



Prejunior youths stories

from «Walking the Straight Path»

Edition 2014



This book contains twenty illustrated stories for prejunior youths and junior youths. Very useful material for animators of the «Walking the Straight Path» book .



Graphic conception by bahai window

The Badi Foundation, Macau

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CROW AND FOX



A fox once saw a crow fly off with piece of cheese in his beak. «I must get that cheese» the fox said to himself and so followed the shadow of the bird until he settled on branch of a tree



Your feathers are glossy and your eyes shine like jewels. Surely you have an excellent voice as well. Oh if only i could hear your sing.



This words were like fresh water satsfying the crow's thirst for praise. So he liffed his head with pride and set out to offer asong in honor of his charming friend.



Of course, the moment he opened his beak, the piece of chesse fell. The fox snapped it up before it hit the ground and ran away, while the crow's not so pleasant voice filled the air.

Are we not better than others?



A man well known for his wisdom took his son to a beautiful garden to pray and to meditate. Many others had gathered there for same purpose. The fragrance of the flowers, the soft whispering of the breeze, and the quiet murmur of a stream created a scene of peace. The father and son sat in the shade of a tree. The boy, following his father's example, closed his eyes and filled his mind with spiritual thoughts. But after some time he became tired. He lost his focus and began to look around, first at the flowers and the birds, and then at the people. to his surprise, he saw that more than half of them were asleep.



The boy thought about this: "All these people have come here to pray. They all think they are devoted and religious. But they are not praying. They are just pretending". This bothered him. So he kept thinking about it. And then another thought came to him, a most dangerous thought indeed. He turned to his father and asked:



Are we not better than those who are sleeping instead of praying?



We might have been, had you not asked that question?

The king and the old man



A king went riding through the countryside to observe the condition of his people. Passing by a field, he noticed a very old man. Although weak and obviously in great pain, he was working hard planting date trees. The king stopped his horse and asked:

*Old man, what are you doing?
Surely at your age you should
be resting at home enjoying the
loving attention of your children!*

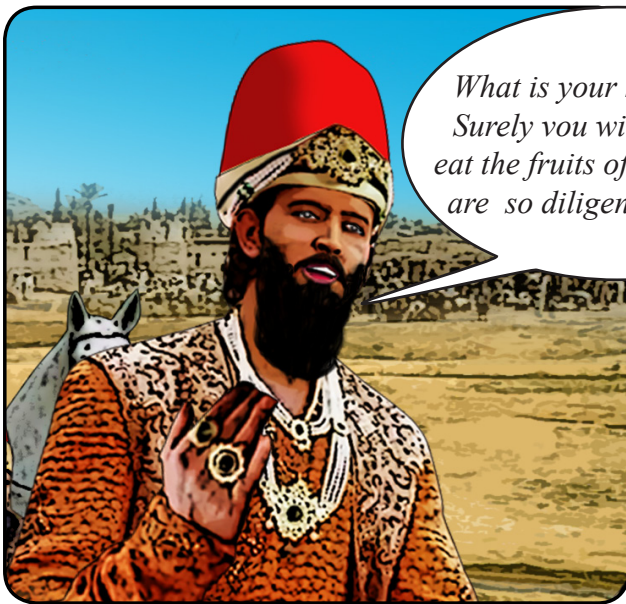
*Oh great king, I cannot rest yet!
I must finish planting these trees!!*



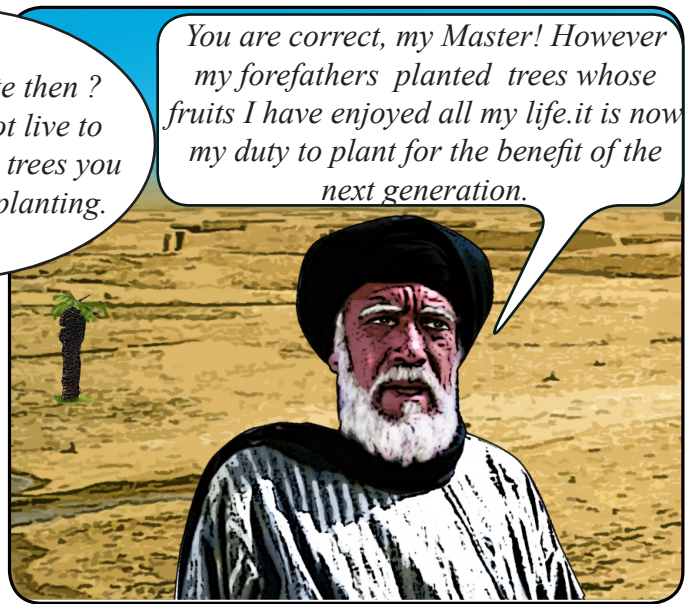
*How long will it before
they produce fruit for
your pleasure?*

*These trees will not
see fruit for at least
last twenty years!*





*What is your haste then ?
Surely you will not live to
eat the fruits of the trees you
are so diligently planting.*



*You are correct, my Master! However
my forefathers planted trees whose
fruits I have enjoyed all my life. it is now
my duty to plant for the benefit of the
next generation.*

The king was so pleased by this answer that he gave the man a gold coin



*I thank you, great king . Just planting the trees
was reward enough for me. But now these trees
have already borne fruit. This coin is worth more
than what first harvest would bring.*



The greedy dog



A dog found a nice juicy bone lying in the trash. He quickly grabbed it and headed home, imagining all the time the pleasure of eating the bone in peace. On the way, he had to cross a small river that ran through the village. As he stepped on the plank used for crossing, his eyes fell on a delightful sight. There in the calm waters of the river was another dog, just like himself, with a delicious looking bone in his mouth.

This is really my lucky day!! Surely I can take away that bone from this silly dog. By the time he gets out of the water, I will have reached home!



But the moment he opened his mouth, his own bone fell into the water and disappeared. All he could see, then, was the other dog staring back at him with a sad look on his face. It was the face of a disappointed dog who had lost not one but two delicious meals.

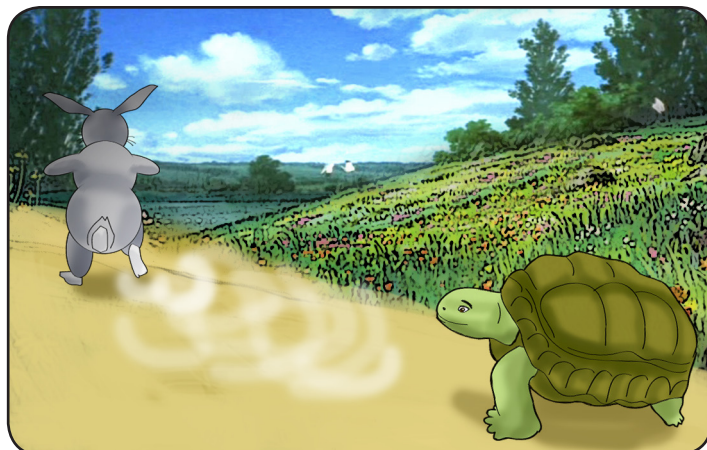
Rabbit and Turtle



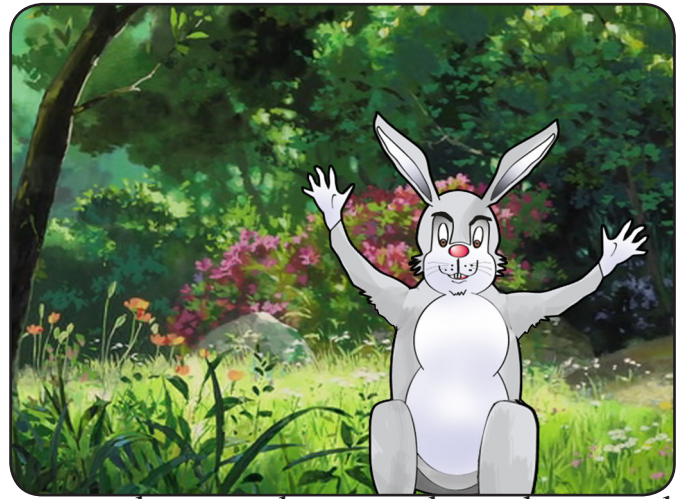
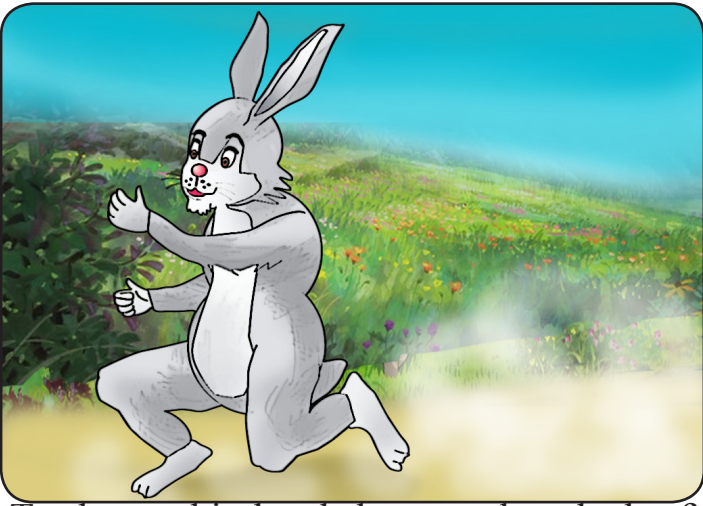
All of Rabbit's friends knew that he was the fastest among them. More than anyone else, Rabbit knew it, and he never tired of telling his friends. Oh, how they wished Rabbit would stop bragging about his running skills. But no one knew what to do about it. Then something unexpected happened. To everyone's surprise, Turtle challenged Rabbit to a long distance race.



At the appointed hour, all the animals gathered to watch. The signal was given and race began. There was a loud whoosh, and Rabbit was out of sight.



Turtle put his head down and took the first step, then another...and another...and another. The animals went to the finish line and waited.



Turtle put his head down and took the first step, then another....and another...and another. The animals went to the finish line and waited. Meanwhile, Rabbit was having a merry time. He ran and Hopped and skipped: He left like singing.



*Why should I strain myself?
How can Turtle possibly win?*



Feeling slightly fatigued after all his shopping and skipping, he stopped behind a tree and lay down to rest. Soon he was in a deep sleep. Turtle was still plodding along. He felt more than “slightly” fatigued. But every time he thought about stopping, he told himself, “I can make it at least to that next stone”, or “I won’t stop before I get to that next tree”, or “Surely, I can get to the top of this hill.



And so Turtle plodded along. Time passed. Rabbit dreamed happily away. The animals waited. Finally they saw Turtle come into sight. And while Rabbit was dreaming of success, Turtle, breathing heavily and exhausted, crossed the finish line.

The fate of two frogs



With a scream, two frogs fell into a deep bowl of cream. The first was a persistent kind of soul, but the other look the gloomy role. He lamented and with a despairing cry he flung his legs and said:



Said the first frog with a determined grin:



Bravely he swam to work his scheme, and his struggles began to churn the cream. The more he swam, his legs aflutter, the more the cream turned into butter. On top of the butter at last he stopped, and out of the bowl he gaily hopped.

The Sultan and his loyal servant



There once was a just and powerful king who had won the loyalty of all his people, high and low. His court was filled with the most accomplished individuals in the kingdom. Yet his favorite was a servant who had attended him selflessly for many years. The other members of the court were envious of this humble man and took every opportunity to convince the king that he was not sincere in his devotion. But the king knew his servant too well to ever doubt him.



One day when the king was enjoying a great feast, he called his loyal servant to his presence and offered him a delicious looking piece of melon. The servant ate it with enjoyment. The king offered him another and another until nearly the whole melon had disappeared. Seeing the pleasure with which the servant ate the melon, the king decided to taste it. His eyes widened in surprise when he found it bitter and disagreeable.



Once again it was proved that the servant's sincerity could not be questioned.

THE FIERY LESSON



In a community that enjoyed much warmth and unity, one individual became discouraged and kept away from others. The local council asked a friend to help him overcome his feelings of estrangement. Soon the friend invited him to his house for dinner and in a most natural way, showered him with kindness. It was a chilly night, and following dinner the two sat in front of the fire sipping tea and watching the flames.



After a few minutes, the host had an idea. He picked up a brightly burning piece of wood with a pair of tongs and moved it to a corner of the fire place. He sat back in silence while his guest kept watching. Alone, the ember began to lose its fire until there was a last glow and then coldness and death. Before the evening was over, he moved the cold dead wood to the middle of the fire where it became a glowing ember once again. Not a word was said all evening about the whole matter. But when the guest was almost out the door, he turned around and said



At the next community gathering, everyone was happy to see a friend who had been sorely missed.

The story of Andocles and Lion



Androcles was a slave who had managed to escape from his cruel master. Moving quietly through the forest, he suddenly came upon a lion. Fear seized him, and he began to run from the ferocious beast. After only a few steps though, he noticed that the lion was not following.



So he stopped and went back to see what was happening. The lion was lying on the ground with a swollen and bloodied paw, and Androcles could see a large thorn in it. The suffering of so noble beast touched his heart. He overcame his fear, approached the lion, and gently pulled out the thorn. He then went on to bind the wound with a strip of fabric torn from his own clothes. In this way, Androcles and the lion became friends.





Unfortunately, Androcles was later captured by the emperor's soldiers. As an escaped slave, he was sentenced to fight a hungry lion in front of the emperor and a large crowd. This usually meant death. On the day of the fight, Androcles was placed in the arena. He prepared himself to meet his fate. A lion was released from a cage. Growling fiercely, it leaped towards its victim. Then suddenly it stopped. It approached Androcles slowly, licked his hand, and received a hug in return. The two friends had met once again.



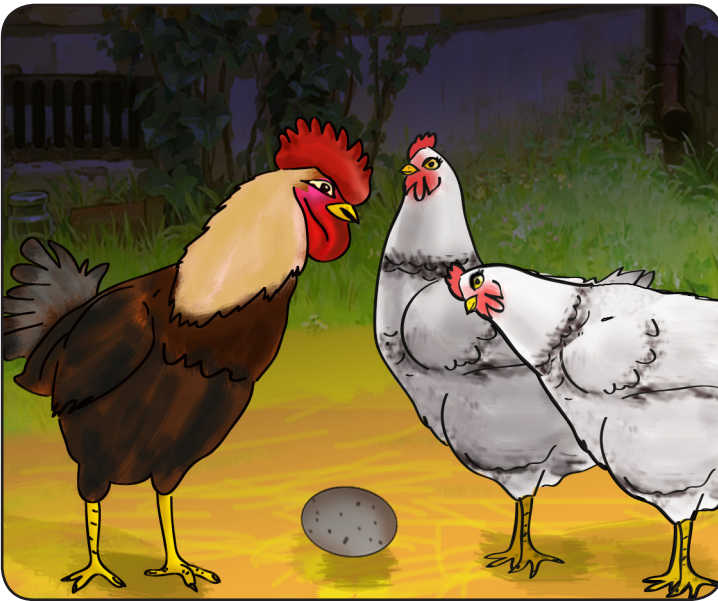
The crowd called for Androcles to be freed. The emperor summoned to his presence. When he heard the story of this unusual friendship, he gave Androcles his freedom and released the lion to roam the forests.



The eagle and chickens



A nest high on a magnificent mountain contained a few large eagle eggs. . One day a strong wind shook the nest, and an egg rolled down the mountainside, coming to rest on a farm. The resident chickens felt they should care for such a gift from heaven, so they asked an old hen to sit on it for a while. She agreed.



This was not the most comfortable thing the hen had ever done, but her care and the heat from her body worked ;the egg finally hatched and an eagle was born. Unfortunately for the eagle, he was raised to be a chicken-a rather unusual one, but a chicken nonetheless. And the saddest part of all was that he believed he was nothing more than a chicken. Yet, his spirit longed for something else. Every now and again, especially on bright sunny mornings, he would look up and see eagles in the sky. How he wished that he could fly like those birds. But whenever he mentioned this to the chickens ,they would make fun of him and cackle,”A chicken who wants to fly!”



Then one day, an eagle, probably his own brother or sister, flew low over the farm and called out to him:



Why are you down there and not up here flying with us?

I'm a chicken, I can't fly !



Of course you can fly. You're eagle like me. Look at your wings. Are those the wings of a chicken?

But I can't fly!!



Yes you can.do as I am!!



And so, with some hesitation, our eagle spread his mighty wings for the first time. To his surprise, he soon found himself soaring in the skies .

The magical mustard seed



Long ago in China there was a young woman who married a wealthy man's son. She was gentle and kind and brought happiness to their home. With time, she and her husband were blessed with a son. But their joy was not to last. Soon the boy was taken ill and died. The woman was overcome with grief. From door to door she went asking her neighbours: »**Is there no medicine, no magic, that will bring my son back to life?**» Seeing that she lost her senses, they sent her to a man known for his wisdom.



Do you have some medicine that will bring my son back to me ?

I will need a handful of mustard seed



Elated, the woman promised to bring it immediately but the wise man said:



The seeds must be taken from a house that has never known sorrow. I will use them to cure your grief



So the women went off in search of the magical mustard seed. Knocking on the door of a beautiful mansion, she thought that surely she had come to the right place.



Here is some mustard seed ?



Take it. It's yours!

But when asked if their home had ever known sorrow, they told her, "**Please don't remind us of our sadness**". As she heard them recount the story of the terrible things that recently happen to them, she was moved to tears. "**Should not I, who have also known sorrow, stay and comfort these people?**" she asked herself. She remained with them for a while and then began her search again. But nowhere, not in the cities or in the towns on the mountain or on the plain, could she find a place that had not been touched grief. And she became so busy helping others that, in the end, she forgot about her search for the magical mustard seed, never realizing that she had actually found the cure for sorrow.



When the hunter had become a prey

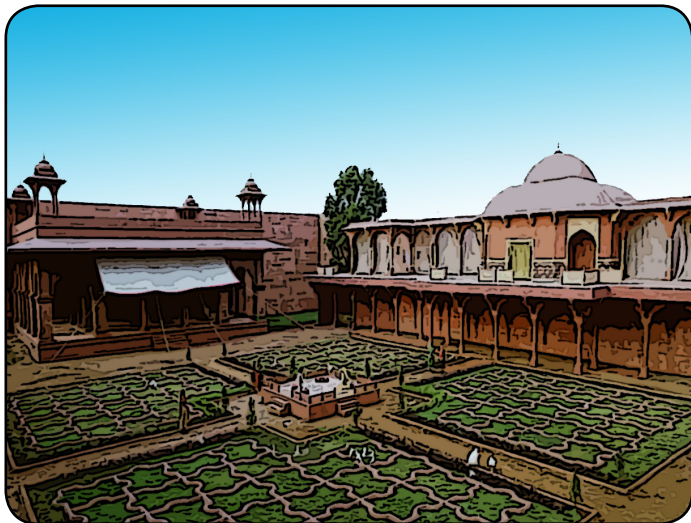


The hunter picked up his gear and went in search of prey. While he was laying his traps, A beautiful bird caught to follow it. After a while, he forgot that he was hunting for food and concentrated on the bird, which he thought could be sold for a good price in the market. But the bird was not easy to catch. it seemed to read the hunter's mind. Just as he was about to capture it, it would fly to the next tree and sit on branch waiting, as if it were teasing him. Gradually, catching the bird became the hunter's obsession. He would run, he would pause, and he would sneak up on the bird. It was exhausting. Once he failed to notice a rock in his way and fell.



Then he became angry, which made him careless. His reckless movements attracted the attention of a hungry wolf. But he was so intent on catching the beautiful bird that he did not notice the wolf behind him. When he finally did, the wolf was about to leap on him. He ran to a tree and climbed it as fast as he could. As he sat on a branch looking in fear at the wolf below, he realized that because of his obsession he was not the hunter anymore; the hunter had become the prey.

The ring of magical words



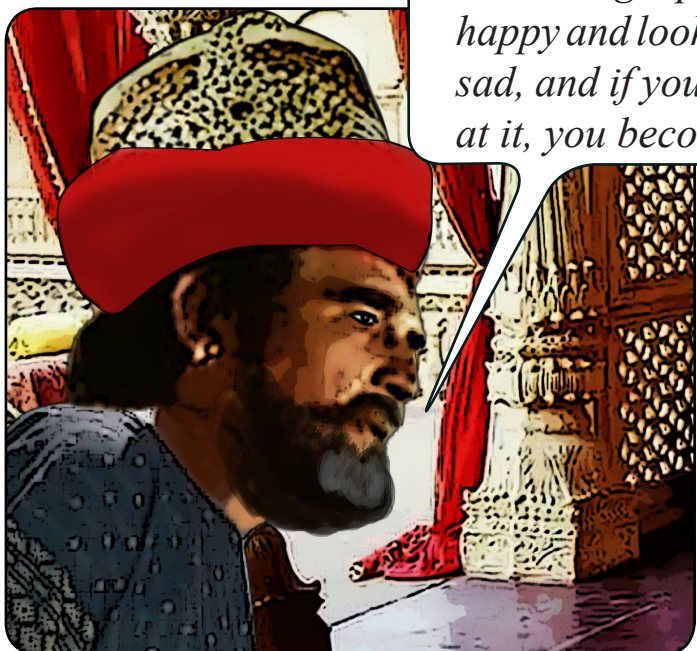
A king sent for his minister one day and said to him:



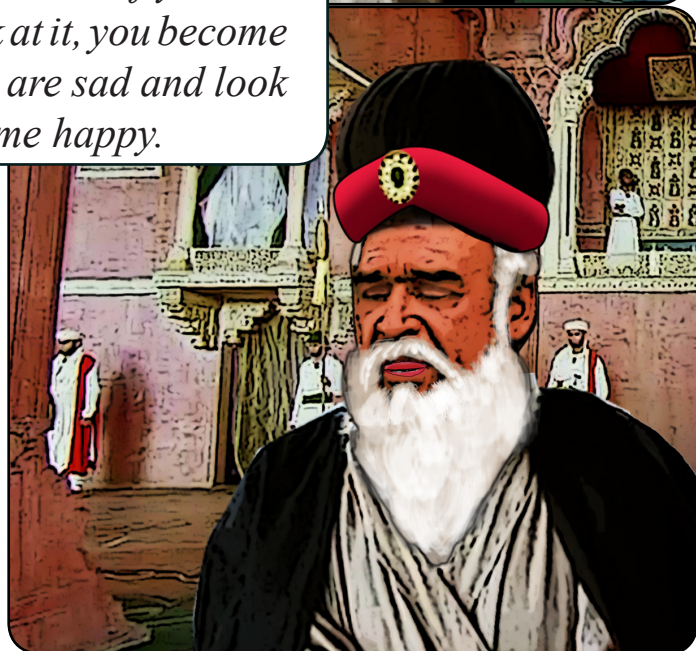
There is a special ring I would like to wear at the great festival in six months' time. I want you to find it and bring it to me.



I shall do my best, Your Majesty"! Would you tell me what is so special about the ring?



It has magic powers! If you are happy and look at it, you become sad, and if you are sad and look at it, you become happy.



The minister set out in search of the ring. Days passed, then weeks and months, and still he had not found it. He was about to give up when, on the morning of the festival, he came across a humble merchant selling a few trinkets spread out on an old mat in the street.

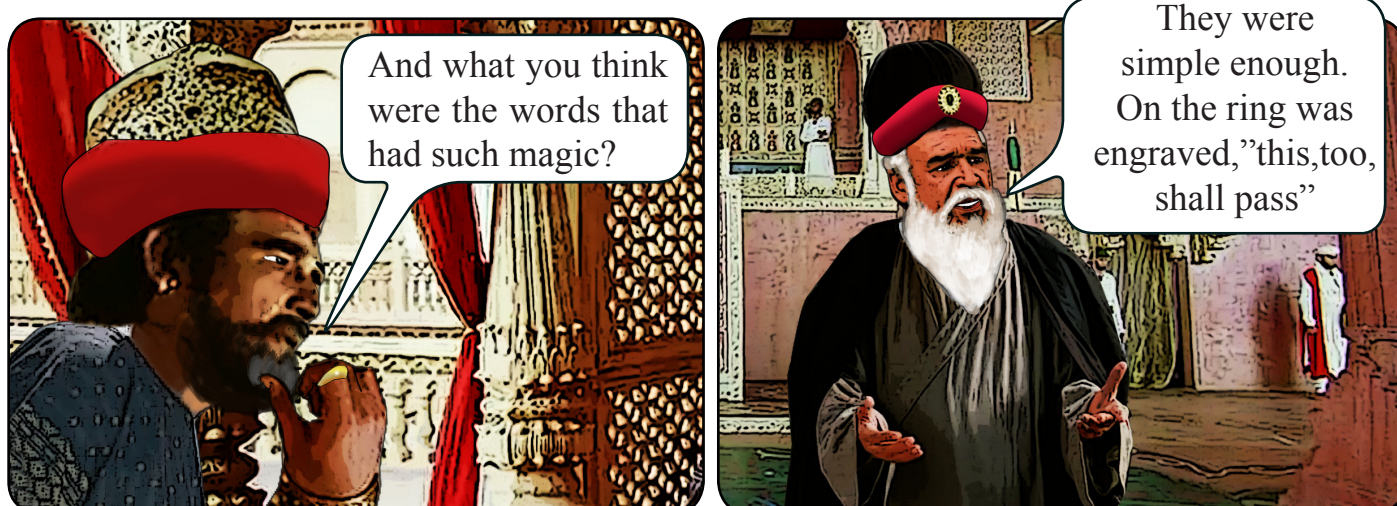


To the minister's surprise, the merchant pulled out a simple ring with a few words engraved on it.

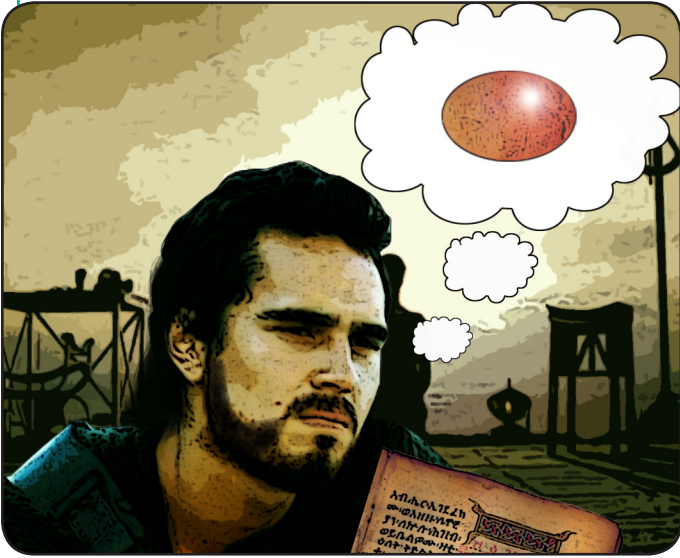


The minister strained his eyes, read the words, and immediately realized that he had found the object of his search. He paid the merchant a handsome sum for the ring and returned to the palace in high spirits. The festival was about to begin.

The king was in a joyous mood. When he examined the ring and read the words he became sad. Then he thought for a while, read the words again, and his sadness vanished. He laughed loudly and praised the minister for a job well done.



The secret of of the Touchstone



It is said that when the famous library of Alexandria burned, all the books were lost but one. Apparently of no value, the book fell into the hands of a poor man, who could read it only with difficulty. He did not find the book very interesting, except for a piece of parchment stuck between two pages. On the parchment was drawn a map on which was marked a spot near the sea. Under the map was written the secret of the “Touchstone”! It explained that the Touchstone, which supposedly could turn copper into gold, was a small pebble hidden somewhere on the seashore among thousands of other pebbles. And what was the secret to finding it? Unlike the ordinary pebbles that were all cold, this special one felt warm to the touch.



The man was delighted. He left his home with a supply of food and traveled to the seashore, where he began his search. He decided to pick the pebbles up one by one and, if they were cold, throw them into sea. In this way, he was sure to come to the Touchstone sooner or later. So that is what he did for hours, then days, then weeks. Months has passed, when one morning he started his daily routine as usual: The first pebble was cold and he threw it into the sea. The next one was cold and he threw it into the sea, as was the next, and the next, and the next. Then he picked up a pebble and it was warm. He threw it into the sea. By the time he realized what he had done, it was too late. Following mindlessly the habit he had formed, he missed his chance to possess countless wealth.

The queen and the sincere boy



In a far away land the queen was getting old and she had no children. Worried about the future of her kingdom, she was looking for a way to choose an heir. Late one night, she took a bag of flower seeds and toasted them so that they would never germinate. She then sent a messenger to every town and village inviting youth nearing the age of fifteen to come to the palace.



The next day dozens of youth appeared before the queen, eager to find out what she had to say. How delighted they were to hear that one of them would be the future king or queen-the one who could grow the most beautiful flowers from the seeds that had been specially prepared. They each received a handful of seeds and hurried home to plant them. But the seeds, of course, did not germinate. “*people will laugh at me if I have no flowers to present*”, was thought on every youth’s mind. “*I’ll be humiliated and the queen will be disappointed!*”



On the appointed day, the youth returned to the palace. One after the other, They presented the queen with a pot full flowers, while she shook her head in sadness. Were they all so easily tempted? Was there not one among them with integrity and courage to follow in her footsteps as the future ruler? At the end of the line, one youth was holding back his tears.



I'm very sorry to disappoint you, your Majesty. My seeds did not grow!



A smile brightened the queen's face. Jumping up, she threw her arms around the boy. And she cried:



This is the one! This is the one! My people will be safe with you as their king!



Mouse and Lion



Mouse was trembling. Almost everything frightened him. Almost everything was bigger than he was. Not only was Mouse small but he also felt small and insignificant. Lion was not afraid of anything. He was strong and fierce. Convinced that nothing could harm him, he walked around full of confidence. And he seemed to be amused that little animals were frightened of him. That is why when he saw Mouse gathering seeds in the shadow of a small tree, he decided to strike. His big paw came down on Mouse and trapped him.



O Great One, don't eat me !

Why not? Surely, that is all you are good for!



But I am so small that I cannot be of any use to you as a meal! Let me go and I will be your friend forever !



A friend! Of what use is your friendship to me? You make me laugh. It is good to laugh. For that I will let you go this time!

A few days later, while walking proudly through his territory, Lion noticed that several traps had been laid out by hunters. “



He walked carefully and avoided every one of the traps every one, that is, but a net hanging in a tree. “Arrrr,” roared Lion as the net crashed down on him. He struggled to free himself but, no matter how hard he tried, he could not. Mouse, hearing all the noise, went over to find out what was happening. When he saw Lion caught in the net, he approached and said:



Mouse did not allow himself to be discouraged. He went to work. Thread by thread, he chewed through the ropes until there was a hole in the net and Lion was free! Lion learned a good lesson that day, and he was noble enough to admit it.



The grandson and wooden bowl



Grandfather had aged. His hands would shake, he had trouble seeing, and his hearing was not so good. Many of his teeth were missing, and he had constant aches and pains. In fact, he had become so feeble that he had difficulty feeling himself. During meals he would cough and wheeze, drop his food, and spill his soup. Grandfather's condition gradually grew worse.



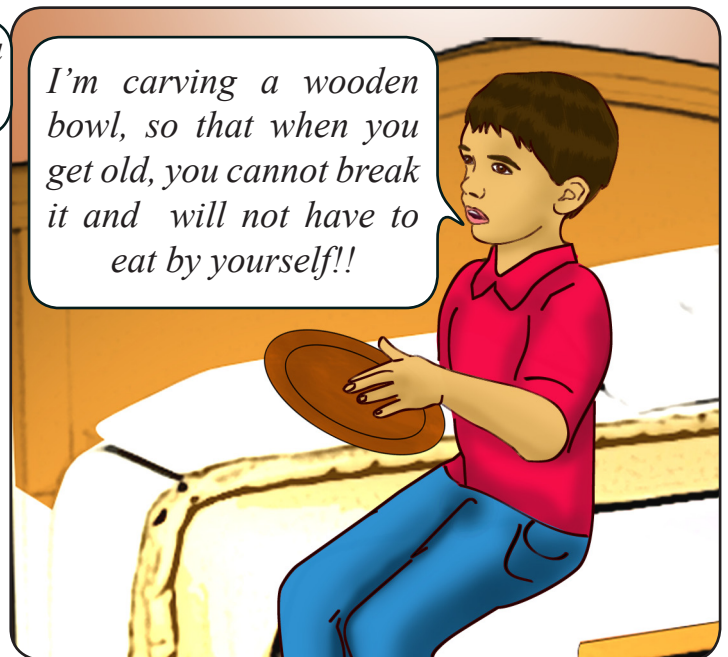
One evening during supper he dropped his soup bowl and broke it. Annoyed and upset, his son and daughter-in law decided he could not eat at the table with them any longer.



They told him: from then on, he would eat in his room alone.



A few days later, the father saw his young son carving something out of wood. Curious he asked:



The father and mother looked at each other and felt ashamed. They realized that what their son needed was not a lesson in table manners, but the example of their loving kindness to his grandfather. And so the family learned to enjoy having meals together again.



The monkey who lost his freedom



Escaping from a band of village children who were determined to catch him.,Monkey jumped from tree to tree in a panic. When he was sure that he had lost them, he calmed down,sat on a branch, and lazily looked around. Oh, how good it felt to be free!



His eyes caught sight of a Squirrel busy gathering nuts. It would take a few nuts, enter the hollow of a tree through a hole, drop its load, come out, and run to gather more. The oil of nuts gave off a delicious scent that aroused Monkey's appetite. "Here is some easy food"! he thought to himself and went closer to investigate.



Unfortunately the hole was too small for him to enter , so he put his hand in. Down and down he reached and, to his delight, his hand finally touched the nuts. He hastily grabbed a few and tried to pull them out. but now his fist, closed around the nuts,was too big to come out through the hole.



He could not decide what to do. If he opened his hand, he would lose the nuts. But there was no way that his fist full of nuts would make it through the hole. So there he stood, unwilling to give up the nuts—not even when he heard the children’s voices again. And as luck would have it, one of them stopped him. He saw the children running towards him, but still he would not let go of the nuts. That is how he ended up sold to a zoo and spent the rest of his life in a cage.

The lesson of Potatoes



It brought the teacher great sadness to see that there was much rancor among her students. They would bicker and argue about the most insignificant things. They would constantly hurt one other's feelings. And then, rather than forgive and forget, they would carry around a grudge for days, sometimes weeks.



One morning the teacher gave each of the students an empty sack. In the front of the room was basket full of potatoes. For every person who wronged them, she said, they should put a potato into their sacks. They should carry the sacks around with them for one month. At the end of the month", she told them, "we shall compare sacks." The students thought this was a fine idea. But then she explained one more thing: If they forgave someone for what he or she had done, they should take out a potato and throw it away.



Slowly the sacks began to fill up, and by the end of the first week, a few of the students complained that they were becoming too heavy to carry. But this did not stop them from adding potatoes to their sacks, determined as they were to show how much they had been wronged by the others. By the time they reached the third week, some of the potatoes were decaying and giving off a nasty odor. Still the students were not deterred.



Finally one clever boy figured it out. He thought about his sack of potatoes. He thought his classmates. Instead of all their wrongdoings, he remembered what good friends they had been to him. The more he thought about them, the more he realized how easily he could get rid of the potatoes. In one act of forgiveness, he threw the entire sack away. By the next day the teacher's point had been understood by all the students.

The broken key



Communities advance through united action. Progress is made when all members take on their share of the work and contribute their talents. This is called the principle of universal participation. Someone explained this principle in the following way.

Xbx, though my typxwritxr is an old modxl, it works quitx wxll xxcxpt for onx of thx kxys. I wish that it would work pxrfxctly. It is trux that arx forty-onx othxr kxys that function wxll xnough, but just onx kxy not working makxs all thx diffxrxncx.

It sxxms to mx that a community is not unlikx my typxwritxr. Anyonx of us could say: "Wxll, I am only onx pxrson. What I do won't makx thx community." That is trux. But xvxyonx doxs makx a diffxrxncx. A community nxxds thx activx participation of xvxy onx of its mxmbxrs. So nxxt timx you think your xfforts don't count, think of my typxwritxr and say to yoursxlf, "Although thxrx arx many pxoplx in thx community and things will gxt donx without mx, I must play my part. I won't bx a brokxn kxy."



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