

Stories from Panchatantra for your children

Panchatantra are a collection of five volumes of stories written by a guru or teacher to instruct the different aspects of kingship for princes. The five volumes together serve as a guide for prospective kings, to help him on ruling, to choose fellow friends, fellow ministers, and to have good conduct in daily life etc. These collection of stories in Panchatantra are a real boon for parents to help them guide their children towards values in human life. All stories of Panchatantra are accompanied by a moral.

The background story of Panchatantra goes as follows:

Many ages ago in the kingdom of Mahilaropya, there lived a king who was ruling very ideally. He had three sons, who were not intelligent. The king was worried about the heir to the throne, as he knew that his sons were incapable of governing. He was desperate to find a good and knowledgeable teacher for his sons who would teach them the scriptures and make them knowledgeable in a short span of time. His minister then pointed towards a skilled pundit, Vishnu sharma. Vishnu sharma was old and the king was worried as to how an old teacher could accomplish this as an intelligent man takes more than twelve years to grasp all the elements of scriptures. Then Vishnu sharma convinced the king that he would teach the princes about kingly conduct through a series of stories, which would be more effective than the scriptures. Thus Vishnu sharma compiled the collection in five volumes termed as Panchatantra.

Panchatantra is written in five volumes:

- The Loss of friends
- The winning of friends
- Crows and Owls
- Loss of Gains
- Ill considered action

Our Panchatantra stories collection

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Panchatantra story-The Brahmin's gift

Once there lived a pious brahmin in a village. He used to perform religious rituals. On one occasion he was rewarded with a cow by a rich man for his service. The brahmin started to bring the cow to his home. On the way, three rogues saw the brahmin bringing the cow. They were lazy and wanted to cheat the brahmin so that they could take away the cow. They hatched a plan.

The first person approached the brahmin and said, "Are you a washer man that you're pulling a donkey." The brahmin was annoyed at being mistaken for a washer man. He went on. A little later he was met by the second of the rogues. The second person asked him why being a brahmin he needed to pull a pig. Now the brahmin was confused but he went on. Some distance later he was met by the third person who asked him why he was pulling along a wild animal. Now the brahmin was totally confused and also afraid. He thought that it was a devil animal which took different forms. He ran away leaving the cow behind. The three tricksters laughed at the brahmin at having cheated the cow from the brahmin.

Story moral: Believe your own eyes than what you hear.

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Panchatantra story-The Foolish Lion and the clever rabbit

Long time ago there lived a ferocious lion in the forest. It was a greedy lion and started killing all the animals in the forest. Seeing this, the animals gathered and decided to approach the lion with the offer of one animal of each species volunteering itself to be eaten by the lion everyday. So every day it was the turn of one of the animals and in the end came the rabbits' turn. The rabbits chose a old rabbit among them. The rabbit old was wise. It decided to take its own sweet time to go to the Lion. The Lion was getting impatient on not seeing any animal come by and swore to kill all animals the next day.

The rabbit then went to the Lion by sunset. The Lion was angry at him. But the wise rabbit was calm and slowly told the Lion that it was not his fault. He told the Lion that a group of rabbits were coming to him for the day but on the way, an angry Lion attacked them all and ate all rabbits but himself. Somehow he escaped to reach safely, the rabbit said. He said that the other Lion was challenging the supremacy of the Lion. The Lion was naturally very enraged and asked to be taken to the location of the other Lion.

The wise rabbit agreed and led the Lion towards a deep well filled with water. Then he showed the Lion his reflection in the water of the well. The Lion was furious and started growling and naturally its image in the water, the other Lion, was also equally angry. Then the Lion jumped into the water to attack the other Lion and kill it but lost its life in the well. Thus the wise rabbit saved the forest and all animals from the proud Lion.

Story moral: Intelligence wins over might.

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Panchatantra story-The fox reared by the lion

Once upon a time there was a lion and a lioness in a dense forest. They gave birth to two cubs in due course of time. The lion asked the lioness to stay at home and take care of the cubs. One day the lion could not hunt any animal but found a little fox on the way home. He took it home as a gift for the lioness. The lioness brought the fox kid with the same love as her own cubs. The three young animals grew and played together. One day the children saw an elephant. The lion cubs wanted to fight the elephant. But the fox kid was frightened and asked them to run away. So they ran away and went to the mother lioness.

The lion cubs told the story to her. She laughed at the fox kid. At this the fox kid was offended and in a rage challenged the lioness as to why she called him a coward. The lioness replied, "What's wrong with eating an elephant? You feel like that only because you're not a lion kid. You are the child of a fox. Your breed never eats elephants. If you cannot be bold please leave us and go live with your tribe." The fox kid did not want to live there any longer and left for the forest.

Story moral: A coward will always remain a coward even if it is in company of the brave.

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Panchatantra story-The Monkey and the crocodile



Long time ago there lived a monkey named Red-face on a tree by the side of the sea. The tree was an apple tree and the fruits it bore were sweet as nectar. Once a crocodile named Ugly-mug swam ashore, Red-face threw apples at him and asked him to taste them. Ugly-Mug started coming everyday ashore to eat the fruits thrown by Red-face and soon they became good friends. Ugly-Mug used to take some fruits to his home to his wife.

His wife was a greedy lady and asked him as to where he got the nectar filled apples. Ugly-Mug told about his friend the monkey. The lady was greedy and pleaded with her husband that she would like to eat the monkey's heart, as a person who gave such tasty fruits must have a heart filled with nectar. Ugly-Mug was angered and did not agree to deceiving his friend. But she then insisted on not eating anything till he brought her his friend's heart. Out of desperation, Ugly-mug started making plans for killing his friend.

He came back to Red-face and treated him with an invitation to his house for supper stating that his wife would be thrilled to have him home and also that she was very anxious to meet such a nice friend. Poor Red-face believed the story but was asking his friend as to how he could cross the sea to reach the house of the crocodile on the other side. Ugly-mug then offered to carry him on his back and the monkey agreed.

In the middle of the sea, Ugly-mug took the crocodile deep into the ocean to kill the monkey. The monkey was frightened and asked the crocodile why he was doing this. Ugly-mug told him that his wife wanted to eat the monkey's heart filled with nectar. Red-face immediately asked the crocodile to take him back to the tree as he told him that he had left his other heart which was full of nectar back at the tree. The foolish crocodile then swam back to the tree and the terrified monkey jumped up the tree never to return. Upon being asked as to why she was not returning, the monkey answered to the crocodile that he had only one heart and he had been fooled and scolded his friend for misusing his friendship.

The crocodile was ashamed at what happened and asked the monkey if he could make any amends. He was also scared that his wife would not let him back in because he had returned without the monkey's heart. Just then he heard that a huge he-crocodile had occupied his house. The monkey advised him to fight the he-crocodile and drive him out of his home and gain his wife's confidence. The crocodile followed the advice and he was back happy with his wife.

Story moral: Intelligence wins over might.

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Panchatantra story-The Moon Lake

Once A large herd of elephants lived in a jungle. Their king was a huge, majestic tusker. He looked after them with love and care. Once, a severe drought hit the area. Birds and animals died of thirst. The wild elephants suffered for want of water. Their king knew that if they did not get water soon, many of them would die of thirst. He had to find water as quickly as possible.

He asked the elephants to go in different directions to look for water. One of them found a large lake full of water in another jungle far away. The king was happy. He ordered all the elephants to make their way to the lake. It was a beautiful lake. Close to it was a colony of rabbits. The elephants had to pass through this colony. Thousands of rabbits were trampled to death and thousands more were injured. The rabbits were in a panic. Their king called a meeting.

"A herd of wild elephants is passing through our colony," he said. "They have already killed or injured thousands of us. We have to take urgent steps to prevent more deaths. I want all of you to think of a way to save our race." The rabbits started thinking of ways to stop the elephants. One little rabbit stood up.

"Your Majesty,"he said,"if you will send me as your messenger to the king of the elephants, I may be able to find a solution." "By all means, go as my messenger and see what you can do." The little rabbit hurried out.

He saw a group of elephants returning from the lake. Right in the middle was the king. To get near him was impossible. I will be crushed to death, thought the rabbit. So he climbed up a huge rock.

"O, king of the elephants," he shouted, "hear me, please." The king heard his voice and turned towards him.

"Well, who are you?" he asked. "I am a messenger,"replied the rabbit. "A messenger? From whom?" "I am a messenger from the mighty Moon." "What is your business? Is there a message for me from the Moon?". "Yes, yes, your Majesty. But you must not be angry with me. Please remember that a messenger is never punished for what he has to

say. He is only doing his duty." "Very well. Say what you have been sent to say. I shall not harm you." "Sir," said the little rabbit, "the Moon has this to say"

" You, the king of the elephants, have brought your herd to my holy lake and soiled its waters. You have killed thousands of rabbits on your way to the lake. You know that rabbits are under my special protection. Everyone knows that the king of the rabbits lives with me. I ask you not to kill any more rabbits. Otherwise something terrible will happen to you and your herd."

The king of the elephants was shocked. He looked at the little rabbit. "You are right," he said. "We may have killed many rabbits on our way to the lake. I shall see that you do not suffer anymore. I shall request the Moon to forgive me for my sins. Please tell me what I should do." "Come with me alone," replied the rabbit. "Come, I shall take you to the Moon." The little rabbit took the huge elephant to the lake. There they saw the Moon reflected in the still waters. "There, your Majesty, meet the Moon," said the little rabbit.

"Let me worship the divine Moon," said the elephant, and dipped his trunk into the water. At once the water was disturbed. The Moon seemed to move to and fro. The rabbit said, "Now the Moon is angrier than ever." "Why?" asked the king. "What have I done?" "You have touched the holy waters of the lake," replied the rabbit. The elephant bowed his head. "Please ask the Moon to forgive me. Never again will we touch the holy waters of this lake. Never again will we harm the rabbits whom the Moon loves so much." And the king and his herd went away. Soon there was rain and the elephants lived happily. It did not occur to them ever that a little rabbit had fooled them.

Story moral: Intelligence wins over might.

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Panchatantra story-The Sparrow and the elephant

Long time ago there lived a sparrow with her husband on a tree. She had built a nice nest and laid her eggs in the nest. One morning, a wild elephant with spring fever feeling came to the tree in search of shade and in a rage broke the branch of the tree on which the nest was residing. Unluckily all the sparrow eggs were lost though both parents were saved. The she-sparrow was deep in sorrow.

Seeing her sorrow, the woodpecker bird, a friend of hers offered her consolation that she would think of a way of killing the elephant. Then she went to her friend the black fly, who in turn went to the counselor frog for advice. The frog then devised a scheme for killing the elephant. He asked the black fly to buzz in the ears of the elephant, so that the elephant would be thrilled to listen to the music of the black fly and close its eyes. Then she asked the woodpecker to pluck his eyes. She herself would be on the edge of a pit and would croak misleading the elephant to think that it is a pond.

The next day at noon the three carried out the plan and the elephant was killed when he fell flat into a pit after being blinded by the woodpecker when he closed his eyes in response to the black fly. So the revenge was taken with collective wit of all three animals.

Story moral: Intelligence wins over might.

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Panchatantra story-The Sage's daughter

Once upon a time there lived a sage on the banks of a river. He and his wife did not have any children. One day when the sage was praying in the middle of the river, an eagle happened to pass by and dropped a female mouse in the hands of the sage. The sage found the mouse in his hands on opening his eyes. He took it home to his wife.

On reaching home, he talked to his wife about the mouse and they decided to convert the mouse into a young baby girl. The sage and his wife began to take care of the girl child and brought her up as their daughter. The child grew day by day to a beautiful maiden. At the age of sixteen, the sage decided to find a match for the girl. He and his wife decided that the Sun God would be an ideal match for their girl.

So the sage prayed for the Sun God to appear. The sun god appeared and the sage asked him to marry his daughter. But his daughter said, "Sorry! I cannot marry the sun god because he is very hot and I will be reduced to ashes in his heat and light. The sage was displeased and asked the sun god to suggest a possible groom. The sun god suggested the name of the Lord of the clouds. For, the cloud can easily stop the rays of the sun.

The sage then prayed for the lord of the clouds and once he appeared, he took him to his daughter. The daughter once again decided not to accept him as his groom. She said, "I do not want to marry a person as dark as him. Moreover, I am afraid of the thunder he produces". The sage was dejected once again and asked the lord of clouds for a suitable groom. The lord of clouds suggested, "Why don't you try the lord of wind, for he can easily blow me away".

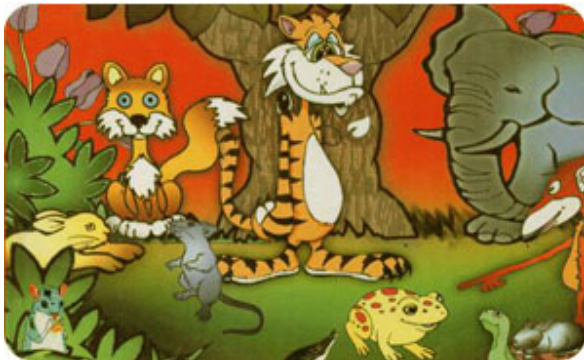
The sage then prayed for the lord of the wind. On the appearance of the wind-god, he took him to his daughter. His daughter rejected the groom saying that she cannot marry the wind god who is always on the move. Dejected once again the sage asked the wind-god for a suggestion. The wind-god suggested the lord of the mountain which was rock solid and stopped the wind easily. So the sage then went to the mountain lord and requested him to marry his daughter. But the daughter once again rejected the mountain lord saying that he was too cold-hearted for her to marry and requested the sage to find somebody softer but stronger than him. The mountain god then suggested a mouse to him, because the mouse is soft and yet can easily make holes in the mountain.

This time the daughter was happy and agreed to marrying the mouse. So the sage said, "Look at what the destiny had to offer you. You started as a mouse, and were destined to marry a mouse in the end. So be it". He then converted her back to a she-mouse and got her married.

Story moral: Destiny cannot be changed.

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Panchatantra story-The blue Jackal



Long time ago there lived a jackal who strayed into a city in search of food. He was hungry and was being chased by a group of dogs. He accidentally entered the house of a dyer and fell into a drum of indigo (blue) dye, and was stained blue from head to toe. When he escaped from the house back into the forest, all animals were surprised at his appearance and could not place its identity. Taking advantage of the situation, the jackal decided to play the situation to his advantage. He proclaimed that he was fierce Owl, sent by the king of Gods, Indra, to earth to guard the forest.

The easy animals believed the jackal. The jackal then appointed the Lion as his Prime minister, Tiger as his guardian of the bed chamber and the Elephant was made the door keeper. He then drove all the Jackals out of sight from the forest for fear of being recognized. The animals would hunt food and bring it to the self proclaimed king and the king would distribute the food to all equally just as a king would do. So he was leading a life of luxury.

One day a herd of jackals were passing by howling to their glory. Unable to control his natural instinct, Fierce Owl showed his natural voice and howled at the top of his voice. Hearing this howl, the animals realized that they have been fooled by a jackal and killed the jackal instantly.

Story moral: Destiny cannot be changed.

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Panchatantra story-The mongoose and the farmer's wife

Long time ago there lived a farmer and his wife. They had a new born son. The farmer's wife wanted to have a pet animal to protect the child which would also be a companion to the child. They had a talk and decided upon a mongoose. So they brought a mongoose and started rearing it.

A couple of months later, one day the farmer and his wife wanted to go out of the house leaving the child at home. The farmer thought that the mongoose would take care of the child while they were away. So they left the mongoose and the child at home and went out.

The farmer's wife returned earlier and on returning home found that the mouth of the mongoose was stained with blood and she immediately inferred that the mongoose had killed the child. In anger she threw a box on the mongoose and the mongoose was hurt badly. She then rushed inside to see what happened to the child. She was surprised to find a dead snake lying in the room. She could guess that that the mongoose had saved the child's life by killing the snake. Realizing the mistake she went out of the room only to find the mongoose dead on the floor. She cried out load at her hasty action.

Story moral: Don't act in haste. Think and act.

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Panchatantra story-The greedy jackal

Long time ago there lived a lazy jackal. Also in the hills there lived a hillman and a wild boar. One day when the hillman went to hunt, he saw the wild boar. He took a sharp aim with his arrow and stuck the boar. But the boar was only injured and it attacked the hillman and he died on the spot. Later the boar also collapsed due to the injuries and died.

The jackal happened to pass the site of both the dead bodies and the bowstring, and the jackal decided to eat them slowly. But he was excessively greedy and first wanted to eat the bowstring, before the other bodies. As he tried to eat the bowstring which was tightly attached to the bow, it snapped and the end of the string pierced its mouth and the jackal died on the spot.

Story moral: Too much of greed is harmful.

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Panchatantra story-The day dreaming priest

Long time ago there lived a priest who was extremely lazy and poor at the same time. He did not want to do any hard work but used to dream of being rich one day. He got his food by begging for alms. One morning he got a pot of milk as part of the alms. He was extremely delighted and went home with the pot of milk. He boiled the milk, drank some of it and put the remaining milk in a pot. He added slight curds in the pot for converting the milk to curd. He then lay down to sleep.

Soon he started imagining about the pot of curd while he lay asleep. He dreamt that if he could become rich somehow all his miseries would be gone. His thoughts turned to the pot of milk he had set to form curd. He dreamt on; "By morning the pot of milk would set, it would be converted to curd. I would churn the curd and make butter from it. I would heat the butter and make ghee out of it. I will then go to that market and sell that ghee, and make some money. With that money i will buy a hen. The hen will lay may eggs which will hatch and there will be many chicken. These chicken will in turn lay hundreds of eggs and I will soon have a poultry farm of my own." He kept on imagining.

"I will sell all the hens of my poultry and buy some cows, and open a milk dairy. All the town people will buy milk from me. I will be very rich and soon I shall buy jewels. The king will buy all the jewels from me. I will be so rich that I will be able to marry an exceptionally beautiful girl from a rich family. Soon I will have a handsome son. If he does any mischief I will be very angry and to teach him a lesson, I will hit him with a big stick." During this dream, he involuntarily picked up the stick next to his bed and thinking that he was beating his son, raised the stick and hit the pot. The pot of milk broke and he awoke from his day dream.

Story moral: There is no substitute for hard work. Dreams cannot be fulfilled without hard work.

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Panchatantra story-The heron and the crab

Long time ago there lived a heron by the side of a pond. It was a lazy creature and once devised a plan to get supply of fish without doing much work. He went to the side of the pond and put on a gloomy face without attempting to catch any fish. The pond was also inhabited by a crab, which was wise and often helped the fish in the pond. On seeing the gloomy heron, the crab asked her what the matter was.

The heron said, "Alas! I am worried that the pond is going to be soon devoid of any fish, which are in turn my source of food. I overheard a group of fishermen talking about catching all the fish in this pond. But I know of a pond somewhat far away, where all the fish will be safe. If the fishes are interested, i can carry a few each day to the other pond where they will be safe."

All the fish were eager to make use of the heron in reaching the safer destination. So everyday some of them volunteer to go with the heron. The heron took some fish each day in the beak, and on reaching a large rock used to eat all the fish and leave the bones of the fish at the rock. This way, she was able to get a continuous supply of fish at no effort at all. In the end, the curiosity got the better of the crab, and one day it volunteered to go with the fish. When it got closer to the rock, it realized the foul play the heron had been playing on the poor fish. Enraged, it tightened its claws around the neck of the heron and snapped the head of the heron off. The heron thus died a selfish death. The crab crept back to the pond and told all the fish about the lies the heron had been telling.

Story moral: Excess of Greed is harmful.

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Panchatantra story-The crows and the serpent

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Long time ago there lived a crow couple who had built a nest on top of a tree. But unfortunately the tree was inhabited by a serpent at its bottom. So the serpent used to crawl up the tree and eat all the eggs that the lady crow used to lay. The crow couple were deeply grieved and when this happened time after time, they decided that the serpent has to be get rid off by a plan.

So the crow approached his friend jackal and asked for a plan. The jackal then told him to go and fetch a costly thing from the palace of the king and throw it in the burrow of the snake. The crow went to palace, and stole a necklace of the queen while she was bathing. The guards of the palace ran after it. The crow then dropped the necklace in the burrow of the snake beneath the tree.

The guards on reaching the bottom of the tree found the necklace guarded by the serpent. They then killed the serpent and recovered the necklace. The crow family was now happy that their eggs were safe now.

Story moral: Intelligence wins over might.

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Panchatantra story-The gold giving serpent

Long time ago there lived a poor brahman. He used to work hard on the fields but all his efforts did not bear fruit. He one day found an anthill on his field and found a serpent there. Thinking that he had not paid respect to the guardian deity of his field, he procured milk and started feeding the anthill with milk from that day. One day he found a gold coin in the plate. So he used to get a gold coin everyday he fed the serpent with milk.

Then one day he had to go to the town and asked his son to look after the serpent by feeding him the milk. The son was greedy and he thought,"This anthill must be full of gold coins". And he stuck the serpent. Unluckily the serpent did not die and it attacked the boy and he died.

Story moral: Excess greed is harmful.

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Panchatantra story-The swan and the owl

Long time ago there lived a swan who used to spend time in various playful activities on a lake. Once an owl visited him in the forest and requested him to be friends after praising the swan a lot. The swan agreed to be friends with him and they used to spend time near the lake for many days.

But the owl soon got bored of the place and told the swan, "I am going back to my home in the Lotus wood, and if you ever want to visit me you can visit me there." The swan, after many days once decided to pay a visit to the owl in the Lotus wood. On reaching Lotus wood, it could not find the owl, who was hiding in the dark hole. The owl asked the swan to take rest till daylight was over and told him that he could come out only at night. The swan decided to take rest.

It so happened that a group of merchants were passing by the wood the next day early morning. The merchants chanted some hymns, and to that the owl replied with a hoot. Thinking that this was a bad omen, the merchants decided to shoot the owl down. The owl sensing danger had fled and took refuge in a nearby hole near the shore of the lake. But the swan did not move. The arrow from the merchants came and hit the swan and it was killed.

Story moral: Friendship has to be between equals.

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Panchatantra story-The cat, partridge and the hare

Long time ago there lived a partridge under a tree. The partridge one day decided to go to the fields and indulge itself in the food there. But it did not return for many days as it found the fields a good source of food.

In the meantime a hare came along one day and occupied the same dwelling which the partridge used to live in. The partridge however returned from the fields having grown plump from the food. It wanted to claim the dwelling for itself. A fight ensued and the hare was saying that the dwelling belonged to whoever occupied it.

Then they both decided to contact a supposedly learned cat. So one day, they both approached the cat with their problem. The cat, which was actually a hypocrite who earned his livelihood by posing as a priest, decided to take advantage of the situation. On hearing the partridge and the hare from a distance, it said, "Sorry! I can't hear you from that far a distance because of old age. Don't worry I mean no harm to you. Come closer and both of you tell me your stories."

They were fooled into coming near and as soon as he could lay his hands on both of them, he killed them both and had a me

Story moral: When two people fight, the third mediator has the advantage.

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Panchatantra story-The geese and the tortoise

Once upon a time there lived a pair of geese and a tortoise and all three were great friends. One day they faced a huge drought and the lake in which they lived was drying up. They decided to leave the lake and look for a new lake. But the tortoise could not fly. So the geese thought of a plan, where by the tortoise would have to hold a piece of stick by its mouth which would be carried by the two geese. The only condition was that the tortoise should not speak or it will fall from the stick to death. The tortoise agreed to be silent.

But on seeing this strange arrangement, people on the way started laughing at the tortoise. Unable to control his anxiety, he spoke out "What are they laughing about?", and so he fell to his death. If he had kept quiet he could have saved his own life.

Story moral: Destiny cannot be changed

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Panchatantra story-The bird with the two necks

Long time ago there lived a special kind of bird which had two necks but shared a common stomach.

One day, one of the heads found a jar of nectar, and on seeing this the other head also wanted to taste the nectar but the first neck refused to let it have it. Enraged, the other neck soon found a jar of poison and consumed it. The poison reached the common stomach and both the necks died.

Story moral: You should Share good things with others.

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Panchatantra story-The Three Fishes

There were three big fishes living in a lake who were very close friends. All three of them were very different from one another. The first one believed in fate. He thought things cannot be changed and what had to happen will happen no matter what. The second one was intelligent. He thought he knew how to solve a problem if he had one, with his intelligence. The third one was the wise one. It thought long and hard before acting.

So one day, the wise fish was happily playing around in the water, when it over heard a fishermen talking to another. "Look at that one, what a big fish... This lake is full of big fishes like this one. Let us come tomorrow and catch them."

It hurriedly swam to it's friends to tell the news. "Let us get out of this lake before those fishermen come back. A canal I know can take us to another lake," the wise one said.

The intelligent fish said, " I know what to do if the fishermen come and catch me."

The fish which believed in fate said, "Whatever to happen will happen, I was born in this lake and I am not going to leave it."

The wise fish didn't want to risk its life, so he took the canal and went to another lake.

The fishermen came back the next morning and cast their net. The rest of the two friends were caught in it along with many other fishes.

The intelligent fish thought of a way to escape, it acted as if it were dead. The fishermen threw him along with other dead fish back into the lake. But the other fish which believed in fate was still jumping in the net and the fishermen struck him dead.

Story moral: Intelligence wins over might.

