

## Teachers' Notes

### **THE VALUE OF READING**

Much research has been done on the importance of reading and all studies show the same results. Students who read fluently, frequently and with pleasure consistently gain higher test scores at school as well as in their further studies, not only in English, but across the whole curriculum. Reading and enjoying the stories on this website will help your students to learn to love reading, and this will benefit every aspect of their education.

*Learning to read is important, but learning to love reading is even more important.*

Here are ten reasons for encouraging your students to love reading:

- Reading improves language skills, vocabulary and grammar
- Reading strengthens brain connections
- Reading increases depth of knowledge
- Reading improves memory
- Reading helps develop a creative imagination
- Reading improves concentration
- Reading encourages self-discipline
- Reading increases confidence
- Reading relaxes the body and calms the mind
- Reading improves critical thinking

### **HOW TO USE THE EXERCISES**

#### **1. The pre-reading questions**

Prediction is an important element in comprehension. Use the pre-reading questions to help the reader to grasp the theme of the story and understand its progression. The pre-reading questions will help the reader to guess correctly the meanings of words that they may not know.

- Before reading, make sure the students have any background information they may need.
- Encourage discussion around the topic of the story, presented in the pre-reading questions.
- Make sure they know key items of vocabulary.

#### **2. Reading the story**

Allow the students time to read the story themselves in silence. Be ready to help if they stumble over unfamiliar words.

#### **3. The exercises**

The exercises follow a progression. The first exercise, entitled **How much did you understand?**, encourages students to check their overall grasp of the story and its structure. This exercise may take the form of putting sentences in the correct order, or offering true/false choices, or filling in key words. Students may have to read the story through again quickly before they can complete this exercise.

The next exercise (or exercises) focuses in more detail. There are more specific questions about time, place, person, or types of sentence. Please note that the purpose of these questions is not to teach grammar or vocabulary. They are all aimed at helping students to increase their

reading comprehension skills. Some concentrate on the comprehension of individual words. Some encourage open-ended replies.

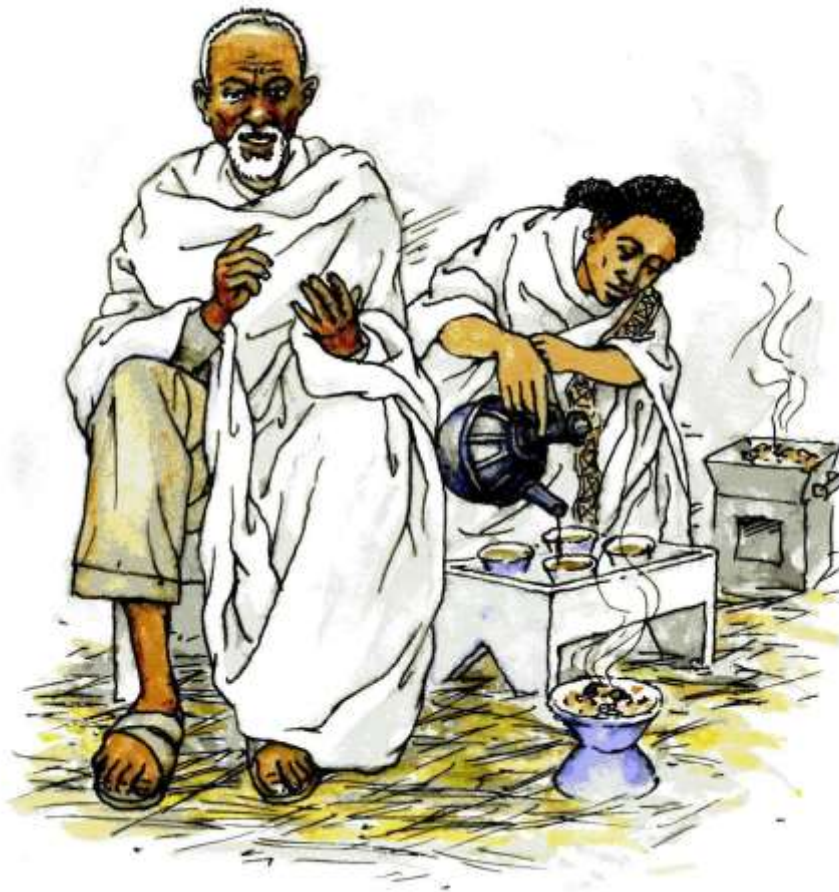
In the **What were they feeling?** exercises, the reader focuses on the personal impact of the events in the story. These questions encourage empathy with the characters.

The next type of exercise (often entitled **What do you think?**) aims to help the student think more widely, to talk about their own ideas and responses to the story, and increase their confidence in expressing their own opinions.

Where it's appropriate, further activities are suggested, for example enacting the story as a play, thinking of a new title, looking at similar stories on this website, or retelling the story to friends.

One final word. We hope that you and the students will enjoy the stories.

### Stories from Amhara



[Small version of map with region highlighted]

The Amhara region is in the cool highlands of Ethiopia. There are many wonderful ancient churches and castles in the Amhara region and a long history of famous kings and emperors.

When people tell stories in Amharic (the language of the Amhara region) they often start with the phrase *teret teret ye lam beret*. This means that the cows are safely in the barn, and it's time to tell stories.

### **The Stories**

### **Originally told by**

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. The Unwise Judge          | <i>Magabi Eynew Gessesse</i> |
| 2. The Cub and the Leopard   | <i>Magabi Eynew Gessesse</i> |
| 3. The Trees and the Axe     | <i>Daniel Legesse</i>        |
| 4. Wardit the Mule           | <i>Mesfin Habte-mariam</i>   |
| 5. The Ox and the Donkey     | <i>Melese Getahun Wolde</i>  |
| 6. The Hyena's Funeral       | <i>Yirga Ejigu</i>           |
| 7. Sinziro and his Brothers  | <i>Magabi Eynew Gessesse</i> |
| 8. The Magic Stick           | <i>Yirga Ejigu</i>           |
| 9. The Man with the Evil Eye | <i>Worku Alemu</i>           |

*Translations by Mesfin Habtemariam and Daniel Legesse*

*With grateful acknowledgements to Bikale Seyoum, Alemayehu Gebrehiwot and Daniel Legesse of the Amhara Education and Culture Bureau for their invaluable support and encouragement in the collection of these stories.*

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- © **Exercises written by Elizabeth Laird and Jacek Opienski**
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## The Unwise Judge



### Before you read the story

#### Think about friends

- How do friends help each other?
- What happens when friends disagree?
- Have you ever helped a friend? What did you do?

### Now read the story

Once there were two neighbours. They were both poor, but they were friends. One day, one of them said to the other, "I must take my barley to the market today. The sack is very heavy, and the market is far away. I wish I had a donkey. But I don't have enough money to buy one."

His neighbour nodded.

"And I must buy some new pots in the market today," he said. "They will be very heavy. I will be tired when I come home. I wish I had a donkey, too. But a donkey is expensive. I only have half the money."

The first man had an idea.

"Listen, my friend," he said. "Let's buy a donkey together. You can pay for half of it, and I will pay for half of it. One week, I will take the donkey to the market, and the next week, you can take it."

His friend was very pleased with this idea. So that day, the two neighbours bought a donkey.

For a long time they were both happy. They used the donkey well. One week, the first neighbour took the donkey to the market. The next week, his friend took it.

But one day, the first neighbour's father died. The man took all his father's property, his fields and his trees, his cows and his sheep. The first neighbour was rich now. He didn't want to see his old friend any more. He didn't want to work with him and help him. And he

wanted his half of the donkey.

"Listen," he said to his neighbour. "My dogs are hungry. They need meat. I want to kill our donkey. You can have half of it, and I will have the other half."

"What?" cried the poor man. "But I don't need any meat. I need the donkey. If you want to kill it, give me money for my half."

His neighbour was angry.

"I'm not going to give you any money," he said. "Half of the donkey is mine, and I want to have it."

"Let's go to the judge," the poor man said. "He can decide between us."

So the two neighbours went to see the judge. The judge was not a wise man. He didn't listen carefully. He didn't try to understand.

"Do you both own the donkey?" he asked.

"Yes," the men agreed.

"Then half of it belongs to one of you, and half of it belongs to the other," the judge said. "If the rich man wants his half, he can take it. Kill the donkey, and cut it in half."

The rich man was happy. He killed the donkey and took half of the meat. He gave it to his dogs. The poor man was unhappy.

"My poor donkey has gone," he thought, "and now I must carry everything myself."

A few months later, the rich man wanted to make a new hut for himself.

"I'll burn my old hut," he thought, "then I'll build a fine, big, new one."

He began to carry everything out of his hut.

The poor man saw him.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"I'm going to burn my hut and make a new one," said the rich man.

"But your hut is next to mine," the poor man said. "If you burn your hut, you will burn mine, too."

The rich man was angry.

"Don't try to stop me!" he said. "This is my hut, and I will burn it if I want to."

"Stop!" cried the poor man. "Let's go and ask the judge."

The unwise judge didn't listen carefully. He didn't try to understand.

"Let the rich man burn his hut," he said. "It's his own hut. No one can stop him."

So the rich man burned his hut. The wind carried the fire to the roof of the poor man's hut. Soon it was burning too.

"Look!" the poor man cried to the judge. "My neighbour has burned my hut! He must pay me."

"No," said the judge. "Your neighbour burned his own hut. The fire burned your hut. Your neighbour can keep his money."

Now the poor man was very unhappy. He had no donkey and no hut. All he had was his field. Every day, he worked in his field. Every night he slept under a tree.

It was nearly harvest time now. In the poor man's field, there was a good crop of chick-peas. The poor man worked hard in his field. He pulled out the weeds. He frightened away the birds.

One day, the rich man's sons came to visit him. They passed by the poor man's field.

"Chick-peas!" they cried. "Look, they are delicious!"

They ran into the field, and began to pick the chick-peas and eat them. They ate and ate. Soon all the chick-peas were gone.

The poor man saw them from far away. He ran quickly to his field.

"What are you doing?" he said. "Where are all my chick-peas? Give them back to me."

"We can't give them back to you," they said. "We have eaten them. Ask our father. He

will pay you for your chick-peas."

The poor man went to see the rich man.

"Your sons ate all my chick-peas," he said. "Give them back to me."

"I can't give them back to you," said the rich man, "but I'll give you some money to pay for them."

"I don't want your money," said the poor man. "I want my chick-peas, and I'm going to take them."

"Wait! Stop!" the rich man said. "Let's go and ask the judge."

So the two men went to see the judge. The judge didn't listen to them carefully. He didn't think about their case.

"The rich man's sons ate all your chick-peas," he said to the poor man, "and they must give them back. Cut them open, and take your chick-peas."

The rich man was very frightened.

"But my sons will die!" he said. "Please, neighbour, let me give you money."

"I wanted money when you killed our donkey," the poor man said. "I don't want it now. I want my chick-peas."

He picked up his knife.

"I'll build you a new hut!" the rich man said. "I'm sorry I burned your old one."

"I don't want a new hut," the poor man said. "I want my chick-peas."

He began to sharpen his knife on a stone.

"No! No! Please, wait!" cried the rich man. "Let's go and see the elders. Please, my old friend, let the elders decide."

So the two neighbours went to see the elders. The elders talked for a long time. At last they called the two men to them.

"You were wrong," they said to the rich man. "You refused to pay your neighbour for your donkey. You burned his hut, and your children ate his harvest."

Then they turned to the poor man.

"But you want to kill your neighbour's sons," they said. "That is wrong too. Here is our decision. The rich man must give to the poor man half of all his property, his trees and fields, his cows and sheep. Then you can live together in peace."

So the rich man gave the poor man half of all his property. They lived together happily, and they never quarrelled again.

**[Click here to listen to the stories]**

## **Exercises**

### **A. How much did you understand?**

*Read sentences 1, 2 and 3 below. Put them in the right order.*

1. The first man became rich.
2. The first man wanted his half of the donkey.
3. The two friends needed a donkey to carry heavy things to market.

*Now put sentences 4, 5 and 6 in the right order.*

4. The first man's father died.
5. The two men bought a donkey together.
6. The two men went to see the judge.

*Now put sentences 7, 8 and 9 in the right order.*

7. The elders said both men were wrong.

8. The two men became friends again.
9. The second man lost his donkey.

**B. Now put all nine sentences in the right order.**

**C. Are these sentences right or wrong?**

1. One week the donkey carried a sack of wheat to market.
2. The two neighbours were happy with the donkey for a long time.
3. The first neighbour wanted to feed the donkey meat to his hungry dogs.
4. The rich man wanted to go to a judge to decide about the donkey.
5. The rich man decided to knock down his old hut.
6. The poor man now had to sleep under a tree.
7. The poor man had a good crop of barley.
8. The rich man wanted to pay for the crop that was eaten.
9. The poor man wanted to cut open the rich man's sons.
10. The rich man gave the poor man all his animals and fields.

**D. What were they feeling?**

1. The two neighbours bought a donkey together. They were feeling .....
2. The first man's dogs were feeling .....
3. The first man did not want to give money for his half of the donkey. He was feeling .....
4. The poor man had lost his hut and his donkey. He was feeling .....
5. The rich man was feeling ..... that his sons would be cut open and die.
6. At the end of the story the two men were feeling .....

**E. Where? What? When? How?**

1. How did the two neighbours take their goods to market before they had a donkey?
2. Where was the market?
3. What did the first man take when his father died?
4. What did the second man want for his share of the donkey?
5. When did the rich man decide to build a hut?
6. When did the rich man's sons go to the poor man's fields?
7. How long did the elders take to make a decision?
8. How much did the rich man give the poor man?

**F. What do you think?**

Remember, there is not just one correct answer. What do *you* think?

Which person did you like in the story?

The first neighbour became rich. How did this change his friendship with his neighbour?

How was the judge unwise?

Can you think of another title for the story?

**[Click here for the answers to the exercises]**



## Answers to the Exercises

[Click here to return to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the stories]

### A. How much did you understand?

*The right order of each set of three sentences is:*

3. The two friends needed a donkey to carry heavy things to market.

1. The first man became rich.

2. The first man wanted his half of the donkey.

5. The two men bought a donkey together.

4. The first man's father died.

6. The two men went to see the judge.

9. The second man lost his donkey.

7. The elders said both men were wrong.

8. The two men became friends again.

### B.

*The right order for all nine sentences is:*

3. The two friends needed a donkey to carry heavy things to market.

5. The two men bought a donkey together.

4. The first man's father died.

1. The first man became rich.

2. The first man wanted his half of the donkey.

6. The two men went to see the judge.

9. The second man lost his donkey.

7. The elders said both men were wrong.

8. The two men became friends again.

### C. Are these sentences right or wrong?

1. One week the donkey carried a sack of wheat to market.

*Wrong. He carried a sack of **barley**.*

2. The two neighbours were happy with the donkey for a long time.

*Right*

3. The first neighbour wanted to feed the donkey meat to his hungry dogs.

*Right*

4. The rich man wanted to go to a judge to decide about the donkey.

*Wrong. The **poor** man wanted to go to the judge.*

5. The rich man decided to knock down his old hut.

*Wrong. He decided to **burn down** his old hut.*

6. The poor man now had to sleep under a tree.

*Right*

7. The poor man had a good crop of barley.

*Wrong. He had a good crop of **chick-peas**.*

8. The rich man wanted to pay for the crop that was eaten.

*Right*

9. The poor man wanted to cut open the rich man's sons.

*Right*

10. The rich man gave the poor man all his property.

*Wrong. He gave the poor man **half of all his property.***

#### **D. What were they feeling?**

1. The two neighbours bought a donkey together. They were feeling **pleased/happy.**
2. The first man's dogs were feeling **hungry.**
3. The first man did not want to give money for his half of the donkey. He was feeling **angry.**
4. The poor man had lost his hut and his donkey. He was feeling **unhappy/very unhappy.**
5. The rich man was feeling **frightened/very frightened** that his sons would be cut open and die.
6. At the end of the story the two men were feeling **happy.**

#### **E. Where? What? When? How?**

*Examples of answers:*

1. How did the two neighbours take their goods to market before they had a donkey? **They carried them.**
2. Where was the market? **Far away**
3. What did the first man take when his father died? **His property, his fields, his trees, his cows and sheep**
4. What did the second man want for his share of the donkey? **Money**
5. When did the rich man decide to build a hut? **A few months later**
6. When did the rich man's sons go to the poor man's fields? **Nearly harvest time**
7. How long did the elders take to make a decision? **A long time**
8. How much did the rich man give the poor man? **Half of all his property**

## The Cub and the Leopard



### Before you read the story

- How do young animals learn about the world?
- What happens when young animals do not listen to their parents?

### Now read the story

The mother leopard had a little cub. He was a beautiful young animal. His fur was golden and his spots were black. He was small, but he was strong.

In the same part of the country there was a mother goat. She had a little kid. The kid was a lovely little animal. His eyes were bright and his tail was long. He liked to run and jump.

One day, the leopard cub ran away from his mother to play. The goat's kid ran off to play, too. They met beside the river.

The leopard cub saw the kid and he liked him.

"Perhaps he will play with me," he thought.

The kid saw the cub, too.

"He's nice," he thought. "Perhaps he will be my friend."

"Hello, little kid," the cub said. "Will you play with me?"

"Yes," said the kid. "I will."

So the cub and the kid played together. They ran and they jumped. They talked and they laughed. They rolled in the grass and they tried to catch butterflies.

When the evening came, the cub and the kid were friends.

"I must go home now," said the cub. "My mother is waiting for me."

"I must go too," said the kid. "My mother is waiting for me."

"Will you come and play with me tomorrow?" said the cub.

"Oh yes," said the kid. "I will."

The cub went home to his mother.

"Well, my son," the mother leopard said to him. "What did you do today?"

"Oh Mother," answered the kid. "I found a new friend."

"And who is your new friend?" asked his mother.

"He's small, and his coat is brown," said the cub. "He says 'maa, maa'."

"Ah, my dear," said his mother. "That was the kid, the son of the goat, and he is very good to eat."

"To eat?" said the cub. "Do leopards eat goats?"

"Yes," answered his mother. "All leopards eat goats. Now listen. Tomorrow you will go and play with the kid again. Bring him home to me, and we will eat him for our dinner."

"Mother, I can't do that," the leopard cub cried. "The kid is my friend! How can I eat my friend?"

His mother was angry.

"Are you a leopard, or a mouse?" she asked. "If you are a leopard, you will eat the kid. And believe me, my dear, his meat will taste very good."

Not far away, the kid was talking to his mother.

"Now, my son," the mother goat was saying, "where did you go today?"

"Oh Mother," answered the kid. "I went to the river to play. I met a beautiful animal. He has golden fur, and his spots were black. We ran and jumped together. We talked and laughed together, and now he is my friend."

"Ah, my poor son," the mother goat said. "That was the leopard cub. A leopard cannot be your friend. Leopards eat goats. If you play with him again, he will try to eat you."

"What?" cried the kid. "But the cub is my friend! He won't eat me!"

His mother was angry.

"Are you a goat, or a fool?" she said. "All leopards are our enemies. Don't you understand?"

"Yes, Mother," the poor little kid said.

"Then tomorrow," said the goat, "you must be careful. When you see the leopard's cub, you must run away."

The next day the cub ran out to play. The kid ran out, too. They met beside the river. The cub looked at the kid and his mouth watered.

"My mother was right," he thought. "The kid will be very good to eat."

"Hello, my little friend," the cub said. "Come and play with me."

He was lying down on his stomach, and his tail was moving in the long grass.

The kid looked at the cub, and he moved backwards. He was ready to run away.

"No, thank you," he said. "I don't want to play today."

The cub closed his eyes, and opened them again.

"But my mother wants to meet you," he said. "Come to my house with me. You will like it there."

The kid moved backwards again.

"No," he said. "Yesterday we were friends. I liked you and we played together. But then you went to your house, and I went to mine. You spoke to your mother, and I spoke to mine. Goodbye, my friend. You are my enemy now."

He ran away and went home to his mother. Sadly, the leopard returned to his mother, too.

"I have lost a friend," they both thought, and they were sad.

**[Click here to listen to the story]**

## **Exercises**

### **A. How much did you understand?**

*On the first day of the story, the cub and the kid met.*

*Read sentences 1, 2 and 3. Now put them in the right order.*

1. The cub said he had found a new friend.
2. They rolled in the grass and tried to catch butterflies.
3. The leopard cub ran out to play.

*On the second day of the story, the cub and the kid had stopped being friends.  
Put sentences 4, 5 and 6 in the right order.*

4. The mother goat said, "When you see the leopard's cub you must run away."
5. The leopard cub said, "The kid is my friend!"
6. The mother leopard said, "All leopards eat goats."

### **B. Describe the leopard cub and the kid goat**

*Make three complete sentences for the cub and three complete sentences for the kid.  
Choose the endings from this list of six:*

- |              |                                |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| The cub..... | 1 ..... liked to run and jump. |
|              | 2 ..... had black spots.       |
|              | 3 ..... was strong.            |
| The kid..... | 4 ..... had bright eyes.       |
|              | 5 ..... had golden fur.        |
|              | 6 ..... had a long tail.       |

### **C. Who said what?**

*Match the mother leopard and the mother goat with the sentences they said.*

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
|                             | 1 ... "Be careful. You must run away."                 |
| The mother leopard said ... | 2 ... "Leopards eat goats."                            |
| The mother goat said ...    | 3 ... "Bring him home and we will eat him for dinner." |
|                             | 4 ... "Are you a leopard or a fool?"                   |
|                             | 5 ... "The goat's meat tastes good."                   |

*Did you find the ending that you can use twice?*

### **D. Where? What? When? How?**

*Again, try to give your answers first from memory before you check with the story.*

1. Where did the kid and the cub first meet?
2. Where did the cub want the kid to go on the second day?
3. What did the cub think when he first saw the kid?
4. What did the kid think when he first saw the cub?
5. When did the cub and the kid go to their homes?
6. When did the kid run away on the second day?
7. How did the mother leopard feel when her cub told her about his day?
8. How did the mother goat feel when her kid told her about his day?

### **E What do you think?**

Think about the mother leopard and the mother goat.  
Did they stop the kid and the cub being friends?  
Did the mother goat want to protect her kid?  
Did the mother leopard want to show her cub his true nature?

Was the mother leopard right to do this?

Which of the four animals did you like the most? And the least?

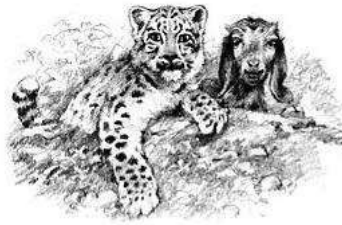
**F. Now you retell the story.**

Choose the animal that you liked the best. You could be the kid or the cub or the mother leopard or the mother goat. Retell the story from their point of view. Find a classmate or a friend to tell the story to.

You can start the story like this.

I am the ...

Hint: You may like to say what happened to you on the first day, and then what happened to you on the second day



**[Click here for the answers to the exercises]**

## Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

### A. How much did you understand?

*The right order of the sentences is:*

3. The leopard cub ran out to play.
2. They rolled in the grass and tried to catch butterflies.
1. The cub said he had found a new friend.

*The right order of the sentences is:*

6. The mother leopard said, "All leopards eat goats."
5. The leopard cub said, "The kid is my friend!"
4. The mother goat said, "When you see the leopard's cub you must run away."

### B. Describe the leopard cub and the kid goat

The cub.....  
2 ..... had black spots.  
3 ..... was strong.  
5 ..... had golden fur.

The kid.....  
1 ..... liked to run and jump.  
4 ..... had bright eyes.  
6 ..... had a long tail.

### C. Who said what?

The mother leopard said .....  
2 ..... "Leopards eat goats."  
3 ..... "Bring him home and we will eat him for dinner."  
5 ..... "Goat's meat tastes good."

The mother goat said .....  
1 ..... "Be careful. You must run away."  
4 ..... "Are you a leopard or a fool?"

### D. Where? What? When? How?

- 1 Where did the kid and the cub first meet? **By the river.**
- 2 Where did the cub want the kid to go on the second day? **To his house.**
- 3 What did the cub think when he first saw the kid? **Perhaps he will play with me.**
- 4 What did the kid think when he first saw the cub? **Perhaps he will be my friend.**
- 5 When did the cub and the kid go to their homes? **In the evening.**
- 6 When did the kid run away on the second day? **When the cub said, "We are enemies."**
- 7 How did the mother leopard feel when her cub told her about his day? **Angry**
- 8 How did the mother goat feel when her kid told her about his day? **Angry**

## The Trees and the Axe



### Before you read the story

The world has big problems. The climate is changing. There are not enough jobs for young people.

- Is there a problem that worries you?
- Where did you hear about it?
- Do you try to find a solution?
- Do you leave it to other people to sort out?

### Now read the story

One day, all the trees in the world had a big meeting.

"We are in trouble," the oldest tree said to the others. "Years ago, we used to live in peace. There were trees everywhere. They covered the whole land. But where are they now? Axes have cut them down."

"You are right," another tree said. "The axe is our enemy. Axes cut us down, then they prepare us to make houses, and ploughs, and furniture. They even chop us up to burn on the fire!"

"The axe!" the other trees shouted. "The axe is our enemy! We must kill the axe!"

"But how can we kill the axe?" the smallest tree asked.

The trees talked together for a long time. None of them could find an answer. Only the eucalyptus said nothing. He watched and listened.

"The axe is too strong for us," the trees all said at last. "We are too weak. We can never kill the axe."

The eucalyptus waved one of his branches.

"My friends," he said. "Listen to me. The axe isn't our enemy."

The other trees were angry.

"What do you mean?" they cried. "Of course he is our enemy!"

The eucalyptus waited again.

When they were all quiet, he said, "What is an axe made of? The head is made of metal, but the handle is made of wood. And where does the wood come from? It comes from us, the trees!"

The other trees began to nod their heads.

"He's right," they said.

"But only bent wood can make axes," the eucalyptus went on. "If we grow straight, there will be no more bent wood. The axes will not have wood for their handles. Then, there will be no more axes! I tell you, my friends, from today, I'm going to grow straight. There will be no bends in my wood! Wait, and you will see."

The eucalyptus kept his promise. From that day, he grew straight, and there were no bends in his wood. But the other trees didn't listen to the eucalyptus. They grew in the old way, with bending trunks and branches.

And so the trees did not kill their enemy, the axe, and the axe continued to cut them down.

**[Click here to listen to the story]**

## **Exercises**

### **A. How much did you understand?**

*Read sentences 1, 2 and 3 below. Now put them in the right order.*

1. The axe is our enemy!
2. But only bent wood can make axes.
3. Years ago, we used to live in peace.

*Now put sentences 4, 5 and 6 in the right order.*

4. We must kill the axe!
5. I'm going to grow straight.
6. The head is made of metal, but the handle is made of wood.

### **B. Now put all six sentences in the right order**

### **C. Finish these sentences**

*Complete sentences 1, 2 and 3 by choosing the best of the three endings: a, b or c*

1. Years ago there were trees everywhere .....
  2. The axe is too strong for us .....
  3. The eucalyptus grew straight .....
- a) ..... but the other trees grew in the old way.  
b) ..... but now axes have cut them down.  
c) ..... and we are too weak.

### **D. What do you think?**

*Find a classmate or a friend to talk with.*

What do you think of the eucalyptus tree's solution?

Why didn't the other trees listen to the eucalyptus?

What will happen to all the trees that grow with bendy trunks and branches?

Can you think of another title to the story?

Can you think of another solution so that the trees can stay alive?

**[Click here for the answers to the exercises]**

## Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the stories](#)]

### A. How much did you understand?

*The right order for sentences 1,2 and 3 is:*

3. Years ago, we used to live in peace.
1. The axe is our enemy!
2. But only bent wood can make axes.

*The right order for sentences 4, 5 and 6 is:*

4. We must kill the axe!
6. The head is made of metal, but the handle is made of wood.
5. I'm going to grow straight.

### B. Now put all six sentences in the right order

*The right order for all the sentences is:*

3. Years ago, we used to live in peace.
1. The axe is our enemy!
4. We must kill the axe!
6. The head is made of metal, but the handle is made of wood.
2. But only bent wood can make axes.
5. I'm going to grow straight.

### C. Finish these sentences?

1/5. Years ago there were trees everywhere **but now axes have cut them down.**

2/c. The axe is too strong for us **and we are too weak.**

3/a. The eucalyptus grew straight **but the other trees grew in the old way.**

## Wardit the Mule



### Before you read the story

Have you ever avoided somebody that you know? Have you ever crossed over to the other side of the street because you don't want to talk to them?

- What stopped you saying hello?
- What were you thinking?

Sometimes people ask questions that you don't want to answer. Their questions make you feel small or stupid. Has this happened to you?

- What made you want to change the topic?
- What were you feeling?

### Now read the story

Once upon a time, there was a young mule called Wardit. She was clever, and beautiful, but she was very proud.

One day, Wardit went to the river to drink some water. On the road, she met a handsome young horse.

"Wardit is the most beautiful mule in the world!" thought the horse. "I must marry her."

He ran up to Wardit.

"How are you, Wardit?" he said.

"I am fine, thank God," she answered. "How are you?"

"I am fine, too," the horse said. "Where are you going?"

"I'm going to the river to drink some water," Wardit said.

"Then let me come with you," said the horse. "Oh Wardit, you are the most beautiful mule in the world. Let me stay with you! Let me marry you! Please, be my wife!"

Wardit looked at the horse. He was young, and handsome, and strong.

"I will marry him," she thought.

"Who are your parents?" the horse asked her. "Who is your father? Who is your

mother?"

Wardit turned her head away. She didn't want to answer him.

"Tell me, my dear," the horse said. "Who is your father? I must know the family of my bride."

Wardit laughed.

"Oh," she said. "You can see my mother every day. She lives in the palace, and the governor rides her every morning."

"But your father?" the horse said. "Who is he?"

"And my sister," Wardit said, "belongs to the priest. Don't you know her? He rides her to the church."

"Yes," the horse said, "but who is your father? Where is he, and what is his name?"

"And my aunt," cried Wardit, "oh, my aunt is so beautiful! She lives with the headman of the village, and he loves her like his daughter."

"That's very good," the horse said, "but please, dear Wardit, tell me about your father. I want to know about him."

Just then, a poor old donkey came down the road. It was Wardit's father. She looked at him, and she was ashamed.

"My father is only a donkey," she thought, "but the horse is young and handsome. He will not want this poor old animal to be his father-in-law."

The donkey was near Wardit now. She did not greet him. She did not look at him, or smile at him.

"Wardit!" the old donkey said to his daughter. "What are you doing here?"

Wardit didn't answer. Her father was angry.

"What's the matter, my girl?" he said. "Why don't you answer me? Don't you know who I am?"

Wardit said nothing. She didn't want to talk to her father. She didn't look at him.

The horse was angry now.

"Who is this foolish old donkey?" he said. "Why is he speaking to you, my beautiful bride?"

"I don't know," said Wardit. "I don't know him."

"You don't know me?" cried the donkey. "But Wardit, I am your ..."

But the horse wasn't listening.

"Go away!" he shouted to Wardit's father. "You foolish old donkey. Leave us alone!"

The donkey didn't move. The horse kicked him. The donkey fell down, and the horse kicked him again.

The poor donkey's heart broke. He looked up to the sky.

"Oh God," he said. "Did you see this?"

And then the donkey died.

God heard the donkey's words.

He said to Wardit, "Wardit, your father is dead, and now I must punish you. Horses will have children, and donkeys will have children, but you, the mule, will never have a child. This is your punishment, because you did not respect your father."

**[Click here to listen to the story]**

## **Exercises**

### **A. How much did you understand?**

*These sentences show what the horse thought, and what he said to Wardit. Put them in the right order.*

1. The horse said: "Who is your father? I must know the family of my bride."
2. "Wardit is the most beautiful mule in the world!" thought the horse.
3. The horse said, "Let me marry you! Please, be my wife!"

*These are Wardit's answers to the horse. Put them in the right order.*

4. "My father is only a donkey," she thought.
5. "And my sister," Wardit said, "belongs to the priest. Don't you know her?"
6. "Oh," she said. "You can see my mother every day. She lives in the palace."

*Wardit's father, the donkey, said these sentences. Put them in the right order.*

7. "You don't know me?" cried the donkey. "But Wardit, I am your ..."
8. He looked up to the sky. "Oh God," he said. "Did you see this?"
9. "What's the matter, my girl?" he said. "Why don't you answer me? Don't you know who I am?"

### **B. Finish these sentences**

*Complete sentences 1, 2 and 3 by choosing the best of the three endings: a, b or c.*

1. The mule was .....
  2. The horse was .....
  3. The donkey was .....
- a) ..... poor and angry.
  - b) ..... clever and very proud.
  - c) ..... handsome and strong.

### **C. Who asked these questions?**

1. "How are you, Wardit?"
2. "Where are you going?"
3. "Who is your father?"
4. "What are you doing here?"
5. "Why don't you answer me?"

### **D. Which questions did Wardit answer?**

*Wardit answered two of the questions in exercise C. She didn't answer three of them. Which questions did she answer? Which questions didn't she answer?*

### **E. What were they feeling?**

1. Just then, a poor old donkey came down the road. Wardit looked at him, and she was .....
2. Wardit did not answer. Her father was .....
3. The horse said, "Who is this foolish old donkey?" The horse was ..... now.

### **F. What do you think?**

What made the donkey's heart break?  
 Do you think that Wardit deserved God's punishment?  
 Is it important to show respect to your parents?  
 Do you sometimes fail to respect your parents?  
 What happens when you do that?

**[Click here for the answers to the exercises]**

## Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the stories](#)]

### A. How much did you understand?

*Here is the correct order for sentences 1 to 3.*

2. "Wardit is the most beautiful mule in the world!" thought the horse.
3. The horse said, "Let me marry you! Please, be my wife!"
1. The horse said: "Who is your father? I must know the family of my bride."

*Here is the correct order for sentences 4 to 6.*

6. "Oh," she said. "You can see my mother every day. She lives in the palace."
5. "And my sister," Wardit said, "belongs to the priest. Don't you know her?"
4. "My father is only a donkey," she thought.

*Here is the correct order for sentences 7 to 9.*

9. "What's the matter, my girl?" he said. "Why don't you answer me? Don't you know who I am?"
7. "You don't know me?" cried the donkey. "But Wardit, I am your ..."
8. He looked up to the sky. "Oh God," he said. "Did you see this?"

### B. Finish these sentences?

*The correct endings to the sentences are:*

- 1/b. The mule was **clever and very proud**.
- 2/c. The horse was **handsome and strong**.
- 3/a. The donkey was **poor and angry**.

### C. Who asked these questions?

1. "How are you, Wardit?" **said the horse**.
2. "Where are you going?" **said the horse**.
3. "Who is your father?" **said the horse**.
4. "What are you doing here?" **said the donkey**.
5. "Why don't you answer me?" **said the donkey**.

### D. Which questions did Wardit answer?

Wardit answered questions 1 and 2. She didn't answer questions 3, 4 and 5.

### E. What were they feeling?

1. Just then, a poor old donkey came down the road. Wardit looked at him, and she was **ashamed**.
2. Wardit did not answer. Her father was **angry**.
3. The horse said, "Who is this foolish old donkey?" The horse was **angry** now.

## The Ox and the Donkey



### Before you read the story

- Do you sometimes want to have a day of rest?
- Do you feel bad about having a rest?
- Do other people say that you are lazy when you rest?
- Do you pretend to be unwell so that you can have a day of rest?

*Tef is a cereal that grows in Ethiopia.*

### Now read the story

A poor farmer had an old ox. The ox didn't like to work. He didn't want to plough the farmer's field. He wanted to stay at home, and eat grass and drink water. He wanted to rest.

The farmer had a donkey, too. The donkey was the ox's friend. At the end of the day, the ox and the donkey talked to each other.

"I'm so tired," the ox said. "I worked hard all day. The plough is big and heavy. The farmer never lets me rest."

The donkey looked at the ox.

"The ox is lazy," he thought. "He doesn't like to work."

"Do you think your plough is heavy?" he cried. "Believe me, my friend, it is light! Now, I was carrying a sack of tef on my back today. It was heavier than your plough, I am sure."

The next day, the two animals met again.

"I had a bad day today," the ox said. "My master's field is far away, and it was full of

stones. I worked hard all day. I didn't have any rest."

"*You* worked hard?" said the donkey. "I went to the market today. It was in the town, many kilometres away. I'm sure I worked harder than you."

The next day, the ox came home late again.

"Oh, my friend," he said to the donkey. "Today was a very bad day for me."

But the donkey didn't want to listen to the ox any more.

"You're always tired," he said. "Every day is a bad day for you. Listen, I have a good idea. Tomorrow, when the farmer comes, lie down on the ground. Close your eyes, and say, 'Moo! Moo!' The farmer will think that you are ill. He will let you rest."

The ox liked the donkey's idea.

"Thank you, dear donkey," he said. "That's a very good idea."

So the next morning, the ox lay down on the ground. He waited for the farmer. When the farmer came, the ox closed his eyes.

"Moo! Moo!" he said.

The farmer looked at him.

"My poor old ox is sick," he said. "But I must plough my field. Who will help me? Why, there is my donkey! He can pull the plough today."

So the farmer took the donkey out to his field. He tied the plough to the donkey, and began to hit him with his whip.

"Go on! Faster! Pull!" he called out to the donkey.

The donkey worked hard all day, and in the evening he was very tired. Slowly, he walked home.

The ox was waiting for him.

"Dear donkey," the ox said. "I had a lovely day today. I ate some grass, and I drank some water, and I rested under a big tree. I want to rest again tomorrow. What shall I do? Give me another idea."

The donkey looked at the ox.

"His work is much worse than mine," he thought. "I don't want to do it again tomorrow."

"My friend," he said at last. "You must be careful. The farmer was talking to his wife today. I heard him. 'My ox is always tired,' he said, 'and now he is sick. If he is not better tomorrow, I will kill him, and we can eat the meat.'"

The ox was very frightened.

"What? Did he say that?" he cried. "Then I will work tomorrow. I feel quite better now. I'm not tired at all!"

**[Click here to listen to the story]**

## **Exercises**

### **A. How much did you understand?**

*Sentences 1, 2 and 3 are what the ox said to the donkey. Match them with the donkey's replies a, b and c.*

1. "I'm so tired. I worked hard all day."
2. "I had a bad day today. My master's field is far away, and it was full of stones."
3. "Today was a very bad day for me."

- a) "*You* worked hard? I'm sure I worked harder than you."
- b) "You're always tired. Every day is a bad day for you."
- c) "Do you think your plough is heavy? Believe me, my friend, it is light!"

## **B. Put these sentences in the right order**

*The donkey had some good ideas.*

*Put the donkey's ideas in the right order.*

1. "Close your eyes, and say, 'Moo! Moo!'"
2. "The farmer will think that you are ill."
3. "Lie down on the ground."

*The next morning the farmer found his ox lying on the ground. He said three things.*

*Put them in the right order.*

4. "Go on! Faster! Pull!"
5. "Why there is my donkey! He can pull the plough today."
6. "But I must plough my field. Who will help me?"

*In the evening, the ox talked to the donkey about his day of rest. He said three things.*

*Put them in the right order?*

7. "I rested under a big tree."
8. "I had a lovely day today."
9. "I ate some grass, and I drank some water."

## **C. Who is speaking?**

*Who said these sentences?*

1. "He can pull the plough today."
2. "I don't want to do it again tomorrow."
3. "My friend, you must be careful."
4. "I feel quite better now. I'm not tired at all!"

## **D. What do you think?**

Do you think that the work was too hard for the ox?

Do you think that the ox was lazy?

Do you think that the donkey worked hard?

Why didn't the donkey want to listen to the ox any more?

Why did the farmer begin to hit the donkey with his whip?

Why did the ox say he was not tired at all?

Do you think there was another reason why the ox wanted to rest?

## **E. Retell the story to a friend**

In this story there is the farmer, the ox and the donkey. Choose one of them. Now tell the story as the farmer, the ox or the donkey. Tell the story again to your friend or classmate.

You can start the story like this.

I am the donkey *or* I am the ox *or* I am the farmer.

On the first day, I .....

On the second day, I .....

On the third day, I .....

**[Click here for the answers to the exercises]**



## Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the stories](#)]

### A. How much did you understand?

1/c. "I'm so tired. I worked hard all day."

**"Do you think your plough is heavy? Believe me, my friend, it is light!"**

2/a. "I had a bad day today. My master's field is far away, and it was full of stones."

**"You worked hard? I'm sure I worked harder than you."**

3/b. "Today was a very bad day for me."

**"You're always tired. Every day is a bad day for you."**

### B. Put these sentences in the right order

*The best order for these sentences is 3, 1, 2.*

"Lie down on the ground."

"Close your eyes, and say, *Moo! Moo!*"

"The farmer will think that you are ill."

*The best order for these sentences is 6, 5, 4.*

"But I must plough my field. Who will help me?"

"Why there is my donkey! He can pull the plough today."

"Go on! Faster! Pull!"

*The best order for these sentences is 8, 9, 7.*

"I had a lovely day today."

"I ate some grass, and I drank some water."

"I rested under a big tree."

### C. Who is speaking?

1. "He can pull the plough today."

*The farmer*

2. "I don't want to do it again tomorrow."

*The donkey*

3. "My friend, you must be careful."

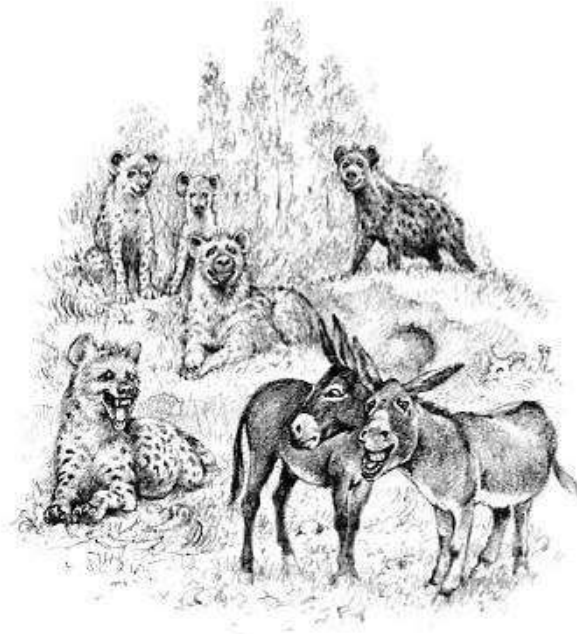
*The donkey*

4. "I feel quite better now. I'm not tired at all!"

*The ox*



## The Hyena's Funeral



### Before you read the story

- Do you ever feel frightened?
- What things frighten you?
- Are there some people who frighten you?
- What do you do when you feel frightened?

### Now read the story

One day, the hyena's son died. A donkey heard the news. He ran to tell his relatives.

"Listen," he said. "The hyena's son is dead."

"The hyena's son?" said all the other donkeys. "That's good news. All the hyenas are our enemies."

"Brothers, we must be careful," said one old donkey. "We must go to the hyena's funeral and show respect."

"What? Go to the hyena's funeral?" the other donkeys said. "We don't want to go. We're frightened. The hyenas will eat us."

"Listen," said the old donkey. "If we don't go, the hyenas will be angry with us. They will have a reason to eat us."

"You are right," said all the other donkeys. "We must go to the hyena's funeral. If we go, the hyenas will be happy with us. Perhaps they will become our friends."

So the donkeys went to the hyenas' house. The hyenas saw them outside their house.

"Here come the donkeys," they said. "Why are they coming? Have they come to laugh at us?"

The donkeys heard the hyenas. They were frightened and they began to sing:

"Great hyenas,  
You hunt all night,

And we hear you sing  
In the cold moonlight.  
Your teeth are long.  
Your eyes are bright.  
Though your food is black,  
Your dung is white.  
But now your son  
Lies on his bed.  
And he is dead!  
Our lord is dead!"

The donkeys sang, and they cried, and they sang again.  
The dead hyena's uncle answered them:

"Your song is good.  
Your words are sweet.  
Come in, dear donkeys.  
Take a seat!  
But what did you bring  
For us to eat?  
Hyenas are hungry.  
Hyenas want meat!"

The donkeys were very frightened now.

"Let's run away," said one.

"We can't," said another. "The hyenas will chase us."

"My lords," the oldest donkey said. "We came to show respect to you. We are sorry that your son is dead. We will pray to God. He will comfort you. Now we must go back to our home."

The donkeys began to go.

"Wait!" the hyenas said. "You cannot leave. You must give us something to eat. Cut off your lips and give them to us."

The donkeys looked at each other.

"If we give them our lips, perhaps they will let us go," they thought.

So the hyenas cut off the donkeys' lips, and ate them. Again, the donkeys tried to go.

"Stop!" cried the dead hyena's uncle. "My brothers, will you let these donkeys go? Look at them! We can see their teeth! They are laughing at us!"

"They are laughing! They are laughing!" said all the hyenas, and they jumped on the donkeys, and killed them, and ate them.

Before the oldest donkey died, he looked at the hyenas and said,

"Wicked hyenas,  
We came with our song  
To comfort you.  
But we were wrong!  
Next time you are hungry,  
Don't pretend  
That you need a reason  
To eat your friend!"

**[Click here to listen to the story]**

## **Exercises**

### **A. How much did you understand?**

*A donkey heard the news that the hyena's son had died. He ran to tell his relatives. He said three things.*

*Read sentences 1, 2 and 3. Now put them in the right order.*

1. "We must go to the hyena's funeral and show respect."
2. "If we don't go, the hyenas will be angry with us. They will have a reason to eat us."
3. "The hyena's son is dead."

*The donkeys decided to show their respect to the hyenas. They went to see them.*

*The donkeys said three things when they arrived.*

*Read sentences 4, 5 and 6. Now put them in the right order.*

4. "We are sorry that your son is dead. We will pray to God. He will comfort you."
5. "Let's run away."
6. "If we give them our lips, perhaps they will let us go."

*When the hyenas saw the donkeys, they said three things.*

*Read sentences 7, 8 and 9. Now put them in the right order.*

7. "We can see their teeth! They are laughing at us!"
8. "You must give us something to eat. Cut off your lips and give them to us."
9. "Hyenas are hungry. Hyenas want meat!"

### **B. If...**

*The donkeys didn't know what to do. They had to decide.*

*Complete each of these sentences with the best ending.*

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. "If we don't go,.....           | a) ..... the hyenas will be happy with us." |
| 2. "If we go,.....                 | b) ..... perhaps they will let us go."      |
| 3. "If we give them our lips,..... | c) ..... the hyenas will be angry with us." |

### **C. Now you retell the story. Tell a classmate or a friend.**

*Retell the story to a classmate or a friend. Pretend to be the oldest donkey, or the dead hyena's uncle.*

*You can start the story like this:*

I am the oldest donkey ..... or I am the dead hyena's uncle .....

**[Click here for the answers to the exercises]**

## Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the stories](#)]

### A. How much did you understand?

*Here is the right order for sentences 1,2 and 3.*

3. "The hyena's son is dead."

1. "We must go to the hyena's funeral and show respect."

2. "If we don't go, the hyenas will be angry with us. They will have a reason to eat us."

*Here is the right order for sentences 4, 5 and 6.*

5. "Let's run away."

4. "We are sorry that your son is dead. We will pray to God. He will comfort you."

6. "If we give them our lips, perhaps they will let us go."

*Here is the right order for sentences 7, 8 and 9.*

9. "Hyenas are hungry. Hyenas want meat!"

8. "You must give us something to eat. Cut off your lips and give them to us."

7. "We can see their teeth! They are laughing at us!"

### B. If...

*The best endings to the sentences are:*

1/c. "If we don't go, **the hyenas will be angry with us.**"

2/a. "If we go **the hyenas will be happy with us.**"

3/b. "If we give them our lips, **perhaps they will let us go.**"

## Sinziro and his Brothers



### Before you read the story

- Is there something that you wish for?
- What is it?
- Do you pray for it?
- If you get what you want, will your life change?

### Now read the story

Once upon a time, a man and a woman had seven foolish sons. They lost their father's cattle, they broke his plough, and everyone cheated them at the market.

Their mother prayed to God.

"Oh God," she said. "Why did you send me all these foolish children? Please, I pray you, send me one more son, and let him be wise."

God heard the woman's prayer, and she gave birth to another boy. The child was very small. He was only as long as his father's hand.

"We'll call him Sinziro," his mother said.

Sinziro was small, but he was very clever, and his mother and father loved him very much.

His brothers were jealous.

"Why do our parents love you?" they said to Sinziro. "Look at yourself! You are no bigger than a rat."

An enemy lived not far away from the family's house. One day, Sinziro's brothers said to each other, "We are hungry, but our enemy has many fat cows and bulls. Let's go to his compound tonight and steal two of his bulls. We'll take our father's donkey. It can carry the meat home."

They didn't see Sinziro. He was sitting behind his father's stool.

So, that night, Sinziro's brothers took the donkey and went to their enemy's compound.

They didn't see Sinziro. He was running after them.

When they reached the compound, the gate was shut. The brothers couldn't get inside.

"I wish Sinziro were here," said one of the brothers. "He's clever. He could get into this compound."

"But Sinziro is at home, with our mother and father," another brother said.

They didn't see Sinziro. He was hiding behind a stone.

"I'm not at home, brothers. I'm here," he said. "And I know what to do. Stay here. I'll go inside the compound, and open the door. I'll drive the bulls out to you."

"But how can you go into the compound?" the third brother said. "The door is locked."

Sinziro laughed.

"There's a door for me," he said. "Look down there."

His brothers looked. There was a small hole in the fence beside the door. It was only big enough for a cat, but it was big enough for Sinziro. He ran through it easily. He climbed up to the door and opened it. Then he began to drive two fat bulls out of the compound.

"Go on, my beautiful bulls! Go out!" he cried.

The brothers' enemy was asleep in his house, but his dogs were awake. They heard Sinziro, and they began to bark. Their master woke up too. He ran out of his house.

"Who's there, in my compound?" he called out. "Who is stealing my cattle?"

Sinziro pretended to be the man's servant.

"Don't worry, sir," he called out. "Our two big bulls were lost, but I found them. I am bringing them back to you now."

The owner was angry.

"Don't make so much noise," he said. "We are trying to sleep in this house."

He went back into his house, and shut the door.

Quietly, Sinziro drove the two bulls out of the compound. His brothers were very happy.

"What beautiful fat bulls!" they said. "They will be very good to eat. Let's kill them and eat them now."

"No, no!" said Sinziro. "Our enemy will hear us. He will come out again and catch us. Come on, brothers. We must take the bulls far away, across the river."

So Sinziro and his brothers drove the bulls far away from the enemy's house. At last they came to the river. The seven foolish brothers looked at the water, and shook their heads.

"We can't cross this river," they said to each other. "Perhaps it's deep. We can't swim. Where is Sinziro? He will know how to cross it."

Sinziro was sitting on one of the bulls' horns.

"I am here, brothers," he said, "and I know what to do. Give me a rope."

His brothers gave him a rope. Sinziro tied one end of the rope to the tree. Then he swam across the river, and tied the other end to another tree. He called out to his brothers, "Hold the rope, and walk across the river. You will be quite safe."

So, one by one, his brothers held the rope and crossed the river, while the bulls swam in front of them.

"We are far away from our enemy now," said Sinziro. "We can kill the bulls."

The brothers killed the bulls. They cut them up and divided the meat into seven parts. They took one part each.

"Wait!" said Sinziro. "Where's my share?"

The brothers laughed.

"Your share?" they said. "But you are too small. You can't eat this meat. No, Sinziro. There's no meat for you."

Sinziro was very angry.

"I'll punish my brothers for this," he thought.

"If you won't give me any meat," he said to them, "at least give me the bladder of one of the bulls."

His brothers laughed again.

"A bladder? No one wants to eat that," they said, and they threw it to Sinziro.

Sinziro took the bladder, and ran up a tree. He blew into it and tied up the hole. Now the bladder was like a ball. Sinziro took a stick from the tree, and he began to beat the bladder.

"Oh!" he began to shout. "Stop it! Please, don't beat me, sir! I didn't steal your bulls. It was my brothers. Look, there they are, near the river. They have killed your bulls and cut up the meat!"

The brothers were very frightened.

"Our enemy has followed us," they cried. "He will punish us!"

At once, they ran away.

Sinziro came down from the tree. He was smiling.

"Now all the meat is for me," he said, and he put it on the donkey, and took it home.

**[Click here to listen to the story]**

## **Exercises**

### **A. How much did you understand?**

*In this story, the mother prayed to God for another son.*

*Put the sentences 1, 2 and 3 in the right order.*

1. "We'll call him Sinziro," his mother said.
2. Sinziro was small, but he was very clever, and his mother and father loved him very much.
3. "Please, I pray you, send me one more son."

*The brothers did not like Sinziro, their new young brother.*

*Put the sentences 4, 5, and 6 in the right order.*

4. "You are no bigger than a rat."
5. His brothers were jealous.
6. "Why do our parents love you?"

*The brothers decided to steal two bulls from their enemy's compound.*

*Put the sentences 7, 8, and 9 in the right order.*

7. "I wish Sinziro was here," one of the brothers said. "He's clever. He could get into this compound."
8. "Let's go to his compound tonight and steal two of his bulls."
9. "But how can you go into the compound?" the third brother said. "The door is locked."

*Sinziro helped his brothers and released the bulls.*

*Put the sentences 10, 11 and 12 in the right order.*

10. Quietly, Sinziro drove the two bulls out of the compound. His brothers were very happy.

11. "Don't worry, sir," Sinziro called out. "Our two big bulls were lost, but I found them. I am bringing them back to you now."
12. Sinziro climbed up to the door and opened it. Then he began to drive two fat bulls out of the compound.

### **B. Complete these sentences**

*Sinziro took the bulls away safely from the enemy's compound and the brothers killed the bulls. The brothers divided the meat into seven parts. Sinziro asked for his share. Now complete sentences 1, 2, and 3 with the best endings a, b and c.*

1. So Sinziro and his brothers drove the bulls.....
  2. "Hold the rope, and...."
  3. "If you won't give me any meat," he said to them.....
- a) "..... walk across the river."
  - b) ".....at least give me the bladder of one of the bulls."
  - c) ..... far away from the enemy's house.

### **C. Who said these sentences? Who were they speaking to?**

1. "I'll punish my brothers for this."
1. "At least give me the bladder of one of the bulls."
2. "A bladder? No one wants to eat that."
3. "Please, don't beat me, sir!"
4. "Now all the meat is for me."

### **D. Now you tell the ending of the story.**

At the end of the story Sinziro wanted to punish his brothers. He said, "I'll punish my brothers for this." Tell this ending from Sinziro's point of view.

You can start the story like this:

I am Sinziro. I want to punish my brothers for this ...

**[Click here for the answers to the exercises]**

### **E. More stories to enjoy**

If you liked reading this story, there are some others on this website like it that you might enjoy. Click on these links:

**[Deya Ali and the Thieves]**

**[Hirsi and Kabaalaf]**

## Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the stories](#)]

### A. How much did you understand?

*Here is the right order for sentences 1,2 and 3.*

3. "Please, I pray you, send me one more son."

1. "We'll call him Sinziro," his mother said.

2. Sinziro was small but he was very clever, and his mother and father loved him very much.

*Here is the right order for sentences 4,5 and 6.*

5. His brothers were jealous.

6. "Why do our parents love you?"

4. "You are no bigger than a rat."

*Here is the right order for sentences 7, 8 and 9.*

8. "Let's go to his compound tonight and steal two of his bulls."

7. "I wish Sinziro was here," one of the brothers said. "He's clever. He could get into this compound."

9. "But how can you go into the compound?" the third brother said. "The door is locked."

*Here is the right order for sentences 10, 11 and 12.*

12. Sinziro climbed up to the door and opened it. Then he began to drive two fat bulls out of the compound.

11. "Don't worry, sir," Sinziro called out. "Our two big bulls were lost, but I found them. I am bringing them back to you now."

10. Quietly, Sinziro drove the two bulls out of the compound. His brothers were very happy.

### B. Complete these sentences

*Here are the best endings to sentences 1, 2 and 3.*

1/c. So Sinziro and his brothers drove the bulls **far away from the enemy's house.**

2/a. "Hold the rope, and **walk across the river.**"

3/b. "If you won't give me any meat," he said to them, "**at least give me the bladder of one of the bulls.**"

### C. Who said these sentences? Who were they speaking to?

1. "I'll punish my brothers for this," **Sinziro said to himself.**

2. "At least give me the bladder of one of the bulls," **Sinziro said to the seven brothers.**

3. "A bladder? No one wants to eat that," **the seven brothers said to Sinziro.**

4. "Please, don't beat me, sir!" **Sinziro said to the enemy, but he was really speaking to his seven brothers.**

5. "Now all the meat is for me," **Sinziro said to himself.**

## The Magic Stick

### **Before you read the story**

- Do you believe in miracles?
- If you could perform a miracle, what would you do?

### **Now read the story**

#### **Part One**

A poor man was married to a beautiful woman. The man and his wife never quarrelled. The husband loved his wife. The wife loved her husband. They were very happy.

But this happy couple had a rich, handsome neighbour. He saw the poor man's beautiful wife and he fell in love with her.

I want to marry her myself, he thought.

Every day, when the woman's husband was working in the fields, the rich man went to the poor man's house.

"You're a beautiful woman," he said to the poor man's wife, "but your clothes are old. Why doesn't your husband buy new, pretty clothes for you? I'm sure he doesn't love you. If he loved you, he would buy wonderful clothes for you. Divorce him, and marry me. I will buy you beautiful new clothes, the best in the land. Then you will be the most beautiful woman in Ethiopia."

At first the woman didn't listen to the rich man. But he came to her house every day, and every day he said the same things.

At last, she began to think, "Perhaps my neighbour is right. Why doesn't my husband buy beautiful new clothes for me? Perhaps he doesn't love me! "

That night, she said to her husband, "Look at me, husband! My clothes are old and ugly. I want new ones. Buy me some new clothes!"

Her husband smiled at her.

"You don't need new clothes," he said. "You are the most beautiful woman in the

world to me."

She was angry.

"Don't you love me?" she said. "If you love me, buy me a new dress!"

Her husband loved his wife and he wanted to please her.

"I have only a little money," he thought, "and I need a new plough. But I want my dear wife to be happy."

So the next day, he went to the market and he bought a new dress for his wife.

He took it home to her and she put it on.

"Thank you, my dear husband," she cried. "Now I know that you love me!"

When the rich man came to see her again, she was wearing her new dress.

"You see?" she said to him. "My husband loves me very much. He bought me this beautiful new dress."

## **Part Two**

The rich man shook his head.

"But a good husband doesn't only give his wife new clothes," he said. "He gives her gold. Where's your gold necklace? Where are your gold rings? Why doesn't your husband give you those?"

He opened a box and showed her some beautiful gold jewellery.

"Look at these," he said. "Divorce your husband and marry me, and I will give all these to you."

The woman did not listen to him.

"Go away," she said. "I love my husband and he loves me, and we are happy together."

But the rich man came again, every day, and every day he showed her the box of jewellery.

At last, she began to think, "Perhaps the rich man is right. Why doesn't my husband buy gold for me? Doesn't he love me?"

That day, she didn't make a fire. She didn't cook a meal. Her husband came home late, after a long day in the fields. He was tired and hungry.

"There's no dinner for you tonight," his wife said. "You don't love me!"

"What?" her husband cried. "But my darling, I love you more than anything. You are the most wonderful person in the world!"

"Then why don't you buy me some gold jewellery?" she said. "When a man loves his wife, he gives her a gold necklace, and rings for her fingers."

Her husband looked worried.

"I spent money on her new clothes," he thought. "How can I find more for gold? I'll go and see my brother. Perhaps he will lend me the money. I must buy gold for my dear wife. I want her to be happy."

The next day he went to visit his brother.

"Lend me some money, brother," he said, "and I will work for you in your field."

"All right," his brother said, "but you must work hard. There are many stones in my field and you must move them all away."

Her husband agreed, and took the money. He went to the market and bought some gold jewellery. Then he took it home to his wife.

His wife was very happy. She put the necklace round her neck, and put the rings on her fingers.

"Look at me!" she said. "Am I not beautiful?"

"You're very beautiful," her husband said. "If you are happy, I am happy."

She put her arms round his neck.

"Thank you, thank you, my dear husband," she said. "Now I know that you love me."

The next day, her husband went out very early, before the sun rose in the sky.

He ran to his brother's field. It was covered with stones.

I must work very hard now, he thought. I must start early, and stop late. I must pay my debt to my brother.

His wife was working happily at home.

"I'll make a wonderful dinner for my husband tonight," she thought. "He gives me wonderful presents. He works hard for me. I know that he loves me."

"Hello?" a voice called out. "Are you there?"

The woman went outside. Her rich neighbour was there.

"Ah, it's you," the woman said. "Listen, neighbour. You were wrong about my husband. Yesterday, he bought me this beautiful jewellery. He loves me very much, and I love him. I will not divorce him. I will not marry you."

### **Part Three**

The rich man was worried.

"Her husband loves her too much," he thought. "If I want her, I must be clever."

"At last he said, "Your husband gave you clothes and jewellery, but I can give you more than that."

"What? What do you mean?" the woman cried.

"Can your husband make miracles?" the rich man asked.

"Miracles? No, of course he can't make miracles," the woman answered. "Only God can make miracles. Men cannot make them."

"But I can," the man said, "because I love you. Love can make miracles. If your husband loves you, he can make miracles for you. If you love me, I will make miracles for you."

"Make a miracle for me now," the woman said.

"I can't," the rich man answered. "You must promise to love me first. You must leave your husband and come to me. Then I will make wonderful, wonderful miracles for you."

The woman said nothing, and the rich man went away.

That night, the poor man came home late. He was very tired and hungry. His wife brought water for him, and he washed himself. She brought delicious food for him, and he ate it.

"My poor husband," she thought. "He works so hard for me, and he is so tired and hungry. The rich man is foolish. How can my husband make miracles? It's impossible."

But the next day, and the day after, and the day after that, the rich man came to her house again.

"Did your husband make a miracle for you yesterday?" he asked the woman. "Leave him, and love me, and I will make many, many miracles for you every day."

At last, the woman began to listen to him. One day, when her husband came home, she was sad.

"Wife, dear wife, what is wrong with you?" cried her husband. "Are you sick?"

"No," she said. "I'm sad because you do not love me."

"What?" cried her husband. "But you know that I love you! I bought you new clothes. I bought you gold jewellery! You're the most precious thing in the world to me!"

"But you don't make miracles for me," his wife said.

Her poor husband was very surprised.

"Miracles? Of course I can't make miracles," he said. "Why do you want a miracle? Who gave you the idea?"

"Our neighbour came to see me today," the woman said. 'Love makes miracles,' he said. 'If a man loves a woman, he will make miracles for her.'"

Her husband was very worried.

"That wicked man wants to take my wife," he thought. "All this trouble comes from him. When he first came here, she wanted new clothes. Then she wanted gold jewellery. And now she wants a miracle! What can I do? If I don't make a miracle, perhaps my wife will leave me and marry him!"

The next day, he went slowly to work in his brother's field.

"I must pray," he thought. "Only God can help me now."

He looked up to heaven.

"Oh Lord God," he prayed. "Please help me to make a miracle. I love my wife and I want to keep her. Don't let this rich man take her from me."

He worked all morning. He was moving stones from his brother's field. In the middle of the day, he sat down under a tree to rest. A man was sitting there already.

"Who are you?" the poor man asked.

"I am a wizard," answered the man "And I have a gift for you. Look, here are two sticks. They make miracles."

"Miracles?" the poor man said. He was happy now. "What kind of miracles?"

"If you touch a person with the first stick," the wizard said, "he will become a donkey."

The poor man thought of the rich man, and he smiled.

"A donkey?" he said. "That's very good. And if I touch him with the second stick, what will happen?"

"He will become a man again," said the wizard.

The poor man took the sticks and jumped up.

"Oh, thank you, my friend!" he said. "I prayed to God and he sent you to me. Now I can keep my wife and punish my enemy."

## **Part Four**

He ran home.

"Wife!" he called out. "Come here! I'm going to make a miracle."

His wife came out of the house.

"A miracle?" she said. "What miracle?"

"Look," said her husband.

He touched her with the first stick. At once she became a donkey.

She lifted her head and tried to speak, but she could not.

"Hee-haw! Hee-haw!" was all she could say.

Her husband touched her with the other stick. At once she became a woman again.

"Husband, that's wonderful!" she said. "It's a real miracle! How did you do it?"

"I prayed to God," her husband said, "and he helped me. And now, wife, I am going to punish my enemy."

"Your enemy?" said his wife. "Who is that?"

"You know my enemy," her husband said. He was looking at her. He wasn't smiling now. "It's the rich man, our neighbour. He comes to our house when I am working in the fields. He gives you bad ideas. 'Ask your husband for new clothes,' he says. 'Ask him for gold jewellery. Ask him for a miracle.' Am I right? Did our rich neighbour give you all these ideas?"

His wife said nothing.

"And did you listen to him?" her husband went on.

His wife did not look at him. She was ashamed.

"I'm sorry," she said. "It's true, he said all those things. He wanted me to divorce you and marry him. And I listened to him."

"And do you want to divorce me and marry him?" her husband asked.

She looked at him. Her eyes were full of tears.

"No! Dear husband, I want to stay with you for ever, and I will never listen to him again."

"Then take this stick," her husband said, "And touch the rich man with it."

He gave his wife the first stick, but he hid the second one in the roof.

The next day, he went to work. Soon, the rich man arrived at the woman's house.

"Well?" he asked her. "And can your husband make miracles yet?"

"Yes," she said, and she touched him with the first stick.

At once, the rich man changed into a donkey.

"Now," said the woman. "You can go to work and help my dear husband."

She took the donkey out to the fields. Her husband was working there. He was moving stones from his brother's field.

"Ah," he said. "A donkey! Now I can finish the job quickly."

From that day, the poor man gave the donkey many heavy loads to carry. The donkey carried stones away from the fields, it took sacks of tef to the market, and it brought flour and coffee home again.

For many years, the donkey worked for the poor man. The poor man was not so poor now. The donkey was helping him. He was becoming richer.

One day, the poor man looked at the donkey. It was tired and old. It stood still. Its head was bent down. The poor man was sorry for it. He went into his house and brought out the second stick. Then he touched the donkey with it.

At once, the rich man stood there. But he was not a handsome young man now. He was old. His back was bent. He was very, very tired.

"You tried to take my wife away from me," the poor man said. "That was wrong. Go home now. Don't look at other men's wives again."

The rich man went away, and he never came back again. But the poor man and his wife lived happily together for many more years.

**[Click here to listen to the story]**

## **Exercises**

### **A. How much did you understand?**

*These sentences tell Part One of the story again. Fill in the spaces from the list below.*

1. A poor man and his wife were very .....
2. Their rich neighbour fell in love with the woman and wanted to ..... her.
- 3 "If your husband loved you, he would buy wonderful ..... for you," he said.
4. The woman said to her husband, "If you love me, ..... me a new dress."
5. The husband needed a new..... but he bought a new dress for his wife.

*happy marry clothes plough buy*

*These sentences tell the story of Part Two again. Fill in the spaces from the list below.*

1. "..... your husband and marry me and I will give you gold jewellery," the neighbour said to the woman.
2. The woman asked her husband to buy ..... for her.
3. Her husband asked his ..... to lend him some money.
4. He bought a ..... and some rings and gave them to his wife.
5. Every day, the poor man worked in his brother's field to pay his .....

*divorce necklace debt brother jewellery*

*These sentences tell the story of Part Three again. Fill in the spaces from the list below.*

1. "If your husband loves you, he can make ..... for you," said the rich man.
2. When the woman said to her husband, "If a man loves a woman, he will make miracles for her," he became very .....
3. He began to ..... to God for help.
4. A wizard gave the poor man two .....
5. "If you touch a person with the first stick, he will become a .....", said the wizard.

*sticks miracles pray donkey worried*

*These sentences tell the story of Part Four again. Fill in the spaces from the list below.*

1. The poor man's wife was ..... because she had listened to the rich neighbour.
2. She touched him with the magic stick. He ..... into a donkey.
3. After many years, the poor man was ..... for the donkey.
4. He touched the donkey with a stick, and a tired, old ..... stood there.
5. "Go home," the poor man said. "Don't look at other men's ..... again."

*changed wives man sorry ashamed*

### **B. What were they feeling?**

*Finish these sentences with words from the box below.*

1. Before the rich neighbour came, the poor man and his wife were very .....
2. When the poor man said to his wife, "You don't need new clothes," she was .....
3. When the poor man came home from the fields, he was tired and .....
4. When the woman asked for jewellery, the poor man was .....
5. When the woman's husband said to her, "You know my enemy," she was .....
6. When the donkey changed back into a man, he was very, very .....

*ashamed angry sad happy tired hungry worried*

### **C. What do you think?**

Do you feel sorry for the poor man, who nearly lost his wife, or do you feel more sorry for the rich man, who became a donkey?

Do you think the poor man's wife was foolish, or wicked?

Do you think that the rich man deserved his punishment?

### **D. Titles**

Do you like the title of this story, or can you think of a better one?

Can you think of a title for each part of the story?

**[Click here for the answers to the exercises]**



## Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

### A. How much did you understand?

#### Part One

1. A poor man and his wife were very **happy**.
2. Their rich neighbour fell in love with the woman and wanted to **marry** her.
- 3 "If your husband loved you, he would buy wonderful **clothes** for you," he said.
4. The woman said to her husband, "If you love me, **buy** me a new dress."
5. The husband needed a new **plough** but he bought a new dress for his wife.

#### Part Two

1. "**Divorce** your husband and marry me and I will give you gold jewellery," the neighbour said to the woman.
2. The woman asked her husband to buy **jewellery** for her.
3. Her husband asked his **brother** to lend him some money.
4. He bought a **necklace** and some rings and gave them to his wife.
5. Every day, the poor man worked in his brother's field to pay his **debt**.

#### Part Three

1. "If your husband loves you, he can make **miracles** for you," said the rich man.
2. When the woman said to her husband, "If a man loves a woman, he will make miracles for her," he became very **worried**.
3. He began to **pray** to God for help.
4. A wizard gave the poor man two **sticks**.
5. "If you touch a person with the first stick, he will become a **donkey**," said the wizard.

#### Part Four

1. The poor man's wife was **ashamed** because she had listened to the rich neighbour.
2. She touched him with the magic stick. He **changed** into a donkey.
3. After many years, the poor man was **sorry** for the donkey.
4. He touched the donkey with a stick, and a tired, old **man** stood there.
5. "Go home," the poor man said. "Don't look at other men's **wives** again."

### B. What were they feeling?

1. Before the rich neighbour came, the poor man and his wife were very **happy**.
2. When the poor man said to his wife, "You don't need new clothes," she was **angry**.
3. When the poor man came home from the fields, he was tired and **hungry**.
4. When the woman asked for jewellery, the poor man was **worried**.
5. When the woman's husband said to her, "You know my enemy," she was **ashamed**.
6. When the donkey changed back into a man, he was very **tired**.

## The Man with the Evil Eye

### **Before you read the story**

Some stories are harmful. They are not true, but they can hurt people. Discuss these questions with your friends.

- Do you know any stories than can hurt people?
- Do you know any stories that make people hate each other?
- Do you know any stories that make people fight each other?

This is a long story, in seven different parts. There are short questions at the end of each part. Try to answer the questions first, before you go on to read the next part.

### **Now read Part One**

#### **Part One**

It was a dark, cold night. Hannah, a little girl, sat in her house beside her mother. The evening meal was finished. The family sat together, and looked into the fire.

Someone knocked at the door.

"Oh! Don't open it!" cried Hannah. "I'm frightened."

But her father was already opening the door.

The family's neighbour stood there.

"Please," she said, "Can you lend me some coffee? Mine is finished. I'm going to the market on Saturday. I'll buy some coffee then, and give you some."

"Yes, of course," Hannah's mother said, and she took some of her coffee and gave it to the neighbour.

The neighbour went away. Hannah's father shut the door and looked at his daughter.

"What's wrong with you?" he said. "Why are you frightened?"

"I'm frightened of our neighbour," the little girl said. "She's old, and ugly, and she lives alone."

Her father was surprised.

"But our neighbour is a good woman," he said. "Her life is very sad. Her husband died many years ago. Her little daughter died and her other children went away. Don't be frightened of her. She will not hurt you."

The little girl didn't answer her father. She sat still and looked into the fire.

At last, she said, "I heard a story today. Our aunt told it to me."

"What story?" said her father.

"It's about a man with the evil eye," Hannah said.

"Tell it to us now," said her mother.

So Hannah sat close beside her mother, and began to tell her story.

## **Exercises**

### **How much did you understand?**

*Answer these questions*

1. Was it day time or night time when the neighbour knocked on the door?
2. Why did the old woman live alone?

*Now give your own opinion.*

Why do you think that that Hannah wanted to tell her parents the story of the man with the evil eye?

**[Click here to check the answers before you read Part Two.]**

**[Click here to read Part Two]**

### **Answers to the Exercise**

1. It was night time when the old woman knocked on the door.
2. The old woman lived alone because her husband was dead, her daughter was dead, and her other children had gone away.

*We think that this is a good answer to the question:.*

Perhaps Hannah wanted to tell the story of the man with the evil eye, because she thought that the old neighbour had the evil eye.

## Part Two

"Once upon a time," she said, "There were two little girls."

"Like you," smiled her father.

"Yes," said Hannah. "They were neighbours, and they lived near each other. They were very good friends.

The younger child lived with her mother and father. The older girl's mother was dead. She lived alone with her father.

The younger girl's mother was a very beautiful woman, with a lovely face and a sweet voice. Only one thing spoiled her beauty. A little chip was broken from her front tooth.

But one day, the little girl's mother became sick. She grew thinner and thinner, and weaker and weaker. And at last, she died.

The little girl was very sad when her dear mother died. She cried and cried. Her friend heard the noise, and came to see her.

"Why are you crying?" she asked. "What's happened?"

"My mother is dead!" the little girl said. "I'm so unhappy! Oh, Mother, Mother! I can't live without you!"

The big girl sat down beside her, and put her arms around her friend and they cried for a long time together.

Nearly a year went past, but the little girl never forgot her mother. She thought about her every day.

One day, the two girls' fathers decided to go to the market together. The market was a long way away, and they left early in the morning. Now the little girl was alone.

"I'll go and see my friend," she thought.

She ran to her friend's house and called out, "Are you there, dear friend? It's me!"

There was no answer.

She called out again.

"Open the door! Don't be afraid. It's me, your friend!"

The door began to open slowly. The older girl was there. She stood still and looked down at the ground. She didn't smile at her little friend.

"What's the matter?" the little girl asked her. "Are you sick?"

The big girl shook her head.

"Are you unhappy?"

The big girl nodded.

"I'm your friend," the little girl said. "Tell me about it. Perhaps I can help you."

The big girl came out of the house and shut the door behind her. The two children sat

down together outside.

## **Exercises**

### **How much did you understand?**

*Answer these questions*

1. What happened to the little girl's mother?
2. Why did the little girl decide to go and see her friend?
3. Did the older girl welcome the little girl into her house?

**Click here to check the answers before you read Part Three.**

**[Click here to read Part Three]**

1. The little girl's mother died.
2. The little girl decided to go and see her friend because her father had gone to the market and she was alone.
3. The older girl didn't welcome the little girl into her house. She didn't smile. She came out of her house and shut the door.

### Part Three

The big girl didn't want to speak, but her little friend said, again and again, "Tell me, why you are sad? Perhaps I can help you. Tell me!"

At last, the big girl said, "I don't want to tell you, because you will be very angry with me, but I must. Last night I saw someone."

"You saw someone? Who?" said the little girl.

"I saw your mother," the big girl said.

The little girl shook her head.

"No! It's impossible. You know that my mother is dead."

"Yes, she is dead, but I saw her, in our house."

The little girl's heart filled with happiness. She jumped up.

"Is she there now?" she cried. "Can I see her? Oh Mother, Mother, where are you?"

And she began to run towards the house.

The big girl ran after her.

"Wait," she said. "Stop!"

The little girl pushed past her angrily.

"I don't want to wait!" she said. "I want to see my mother!"

She opened the door and ran inside. But the house was empty. No one was there.

The little girl ran outside.

"My mother isn't there!" she said. "You were tricking me. You're cruel. You want me to be unhappy!"

"No! I want to make you happy! " the big girl said. "I'll show you your mother. Wait."

She put up her hand and pulled a stick down from the roof, then she went into the second room of the house. The little girl followed her.

There were many pots in the second room. Some were big. Some were small. In the corner, one pot stood alone. It was a beautiful pot, but a little chip was broken from the top.

The big girl picked up the pot and carried it into the other room. Then she touched it with her stick.

At once, the pot changed into a human body. It was the body of the little girl's mother.

"Mother! Oh, Mother!" cried the little girl.

She kissed her mother's body again and again.

"Wake up, Mother! Look at me! Say something to me! Oh Mother, are you alive, or are you dead? Come back to me! Please!"

But her mother did not speak. She did not move.

Suddenly, the big girl heard a noise outside the house.

"Quick!" she said. "My father is coming! You must go."

"Go? What do you mean?" the little girl said. "I can't leave my mother now."

But the big girl picked up the stick. She touched the woman's body again. At once the body changed into the pot. The big girl picked up the pot and carried it back into the second room. Then she put the stick back into the roof.

"Go home now," she said to the little girl. "Remember, this is our secret. Don't tell anyone. If my father knows, he will be very, very angry."

## **Exercise**

### **How much did you understand?**

*Answer these questions*

1. At first when the little girl ran into the house, what did she see?
2. How did the older girl change the pot into the little girl's mother?
3. Why did she change the little girl's mother back into a pot?

**Click here to check your answers before you read Part Four.**

**[Click here to read Part Four]**

1. The little girl saw nothing. The house was empty.
2. The older girl touched the pot with a stick.
3. The older girl changed the little girl's mother back into a pot because her father was coming home.

## Part Four

The little girl ran home. At first she was happy.

"My mother is there, in the house next to ours!" she thought. "I saw her again. She is still my dear, dear mother."

But soon she was sad.

"Why didn't she talk to me?" she thought. "Why didn't she sit up and kiss me? Is she really dead, or is she half alive?"

Then she felt angry.

"Why is my mother in my friend's house? Is her father keeping her there? Why didn't he tell my father? What is he doing to her?"

She heard a donkey outside the house.

"My father is home," she thought. "What shall I tell him? I can't keep this secret! It's too important. No, I'll tell him everything."

She ran outside. Her father was there.

"Father, listen! Today I saw my mother!" she said.

Her father was angry.

"Don't say stupid things," he said. "Your poor mother is dead."

"But I saw her, Father," the little girl said. "She is in our neighbour's house. Please, you must believe me."

And she told her father the story.

At first, her father didn't believe her, but the little girl talked and talked.

At last he said, "My child, if this is true, we must rescue your mother. What did the pot look like? Tell me again."

So the little girl told her father everything again.

"There are many pots in my friend's house," she said. "Some are big and others are small. But my mother's pot is very beautiful. Only the top is a little broken. There is a chip in the top of it."

"Your mother was very beautiful," said the man, "only there was a chip in her tooth."

He believed his daughter now.

"All right," he said, "I must think. I must make a plan."

### **Exercise**

#### **How much did you understand?**

*Answer these questions*

1. At first, the little girl was happy when she went home. Why did she become sad?
2. Did the little girl's father believe her the first time she told him about her mother?
3. Why did the little girl's father believe her story in the end?

**[Click here to check your answers before you read Part Five.]**

**[Click here to read Part Five]**

### **Answers to the Exercise**

1. The little girl became sad because her mother hadn't talked to her, or sat up and kissed her.
2. No, her father didn't believe her at first.
3. He believed her in the end because she said that the pot had a chip on top. His dead wife had chip in her tooth.

**Now read Part Five of the story**

## Part Five

The little girl's father thought for a long time. At last he said, "Your mother died one year ago. We will invite all our friends and relatives to a ceremony to remember her. You, my child, must prepare the food for the feast. Your aunts will help you. I will make the tala."

The next day, the little girl's father went to see his neighbour.

"My wife died a year ago," he said, "and I'm going to make a ceremony to remember her death. There will be a big feast. I need some help from you."

"Some help?" said his neighbour. "What do you want?"

"I want to make a lot of tala," the little girl's father said, "but I don't have enough pots. Lend me your pots, neighbour. I'll give them back to you after the feast."

"Ah," his neighbour said. He looked a little worried.

"You want to borrow my pots? I don't know. My pots are good ones. Perhaps you will break them."

"No, no," said the little girl's father. "I will be very careful. Please, neighbour. I need your help."

At last, the neighbour agreed.

"Take my pots then," he said angrily. "But if you break them, you must pay me a lot of money!"

The little girl's father took all the neighbour's pots home. He carried the beautiful pot with the chip in the top very carefully. He put it down on the floor near his bed. Then he picked up a stick and touched it. Nothing happened.

The little girl was watching.

"It's the wrong stick, father," she said. "You need our neighbour's stick. He keeps it in the roof of his house."

"Then we must wait," her father said.

The day of the ceremony came. The little girl and her aunts worked hard. They made piles of injera and many dishes of delicious food. Friends and relatives came from far away to remember the dead woman.

"She was so beautiful," one of them said.

"And she was so good and kind," said another.

"She was my best friend," a third person said.

The man brought the neighbour's pots out of the house. They were full of tala. He kept only one inside. It was the pot with the chip in the top.

The little girl's father pulled her away from the other people.

"Look, our neighbour is here now, with his daughter," he said. "His house is empty. Let's go and find his stick. You must come and show me where it is."

They hurried to the neighbour's house.

"It's there, up there, Father," the little girl said, and she showed her father the stick in the roof.

Her father took it down, and together they ran back into their own house. The guests were outside. They were happy. They were talking and laughing. No one saw the man and his daughter.

"Now, Father," said the little girl. "Touch the pot with the stick and you will see my mother."

The man touched the pot with the stick. At once, the little girl's mother was there. She lay on the ground. Her eyes were shut. She didn't speak or move.

"Wife! Dear wife!" the man cried. "Is it really you?"

Outside the house, someone was calling.

"Where is our host? And his little girl? Why aren't they here with us?"

"Come, Father, we must go to our guests again," said the little girl.

She picked up the stick and touched her mother's body and at once it became a pot again.

The man looked at his daughter. He was very angry.

"My neighbour killed my wife!" he said. "He keeps her in his house, and she is his servant! He has the evil eye!"

"What are you going to do, Father?" asked the little girl. She was frightened.

"You will see," her father answered. "Go outside and serve food to our guests."

## **Exercise**

### **How much did you understand?**

*Answer these questions*

1. The little girl's father invited all his friends and relatives to a ceremony. What reason did he give them?
2. The first time the little girl's father touched the pot with a stick, nothing happened. Why?
3. What do you think will happen next?

**[Check your answers to the questions before you read Part Six.]**

**[Click here to read Part Six]**

1. It was a year since his wife had died. He wanted to have a ceremony to remember her.
2. He was using the wrong stick.
3. There are many possible answers to this question. What do *you* think?

**Now read Part Six of the story**



So the little girl went outside. She served more food and tala to the guests. But her father went quietly to all the men off his family.

"Bring your weapons," he told them. "There is an enemy at my feast. He is a man with the evil eye."

His relatives went home quietly one by one. They came back with their weapons.

"Now, child," the little girl's father told her. "Go into the house and bring out the pot and the stick."

So the little girl brought out the pot and the stick. She carried them very carefully and put them down beside her father. He picked the stick up and touched the pot. At once the body of his wife was lying on the ground.

Everyone was very surprised.

"It's your wife! Our sister!" they all said. "But she died a year ago. How can she be here?"

The neighbour was frightened now. He was moving quietly away.

"Quick!" the little girl's father said. "Catch him! Don't let him go! He is the man with the evil eye!"

His relatives brought the neighbour back. They stood all round him and showed him their weapons. The neighbour was frightened.

"This is my wife's body," the little girl's father said, "but she is dead. You were keeping her body. You were using her. She was your servant. But where is her soul?"

"I - I don't know," the neighbour said. "I didn't - I don't -"

"Give my wife her soul!" the little girl's father shouted, "Or we will kill you!"

"Yes, give her back her soul!" shouted all the man's relatives.

The man with the evil eye looked round. Everyone was shouting at him. Everyone was shaking their weapons. Even his daughter was angry with him now. She was shouting with the others.

"Don't kill me," he said. "I'll give her soul back to her. I'll bring her to life, but you must promise to let me go."

Everyone looked at the little girl's father.

"I promise," he said. "If you bring my wife's soul back again, you can go. But you can never live in this place again."

The man with the evil eye bent over the dead woman's body. At once she opened her eyes. Then she sat up.

"What - where am I?" she said.

"Mother!" shouted the little girl, and she ran into the woman's arms.

"My own dear wife!" her husband said.

No one was looking at the neighbour and his daughter. Very quietly, they were walking away. And after that day, no one ever saw them again.

But the little girl and her father and mother lived happily together for many more years.

### **Exercise**

#### **How much did you understand?**

*Answer these questions*

1. Why did the little girl's father tell the men to bring their weapons?
2. Why did the neighbour agree to give the dead woman back her soul?
3. What happened to the neighbour and his daughter?

**[Check the answers to the questions before you read Part Seven]**

**[Click here to read Part Seven]**

1. The little girl's father told the men to bring their weapons because there was an enemy at the feast, a man with the evil eye.
2. The neighbour agreed to give the dead woman back her soul because he was afraid that the men would kill him.
3. The neighbour and his daughter walked quietly away. No one ever saw them again.

**Now read Part Seven of the story**

"And that," said Hannah, "is the end of the story."  
Hannah's father looked at her.  
"Did the story frighten you?" he asked her.  
"Oh yes, Father," Hannah said. "It's a true story. My aunt told me it was true."  
Suddenly, someone knocked at the door again.  
Hannah screamed.  
"It's our neighbour!" she cried. "Don't let her come in! She has the evil eye!"  
"Stop it, Hannah," her father said. "Be quiet. Go and open the door."  
"Oh Father, please, no," began Hannah.  
Her father was angry.  
"Open the door, Hannah! Now!" he said.  
Slowly, Hannah went to the door and opened it. The old neighbour stood there.  
Hannah was very frightened. The old woman's face was ugly.  
"I brought your coffee back," she said. "I didn't need it."  
"She is looking at me," Hannah thought. "She is putting her evil eye on me!"  
Then the old woman smiled.  
"Ah, Hannah," she said. "You are a good girl. My little daughter was like you."  
Tears filled the old woman's eyes, and fell down her cheeks.  
Hannah's father was standing beside Hannah now.  
"What happened to your daughter?" he asked the neighbour.  
"God took her," the old woman said. "She died many years ago. She is with Him now, in Heaven. She was like your little girl, good and happy and sweet. God bless you, little Hannah."  
Then she turned and went away.  
Hannah and her father went back to sit by the fire.  
"Well, Hannah," her father said. "Are you frightened of our neighbour now?"  
"No," Hannah said. "She is sad and old and lonely. I was sorry for her. But I thought, at first..."  
"You thought she had the evil eye," her father said. "You know, Hannah, that story is a bad one. Many good people have suffered because of it.  
When I was a child, an old man lived near our house. He wasn't friendly to other people. He shouted at them sometimes. I think he had sickness in his mind.  
'He has the evil eye!' everyone said.  
No one talked to that poor man. Children threw stones at him. At last he died, alone and unhappy."

"But did he have the evil eye, Father?" Hannah asked.

"No! He was just a sad, sick old man," her father said. "Forget this story, Hannah. It is a cruel one. And it is not true."

**[Click here to listen to the whole story]**

### **Exercise**

#### **How much did you understand?**

*Answer these questions*

1. Why did Hannah scream when someone knocked at the door?
2. Why did tears fill the old woman's eyes when she looked at Hannah?
3. Why did Hannah's father tell her to forget the story of the man with the evil eye?

**[Click here to check the answers ]**

### **Exercises for the whole story**

#### **A. How much did you understand?**

*These sentences are headings for each of the seven sections of the story. Put them in the right order.*

1. The little girl's friend shows her the body of her mother.
2. The little girl's father invites his friends and family to a ceremony, and borrows his neighbour's pots.
3. Everyone learns about the man with the evil eye, and he brings the dead woman back to life.
4. Hannah's old neighbour comes to ask for some coffee.
5. The little girl in the story visits her friend, because her father has gone to the market.
6. The little girl tells her father that the pot with the chip is really her dead mother.
7. Hannah's father tells her that the story isn't true.

#### **B. When, where, who, what**

1. Who told Hannah the story of the man with the evil eye?
2. Where was Hannah when she told the story to her parents?
3. In the story, something had spoiled the beauty of the little girl's mother. What was it?
4. Where did the fathers of the little girl and the older girl go one day?
5. Where was the stick that the big girl used to touch the pot with the chip?
6. When did the little girl's father make a ceremony for his wife?
7. What did the little girl and her aunts make for the ceremony?
8. What did the little girl's father make inside the neighbour's pots?
9. The little girl's father told some people to bring their weapons to the ceremony. Who were they?
10. When did the daughter of Hannah's old neighbour die?

#### **C. Questions with WHY and answers with BECAUSE**

*Match these questions starting with WHY to the answers below, that start with BECAUSE.*

1. Hannah's old neighbour was sad .....
2. The big girl didn't welcome the little girl into her house .....

3. The big girl told the little girl to go home .....
4. The little girl's father believed his daughter's story about her dead mother at last.....
5. The neighbour didn't want to lend his pots to the little girl's father .....
6. The little girl went with her father to fetch the stick from the neighbour's house .....
7. The neighbour tried to move away when everyone saw the body of the dead woman.....
8. Hannah stopped being frightened of the old woman.....

- a) ..... because he didn't want anyone to find out the truth about the pot with the chip in the top.
- b) ..... because she understood that she was sad and old and lonely.
- c) ..... because he was frightened.
- d) ..... because she had seen the little girl's dead mother in her house.
- e) ..... because she told him about the chip at the top of the pot.
- f) ..... because she had to show her father where it was.
- g) ..... because her husband and her little daughter had died and her other children had gone away.
- h) ..... because her father was coming.

#### **D. What do you think?**

Many people believe that stories about the evil eye are true. Do you?  
Why does belief in these stories make innocent people suffer?  
How can you decide what is true and what is not true?



**[Click here for the answers to the exercises]**

### **Possible answers to the questions on Part Seven**

1. Hannah screamed because she was afraid that the old neighbour had the evil eye.
2. Tears filled the old woman's eyes because Hannah made her think of her little daughter, who had died.
3. Hannah's father told her to forget the story of the man with the evil eye, because it was a cruel story, and it was not true.



## Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

### A. How much did you understand?

*The right order of the headings is 4, 5, 1, 6, 2, 3, 7*

Hannah's old neighbour comes to ask for some coffee.

The little girl in the story visits her friend, because her father has gone to the market.

The little girl's friend shows her the body of her mother.

The little girl tells her father that the pot with the chip is really her dead mother.

The little girl's father invites his friends and family to a ceremony, and borrows his neighbour's pots.

Everyone learns about the man with the evil eye, and he brings the dead woman back to life.

Hannah's father tells her that the story isn't true.

### B When, where, who, what

1. Her aunt
2. Hannah was in her house beside her mother. The family sat together, and looked into the fire.
3. A little chip was broken from her front tooth.
4. They went to the market.
5. In the roof
6. One year after her death
7. Piles of injera and many dishes of delicious food
8. Tala
9. The men of his family
10. Many years ago

### C. Questions with WHY and answers with BECAUSE

1/g. Hannah's old neighbour was sad because her husband and her little daughter had died and her other children had gone away.

2/d. The big girl didn't welcome the little girl into her house **because she had seen the little girl's dead mother in her house.**

3/h. The big girl told the little girl to go home **because her father was coming.**

4/e. The little girl's father believed his daughter's story about her dead mother at last **because she told him about the chip at the top of the pot.**

5/a. The neighbour didn't want to lend his pots to the little girl's father **because he didn't want anyone to find out the truth about the pot with the chip in the top.**

6/f. The little girl went with her father to fetch the stick from the neighbour's house **because she had to show her father where it was.**

7/c. The neighbour tried to move away when everyone saw the body of the dead woman **because he was frightened.**

8/b. Hannah stopped being frightened of the old woman **because she understood that she was sad and old and lonely.**