned. They landed in the same part of the forest where they had left the young bird. And now many of the birds called out: "Young bird! Young bird! Where are you? Are you ok?"

The young bird heard their calls. The young bird stuck the young bird's head out of the hollow space, and called back, "Hello! Yes, I am here! I am ok! I am so glad you have come back!"

All the birds flocked to the young bird.

The young bird said, "I am ok. My wing has healed. Look!" And with that, the young bird flapped the young bird's wings and hovered in the air.

Then the young bird landed on one of the tree's branches. The young bird said to the tree, "Thank you so much for letting me stay in your hollow space!"

And the young bird looked down at the deer, the rabbit, and the squirrel, and said to them, "And thank you for helping me!"

Then, all the birds, including the young bird with the healed wing, flapped their wings and went up into the sky, flying northward.

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## 25) "The Boulder on the Road"

### A Folktale

Once upon a time a king placed a huge boulder on a road. He then hid himself and watched to see if anyone would move the boulder out of the way.

A number of the land's leading citizens walked, or drove their vehicles, around the boulder.

Many people loudly blamed the king for not keeping the road clear.

But none of these people did anything about getting the boulder out of the way.

A poor farmer carrying a load of vegetables then came along. Upon approaching the boulder, the farmer laid down the farmer's burden and tried to push the boulder off of the road. After much effort, the farmer finally succeeded.

The farmer went back to get his vegetables and then began to walk forward on the road. The farmer noticed a purse lying on the road where the boulder had been.

The farmer picked up the purse and saw that it contained many gold coins and a note from the king explaining that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the road.

## 26) "The Fish Brother"

## A Tamil Folktale

There were seven brothers and one sister. The youngest brother was a fish who lived in a river. The sister used to take food to her brothers every day. On the way to the six older brothers who did agricultural work, she would give the youngest brother, the fish, a ball of rice; and he would carry her across the river as she stood on his back.

One day the sister did not have enough rice for all six brothers, so for the fish-brother, so she made a ball of dirt, stuck a few grains of rice on its surface, and gave him that. When the fish tasted the dirt-ball, it thought, "Ugh! How could my sister give me this to eat? Is this the thanks I get for carrying her across the river every day?" Enraged, he cut her foot with the sharp fin on his back.

She told the rest of her family that the fish had cut her, and they killed the fish. They buried him beside the river. A rosebush with many flowers grew over his grave.

Life went on for the family. Soon it was time for the sister's marriage. All the preparations had been done, except: there were no flowers anywhere in the town! Nowhere! They looked everywhere but found nothing.

Then one of the brothers said, "There is one beautiful rosebush I know of. It grows beside the river, right over where we buried our fish-brother."

The oldest of the human brothers went to the rosebush, and sang,  
 "Flowers, flowers, flowers,  
 We need flowers for sister's wedding.  
 Flowers for her wedding garland."

But the rosebush sang back,  
 "Don't pluck me,  
 Don't touch me!  
 I was given a ball of dirt to eat,  
 And I was punished unfairly."

The second oldest brother went singing,  
 "Flowers, flowers, flowers,  
 We need flowers for sister's wedding.  
 Flowers for her wedding garland."

But again the rosebush sang back,  
 "Don't pluck me,  
 Don't touch me!  
 I was given a ball of dirt to eat,  
 And I was punished unfairly."

Again and again, the brothers went to pick the flowers, and the bush refused.

Finally, the mother and father came and, despite the rosebush's protests, they were able to pluck flowers from the bush.

They took the flowers home, and the flowers were woven into a marriage garland.

It is said that a garland put on a good person will shine brightly, and that a garland put on a bad person will fade and wilt.

When they garlanded the bride, the flowers faded and wilted. The flowers looked terrible.

At this point, her parents said to their daughter, "Go to your brother and ask for forgiveness. Then come back."

The sister went to the spot where her brother had been buried, and said, "What I did was wrong. I didn't have enough food that day. That's why I gave you that dirt-ball covered with rice. Please forgive me, and send me back with your blessings."

When he heard this, the fish-brother blessed her and wished her a happy married life.

This time when the garland was put around the sister's neck, it shone brightly.

The sister and her groom were married, and all were happy.



## 27) "The Flowering Tree"

A Kannada Folktale.  
Translated and retold by A. K. Ramanujan,  
and retold again by Eric Miller

Once there was a girl who could turn into a tree.

She would have her younger sister pour a pot of water over her, and she would turn into a tree. Her younger sister would gently pick the little white flowers that would grow from the branches of the tree. She was very careful to not break any of the branches. Then, to turn her older sister back into a human, she would pour another pot of water over her.

The sisters did this a number of times. They would take the flowers to the market, and sell them. With the money, they would buy vegetables. They would bring these vegetables home for their mother to cook. Their family was very poor.

After some days, the mother said to her daughters, "I appreciate you bringing the vegetables, but where are you getting the money for this? Are you stealing the money?"

The older daughter replied, "Mother, I am afraid to tell you how we are getting the money, because I am afraid you might not believe me."

The mother said, "Please just tell me."

The older daughter said, "Well, I can turn into a tree, and when I do, flowers grow from my branches."

The mother said, "Stop telling lies!"

The older daughter said, "Come out to the yard, and I will show you."

So they went outside. Water was poured over the older sister, and indeed she turned into a flowering tree. The mother was amazed!

So every day the girls would go to the market to sell the flowers. The family began to get a little extra money, enough to have their house re-painted. Some of their neighbours started to ask, "Where are these people getting all of this money?"

Nearby, there was a prince who lived in a palace. Even he heard about this family that had suddenly become wealthy. He came to investigate. He hid behind a tree, and saw the older sister turn into a tree, and the younger sister pick the flowers.

The prince went back to the palace, and said to the king, "Father, I have found the girl I want to marry. She lives in a nearby village."

The king said, "My son, you can't marry a village girl. You are royalty, and she is a commoner."

But the prince said, "Father, my mind is made up. I want to marry that girl. She has wonderful abilities."

So the wedding occurred. That night, when the prince and his new wife tried to go to sleep, they found their mattress was very hard. So the prince said, "My wife, why don't you become a tree, and I will pick your flowers, and we can sleep on the flowers."

They did what he suggested. In the morning they threw the flowers out the window. They did this same thing for a number of days, and eventually a large pile of flowers developed outside their window.

The prince had two sisters – one younger than him (she was not even ten years old), and one older than him. His younger sister asked him, "Brother, why are there so many flowers outside your window?"

The prince told her. And she asked him, "Could you have your wife come down to the garden where I play with my friends, and have her show us how she can turn into a tree and make flowers?"

The prince asked his wife to do this. The wife was afraid to turn into a tree in public, but she finally agreed.

When the wife turned into a tree in the garden, the young children started fighting over the flowers that grew from her branches. The children struggled and grabbed and fought, and many of the tree's branches were broken. Just then, it began to rain, and all of the children went running home.

The rainwater turned the wife back into a human, but because of the damage that had been done to her branches, she was missing both her arms and both her legs. So she fell onto the ground. She tried to roll home, but in the rain she rolled into a ditch, and from there she could not help but roll part of the way down the side of a mountain.

That night, the prince asked his younger sister, "Where is my wife?"

The younger sister answered, "I don't know. When it started raining, we all came home."

But the wife did not come home that night. She did not come home the next day, or the next. They searched for her, but they could not find her. Her husband became very sad. He stopped brushing his teeth. He stopped combing his hair. He stopped washing. He stopped shaving. He stopped cutting his hair and fingernails. He came to look like a wild animal. Finally, he just wandered off into the forest.

After some time, his wife managed to roll back up the mountainside. Then she rolled to the home of her husband's older sister. This older sister looked out her window and saw a living lump of flesh laying on the side of the road.

She saw it was a woman, and she thought, "That woman looks familiar. Could she be my younger brother's wife?"

So the prince's older sister had her brother's wife brought into the house, and bathed. The wife was put in new clothes, placed in a bed, and given food and drink. But the wife was very weak: she could not even speak.

After some days, the prince also appeared outside his older sister's house. Again, the older sister looked out her window and saw a person down there, and thought, "This person looks familiar." She could not see his face, because his hair was covering it. But she looked and looked, and wondered, "Could this person be my younger brother?"

She had the man brought into the house. He could not speak, but when his hair was parted, she saw that this indeed was her younger brother. She had him bathed, clothed, and fed. Then he was brought into the room in which his wife lay in bed. Neither of them could speak, but when they saw each other, each of them smiled.

After two days, the wife regained her ability to speak. She said faintly, "Dear husband, please pour water on me. I will become a tree again. While I am a tree, please fix my broken branches as best you can. Then pour water on me again."

The prince did this. You know, when branches have been broken, they cannot be un-broken. But they can be straightened and neatened. The prince did what he could. After he poured water on her to make her become human again, he was delighted to see that when she regained her human form, she once again had both her arms, and both her legs.

Now husband and wife were both strong enough to speak normally once more. They told each other how happy they were to be together again. And they lived happily ever after.

## 28) "Jack and the Beanstalk"

### A Fairytale from England

Once upon a time there lived a poor widow and her son, Jack. One day, Jack's mother told Jack to sell their only cow. On the way to the market, Jack met a man who wanted to buy the 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 cow to the man. But when Jack reached home and told his mother what had occurred, Jack's mother was very angry. She said, "You fool! He took our cow and gave you some beans?!" She threw the beans out of the kitchen window. Jack was very sad. He went to sleep without dinner.

When Jack woke up in the following 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 land in the sky. A giant and his wife lived there. Jack knocked on the door. The giant's wife opened the door, and Jack asked her, "Could you please give me something to eat? I am so hungry!" The kind wife invited Jack into the house and gave him some bread and milk.

While Jack was eating, the giant came home. The giant was very big and looked very fearsome. Jack was terrified – he found an empty room, and hid in it. 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 giant's wife said, "There is no boy in here!"

The giant ate his food and then went into the room where he kept his gold coins. He took out his sacks of coins, and counted the coins. Then he went to sleep. During the night, Jack crept out from 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 some time.

Jack climbed the beanstalk and went to the giant's house again. Once again, Jack asked the giant's wife for food, and while he was eating, the giant returned. Jack leapt up in fright and went and hid under the bed. 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!"

Again the giant's 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 the golden egg, 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 house. For a third time, Jack met the giant's wife and asked for some food. Once again, the giant's wife gave him bread and milk, and while Jack was eating, the giant came home. Jack ran and hid in a closet.

"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 the giant's wife.

The giant had a magical harp that could play beautiful songs, and now this beautiful music helped the giant fall asleep. While the giant was sleeping, 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. Furious, he ran after Jack. But Jack was too fast for him. Jack ran outside and to the beanstalk, went down the beanstalk, and reached home. The giant followed him down. Jack quickly ran inside his house and fetched an axe. He chopped at the beanstalk. The beanstalk snapped, and the giant fell and died.

Jack and his mother were now very wealthy and they lived happily for a long time.

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## 29) "King Midas"

### A Legend from Greece

Long ago in a country called Greece there lived a king called Midas. King Midas was very rich. His treasury was filled with gold. But the king was still not happy and wanted more and more. He was greedy.

One day as King Midas was counting his gold coins, a holy man came to him and said, "Tell me what boon you want."

King Midas immediately said, "Whatever I touch should turn into gold."

The holy man said, "So be it."

King Midas was very excited and went running around the palace, looking for things to touch. He touched his throne and it turned into gold. He touched tables, chairs, statues, and many more things – and they all turned into gold. He was delighted! He went into the garden and touched an apple tree and it turned into gold. Just then his minister brought him some food. However, the moment the king touched the food it turned into gold, and he could not eat it.

King Midas' daughter was playing in the garden. Now she ran to him and hugged him. The instant King Midas' hand touched her, she turned into gold.

King Midas was horrified, and pleaded to the holy man, "Please take away this boon! I will not be greedy anymore." The holy man took away the boon and gave King Midas a bottle of water to sprinkle on all the things he had touched. The moment the king sprinkled the water on a thing, it turned back into its usual self. The king was very relieved when his daughter came back to her usual self. King Midas was happy and was never greedy again.

## 30) "Mother Hulda"

A Fairytale collected by Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm  
in the early 1800s in Germany

Once upon a time there was a widow who had a daughter and a step-daughter. The daughter was often greedy and rude, and the step-daughter was generous and kind. However, the woman was much fonder of her daughter, even though she was often greedy and rude. The step-daughter was made to do all the work of the house. Also, every day the step-daughter was sent out of the house to sit by the well and spin yarn by hand until her fingers would bleed.

One day the blood from her fingers fell on the spindle, so the girl decided to draw some water from the well with which to wash the spindle. As she was doing so, the spindle slipped out of her hands and fell into the well. The girl ran home and told what had happened. Her stepmother scolded her harshly, and said in rage, "You let the spindle fall into the well, so go and get it!"

The girl went back to the well. Not knowing what else to do, she jumped into the well. Down, down, down she fell. As she was falling, she lost consciousness. When she awoke, she found herself in a beautiful meadow where the sun was shining and flowers were growing all around her.

She walked across the meadow. Soon she came to a baker's oven that was full of bread. The loaves of bread cried out to her, "Please take us out of the oven, or alas, we shall burn! We are baked enough already!" So she picked up the baker's iron thongs and one by one took all of the loaves out of the oven, setting the loaves on a nearby table for them to cool.

The girl walked on and came to a tree with many apples hanging from every branch. The tree called out to her, "Please shake me, shake me! My apples are ripe and heavy!" The girl shook the tree, and the apples came falling down like rain. She kept shaking the tree until not a single apple was left on the tree's branches. Then she carefully gathered the apples together, and walked on again.

After some time, the girl came to a little wooden house that had a thatched roof. An old woman was standing in the doorway, looking out. The woman's teeth were very large, and this terrified the girl, so the girl turned to run away.

But the old woman called after her, "Do not be afraid, dear child! Stay with me. Things will go well for you if you will do the work of my house properly. For example, when you make my bed you must shake the mattress thoroughly, so that the feathers fly about. It is then that it snows in the world, for I am Mother Hulda."

The old woman spoke so kindly that the girl summoned up her courage and consented to work in the house. The girl did her best to do everything to the old woman's satisfaction.

Indeed, every time she made the old woman's bed she shook it with all her might, so that the feathers flew about like snowflakes.

The old woman never spoke angrily to the girl, and every day there was plenty of good food for the girl to cook for the two of them.

The girl lived with Mother Hulda for a long time, but then the girl began to feel homesick. Although she was a thousand times better off with Mother Hulda than she had been at home, still she wanted to see her mother and sister.

So at last, one day when the girl and the old woman were sitting in the house together, the girl said to her, "Mother Hulda, you have been most kind to me, and I have been very contented here, but now I want to return to my own home."

Mother Hulda answered, "I am pleased that you want to go back to your people. And as you have served me so well and faithfully, I will help you go." With that, Mother Hulda gave a large empty cloth bag to the girl, and gestured for the girl to walk out of the house's front door.

As the girl passed through the door, flakes of gold fell from the roof down onto her. The gold kept falling, until the girl had filled her bag with the gold, and the bag was very heavy.

"This gold is yours," said Mother Hulda, "It is your reward for your hard work and good spirit." Mother Hulda then handed the spindle that had fallen down the well to the girl, and waved goodbye.

The girl waved back, and then as she turned to go, the girl instantly found herself back in her ordinary world, close to her mother's house. As the girl entered the courtyard, a rooster who was perched on a fence, called out, "Cock-a-doodle-doo! Your golden daughter has come back to you!"

The girl went in the house, to her mother and sister. The girl had the spindle – and a large heavy bag of gold – so her mother and sister welcomed her warmly. The girl told them all about everything that had happened.

When the mother heard about how her step-daughter had come by her great riches, she thought she would like her own daughter to go and get rich also!

So she made her greedy daughter go and sit by the well and spin. Her greedy daughter would not spin yarn enough to make her fingers bleed, so the mother had the greedy daughter prick her finger on a thorn-bush and drop a few drops of her blood on the spindle. Then the mother told her greedy daughter to throw the spindle into the well, and jump in after it. The greedy girl had no choice, and did as her mother commanded.

Like her sister, the greedy girl lost consciousness as she fell, and awoke in the beautiful meadow. She walked across the meadow until she came to the oven. Just as before, the loaves of bread cried out, "Please take us out of the oven, or alas, we shall burn! We are baked enough already!"

But the greedy girl answered, "No, I might burn my hands if I took you out of the oven." And she walked on.

The greedy girl came to the apple tree, which once again had many apples hanging from every branch. The tree called out to her, "Please shake me, shake me! My apples are ripe and heavy!"

The greedy girl answered, "Do you think I am going to dirty my hands for your sake? And anyway, some of the apples might fall on my head." So she just walked away.

Finally the greedy girl came to Mother Hulda's house. She had heard all about Mother Hulda's large teeth from her sister, so she was not afraid. She began her service in the old woman's house without delay.

On the first day, the greedy girl was very obedient and industrious, and did everything that Mother Hulda asked of her, because she was thinking of the gold she would get in return.

The next day, however, the greedy girl began to dawdle over her work. On the third day, she was more idle still. On the following days, she would lie in her bed in the mornings and refuse to get up. Worse still, she neglected to make the old woman's bed properly, and forgot to shake it so that the feathers might fly about.

Mother Hulda soon told the greedy girl that it was time for her to return home. The greedy girl was delighted, and thought to herself, "Now the shower of gold is coming!"

Then the greedy girl stepped out through the front door, and – something fell on her, but it was not flakes of gold! It was only some very horrible-smelling sticky stuff! This stinky sticky stuff got all over her!

She started running, and the next thing she knew, she was back in the ordinary world, close to her mother's house. The greedy girl came running into the courtyard, looking for some water to wash herself with.

The rooster who was perched on a fence, called out, "Cock-a-doodle-doo! Your greedy daughter has come back to you!"

The greedy girl found some water and spent a long time scrubbing herself, but the mixture was very sticky and smelly – so she might be scrubbing herself even until today!