

## 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 the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region**



**[Small map with region highlighted]**

The southern region of Ethiopia has different landscapes. Parts of it are hilly, and parts are flat. The river Omo runs through it from north to south. There are many zones and districts in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) and the people who live in

them are of different cultures and speak many different languages.

**To read the stories, click on the titles below.**

**Wolayita stories**

**Originally told by**

1. The King's Birthmark
2. The Sheep and the Goat

*Yisahak Aldade*  
*Yisahak Aldade*

**Sidama stories**

3. The Father's Shield
4. The Merchant and the King

*Abebe Kebede*  
*Yisahak Aldade*

**Gurage stories**

5. The Lazy Family
6. The Girl from the Sea

*Shirguma Soraga*  
*Capt. Dejene Washaka*

**Kafa stories**

7. Three Boxes for Three Sons
8. The Longest Pole in the World

*Imahoy Zewditu Wudineh*  
*Worku Alemu*

**Bena stories**

9. Nine and One Make Ten
10. The Monkey's Heart

*Iyasu Origo*  
*Iyasu Origo*

**Ari stories**

11. The Leopard's Child
12. The Hyena Woman

*Metekia Libri*  
*Metekia Libri*

**Male stories**

13. The Monkey's Tower
14. The Bear and the Woman

*Zarke Goite*  
*Abdisa Labe*

**A Tsemay story**

15. The Demon's Daughter

*Aykabadane Basha*

*With grateful thanks to the officers of the Regional and Cultural bureaus in the SNPPR.*

*In Gurage, Nigatu Wolde (translator Mesfin Habtemariam)*

*In Kafa, Yacob Woldemariam Dimeno and Tiringo Sigatu (translator Mesfin Habtemariam)*

*In Omo, Mamo Malla and Mitachew Belay (translators Itegasu Mitaku, Wuhemayo Desmi and Mesfin Habtemariam)*

*In Wolayita, Ato Aklilu (translated by Michael Ambatchew)*

*In Sidama, Ato Aklilu (translated by Michael Ambatchew)*

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## The King's Birthmark

### A Wolayita Story



#### Before you read the story

- What makes a good king or leader?
- Must a good king or leader be good-looking, like a film star?
- Can people respect a king or a leader who is not good-looking?

*Tej is an alcoholic drink made from honey*

#### Now read the story

##### Part One

In the old days a king ruled Wolayita. He was wise, and kind to his people, and they loved him.

The king always wore a turban on his head. He never took it off. The turban covered the king's secret. This secret was a birthmark, an ugly mark on his head.

Nobody knew about the birthmark, and the king was ashamed of it.

"Why does our king always wear a turban?" people asked each other, but nobody knew the answer.

One day, the king went to take a bath. He took off his clothes, and took the turban off his head. But he forgot to cover the window of his bathroom.

A man was walking along the road outside. He looked in through the bathroom window and saw the king. And he saw the birthmark on his head.

The man was very surprised.

"I know the king's secret!" he thought. "He has a birthmark on his head!"

He hurried on into the town.

"Listen," he said to his brother. "I know something."

"What do you know?" asked his brother.

"The king has a secret," said the man. "He has a ..."

"Stop! Don't tell me!" cried his brother. "The king's secrets are dangerous. If you tell the king's secrets, his soldiers will take you to the edge of the gorge. They will cut off your head and throw your body down into the gorge."

"Really?" said the man. He looked worried. "But I must tell someone the secret!"

"Yes, but don't tell me," said his brother.

The man tried to tell other people the king's secret, but no one listened. They were all afraid.

The secret grew and grew inside the man.

"I must tell someone," he thought, "or I will go mad!"

At last he had an idea. He ran to the river and dug a hole in the bank.

Then he put his head down into the hole, and said, very quietly, "The king has a birthmark on his head. The king has a birthmark on his head!"

After that, he filled the hole again, and went home. He felt better. The secret was not inside him now.

## Part Two

The man never went back to the river. Reeds soon grew up and covered the hole. They grew big and strong.

One day, many years later, the king decided to give a big feast.

"I want music at the feast," he told his servants. "Call the musicians. I want them to play for me. My guests will come from far away. The musicians must play their best music."

The musicians were worried when they heard this.

"We need new flutes," they said. "Our old flutes don't make good music now. Let's go down to the river, and cut some reeds. We'll make new flutes from them."

They went down to the river and cut some reeds. They made beautiful new flutes from them.

The night of the feast came at last. The cooks made delicious food, and plenty of beer and tej. Everyone ate and drank well.

"Where are the musicians?" the king called out. "Let them play now!"

Two musicians, a singer and a flute player, came into the room.

"I have a new song for you, Your Majesty," the singer told the king. "Here are the words:

Our king is lion.  
He is brave and strong.  
He looks after his people  
All day long."

"Good. Very good," said the king. "Begin your song."

The singer began to sing, and the flute player lifted the flute to his mouth. He began to blow. But the flute began to sing too. Its sound was loud, much louder than the singer's voice.

"The king has a birthmark on his head," it sang. "The king has a birthmark on his head!"

The king looked up. He was angry.

"Take this man away," he cried. "Take him to the gorge and cut off his head!"

His servants ran forward and caught the poor flute player. They took him to the gorge, and cut off his head.

The king sat down again.

"Where is the second flute player?" he asked. "Let him play."

The second flute player came and stood in front of the king.

"Start the song again," said the king to the singer.

"Our king is a lion,

He is brave and..." began the singer.

But the second flute player's flute began to sing too, and it sang louder than the singer.

"The king has a birthmark on his head," it sang. "The king has a birthmark on his head!"

The king was very, very angry. He jumped to his feet.

"This man is my enemy too," he shouted. "Take him to the gorge and cut off his head. Are all my people against me? Where are the elders of Wolayita? Send them to me!"

### **Part Three**

The elders came to the king. They asked many questions, and spoke to many people.

"The flute players were good men," everyone said. "They loved the king. They never said anything bad about him."

At last, one wise elder said, "Where are the flute players' flutes? Bring them to me."

The servants found the flutes and brought them to the elder. The old man lifted one of them to his mouth and began to blow. At once, the flute sang, "The king has a birthmark on his head. The king has a birthmark on his head!"

"Where did this flute come from?" the elder asked the other musicians.

"The flute players cut reeds from the river," they told him. "They made their flutes from them."

The elder went to the river. He talked to many people there. At last, he came back to the king.

"Your Majesty," he said. "Long ago, a man was walking past your palace. You were taking a bath. He looked through the window, and saw the birthmark on your head. He wanted to tell your secret to everyone, but he was frightened. So he dug a hole near the river, and spoke into the hole. Reeds grew in that place. The musicians made their flutes from them. The musicians didn't tell your secret. It was the flutes."

The king was sorry when he heard this.

"My flute players did nothing wrong," he said, "but I killed them. It's true. I have a birthmark on my head, and I am ashamed of it."

He took off his turban, and showed his birthmark to the people. Nobody said anything. Nobody went away.

"It's not important," they said. "Our king is a good man. His birthmark doesn't matter."

"You cannot hide the truth," the elders told the king. "It will always come out in the end."

The king learned his lesson. He ruled wisely and well for many more years, and he never wore his turban again.

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

### **Exercises**

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

### Part One

*This story is in three parts. In the first part, a man finds out the secret of the king's birthmark, and he tells it into a hole near the river. In the second part, the musicians' flutes sing about the king's secret at the feast. In the third part, the elders of the king discover the truth.*

*Put these sentences from Part One of the story in the right order.*

1. After that, he filled the hole again, and went home.
2. In the old days a king ruled Wolayita.
3. "Listen," he said to his brother. "I know something."
4. One day, the king went to take a bath.
5. He looked in through the bathroom window and saw the king.

### Part Two

*Put these sentences from Part Two of the story in the right order.*

1. One day, many years later, the king decided to give a big feast.
2. But the flute began to sing too.
3. Reeds soon grew up and covered the hole.
4. "Let's go down to the river and cut some reeds."
5. "Take this man away!" he cried. "Take him to the gorge and cut off his head!"

### Part Three

*Put these sentences from Part Three of the story in the right order.*

1. "The musicians didn't tell your secret. It was the flutes."
2. The servants found the flutes and brought them to the elders.
3. The elders came to the king. They asked many questions, and spoke to many people.
4. The elder went to the river. He talked to many people there.
5. The king learned his lesson.

### B. Make complete sentences

*Match the beginnings of these sentences with endings from the list below.*

1. Nobody knew about the birthmark .....
2. He looked in through the bathroom window .....
3. The man tried to tell other people the king's secret .....
4. He ran to the river .....
5. They went down to the river .....
6. His servants ran forward .....
7. But the second flute player's flute began to sing too .....
8. He took off his turban .....

- a) ..... and cut some reeds.
- b) ..... and saw the king.
- c) ..... and showed his birthmark to the people.
- d) ..... and it sang louder than the singer.
- e) ..... and the king was ashamed of it.
- f) ..... and dug a hole in the bank.
- g) ..... but no one listened.

h) ..... and caught the poor flute player.

### **C. Words and their meanings**

*Match these words to their definitions.*

1. birthmark
2. turban
3. feast
4. reed
5. flute
6. gorge

- a) a musical instrument
- b) a big meal with many guests and special food
- c) a kind of hat made by a cloth wrapped round the head
- d) a mark that a baby is born with
- e) a deep valley with steep sides
- f) a plant that grows by the water with thick, hollow stems

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

Was the king foolish to hide his birthmark?

Which is more important, good looks or a good character?

### **E. Make a play**

This story can make a good play. If you act the part of the musicians, you could play a musical instrument, and sing the songs.

**[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

*The right order for these sentences is 2, 4, 5, 3, 1*

In the old days a king ruled Wolayita.

One day, the king went to take a bath.

He looked through the bathroom window and saw the king.

"Listen," he said to his brother. "I know something."

After that, he filled the hole again, and went home.

#### Part Two

*The right order for these sentences is 3, 1, 4, 2, 5*

Reeds soon grew up and covered the hole.

One day, many years later, the king decided to give a big feast.

"Let's go down to the river and cut some reeds."

But the flute began to sing too.

"Take this man away!" he cried. "Take him to the gorge and cut off his head!"

#### Part Three

*The right order for these sentences is 3, 2, 4, 1, 5*

The elders came to the king. They asked many questions, and spoke to many people.

The servants found the flutes and brought them to the elders.

The elder went to the river. He talked to many people there.

"The musicians didn't tell your secret. It was the flutes."

The king learned his lesson.

### B. Make complete sentences

1/e Nobody knew about the birthmark **and the king was ashamed of it.**

2/b He looked in through the bathroom window **and saw the king.**

3/g The man tried to tell other people the king's secret **but no one listened.**

4/f He ran to the river **and dug a hole in the bank.**

5/a So the musicians went down to the river **and cut some reeds.**

6/h His servants ran forward **and caught the poor flute player.**

7/d But the second flute player's flute began to sing too **and it sang louder than the singer.**

8/c He took off his turban **and showed his birthmark to the people.**

### C. Words and their meanings

1. birthmark - a mark that a baby is born with
2. turban – a kind of hat made by a cloth wrapped round the head
3. feast – a big meal with many guests and special food
4. reed – a plant that grows by the water with thick, hollow stems

5. flute – a musical instrument

6. gorge – a deep valley with steep sides

## The Leopard's Child An Ari Story



### Before you read the story

- Do you think that wild animals and human beings can love and trust each other?
- Do you think that animals are more faithful than human beings?

### Now read the story

#### Part One

A hungry leopard needed meat for her cubs. She tried to catch a bushbuck, but it ran away. She tried to kill a cow, but the men threw their spears at her.

At last, she came to a house. A woman came out of the house with her water pot.

"Stay at home, my child," she said to her baby son. "I will come back soon."

And she went down the hill to the river.

"A fat little child," thought the leopard. "My cubs will like to eat him."

She pushed open the door and went into the house. The little boy was not afraid. He looked at the leopard and smiled. She picked him up in her mouth and carried him back to the forest.

"Children!" she called out. "Come! There is something good to eat!"

Her children heard their mother and ran towards her. The little boy liked the leopard cubs. He laughed at them. He wanted to play with them.

The leopard looked at the little boy.

"His eyes are beautiful," she thought. "They are like my cubs' eyes. He is young, like my cubs. I can't kill this child. I can't eat him."

So the leopard kept the child, and he became one of her cubs. She gave him meat, and she loved him. She became his foster mother, and he became her foster son.

The leopard's cubs grew fast. They learned to hunt. One day, they ran away from their mother, and began to live alone.

But the child grew slowly. He could not hunt. He could not leave his foster mother.

And every day, he wanted more and more meat.

The leopard was tired now.

"I can't keep you, my dear child," she said to him at last. "I am growing old. I can't catch enough meat. I give you everything, and then there is nothing for me. I will take you home to your parents. They must look after you now."

So the leopard took the boy to his parents' house. She said goodbye, and left him at the door.

## **Part Two**

The boy's parents were at the market. They came home, and found their son.

"Who are you?" they said to the boy. "Who are your parents? Where are your father and mother?"

The boy could not speak. He did not know the language of people.

"Look, husband," his mother said. "This child's eyes are like your eyes. His nose and mouth are like yours. He is our son! We lost him many years ago, and now he has come back to us."

She was very happy. She brought some food and gave it to the boy. But he did not like her food. He did not want cereals, and cooked meat.

The leopard was unhappy. All day she thought about her foster son.

"Is he unhappy?" she asked herself. "Is he well? Those people don't give him meat. I'm sure he is hungry."

She killed a bushbuck and took it to the boy's house. She left it by the door, and ran away.

The boy found the bushbuck. He fell on his knees and ate it with his mouth. He did not use his hands.

"Look," said his parents. "He eats like an animal. Did an animal take him away from us?"

The leopard did not forget the boy. Every day, she killed an animal and brought it to his house. She lay in the forest and watched him. She still loved him.

Slowly, the boy learned to speak. He told his parents about the leopard. They asked him many questions.

"Was the leopard kind to you?" they said.

"Yes," said the boy. "She was kind."

"Did she feed you? Did she look after you? Did you play with her cubs?"

"Yes, yes," the boy said. "The leopard was good. She was my foster mother."

## **Part Three**

One night, the leopard killed a zebra for her boy. She brought it to his house, and put it outside the door. Then she heard voices. The boy and his parents were talking inside the house.

"Tell us more about the leopard," the boy's father said. "That wicked animal! Didn't you hate her?"

"No," the boy said. "She loved me, and I..."

"But now you love us," his father said. "You don't love her now."

"I...I don't know," the boy said.

His mother was angry.

"You only say good things about that leopard," she said. "Don't you remember

anything bad?"

The boy thought for a moment.

"Well," he said. "I didn't like her smell. Her mouth was dirty. It was very bad. Sometimes I turned my face away from her. Yes, I remember now. The leopard's smell was horrible."

The leopard was still listening outside the door. She was very sad when she heard this.

"I loved this boy," she thought. "Every day I hunted for him. I gave him all my food. But he doesn't love me at all!"

She ran away into the forest. The boy's words burned in her heart. She became more and more angry.

The next night, she waited by the path. The boy's father was coming home with the cattle. The leopard jumped on him, and killed him. She carried him to his house, and left him there.

"This man tried to turn my child's love away from me," she thought. "This is my revenge."

The next day, she came back again. The boy's mother was coming home from her husband's grave. The leopard jumped on her and killed her. She carried her to the house and left her there.

"This woman hated me," she thought, "but I fed her child. Now I have my revenge."

The boy found his mother. He began to cry.

"My mother and father are dead," he said. "What will happen to me now?"

The leopard came to him.

"I killed your parents," she said. "I heard their cruel words about me. And I heard your answer. 'The leopard's smell was bad,' you said. 'I turned my face away from her.' Oh, my child! You don't know. You don't understand. Your words hurt my heart. But you are my son. I could not hurt you. It was your parents' fault. They tried to take your love away from me, and so I had my revenge.

But I learned my lesson. I will never trust people again. They are ungrateful. Only animals are faithful to their friends."

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

## **Exercises**

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

#### **Part One**

*Are these sentences about the story true or false?*

1. A woman left her child in the house when she went to fetch water.
2. When the little boy saw the leopard, he was afraid.
3. The leopard liked the little boy because he had beautiful eyes, and he was like her cubs.
4. The child hunted for meat with his foster mother.
5. The child asked the leopard to take him back to his parents.

#### **Part Two**

*Are these sentences about the story true or false?*

1. The boy could not speak to his parents because he did not know the language of people.

2. The boy liked to eat his mother's food.
3. The boy's father killed a bushbuck and gave it to his son to eat.
4. The leopard lay in the forest and watched the boy because she still loved him.
5. The boy told his parents that the leopard had been kind to him.

### Part Three

*Are these sentences about the story true or false?*

1. The boy's mother said good things about the leopard.
2. The boy said that he didn't like the leopard's smell.
3. The leopard was angry when she heard the boy's words.
4. The leopard killed the boy's father's cow, and left it at the house.
5. The leopard killed the boy.

### B. WHY and BECAUSE

*Match the first halves of these sentences with the endings below to show the reasons for the characters' actions.*

1. The boy's mother left her son in the house alone because .....
  2. The leopard did not give the boy to her cubs to eat because .....
  3. The leopard could not keep the little boy because .....
  4. The leopard caught meat and left it at the boy's house .....
  5. The boy's mother was angry with her son because .....
  6. The leopard killed the boy's father because .....
  7. The leopard did not kill the boy because .....
- a) ..... he had tried to turn the boy's love away from her.
  - b) ..... he had beautiful eyes and he was young like her cubs.
  - c) ..... she thought that he was hungry.
  - d) ..... he only said good things about the leopard.
  - e) ..... she needed to fetch water from the river.
  - f) ..... she was tired and she was growing old.
  - g) ..... she loved him and could not hurt him.

### C. What do you think?

Was the boy wrong to say that the leopard smelled horrible?  
 Did the leopard have a good reason to kill the boy's parents?  
 What will happen to the boy, now that his parents are dead?

**[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 woman left her child in the house when she went to fetch water.

*True*

2. When the little boy saw the leopard, he was afraid.

*False. He was not afraid.*

3. The leopard liked the little boy because he had beautiful eyes, and he was like her cubs.

*True*

4. The child hunted for meat with his foster mother.

*False. He grew slowly and could not hunt.*

5. The child asked the leopard to take him back to his parents.

*False. The leopard took the child back to his parents because she was old and tired.*

#### Part Two

1. The boy could not speak to his parents because he did not know the language of people.

*True*

2. The boy liked to eat his mother's food.

*False. The boy did not want cereals, and cooked meat.*

3. The boy's father killed a bushbuck and gave it to his son to eat.

*False. The leopard killed a bushbuck and gave it to the boy.*

4. The leopard lay in the forest and watched the boy because she still loved him.

*True*

5. The boy told his parents that the leopard had been kind to him.

*True*

#### Part Three

1. The boy's mother said good things about the leopard.

*False. She was angry with her son because he said good things about the leopard.*

2. The boy said that he didn't like the leopard's smell.

*True*

3. The leopard was angry when she heard the boy's words.

*True*

4. The leopard killed the boy's father's cow, and left it at the house.

*False. The leopard killed the boy's father and carried him to the house.*

5. The leopard killed the boy.

*False. The leopard could not hurt the boy because she loved him.*

### B. WHY and BECAUSE

1/e The boy's mother left her son in the house alone because **she needed to fetch water from the river.**

2/b The leopard did not give the boy to her cubs to eat because **he had beautiful eyes and he was young like her cubs.**

3/f The leopard could not keep the little boy because **she was tired and she was growing old.**

4/c The leopard caught meat and left it at the boy's house **she thought that he was hungry.**

5/d The boy's mother was angry with her son because **he only said good things about the leopard.**

6/a The leopard killed the boy's father because **he had tried to turn the boy's love away from her.**

7/g The leopard did not kill the boy because **she loved him and could not hurt him.**

## The Lazy Family A Gurage Story



### Before you read the story

- Do you think you are a lazy person, or are you hard-working?
- Do you feel ashamed when you don't work hard?

*The word **inset** in this story means a kind of false banana plant that Gurage people eat.*

### Now read the story

Once upon a time, there **was** a foolish, lazy man. He was a farmer, but he never worked on his farm. He never cut down the weeds, or dug his field, or planted inset. All day, he sat beside the fire, or lay on his bed and slept. In the evening, he went off to drink with his friends.

The man's sons were lazy too. They watched their father, and they copied him.

"You must work," his wife said to them. "What are we going to eat?"

Her husband laughed.

"Work?" he said. "Why? I don't like pulling out weeds. I don't like digging or planting. I like going to see my friends."

"Then you must work," the woman said to her children. "Go to our field, and dig it."

"Why?" her children said. "Our father visits his friends. We want to visit our friends, too."

Her husband laughed at his wife.

"Don't worry," he said. "My friends and my brothers will give us food."

In the morning, he went to see his friends.

"Oh, I am so unlucky," he told them. "Yesterday, the birds came and ate all my sorghum. My children are hungry. Please give me some food for them."

His friends gave him a bag of sorghum.

When the sorghum was finished, he went to see his brothers.

"What can I do?" he said. "Wild animals came to my field and ate all my inset. Can you give me some food for my family?"

His brothers gave him some inset. He took it home to his wife, but she was angry.

"We can't live like this," she thought. "I must teach my husband and my children to work."

She took some of the inset, and wrapped it in leaves. Then she went to the field. She dug a hole, and put the inset into the ground.

At lunchtime, her husband and her sons came home.

"We are hungry," they said. "Where is our food?"

The woman smiled at them.

"I will show you," she said. "God has listened to my prayers. He has sent a miracle."

She went to the inset field. Her husband and sons followed her.

"Look at this," she said.

She dug the inset out of the hole, and showed it to them.

Her husband and sons were very surprised.

"This is wonderful," they said. "God put this inset here. He will give us our food. We don't need to work at all."

They ate the inset together. It was delicious.

The next day, the woman dug another hole in the field, and buried more inset. Then her husband and her sons came home.

"Where is our inset today?" they asked her. "Show us the place in the field."

"I don't know where it is," she said. "Go and look for it."

So her husband and sons went to the field and began to dig. They dug, and dug. After a long time, they found the inset. They were happy. They ran home to the woman.

"Look! Here it is!" they said. "God gave us more inset today."

The woman went to look at the field. She smiled.

"Today they dug a quarter of the field," she said.

The next day, she buried more inset, and her husband and sons dug half the field. The day after that, she buried more, and the day after that, even more.

Her husband and sons liked digging now.

"It's easy," they said. "We feel strong."

The woman went to look at the field again. She laughed.

"They have dug the whole field!" she said.

She gave them seeds, and they planted them. They learned to pull out the weeds, and water the field. They liked the work.

"Our mother is clever," they said. "She taught us a lesson. Work is good. When we work, we are proud. We become men."

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

## **Exercises**

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

*Are these sentences true or false?*

1. The farmer was very lazy, so his sons did all the work on the farm.
2. The farmer's wife said to the neighbours, "Yesterday, the birds came and ate all my sorghum."
3. The farmer said to his brothers, "Wild animals came to my field and ate all my inset."

4. The farmer's wife was angry when her husband brought the inset home.
5. God sent a miracle, and put inset in the field.
6. The next day, the farmer buried more inset.
7. After several days, the farmer and his sons had dug the whole field.
8. The farmer and his sons learned to like digging.
9. The farmer's wife planted seeds, and her sons learned to pull out the weeds.
10. The farmer's sons felt proud of their good work.

### **B. Make complete sentences**

*Match the beginnings of these sentences from the story with endings from the list below.*

1. Yesterday, the birds came and .....
  2. Wild animals came to my field and .....
  3. She dug the inset out of the hole, and .....
  4. She took some of the inset, and .....
  5. The next day, the woman dug another hole in the field, and .....
  6. They dug, and dug. After a long time, they .....
  7. The next day, she buried more inset, and her husband and sons .....
- 
- a) ..... dug half the field
  - b) ..... showed it to them.
  - c) ..... wrapped it in leaves.
  - d) ..... ate all my inset.
  - e) ..... buried more inset.
  - f) ..... ate all my sorghum.
  - g) ..... found the inset.

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

Do you think that working hard makes people happy? Or does it just make them tired?  
Does your mother try to make you work hard? How does she do it?

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

### A. How much did you understand?

[Click here to return to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the story]

1. The farmer was very lazy, so his sons did all the work on the farm.

*False. The sons were lazy too.*

2. The farmer's wife said to the neighbours, "Yesterday, the birds came and ate all my sorghum."

*False. The farmer said those words.*

3. The farmer said to his brothers, "Wild animals came to my field and ate all my inset."

*True*

4. The farmer's wife was angry when her husband brought the inset home.

*True*

5. God sent a miracle, and put inset in the field.

*False. The farmer's wife put the inset in the field.*

6. The next day, the farmer buried more inset.

*False. The farmer's wife buried the inset.*

7. After several days, the farmer and his sons had dug the whole field.

*True*

8. The farmer and his sons learned to like digging.

*True*

9. The farmer's wife planted seeds, and her sons learned to pull out the weeds.

*False. The farmer and his sons planted the seeds.*

10. The farmer's sons felt proud of their good work.

*True*

### B. Make complete sentences

*Match the beginnings of these sentences from the story with endings from the list below.*

1/f Yesterday, the birds came and **ate all my sorghum.**

2/d Wild animals came to my field and **ate all my inset.**

3/b She dug the inset out of the hole, and **showed it to them.**

4/c She took some of the inset, and **wrapped it in leaves.**

5/e The next day, the woman dug another hole in the field, and **buried more inset.**

6/g They dug, and dug. After a long time, they **found the inset.**

7/a The next day, she buried more inset, and her husband and sons **dug half the field.**

## The Monkey's Tower A Male Story

### Before you read the story

- Are there any baboons or monkeys near where you live?
- Do you like to watch them?
- Do you see baboons and monkeys play together, or look for food together?

### Now read the story

In the old days, the baboons and the monkeys were the same. Their faces and hands and colour were all the same. Only one thing was different. The baboons were bigger than the monkeys.

The baboons and the monkeys were friends. They lived together, and ate the same food. They played, and talked, and slept together.

One day, an old monkey said, "Listen, my brothers. Why do we live here, on the ground? Look up at the sky. Isn't it beautiful? Why don't we go up to the sky? Perhaps we will find another country there."

The others laughed at him.

"How can we do that?" they said.

"Let's build a tower," the monkey said.

"A tower? How can we do that?" asked the other monkeys and baboons.

"We can do it with our bodies," the old monkey said. "There are many of us. We can climb on to each other, and sit on each other's shoulders. We will soon reach the sky."

The others agreed.

"The baboons are bigger than the monkeys," said the old monkey, "so they must go at the bottom of the tower."

And so the baboons began to make a tower. They climbed on each other's shoulders, one by one. There were many baboons, and soon the tower was high.

"It's your turn now," they said to the monkeys. "Climb up on us. We'll soon reach the sky."

The biggest baboon was at the bottom of the pile. A naughty little monkey was looking at him.

"That big baboon chases me sometimes," he thought. "But he can't move now. I'm going to punish him!"

And he pushed his finger into the big baboon's bottom.

"Aaghh!" shouted the big baboon. "Stop it! Don't do that!"

He began to jump around. At once, all the other baboons fell down to the ground.

They were very angry.

"You wicked monkeys!" they said. "We'll punish you for this!"

The monkeys were very frightened. They ran into the forest. The baboons ran after them.

"Oh God," the monkeys prayed. "The baboons are going to kill us! What can we do? Please, God, help us!"

God heard the monkeys.

"Don't be frightened," he said to them. "I will change you. The baboons will not know

you now."

He gave the monkeys white hair above their eyes.

Soon, the baboons arrived.

"Who are these animals?" they said. "They are not monkeys. Where have the monkeys gone?"

The monkeys were happy.

"Now the baboons don't know us," they thought, "but we know them. We can run away from them now and they can't catch us."

God heard them.

"The monkeys are frightened of the baboons," he thought, "but fear is a bad thing. I will change the baboons too. Then the monkeys will not know them, and they will not fear them. They will not be together any more, but they will live in peace."

So God made the baboons' tails shorter, and made their bottoms red. The monkeys did not know the baboons any more, and the baboons did not know the monkeys. And so they learned to live in peace.

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

## Exercises

### A. How much did you understand?

*At the beginning of this story, the monkeys and the baboons decide to make a tower.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. "Look up at the sky. Isn't it beautiful?"
2. The baboons and the monkeys were friends.
3. "We can climb on to each other, and sit on each other's shoulders."

*In the second part of the story, the baboons make a tower with their bodies.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. The biggest baboon was at the bottom of the pile.
2. At once, all the other baboons fell down to the ground.
3. And he pushed his finger into the big baboon's bottom.

*In the third part of the story, God makes the baboons and the monkeys look different from each other.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. So God made the baboons' tails shorter, and made their bottoms red.
2. And so they learned to live in peace.
3. He gave the monkeys white hair above their eyes.

### B. THE SAME and DIFFERENT FROM

*THE SAME and DIFFERENT FROM are words we use to compare one thing with another.*

*Fill the gaps in these sentences with the same or different from.*

1. In the old days, the baboons and the monkeys were .....
2. The faces and hands of the baboons and the monkeys were .....
3. The baboons were ..... the monkeys, because they were bigger.
4. God gave the monkeys white hair above their eyes to make them ..... the baboons.
5. God made the baboons' tails shorter, so that they were not ..... as the monkeys.

6. The baboons and the monkeys live in peace because they are ..... each other.

### **C. Adjectives**

*Adjectives are words that describe things. There are many adjectives in this story. Fill the gaps in these sentences with adjectives from the list below.*

1. The old monkey wanted to reach the sky because he thought it was .....
2. The baboons climbed on top of each other, and made a ..... tower.
3. A ..... baboon was at the bottom of the pile.
4. One ..... little monkey pushed his finger into the big baboon's bottom.
5. The ..... monkeys ran into the forest.
6. God gave the monkeys ..... hair above their eyes.
7. He gave the baboons ..... bottoms.

*naughty, red, frightened, white, big, high, beautiful*

### **D. Other stories**

Do you know any other stories like this one? Ask any old people that you know to tell you stories about how things began when the world was young. Write them down to make a collection. Click on these links to read other stories like this.

**[The First Gift]**

**[The Baboon Child]**

**[How the Dog Lost its Voice]**

**[The Cat and the Woman]**

**[Click here for the 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 these sentences is 2, 1, 3*

The baboons and the monkeys were friends.

“Look up at the sky. Isn't it beautiful?”

“We can climb on to each other, and sit on each other's shoulders.”

*The right order of these sentences is 1, 3, 2*

The biggest baboon was at the bottom of the pile.

And he pushed his finger into the big baboon's bottom.

At once, all the other baboons fell down to the ground.

*The right order of these sentences is 3, 1, 2*

He gave the monkeys white hair above their eyes.

God made the baboons' tails shorter, and made their bottoms red.

And so they learned to live in peace.

### B. THE SAME and DIFFERENT FROM

1. In the old days, the baboons and the monkeys were **the same**.
2. The faces and hands of the baboons and the monkeys were **the same**.
3. The baboons were **different from** the monkeys, because they were bigger.
4. God gave the monkeys white hair above their eyes to make them **different from** the baboons.
5. God made the baboons' tails shorter so that they were not **the same** as the monkeys.
6. The baboons and the monkeys live in peace because they are **different from** each other.

### C. Adjectives

1. The old monkey wanted to reach the sky because he thought it was **beautiful**.
2. The baboons climbed on top of each other, and made a **high** tower.
3. A **big** baboon was at the bottom of the pile.
4. One **naughty** little monkey pushed his finger into the big baboon's bottom.
5. The **frightened** monkeys ran into the forest.
6. God gave the monkeys **white** hair above their eyes.
7. He gave the baboons **red** bottoms.

**Three boxes for three sons**  
**A Kafa story**



**Before you read the story**

- When a person dies, how can he or she fairly divide their property between their children?
- Is it right to give each child the same amount of property?
- Families sometimes quarrel about property left to them by their parents. Has this happened to anyone that you know?

**Now read the story**

An old man had three sons.

"Soon I will die," he said to his friends. "I must make my will, and give my property to my children. Please, my friends, bring me three boxes."

His friends brought the boxes to him. The old man put soil in the first box. He put money in the second box, and jewellery in the third box. Then he closed the boxes. He wrote the name of one of his sons on each box, and gave them to his friends.

"When I am dead, give these to my sons," he said to them.

At last, the old man died, and his friends gave the boxes to his sons. The young men opened them.

"There's soil in my box," the first son said.

"And money in mine," said the second son.

"And I have jewellery in mine," said the third son.

"Why did our father give us these things?" they asked each other, but they could not find the answer.

"Let's go and visit the wise man," they said. "Perhaps he can help us."

The three brothers began to walk to the wise man's house. On the way, they passed a river. A crocodile was in a field near the river. It was licking water from the grass.

"What does this mean?" the brothers asked, but none of them could answer.

Soon they came to a beautiful valley full of green grass. A horse stood on the grass. It was very thin, but it did not eat.

"This is strange," the brothers said. "The horse is very thin. Why doesn't it eat the grass?"

The road passed through the valley and came to a desert. A fat donkey stood in the desert.

"Look at this donkey," said the brothers. "Why is he fat? This place is a desert. There is no grass here, and no water."

At last they arrived at the wise man's house. They showed him the three boxes.

"Your father was a good, clever man," the wise man said, "and his will is a good one. Here is its meaning."

He looked at the soil in the first brother's box.

"Your father's land is for you," he said. "Plough it. Plant seeds. Grow crops. Be a good farmer."

He looked at the money in the second brother's box.

"Your father gave you his money," he said. "Buy cows and sheep and goats. Look after your cattle well. Be a good herdsman."

He looked at the jewellery in the third brother's box.

"The goods of your father are for you," he said. "Sell them. Buy more goods and sell those. Be a good merchant."

The three brothers thanked him, and began to go.

"I have one more message for you from your father," the wise man said. "It is a promise. If you obey his will, you will all become rich, happy men."

The three brothers thanked the wise man again, and went home. The oldest brother took the land. He ploughed it, and sowed seeds, and grew good crops. He was a farmer.

The second brother took the money. He bought cows and sheep and goats. He became a herdsman.

The third brother took his father's goods. He sold them and bought more. He became a merchant.

But the three brothers were not rich, and they were not happy.

"I have land, but I have no goods and no money," the farmer thought. "Look at my fields! There is too much grass. Wild animals come and eat it. Then they eat my crops."

Suddenly, he remembered the crocodile, licking the grass in the field by the river.

"Now I understand," he thought. "I don't want wild animals on my land. I want cattle. I will ask my brother to give me some."

The herdsman was unhappy too.

"I have many cows and sheep and goats," he thought, "but I don't have any land. My cattle are all thin."

He remembered the thin horse in the green valley.

"I understand its meaning now," he thought. "I need land for my cattle. I will ask my brother to give me some."

The merchant was thinking too.

"I have many goods," he said to himself, "and I travel with my donkeys to many places. But I have no house, and I live far away from my family."

He remembered the fat donkey in the desert.

"Yes," he thought. "I understand now. I will ask my brother for land. Then I will build a house and live near my family."

So the farmer gave some of his land to the herdsman, and the herdsman gave him some cattle. The merchant gave the farmer goods, and the farmer gave him land for his house. The three of them lived together happily. They helped each other, and they became rich.

When the wise man heard the news, he smiled.

"The old man was clever," he thought, "and his sons obeyed his will. They respected their father and learned from him, and now they are rich and happy."

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

## Exercises

### A. How much did you understand?

*In the first part of this story, an old man is preparing to die.*

*Answer these questions.*

1. What did the old man ask his friends to bring him?
2. What did the old man put in the first box?
3. What did he put in the second box?
4. What did he put in the third box?
5. What did he write on the boxes?

*In the second part of the story, the old man's sons went to see a wise man. On the way, they passed some strange things.*

*Answer these questions.*

1. Which animal did the brothers see in a field near the river?
2. What was the animal doing?
3. Which animal did the brothers see in a valley full of green grass?
4. Which animal did the brothers see in a desert?
5. The first brother was going to have the old man's land, and be a farmer. What did he find in his box?
6. The second brother was going to buy cows and sheep and goats, and be a herdsman. What did he find in his box?
7. The third brother was going to buy and sell goods, and be a merchant. What did he find in his box?

*In the third part of the story, the brothers find that their lives are not easy.*

*Which brother is thinking each of these thoughts?*

1. "I will ask my brother for land. Then I will build a house and live near my family."
2. "I have land, but I have no goods and no money."
3. "I need land for my cattle. I will ask my brother to give me some."
4. "I don't want wild animals on my land. I want cattle."
5. "But I have no house, and I live far away from my family."
6. "But I don't have any land. My cattle are all thin."

### B. Who is speaking?

*Who said these sentences?*

1. "I must make my will."
2. "Let's go and visit the wise man."

3. "The horse is very thin. Why doesn't it eat the grass?"
4. "Your father was a good, clever man."
5. "If you obey his will, you will all become rich, happy men."

### **C. Make a play**

This story can make a good play. You can act the parts of the old man, his friends, his three sons and the wise man, as well as the crocodile, the horse and the donkey.

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

**[Click here to return to the exercises]**

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

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

1. What did the old man ask his friends to bring him?

*Three boxes*

2. What did the old man put in the first box?

*Soil*

3. What did he put in the second box?

*Money*

4. What did he put in the third box?

*Jewellery*

5. What did he write on the boxes?

*The names of his sons*

1. Which animal did the brothers see in a field near the river?

*A crocodile*

2. What was the animal doing?

*It was licking water from the grass.*

3. Which animal did the brothers see in a valley full of green grass?

*A horse*

4. Which animal did the brothers see in a desert?

*A donkey*

5. The first brother was going to have the old man's land, and be a farmer. What did he find in his box?

*Soil*

6. The second brother was going to buy cows and sheep and goats, and be a herdsman. What did he find in his box?

*Money*

7. The third brother was going to buy and sell goods, and be a merchant. What did he find in his box?

*Jewellery*

1. "I will ask my brother for land. Then I will build a house and live near my family."

*The third brother – the merchant*

2 "I have land, but I have no goods and no money."

*The first brother – the farmer*

3. "I need land for my cattle. I will ask my brother to give me some."

*The second brother – the herdsman*

4. "I don't want wild animals on my land. I want cattle."

*The first brother – the farmer*

5. "But I have no house, and I live far away from my family."

*The third brother – the merchant*

6. "But I don't have any land. My cattle are all thin."

*The second brother – the herdsman*

**B. Who is speaking?**

*Who said these sentences?*

1. "I must make my will."

*The old man*

2. "Let's go and visit the wise man."

*The three brothers*

3. "The horse is very thin. Why doesn't it eat the grass?"

*The three brothers*

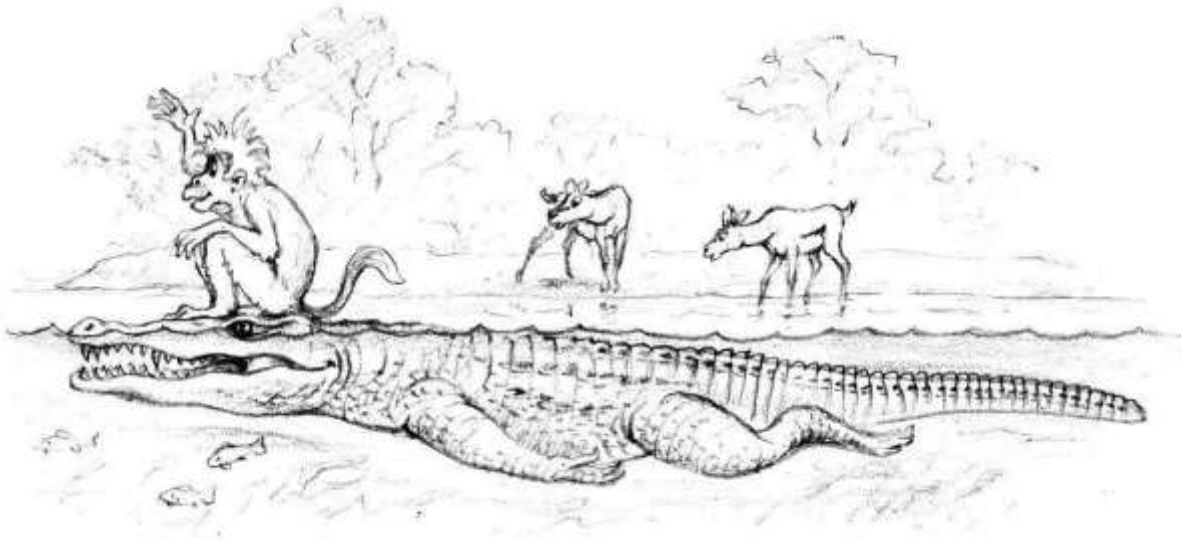
4. "Your father was a good, clever man."

*The wise man*

5. "If you obey his will, you will all become rich, happy men."

*The wise man*

## The Monkey's Heart A Bena Story



### Before you read the story

- Sometimes you have to think quickly to escape from a difficult situation. Has this ever happened to you?
- How did you escape?

### Now read the story

A monkey once lived on a small island in the middle of a river. There was a big tree on the island and beautiful fruit grew on the tree.

One day, the monkey was eating a piece of fruit. A crocodile was watching her.

"Monkey," said the crocodile, "please give me a piece of your fruit. It looks very good to eat."

So the monkey threw a piece of fruit to the crocodile.

"Mm," said the crocodile. "This is delicious. Please give me another, dear Monkey."

The monkey gave the crocodile another piece of fruit, and the crocodile took it to his wife.

"Eat this, my dear," he said to her.

His wife ate the piece of fruit.

"Mm," she said. "This is wonderful. Where did you find it?"

"That clever monkey gave it to me," said her husband.

"I want to meet that clever monkey," his wife said. "Let's go and see her."

So the crocodile and his wife went to see the monkey. She was sitting in her tree.

"Please, Monkey, give us more of your delicious fruit," the crocodiles said.

The monkey threw more pieces of fruit to the crocodiles, and they ate them.

At last, the crocodile's wife said to the monkey, "Thank you for your kindness, Monkey. Now you must come to our house across the river. We will make a delicious lunch for you."

The monkey looked down at the crocodiles. They were smiling at her, and their teeth

were long and sharp.

"I can't go across the river," she said. "I can't swim."

"Oh, that's all right," the crocodile said. "I will carry you on my back."

"Well - " said the monkey. "I - "

"But you must come," said the crocodile's wife. "You invited us, and now we are inviting you."

At last, the monkey agreed. She came down from the tree, and jumped on the crocodile's back. He carried her across the river to his house.

The crocodile's wife went out to cook the lunch. The crocodile followed her. They talked quietly together.

"What are they saying?" thought the monkey. "What are they planning?"

At last the lunch was ready, and the crocodiles and the monkey ate it.

"That was very nice," said the monkey. "Thank you very much. I want to go home now."

"Home?" said the crocodile. "Oh no, you can't go home. We're going to eat you for our dinner."

"What?" cried the monkey. "You want to eat me? But I gave you my fruit, and we have just eaten lunch. You're not hungry now."

"No, no," the crocodile's wife said. "Please understand, dear Monkey. We're not hungry. We don't want to eat your meat. We only want to eat your heart."

"My heart?" said the monkey. "Why?"

"Because you are so clever," said the crocodile. "If we eat your heart, we will be clever too."

The monkey smiled.

"Oh," she said. "I see. You don't want to eat me. You only want to eat my heart."

"Yes, yes!" said the crocodiles.

"But my heart isn't here," said the monkey. "I never carry it with me. I keep it on the island, in the big fruit tree. If you want my heart, you must take me home first."

"All right," said the crocodile. "Let's go now."

So the monkey jumped on the crocodile's back, and he carried her across the river to the island. She jumped off the crocodile and ran up the tree.

"Where's your heart? Have you found it?" the crocodile shouted. "Throw it down to me!"

The monkey laughed and laughed.

"You stupid animal!" she said. "My heart is in my body. How can I live without it? If you want my heart you must catch me first. Come on, crocodile! Climb my tree and catch me!"

And she laughed and laughed again.

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

## Exercises

### A. How much did you understand?

*Are these sentences true or false?*

1. The crocodile and his wife lived on a small island in the middle of a river.
2. "Monkey," said the crocodile, "please give me a piece of your fruit."
3. "Mm," said the crocodile. "This is delicious."

4. "That clever monkey gave it to me," said the crocodile's wife.
5. They were smiling at her, and their teeth were long and sharp.
6. "I can cross the river," said the monkey. "I can swim."
7. The crocodile's wife went out to cook the lunch. The monkey followed her.
8. "We're not hungry. We don't want to eat your meat. We only want to eat your heart."
9. "If you want my heart, you must take me home first."
10. She jumped off the crocodile and ran into her house.

### **B. Where, what?**

*Answer these questions.*

1. Where did the monkey live?
2. What did she throw to the crocodile?
3. The crocodile and his wife went to see the monkey. Where was she?
4. When the crocodiles smiled, the monkey saw something. What was it?
5. What did the crocodile's wife cook for the monkey?
6. What did the crocodiles want to eat?
7. Where did the monkey say that she kept her heart?
8. Where did the monkey go when the crocodile took her back to her island?

### **C. Old beliefs**

In the old days, some people believed that a person's intelligence came from the heart. Modern science tells us that intelligence lies in the brain, inside our heads. Do you know any other old beliefs that are not really true?

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

[Click here to return to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the story]

### A. How much did you understand?

1. The crocodile and his wife lived on a small island in the middle of a river.  
*False. The **monkey** lived on a small island in the middle of a river.*
2. "Monkey," said the crocodile, "please give me a piece of your fruit."  
*True*
3. "Mm," said the crocodile. "This is delicious."  
*True*
4. "That clever monkey gave it to me," said the crocodile's wife.  
*False. "That clever monkey gave it to me," said **her husband**.*
5. They were smiling at her, and their teeth were long and sharp.  
*True*
6. "I can cross the river," said the monkey. "I can swim."  
*False. "I **can't** go across the river," said the monkey. "I **can't** swim."*
7. The crocodile's wife went out to cook the lunch. The monkey followed her.  
*False. The **crocodile** followed her.*
8. "We're not hungry. We don't want to eat your meat. We only want to eat your heart."  
*True*
9. "If you want my heart, you must take me home first."  
*True*
10. She jumped off the crocodile and ran into her house.  
*False. She jumped off the crocodile and ran **up the tree**.*

### B. Where, what?

1. Where did the monkey live?  
*On a small island in the middle of a river*
2. What did she throw to the crocodile?  
*A piece of fruit*
3. The crocodile and his wife went to see the monkey. Where was she?  
*She was sitting in her tree.*
4. When the crocodiles smiled, the monkey saw something. What was it?  
*Their long, sharp teeth*
5. What did the crocodile's wife cook for the monkey?  
*Lunch*
6. What did the crocodiles want to eat?  
*The monkey's heart*
7. Where did the monkey say that she kept her heart?  
*On the island, in the big fruit tree*
8. Where did the monkey go when the crocodile took her back to her island?  
*Up the tree*

**The Demon's Daughter**  
**A Tsemay Story**



**Before you read the story**

- Has a stranger ever asked you to go to his or her house?
- If a stranger asks you, will you go?

*Tef is a cereal that grows in Ethiopia*

**Now read the story**

A long time ago, the rains did not come, and there was a famine in the country. The people were hungry. They had no tef, or sorghum, or barley, or wheat. They had to go into the forest to look for fruit and leaves.

Two girls, Dula and her sister, were in the forest one day. They were looking for food. Dula's sister went home, but Dula went on, into the forest.

Suddenly, she met a woman. The woman was wearing a veil. It covered the back of her head. She smiled at Dula.

"What's your name?" she asked her.

"Dula," said Dula.

"And what are you doing here in the forest?" the woman said.

"I'm looking for fruit and leaves to eat," said Dula, "because I'm very hungry."

"Come with me," said the woman. "I have food in my house. I have tef, and sorghum, and barley, and wheat. And I have butter, and honey, and meat."

Dula was very happy.

"Oh thank you," she said. "You are very kind."

And she went with the woman to her house.

The woman's daughter was in front of the house. She was grinding maize. Dula smiled at her.

"Hello," she said.

The woman went behind the house to the store room.

"Why did you come here?" her daughter asked Dula. "What did my mother tell you?"

"She was very kind to me," said Dula. "I was looking for food in the forest, because I am very hungry. 'Come to my house,' she said. 'I have tef, and sorghum, and barley, and wheat. And I have butter, and honey, and meat. I will give you food.'"

"Oh, you poor girl," the woman's daughter said. "You don't understand. My mother is a demon. Did you see her veil? It covers the eyes in the back of her head. We don't have a lot of food in this house. We don't eat it. We are demons. We eat people. Human meat is our only food."

Dula began to cry.

"What can I do?" she said. "I am alone here. Who will help me now?"

The demon's daughter looked at her.

"I will help you," she said. "You are a good girl, and I like you. I'm sorry for you. Listen. My mother will soon come back from her store room. She will give you food to eat. Don't put it in your mouth. It will kill you. Give it to me. It won't hurt me."

Soon the demon woman came back from her store. She smiled at Dula. She had food in her hands.

"My poor child," she said. "You are very hungry. Come and eat."

Dula looked at the food. She wanted to eat it. She was very hungry.

She took the food from the demon, but she did not eat it. When the demon was not looking, she gave it to her daughter.

Soon it became dark.

"Sleep here, next to me," the demon's daughter said.

Dula lay down with her. The demon woman lay down on the other side of the house.

"Your mother is asleep," Dula said quietly to the girl. "Please, dear friend, help me. I must run away now."

"Not yet," the girl said. "Wait. My mother is not asleep yet."

Dula waited. At last, the demon woman began to snore.

"Now she is asleep," the girl said. "The door is locked. You can't open it. I will do it for you."

She got up and opened the door.

"Run!" she said to Dula. "Run for your life!"

Dula ran into the forest. Behind her, in the house, the demon woman woke up.

"The door is open!" she said. "Where is Dula? Where is my dinner? My dinner has run away! Daughter, where did Dula go? Did you see her?"

Her daughter was lying on her bed. Her eyes were shut. She was pretending to be asleep. Her mother called to her again.

"Daughter! Wake up!" she said.

The girl sat up.

"Where is Dula?" her mother asked her again. "Where did she go?"

"I don't know, Mother," her daughter answered. "I didn't see anything. I was asleep."

The demon woman ran out of the house. She ran fast, fast, through the forest. Dula heard her footsteps. She tried to run fast too.

She looked back, over her shoulder. The demon was coming! The demon was near her!

In front of Dula there was a big river.

"I can't swim!" thought Dula. "What can I do? The demon woman will catch me now."

Then she saw a fallen tree in the water. It was a long tree. It went from one side of the river to the other. She jumped on to it and ran across it. Soon she was on the other side of the river. Then she picked up the end of the tree and threw it into the river. The water carried it away.

The demon woman came to the river.

"Dula!" she called out. "Don't run away from me. I am your friend. I want to help you."

Dula didn't answer. She could see something in the river. The crocodiles were coming.

"How did you cross the river?" the demon said to her. "I want to cross it too."

"There are logs in the water," Dula answered. "I ran across the logs."

The demon woman was very hungry. She didn't wait. She didn't look carefully at the river. She jumped on to the first log. But it wasn't a log. It was a crocodile. At once, it opened its big mouth, and ate the demon woman.

Dula was saved. She ran home to her sister and her family. She told her parents about the demon woman in the forest.

"Learn your lesson," her father said to her. "Don't trust strangers. Don't go with them. Be careful, my dear, and God will keep you safe."

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

## Exercises

### A. How much did you understand?

*This story is in three parts. In the first part of the story, Dula is in the forest alone looking for food, because there is a famine and she is very hungry. She meets a woman and goes with her to her house.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. "I'm looking for fruit and leaves to eat," said Dula, "because I'm very hungry."
2. "Oh thank you," she said. "You are very kind."
3. They had no tef, or sorghum, or barley, or wheat.
4. "My mother is a demon. Did you see her veil? It covers the eyes in the back of her head."

*In the second part of the story, the demon's daughter helps Dula.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. "We are demons. We eat people."
2. The demon woman lay down on the other side of the house.
3. Dula waited. At last, the demon woman began to snore.
4. The woman went behind the house to the store room.

*In the third part of the story, Dula escapes from the demon woman.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. "There are logs in the water," Dula answered. "I ran across the logs."
2. "I don't know, Mother," her daughter answered. "I didn't see anything."
3. She told her parents about the demon woman in the forest.
4. Then she saw a fallen tree in the water.

### B. Who said these sentences?

*Who said these sentences? Was it Dula, the demon woman, the demon's daughter, or Dula's father?*

1. "And what are you doing here in the forest?"
2. "Why did you come here?"
3. "She was very kind to me."
4. "We don't have a lot of food in this house."
5. "Who will help me now?"
6. "You are very hungry. Come and eat."
7. "The door is locked."
8. "I am your friend. I want to help you."
9. "There are logs in the water."
10. "Be careful, my dear, and God will keep you safe."

### **C. Where, what, when**

*Answer these questions*

1. When the famine came, where did the people go to look for food?
2. Dula met a woman in the forest. What was the woman wearing?
3. When Dula went to the demon woman's house, where was the demon woman's daughter?
4. What was at the back of the demon woman's head?
5. Where did Dula lie down to sleep?
6. When Dula left the demon woman's house, where did she run to?
7. What was lying from one side of the river to the other?
8. The demon woman jumped on to something in the river. What was it?

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

Was Dula's father right to warn her about strangers?

Are there ever any times when it is all right to trust a stranger?

### **E. Dreams and nightmares**

A nightmare is a bad dream. Do you ever have nightmares? Do you sometimes dream that someone is chasing you, and you cannot run away?

Tell your nightmares to your friends, and ask them to tell you theirs. Don't get too frightened!

Do you ever have nice dreams? Tell those to your friends too.

**[Click here for the 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 these sentences is 3,1,2,4*

They had no tef, or sorghum, or barley, or wheat.

"I'm looking for fruit and leaves to eat," said Dula, "because I'm very hungry."

"Oh thank you," she said. "You are very kind."

"My mother is a demon. Did you see her veil? It covers the eyes in the back of her head."

*The right order of these sentences is 4,1,2,3*

The woman went behind the house to the store room.

"We are demons. We eat people."

The demon woman lay down on the other side of the house.

Dula waited. At last, the demon woman began to snore.

*The right order of these sentences is 2, 4, 1, 3*

"I don't know, Mother," her daughter answered. "I didn't see anything."

Then she saw a fallen tree in the water.

"There are logs in the water," Dula answered. "I ran across the logs."

She told her parents about the woman in the forest.

### **B. Who said these sentences?**

1. "And what are you doing here in the forest?"

*The demon woman*

2. "Why did you come here?"

*The demon woman's daughter*

3. "She was very kind to me."

*Dula*

4. "We don't have a lot of food in this house."

*The demon woman's daughter*

5. "Who will help me now?"

*Dula*

6. "You are very hungry. Come and eat."

*The demon woman*

7. "The door is locked."

*The demon woman's daughter*

8. "I am your friend. I want to help you."

*The demon woman*

9. "There are logs in the water."

*Dula*

10. "Be careful, my dear, and God will keep you safe."

*Dula's father*

### **C. Where, what, when**

1. When the famine came, where did the people go to look for food?

*Into the forest*

2. Dula met a woman in the forest. What was the woman wearing?

*A veil*

3. When Dula went to the demon woman's house, where was the demon woman's daughter?

*In front of the house*

4. What was at the back of the demon woman's head?

*Eyes*

5. Where did Dula lie down to sleep?

*Next to the demon's daughter or With the demon's daughter.*

6. When Dula left the demon woman's house, where did she run to?

*Into the forest*

7. What was lying from one side of the river to the other?

*A fallen tree*

8. The demon woman jumped on to something in the river. What was it?

*A crocodile*

**The Girl from the Sea**  
**A Gurage Story**

**Before you read the story**

- Do you ever wish for impossible things?
- If you had a magic ring, what would you ask it to bring you?

**Now read the story**

In the good old days, there was a poor boy with a kind heart. He liked to help other people, and he never thought about himself.

One day, he saw a man beating a dog.

"Please stop," he said. "Don't beat the dog."

The man was angry.

"Why can't I beat him?" he said. "This wicked dog stole my meat."

The boy was sorry for the dog. He had only a little money, but he gave it to the man.

Then he took the dog home with him.

A few weeks later, the boy saw a woman beating a cat.

"Oh, the poor cat," said the boy. "Why are you beating her?"

"This cat's a thief," the woman answered. "She ate my chicken."

The boy was sorry for the cat. He gave the woman some money, and took the cat home.

A few weeks later, the boy was coming home from market. A beautiful girl ran up the road towards him.

"Help me! Save me!" she cried. "A hyena is chasing me. It's going to eat me!"

The boy was frightened, but he didn't run away.

"Stand behind me," he said to the girl. "I'll keep you safe."

He picked up some stones and threw them at the hyena. One of them hit the hyena's head and killed it.

"Oh thank you, thank you!" said the girl. "Come home with me and talk to my father."

I will tell him that you saved my life. He will reward you."

Now, the girl was a demon's daughter, and the demon, her father lived under the sea. She took the boy down to the seaside, and threw him into the water. She jumped in after him, and together they sank to the bottom of the sea.

"Listen," the girl said to the boy. "When you see my father, be careful. Don't say, 'Thank God', or 'With God's help'. Don't talk about God at all. Say only yes and no."

They went into the demon's house.

"Father," the girl said, "this boy saved my life. A big hyena was chasing me, and he killed it."

The demon looked at the boy.

"Did you really save my daughter?" he asked.

The boy nearly said, "Yes, with God's help," but he remembered the girl's words.

"Yes," he said.

"Did you really kill the hyena?" asked the demon.

The boy wanted to say, "Yes, thank God," but he didn't.

"Yes," he said.

The demon smiled at him.

"I will give you my ring," he said. "Its name is Atli. Do you want money? Ask Atli, and you will receive it. Do you want to travel? Ask Atli, and it will take you on your journey."

The demon's daughter smiled at the boy too.

"Look after Atli well," she said. "It will be a good servant to you."

The boy thanked the demon and his daughter, and said goodbye to them.

"Atli, take me home," he said.

At once the ring took him to his house. His mother was waiting for him, with the dog and the cat.

"Where have you been?" she said.

The boy told her about the demon and his daughter.

"We are rich now, Mother," he said. "The demon gave me a magic ring. Listen to this.

Atli, bring us food."

At once, there was a beautiful meal on the table, with enough food for the boy, his mother, and the dog and the cat.

The boy and his mother were happy now. They had a beautiful house, new clothes and good food to eat. But the boy wanted more.

"The king has a beautiful daughter," he said to his mother. "I want to marry her."

His mother was worried.

"But we are from a poor family," she said. "We don't know the king. How can we ask him for his daughter?"

"Let's try," her son answered. "Go to the king, and ask him."

So the woman went to the palace. She stood at the gate and shouted, "Your majesty, your daughter for my son! Your daughter for my son!"

The king heard her.

"Who is this woman?" he said. "What does she want?"

"She wants your daughter," his servants said, and they laughed.

"Bring her to me," said the king.

The servants brought the boy's mother to the king.

"You want my daughter for your son?" said the king. "Then he must take a test. He must bring gold to the palace and make clothes from it. Can he do this?"

"I - I don't know, Your Majesty," answered the woman. "I will ask him."

She ran home.

"Forget the king's daughter, my son," she said. "If you want to marry her, you must take gold to the palace and make clothes from it. How can you do that?"

"I can't, but Atli can," said her son, and he turned the ring on his finger. "Atli, bring me gold!"

At once, the ring brought gold.

"Now take me to the palace," said the boy.

A minute later, he was in the palace, with the gold beside him.

"Atli, make a gold dress for the king's daughter," said the boy.

At once, a beautiful gold dress was in his hands.

The king was very happy with the boy. He gave his daughter to him, and the boy married her.

On their wedding day, the boy gave Atli, the gold ring, to his wife.

"Look after this ring," he said to her. "Do not lose it."

The boy loved the king's daughter, and she loved him. They lived together happily.

One day, a beggar came to the boy's house.

"I'm hungry! Give me food!" he cried.

The king's daughter came out of the house with food in her hands, and gave it to the beggar. The beggar saw the ring on her finger.

"Atli!" he said. "I have found you!"

He pulled the ring off the girl's finger.

"Take me home!" he cried.

At once the ring carried him back to his home at the bottom of the sea.

The boy and his wife had no more food and no more gold from Atli, but they lived together happily, with the dog and the cat, for the rest of their lives.

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

**Exercises**

### A. How much did you understand?

*In the first part of this story, the poor boy is kind to a dog and a cat, and he saves a girl from a hyena.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. He picked up some stones and threw them at the hyena.
2. One day, he saw a man beating a dog.
3. "This cat's a thief," the woman answered. "She ate my chicken."
4. A few weeks later, the boy was coming home from market.

*In the second part of the story, the demon's daughter takes the boy under the sea, and the demon gives him Atli, his ring.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. The boy wanted to say, "Yes, thank God," but he didn't.
2. She took the boy down to the seaside, and threw him into the water.
3. "Do you want to travel? Ask Atli, and it will take you on your journey."
4. "Did you really save my daughter?" he asked.

*In the third part of the story, the boy goes home. He passes the king's test, and marries the king's daughter.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. The servants brought the boy's mother to the king.
2. At once, there was a beautiful meal on the table, with enough food for the boy, his mother, the dog and the cat.
3. The king was very happy with the boy.
4. "Now take me to the palace," said the boy.

*In the fourth part of the story, the boy's wife gives Atli, the ring, to a beggar who comes to their house.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. The beggar saw the ring on her finger.
2. The boy and his wife had no more food and no more gold from Atli.
3. "I'm hungry! Give me food!" he cried.
4. On their wedding day, the boy gave Atli, the gold ring, to his wife.

### B. Commands

*In this story, there are many commands, when one person tells another person what they must do. Who is giving these commands?*

1. "Don't beat the dog."
2. "Save me!"
3. "Don't talk about God at all."
4. "Bring her to me."
5. "Forget the king's daughter."
6. "Atli, bring me gold!"
7. "Look after this ring."
8. "Give me food!"

**C. What were they feeling?**

*Fill the gaps in these sentences with words from the list below to show what the characters in the story were feeling.*

1. "Please stop," he said. "Don't beat the dog." The man was .....
2. The boy was ..... for the dog.
3. The boy was ..... but he didn't run away.
4. His mother was ..... "But we are from a poor family," she said.
5. The king was very ..... with the boy.
6. "I'm ..... ! Give me food!" he cried.

*worried, hungry, happy, angry, sorry, frightened*

**D. What do you think?**

There are many stories in the world about people who live under the sea. Why do we like these stories so much?

Who do you think the beggar at the end of the story really was?

The boy, his mother and the king's daughter were happy because they had gold and plenty of food. Do you think that money makes people happy?

**[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 these sentences is 2, 3, 4, 1*

One day, he saw a man beating a dog.

"This cat's a thief," the woman answered. "She ate my chicken."

A few weeks later, the boy was coming home from market.

He picked up some stones and threw them at the hyena.

*The right order of these sentences is 2, 4, 1, 3*

She took the boy down to the seaside, and threw him into the water.

"Did you really save my daughter?" he asked.

The boy wanted to say, "Yes, thank God," but he didn't.

"Do you want to travel? Ask Atli, and it will take you on your journey."

*The right order of these sentences is 2, 1, 4, 3*

At once, there was a beautiful meal on the table, with enough food for the boy, his mother, the dog and the cat.

The servants brought the boy's mother to the king.

"Now take me to the palace," said the boy.

The king was very happy with the boy.

*The right order of these sentences is 4, 3, 1, 2*

On their wedding day, the boy gave Atli, the gold ring, to his wife.

"I'm hungry! Give me food!" he cried.

The beggar saw the ring on her finger.

The boy and his wife had no more food and no more gold from Atli.

### B. Commands

1. "Don't beat the dog."

*The boy*

2. "Save me!"

*The beautiful girl/the demon's daughter*

3. "Don't talk about God at all."

*The demon's daughter*

4. "Bring her to me."

*The king*

5. "Forget the king's daughter."

*The boy's mother*

6. "Atli, bring me gold!"

*The boy*

7. "Look after this ring."

*The boy*

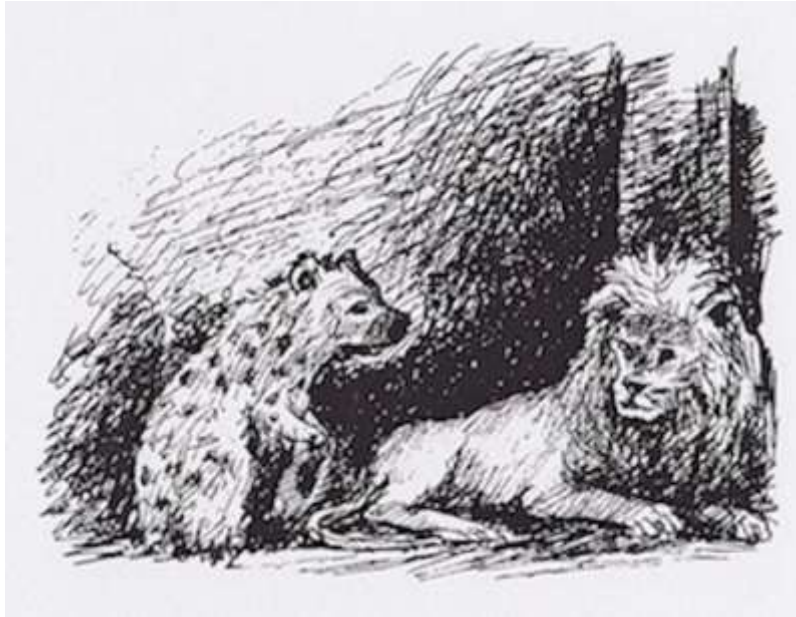
8. "Give me food!"

*The beggar*

**C. What were they feeling?**

1. "Please stop," he said. "Don't beat the dog." The man was **angry**.
2. The boy was **sorry** for the dog.
3. The boy was **frightened** but he didn't run away.
4. His mother was **worried**. "But we are from a poor family," she said.
5. The king was very **happy** with the boy.
6. "I'm **hungry** ! Give me food!" he cried.

**Nine and One Make Ten**  
**A Bena Story**



**Before you read the story**

- Are you a brave person, or do you run away from danger?
- Is it always good to be brave, or is it sometimes foolish?

**Now read the story**

Once upon a time, nine hyena brothers hunted with a lion. They caught ten fat cows.

"You are nine," the lion said, "and I am one. That makes ten. And there are ten cows. So I will have nine, and you can have one."

The hyenas were frightened of the lion.

"Yes, my lord," they said to the lion. "You can have nine cows, and we will have one."

Then they went home to their father.

Their father was angry with them.

"What?" he said. "You caught ten cows, and you gave nine to the lion? That's not right. Give me your cow. I will take it to the lion. He must give nine cows to us."

So the hyena took the cow, and went to find the lion. His sons came with him.

"Father, please come home with us," they said. "You don't know the lion. He's very big, and very strong. If we make him angry, he will kill us."

Their father didn't listen to them.

"The nine cows are yours," he said. "The lion will listen to me."

They walked on.

"My sons," said the old hyena. "What is that hill in front of us? It wasn't there yesterday."

"That is not a hill, Father," said his sons. "That is the lion."

"Oh," their father said. He began to walk more slowly. His sons walked slowly too.

"Look at the long, yellow grass in front of us," said the old lion. "Where did it come

from? It wasn't there yesterday."

"That is not grass," his sons said. "That is the lion's mane."

"I see," said their father. He was walking very slowly now. His sons were walking very slowly too.

"And what are those two balls of fire?" their father asked them. "I've never seen those before."

"Those are not balls of fire," said his sons. "Those are the lion's eyes."

"The lion's eyes?" said their father. "My sons, give me the cow."

The sons drove the cow to their father. The old hyena stopped walking. He pushed the cow in front of him.

"My lord," he called out to the lion. "Here is the tenth cow. My foolish sons took it and brought it home, but it belongs to you."

Then he turned round, and ran home, and his sons ran after him.

"The lion is too strong for us," they said. "We understand that now."

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

### Exercises

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

*Each sentence in the second list follows a sentence in the first list. Match them to retell the story.*

1. Once upon a time, nine hyena brothers hunted with a lion.
2. "Yes, my lord," they said to the lion. "You can have nine cows, and we will have one."
3. "You caught ten cows, and you gave nine to the lion?"
4. "The nine cows are yours," he said.
5. "That is not a hill, Father," said his sons.
6. "That is not grass," his sons said.
7. "Those are not balls of fire," said his sons.
8. "Here is the tenth cow."

- a) "The lion will listen to me."
- b) "Those are the lion's eyes."
- c) "My foolish sons took it and brought it home, but it belongs to you."
- d) Then they went home to their father.
- e) They caught ten fat cows.
- f) "That is the lion's mane."
- g) "That is the lion."
- h) "That's not right."

#### B. Who is speaking?

*Who said these sentences?*

1. "And there are ten cows. So I will have nine, and you can have one."
2. "Give me your cow. I will take it to the lion."
3. "You don't know the lion. He's very big, and very strong."
4. "Look at the long, yellow grass in front of us."
5. "Give me the cow."
6. "The lion is too strong for us."

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

Weak people often have to give strong people everything they want. But this is not fair. What is the best way to work for a fairer society?

Good laws protect weak people, and stop strong people taking everything. Are there any laws that you would like to change in your country?



**[[Click here for the answers to the exercises](#)]**

### Answers to the questions

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

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

1/e Once upon a time, nine hyena brothers hunted with a lion. **They caught ten fat cows.**

2/d "Yes, my lord," they said to the lion. "You can have nine cows, and we will have one."

**Then they went home to their father.**

3/h "You caught ten cows, and you gave nine to the lion? **That's not right.**"

4/a "The nine cows are yours," he said. "**The lion will listen to me.**"

5/g "That is not a hill, Father," said his sons. "**That is the lion.**"

6/f "That is not grass," his sons said. "**That is the lion's mane.**"

7/b "Those are not balls of fire," said his sons. "**Those are the lion's eyes.**"

8/c "Here is the tenth cow. **My foolish sons took it and brought it home, but it belongs to you.**"

### B. Who is speaking?

1. "And there are ten cows. So I will have nine, and you can have one."

*The lion*

2. "Give me your cow. I will take it to the lion."

*The hyenas' father*

3. "You don't know the lion. He's very big, and very strong."

*The hyena brothers*

4. "Look at the long, yellow grass in front of us."

*The hyenas' father*

5. "Give me the cow."

*The hyenas' father*

6. "The lion is too strong for us."

*The hyenas*

**The Longest Pole in the World**  
**A Kafa Story**



**Before you read the story**

- Everyone needs to have good advice sometimes.
- Do you ask your friends, when you need good advice?
- Do you ask your parents, or your teachers?

**Now read the story**

A long time ago, the Mattoni people lived in Kafa. They were wise and clever, and they gave good advice to the Kafa kings. There were Manno people in Kafa too. They were tanners. They made leather from the skins of cows. They were very poor.

One day, the old king died, and his son became the king. He did not like his father's Mattoni advisers.

"These people are too clever," he thought. "I don't trust them. Why did my father always listen to them? They are rich and powerful now. Perhaps, one day, they will kill me and a Mattoni will become the king."

So the king sent his soldiers to the Mattoni people's houses. The soldiers sent the Mattoni people away, out of the country. Some refused to leave, and the soldiers killed them all.

"Now I am safe," thought the king. "All my enemies are far away."

But the soldiers did not send all the Mattoni people out of the country. One little boy ran away and hid in the forest.

A kind Manno family found him there. They took him home, and looked after him.

One day, the king said to his servants, "The kings of other countries have big, beautiful palaces. I want a palace too, but my palace must be bigger and more beautiful than

theirs."

The servants were afraid of the king.

"Yes, Your Majesty," they said. "Your Majesty is the best king in the world. Your palace will be the best palace, too. It will be big! It will be beautiful! It will be very high! It will even reach the sky!"

"Reach the sky?" said the king. "How can it reach the sky?"

"You will need a very long pole," his servants said. "This pole will make the pillar in the middle of the palace. The pole must come from the tallest tree in the world."

"You are right," said the king. "You must find a pole from the tallest tree in the world. Why are you waiting? Go. Find the tallest tree in the world. Cut it down, and make a pole. It must reach the sky!"

His servants were worried.

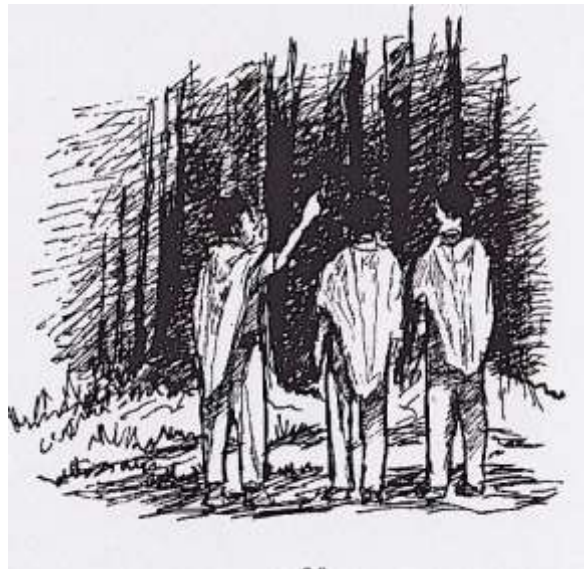
"But, Your Majesty, we don't know... We can't..." they began.

The king was angry.

"Didn't you hear me?" he said. "Go now! Find the pole! If you come back without it, I will kill you all."

The king's servants were frightened. They left their homes and began to travel through the forest. They were looking for the tallest tree in the world.

For ten years, the king's servants looked for the tree. They found many tall ones, but none of them reached the sky. They were old men now. Their beards were long. Their hair was long. The nails on their fingers were very long. They went on, and on. They were looking for the tree.



"We can't go home to our families without the pole for the king's palace," they thought, "or the king will kill us."

One day, the king's servants came to a village. It was a poor place. Many people lived there. They were making leather. The people saw the king's servants, and they were frightened.

"Who are those people?" they asked each other. "Look at their beards, and their long hair. What do they want from us?"

The people ran away. But one young man didn't run away. He went up to the king's servants and spoke to them. It was the Mattoni boy. He was a man now.

"Are you looking for something?" the Mattoni boy asked them. "What is it? What do you want?"

The king's servants looked at the young man. His clothes were old and dirty.

"You can't help us," they said. "Go away. We don't need you."

The young man didn't go away.

"Tell me," he said. "Perhaps I can help you."

So the king's servants told the Mattoni boy everything.

"We left our homes more than ten years ago," they said at last. "We will never see our families again. We can't find the king's pole. If we go home, he will kill us."

The Mattoni boy laughed.

"But you can go home tomorrow," he said. "The king will not hurt you."

"What do you mean?" the king's servants asked him. "How can we go home?"

"I will tell you," the Mattoni boy said. "Take a drum, and sing and dance. Go to the king's palace. Say to him, 'O King, live for a thousand years! We have got your pole.' He will say, 'Is it the tallest pole in the world? Is it as high as the sky?' Then you must say, 'We don't know. We haven't got a measuring rod. Give us the longest measuring rod in the world. We will take it to the pole, and measure it. If it is the tallest pole in the world, we will bring it back to you.' The king will say, 'But I haven't got the longest measuring rod in the world.' And you will say, 'Then we are sorry, Your Majesty. We cannot bring the pole to you.'"

The king's servants were very happy.

"Oh thank you, thank you," they said to the boy. "Now we can go home to our families."

"That's good," said the boy. "But please don't tell the king about me. Promise me that."

The king's servants promised, then they fetched a drum. They began to sing and dance. They ran all the way to the palace.

The king heard the noise.

"It's my servants!" he thought. "Have they got my pole?"

He went out to meet them.

"O King!" his servants said. "Live for a thousand years! We have got the pole for your palace."

The king was happy.

"Where is it?" he said. "Is it the tallest pole in the world? Is it as high as the sky?"

"We don't know that," his servants said. "We haven't got a measuring rod. Give us the longest measuring rod in the world. We will take it to the pole and measure it. If it is the longest pole in the world, we will bring it to you."

"But I haven't got the longest measuring rod in the world," said the king.

"Then we are sorry, Your Majesty," his servants said. "We can't bring the pole to you."

The king was angry.

"This is a trick," he said. "You didn't think of this answer. You met someone clever in the forest. Who was it? Is there a Mattoni in the forest?"

His servants remembered their promise.

"We didn't meet anyone, Your Majesty," they said. "We told you. We need the tallest measuring...."

"Yes, yes," said the king. "But who gave you this idea? Tell me, or you will die!"

So the men told the king about the boy in the forest.

"Send my soldiers to find him," he said to them. "They must bring him here to me."

Soon the soldiers came back. The Mattoni boy was with them.

"Who are you?" said the king. "Your clothes are old and dirty. You are making leather, and you are not a Manno. Your face is not a Manno face. Your voice is not the voice of the Manno."

The boy looked at the king. He was not frightened.

"O King, live for a thousand years!" he said. "I am a Mattoni. When I was a child, your soldiers came to my home. They took my father and my mother away. I ran out of the house. I hid in the forest. The Manno people were kind to me. For many years, I lived with them."

The king was ashamed.

"I was foolish and wicked," he said. "You gave good advice to my servants. You saved their lives. Your people gave good advice to my father. You can give it to me. Come and live with me in my palace."

So the Mattoni boy lived with the king, and became his advisor. The king sent for his relatives, and they returned to their old homes. And after that, the Mattoni people always lived in Kafa, and they were always advisers to the king.

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

## Exercises

### A. How much did you understand?

*In the first part of this story, the king sends the Mattoni people out of his country. Then he sends his servants to find the longest pole in the world.*

*Match the first parts of these sentences about the story with the endings from the list below to show the reasons for the characters' actions.*

1. The new king did not like his father's advisors because .....
  2. The soldiers killed some Mattoni people because .....
  3. The king wanted a big, beautiful palace because .....
  4. The king needed a very long pole because .....
  5. The king's servants travelled through the forest because .....
- a) ..... the pole would make the pillar in the middle of the palace.
  - b) ..... they were looking for the tallest tree in the world.
  - c) ..... they refused to leave the country.
  - d) ..... he thought they were too clever and he did not trust them.
  - e) ..... the kings of other countries had big palaces.

*In the second part of the story, the king's servants come at last to the village of the Mattoni boy, and he gives them good advice.*

*Match the first parts of these sentences about the story with the endings from the list below to show the reasons for the characters' actions.*

1. The king's servants did not go home to their families because.....
2. The people ran away from the king's servants because.....
3. At first, the king's servants did not want to talk to the young man because.....
4. The servants couldn't tell the king that their pole was the longest in the world because.....
5. The king's servants were very happy because.....

- a) ..... his clothes were old and dirty.
- b) ..... at last they could go home to their families.
- c) ..... they were afraid that the king would kill them.
- d) ..... they were frightened of them.
- e) ..... they didn't have a measuring rod.

*In the third part of the story, the servants go back to the king and ask for a measuring rod. They tell the king about the clever boy in the forest. Soldiers bring the boy back to the king, and he becomes the king's advisor.*

*Match the first parts of these sentences about the story with the endings from the list below to show the reasons for the characters' actions.*

1. The king was happy when he saw his servants because .....
2. The king was angry because.....
3. The servants told the king about the boy in the forest because .....
4. The king saw that the boy was not a Manno boy because .....
5. The king was ashamed because .....

- a) ..... his face was not like a Manno face, and his voice was not like a Manno voice.
- b) ..... he had been wrong to punish the Mattoni people.
- c) ..... he thought his servants were playing a trick on him.
- d)..... he thought they had found the longest pole in the world.
- e) ..... he threatened to kill them.

### **B. Where, who, what**

*Answer these questions*

1. The Manno people were tanners. What did they make?
2. When the king sent the Mattoni people away, where did they go?
3. Who looked after the little Mattoni boy?
4. The king wanted something big and beautiful. What was it?
5. What did the king need to make the pillar of his palace?
6. Where did the king's servants go to look for the pole?
7. The king's servants came to a village. Who lived there?
8. What did the king's servants fetch, before they began to sing and dance?
9. Who went to the forest, to find the Mattoni boy?
10. After his return from the forest, where did the Mattoni boy live?

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

The king's servants said, "Your Majesty is the best king in the world." Were they foolish to talk to him like that?

What did you think of the Mattoni boy? Can you find words to describe him?

Can you think of another title for this story?

**[Click here for the 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/d The new king did not like his father's advisors because **he thought they were too clever and he did not trust them.**

2/c The soldiers killed some Mattoni people because **they refused to leave the country.**

3/e The king wanted a big, beautiful palace because **the kings of other countries had big palaces.**

4/a The king needed a very long pole because **the pole would make the pillar in the middle of the palace.**

5/b The king's servants travelled through the forest because **they were looking for the tallest tree in the world.**

#### Part Two

1/c The king's servants did not go home to their families because **they were afraid that the king would kill them.**

2/d The people ran away from the king's servants because **they were frightened of them.**

3/a At first, the king's servants did not want to talk to the young man because **his clothes were old and dirty.**

4/e The servants couldn't tell the king that their pole was the longest in the world because **they didn't have a measuring rod.**

5/b The king's servants were very happy because **at last they could go home to their families.**

#### Part Three

1/d The king was happy when he saw his servants because **he thought they had found the longest pole in the world.**

2/c The king was angry because **he thought his servants were playing a trick on him.**

3/e The servants told the king about the boy in the forest because **he threatened to kill them.**

4/a The king saw that the boy was not a Manno boy because **his face was not like a Manno face, and his voice was not like a Manno voice.**

5/b The king was ashamed because **he had been wrong to punish the Mattoni people.**

### B. Where, who, what

*Answer these questions*

1. The Manno people were tanners. What did they make?

*Leather*

2. When the king sent the Mattoni people away, where did they go?

*Into the forest*

3. Who looked after the little Mattoni boy?

*A kind Manno family*

4. The king wanted something big and beautiful. What was it?

*A palace*

5. What did the king need to make the pillar of his palace?

*A long pole*

6. Where did the king's servants go to look for the pole?

*Into the forest*

7. The king's servants came to a village. Who lived there?

*Manno people and the Mattoni boy*

8. What did the king's servants fetch, before they began to sing and dance?

*A drum*

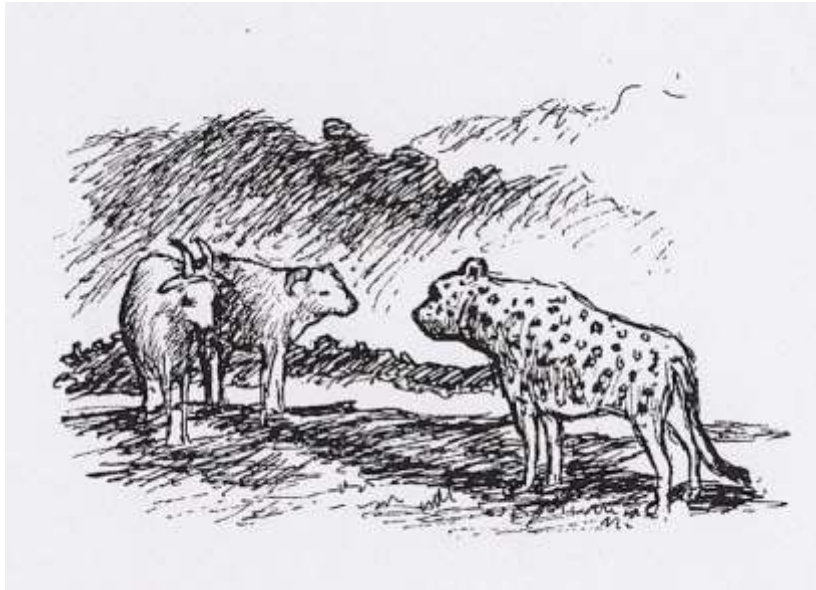
9. Who went to the forest, to find the Mattoni boy?

*Soldiers*

10. After his return from the forest, where did the Mattoni boy live?

*In the palace with the king*

**The Sheep and the Goat**  
**A Wolayita Story**



**Before you read the story**

- Some people will believe anything, even impossible things. They are gullible. Are you gullible? Do you always believe what people tell you?
- Do you have any gullible friends, who always believe what people tell them?

**Now read the story**

Once upon a time, there was a sheep and a goat. They lived with a cruel farmer. He never took them to eat good grass. He never took them to the river to drink. They were thin, and always very hungry.

One day, the goat said to the sheep, "Listen, my friend, I'm very, very hungry. If I don't eat soon, I'm going to die."

"So am I," said the sheep.

"Our master never takes us to the river to drink the clean, cool water and eat the long, green grass," said the goat. "Let's go alone. We will start early tomorrow morning."

"That's a good idea," said the sheep.

So the sheep and the goat got up early the next morning. They left the farm, and began to walk towards the river. They walked and they walked.

"It's a long way," said the sheep. "I'm tired."

"I'm tired, too," said the goat. "But think of the cold, clean river, and the long, green grass. We'll be there soon."

Suddenly, a big lion ran up to them.

"Aha! A sheep and a goat!" said the lion. "That's good. I'm very hungry."

He opened his mouth, and showed his long white teeth.

"Wait!" said the goat. "Don't eat us, Lion. You haven't got time. Didn't you know? The sky is falling on our heads! Run! Save yourself!"

The lion was frightened. He roared, and ran away, into the forest.

The sheep and the goat went on. They were laughing.

"We're cleverer than the lion," they said.

Soon, they met a leopard.

"Oho! A sheep and a goat!" said the leopard. "I'll have them for my dinner."

He opened his mouth and showed his long, white teeth.

"Stop!" said the goat. "Listen to me, Leopard. You can't eat us. The sky is falling down. We're running away. You must run too!"

The leopard was frightened. He waved his tail and ran away, into the forest.

The sheep and the goat laughed louder.

"That stupid leopard!" they said.

Then they met a hyena.

"Mm, a sheep and a goat!" said the hyena. "They're my favourite meat."

He opened his mouth and showed his long, white teeth.

"No!" said the goat. "Stop, Hyena! Haven't you heard the news? The sky is falling down. Run away! Be quick!"

The hyena was frightened. He closed his mouth and ran away, into the forest.

The sheep and the goat laughed and laughed.

"We're the cleverest animals of all," they said.

At last, they came to the river. The water was clean and cold. They drank and drank. Then they went to the field. The grass was long and green. They ate and ate. They were very happy.

At last the goat said, "It's late. We must go home."

"All right," said the sheep, and he followed his friend up the hill away from the river.

"Come on. We must go faster," said the goat. "It's a long way to the farm."

"I can't," said the sheep. "I'm tired, and I'm full of grass and water."

Slowly, they went on. At last, they came to the top of the hill. The path went through the forest.

"It's getting dark," the sheep said. "I'm frightened. I want to go home."

"It's a long way," said the goat. "We can't go home tonight. Look, it's nearly dark. We must stay here all night."

"But I'm frightened," said the sheep. "There are many wild animals here. Perhaps they will come and eat us."

"Don't worry," said the goat. "Look, can you see that big tree? Let's climb it. We will sit in the branches all night. We'll be safe there."

The goat ran to the tree and began to climb it. It was easy for him. He could climb it easily. The sheep tried to climb the tree too. It was difficult for him. He couldn't climb it easily. The goat helped him. At last, both of them were up in the tree. They were safe there.



"Goodnight," said the goat. "I'm going to sleep now."

"Goodnight," said the sheep.

And they went to sleep.

After a long time, they suddenly woke up. Animals were talking under the tree. The sheep and the goat looked down. In the moonlight, they could see the lion, the leopard and the hyena. They were sitting under the tree, and talking.

"I was a fool today," said the lion. "I met a sheep and a goat on the road. I wanted to eat them. Then the goat said, 'Don't eat us. The sky is falling. Run away!' So I ran away, into the forest. They were tricking me. The sky didn't fall at all!"

"I met that sheep and goat," said the leopard. "They tricked me too."

"And me!" said the hyena. "I believed them. I ran away. "

"If I catch those two," the lion roared, "I'll pull off their heads, and take out their hearts, and eat every part of them."

"I will, too," said the leopard.

"And I will," said the hyena.

Up in the tree, the sheep and the goat were very, very frightened.

"What are we going to do?" whispered the sheep, very quietly.

"Nothing," whispered the goat. "We must stay here and wait."

The sheep and the goat sat still in the tree. But then the sheep began to move.

"What are you doing?" said the goat. "Don't move."

"I must," said the sheep. "I drank too much water today. I need to go to the toilet."

"You can't!" said the goat. "Keep still! If your urine falls on the lion, the leopard and the hyena, they will find us here. Didn't you hear them? They will pull off our heads, and take out our hearts and eat every part of us!"

"But I must go," said the sheep. "I can't wait any longer."

"Turn over on to your back, then," said the goat. "Perhaps your urine will run into your wool. Perhaps it won't fall on them."

The sheep tried to turn over, but he couldn't do it. He slipped, and fell out of the tree, on to the heads of the animals below.

"Aaghh!" roared the lion. "The sheep and the goat were right! The sky is falling on

my head!"

"On mine too!" shouted the leopard.

"And on mine!" barked the hyena.

And they all ran away.

The sheep and the goat laughed and laughed.

"Look," said the goat. "It's nearly morning. Now we can go home."

So they ran home safely, and they never went alone to the river again.

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

### Exercises

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

*At the beginning of this story, the sheep and the goat went off to find some good grass to eat.*

*On the way they met some other animals.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. They left the farm, and began to walk towards the river.
2. "Mm, a sheep and a goat!" said the hyena. "They're my favourite meat."
3. Once upon a time, there was a sheep and a goat.
4. "Listen to me, Leopard. You can't eat us. The sky is falling down."

*The sheep and the goat enjoyed the clean water and the good grass. Then they wanted to go home.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. They ate and ate. They were very happy.
2. "Goodnight," said the goat. "I'm going to sleep now."
3. "Come on. We must go faster," said the goat.
4. "Look, can you see that big tree? Let's climb it."

*The lion, the leopard and the hyena met under the tree.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. "If I catch those two," the lion roared, "I'll pull off their heads."
2. So they ran home safely, and they never went alone to the river again.
3. The sheep tried to turn over, but he couldn't do it.
4. "I was a fool today," said the lion.

#### B. Where were they?

*Fill the gaps in these sentences with words from the list below to show where the animals were.*

1. They left the ..... and began to walk towards the .....
2. The leopard was frightened. He waved his tail and ran away, into the .....
3. They drank and drank. Then they went into the .....
4. "All right," said the sheep, and he followed his friend up the .....
5. The goat ran to the ..... and began to climb it.
6. "I was a fool today," said the lion. "I met a sheep and a goat on the ....."
7. "Look, " said the goat. "It's nearly morning. Now we can go ....."

*tree, home, hill, farm, forest, field, river, road*

### C. What were they feeling?

*Fill the gaps in these sentences which retell the story. Choose the right word from the list below to show what the animals were feeling.*

1. The sheep and the goat lived with a cruel farmer, and they were .....
2. The farmer never took them eat good grass, and so they were always .....
3. The sheep and the goat walked a long way to the river, and they became very .....
4. "The sky is falling on our heads!" the goat said to the lion, and the lion was .....
5. When the sheep and the goat came to the river, they ate the long green grass and they were .....
6. The lion, the leopard and the hyena were very ..... with the sheep and the goat.

*hungry, angry, tired, happy, unhappy, frightened*

### D. Sayings

"Out of the frying pan into the fire" is an English saying. It means that if you try to run away from one problem, you might be in worse danger. In this story, the "frying pan" for the sheep and the goat is their life with the cruel farmer. They are always hungry, and so they try to run away. But when they go out from the farm, they meet dangerous enemies (the "fire") who want to eat them.

Do you have any sayings like this one in your language

**[Click here for the 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 these sentences is 3, 1, 4, 2*

Once upon a time, there was a sheep and a goat.

They left the farm, and began to walk towards the river.

"Listen to me, Leopard. You can't eat us. The sky is falling down."

"Mm, a sheep and a goat!" said the hyena. "They're my favourite meat."

*The right order of these sentences is 1, 3, 4, 2*

They ate and ate. They were very happy.

"Come on. We must go faster," said the goat.

"Look, can you see that big tree? Let's climb it."

"Goodnight," said the goat. "I'm going to sleep now."

*The right order of these sentences is 4, 1, 3, 2*

"I was a fool today," said the lion.

"If I catch those two," the lion roared, "I'll pull off their heads."

The sheep tried to turn over, but he couldn't do it.

So they ran home safely, and they never went alone to the river again.

### B. Where were they?

1. They left the **farm** and began to walk towards the **river**.
2. The leopard was frightened. He waved his tail and ran away, into the **forest**
3. They drank and drank. Then they went into the **field**.
4. "All right," said the sheep, and he followed his friend up the **hill**.
5. The goat ran to the **tree** and began to climb it.
6. "I was a fool today," said the lion. "I met a sheep and a goat on the **road**."
7. "Look, " said the goat. "It's nearly morning. Now we can go **home**."

### C. What were they feeling?

1. The sheep and the goat lived with a cruel farmer, and they were **unhappy**.
2. The farmer never took them eat good grass, and so they were always **hungry**.
3. The sheep and the goat walked a long way to the river, and they became very **tired**.
4. "The sky is falling on our heads!" the goat said to the lion, and the lion was **frightened**.
5. When the sheep and the goat came to the river, they ate the long green grass and they were **happy**.
6. The lion, the leopard and the hyena were very **angry** with the sheep and the goat.

The Bear and the Woman  
A Male Story

**Before you read the story**

- Have someone ever stolen something from you?
- How did it make you feel?
- What did you do?

**Now read the story**

A long time ago, the first bear and the first woman were friends. They were good neighbours and they helped each other.

One day, the woman was cooking in her house. She was making porridge.

"This porridge will be good," she thought. "I am glad, because I am very hungry. But I need more water. I will go to the river and get some. I must be quick. I don't want my porridge to burn."

She picked up her empty water pot and ran out of her house. The bear was standing outside.

"Where are you going?" asked the bear. "Why are you running?"

"I'm going to the river to get some water," said the woman, "but my porridge is cooking. I don't want it to burn."

"You are cooking porridge?" said the bear. "I like porridge."

"I'm sorry," the woman said. "I have only a little bit of porridge, and I am very hungry. I can't give any to you."

"Not even a little bit?" said the bear.

"No," said the woman. "Please, bear, don't go into my house and eat my porridge. Please leave it for me."

Then she hurried to the river.

The bear could smell the porridge. He began to feel very hungry.

"I'll just look into the porridge pot," he thought. "I won't eat any of it."

He looked inside the pot.

"What beautiful porridge!" he thought. "I'll just eat a little bit. The woman won't know."

He ate a little bit of the porridge. It was delicious! He ate a bit more, and a bit more. Soon, nearly all the porridge was gone.

The woman came back from the river. She saw the bear. He was eating the last bit of porridge.

"Bear! What are you doing? You are eating all my porridge!" shouted the woman.

She picked up a big stick, and hit the bear on the head. The bear was frightened of the woman. She was big and strong, and she was very angry. Quickly, he ran out of the house.

Outside the house was the woman's donkey. He was tied to a tree with a rope. The donkey saw the bear. It was running towards him.

"Help!" thought the donkey. "The bear's going to eat me!"

He pulled and pulled at his rope. It broke, and he ran away.

In the tree, there was a beehive. The rope shook the tree, and the tree shook the beehive. It fell down, on to the ground.

"What's this?" said the bees. "Someone is attacking us!"

And they all flew out of the beehive.

Near the woman's house, was the house of the chief. And outside the chief's house was a chicken. The bees flew up to the chicken, and stung her.

"Stop! Stop!" cried the chicken. "You're hurting me!"

And she flapped her wings.

On the ground outside the chief's house were some cereals. They were drying in the sun. The chicken's wings made a wind and the wind blew the cereals away.

The chief's dog began to bark and his wife ran out of the house.

"Oh! Oh! My cereals, are blowing way!" she shouted. "You stupid chicken, what are you doing? Why are you flapping your wings?"

"It's not my fault," said the chicken. "The bees stung me. That's why I flapped my wings."

The chief's wife went to the bees.

"Why did you sting the chicken?" she asked.

"It's not our fault," said the bees. "The donkey shook the tree, and our beehive fell down to the ground. We were angry. That's why we stung the chicken."

So the chief's wife went to the donkey.

"Why did you shake the tree?" she asked.

"It's not my fault," said the donkey. "The bear ran towards me and I was frightened. I pulled my rope. That's why I shook the tree."

The chief's wife ran after the bear.

"Why did you frighten the donkey?" she asked him.

"It's not my fault," said the bear. "The woman hit me on the head with a stick. I was running away from her. That's why I frightened the donkey."

The chief's wife went to the woman.

"Why did you hit the bear with your stick?" she asked.

"It's not my fault," said the woman. "The bear came into my house and ate all my porridge. And I am still very hungry."

"Ah," said the chief's wife. "I see. Let's ask the chief, my husband. He will find the answer."

So everyone went to see the chief. He listened carefully.

"The bear is greedy," he said at last. "He likes to eat other people's food. And the woman is selfish. She does not like to share her food with him. They cannot live together. The bear must go away."

So the bear went away to live in the forest. He did not want to go. He was angry with the woman.

The bear still lives in the forest, and he is still angry. The woman knows this. She is frightened of the bear.

"If he catches me, he will eat me," she thinks, and she is always very careful.

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

## Exercises

### A. How much did you understand?

*In this story, everything happens for a reason.*

*In the first part of the story, the woman becomes angry with the bear.*

*Match these beginnings of sentences with endings from the list below, to show the reasons for the actions in the story.*

1. The woman went to the river because.....
2. The woman didn't want to give the bear her porridge because.....
3. The bear began to feel hungry because.....
4. The woman was angry with the bear because.....
5. The bear was frightened of the woman because.....

- a) ..... she was very angry.
- b) ..... he could smell the porridge.
- c) ..... he was eating the last bit of her porridge.
- d) ..... she needed more water for her porridge.
- e) ..... she was very hungry.

*In the second part of the story, one action leads to another.*

*Match these beginnings of sentences with endings from the list below to show the reasons for the actions.*

1. The donkey pulled and pulled at his rope because .....
2. The bees flew out of the beehive because .....
3. The chicken flapped her wings because .....
4. The cereals blew away because .....
5. The chief's dog barked because .....
6. The chief's wife came out of her house because .....

- a) ..... the bees had stung her.
- b) ..... the chicken flapped her wings.
- c) ..... he was frightened of the bear.
- d) ..... the chief's dog was barking.
- e) ..... the cereals were blowing away.
- f) ..... the beehive fell down, on to the ground.

*In the third part of the story, all the animals explain the reasons for their actions to the chief's wife. Then they go to the chief, and he gives them his advice.*

*Match these beginnings of sentences with endings from the list below.*

1. The chief's wife went to the chief because.....
2. The chief said that the bear was greedy because .....
3. The chief said that the woman was selfish because .....
4. The chief told the bear to go away because .....
5. The woman is still frightened of the bear because .....

- a) ..... he could not live with the woman.
- b) ..... he liked to eat other people's food.
- c) ..... the bear is still angry.
- d) ..... she knew that he could find the answer.
- e) ..... she did not like to share her food.

## **B. Where, what, who?**

*Answer these questions.*

1. What was the woman cooking in her pot?
2. What did she need to fetch from the river?
3. Where was the bear when the woman was cooking?
4. Who was tied to a tree outside the woman's house?
5. What fell out of the tree?
6. Who did the bees sting?
7. When the chicken flapped her wings, what blew away?
8. Where was the chief's wife when the dog began to bark?
9. Who found the answer to the problem?
10. Where did the bear go to live?

## **C. English expressions**

Here are two English expressions for you to learn. This story is a good example of them.

A chain is made up of small pieces of metal linked to each other to make a long metal rope. "A chain of events" means that one event causes another, and the second event causes the third, and the third event causes the fourth, and so on. Another way of saying this is "One thing leads to another".



**[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?

- 1/d The woman went to the river because **she needed more water for her porridge.**
- 2/e The woman didn't want to give the bear her porridge because **she was very hungry.**
- 3/b The bear began to feel hungry because **he could smell the porridge.**
- 4/c The woman was angry with the bear because **he was eating the last bit of her porridge.**
- 5/a The bear was frightened of the woman because **she was very angry.**

- 1/c The donkey pulled and pulled at his rope because **he was frightened of the bear.**
- 2/f The bees flew out of the beehive because **the beehive fell down, on to the ground.**
- 3/a The chicken flapped her wings because **the bees had stung her.**
- 4/b The cereals blew away because **the chicken flapped her wings.**
- 5/e The chief's dog barked because the **cereals were blowing away.**
- 6/d The chief's wife came out of her house because **the chief's dog was barking.**

- 1/d The chief's wife went to the chief because **she knew that he could find the answer.**
- 2/b The chief said that the bear was greedy because **he liked to eat other people's food.**
- 3/e The chief said that the woman was selfish because **she did not like to share her food.**
- 4/a The chief told the bear to go away because **he could not live with the woman.**
- 5/c The woman is still frightened of the bear because **the bear is still angry.**

### B. Where, what, who?

1. What was the woman cooking in her pot?

*Porridge*

2. What did she need to fetch from the river?

*Water*

3. Where was the bear when the woman was cooking?

*Outside the woman's house*

4. Who was tied to a tree outside the woman's house?

*The woman's donkey*

5. What fell out of the tree?

*The beehive*

6. Who did the bees sting?

*The chicken*

7. When the chicken flapped her wings, what blew away?

*Some cereals*

8. Where was the chief's wife when the dog began to bark?

*Inside her house*

9. Who found the answer to the problem?

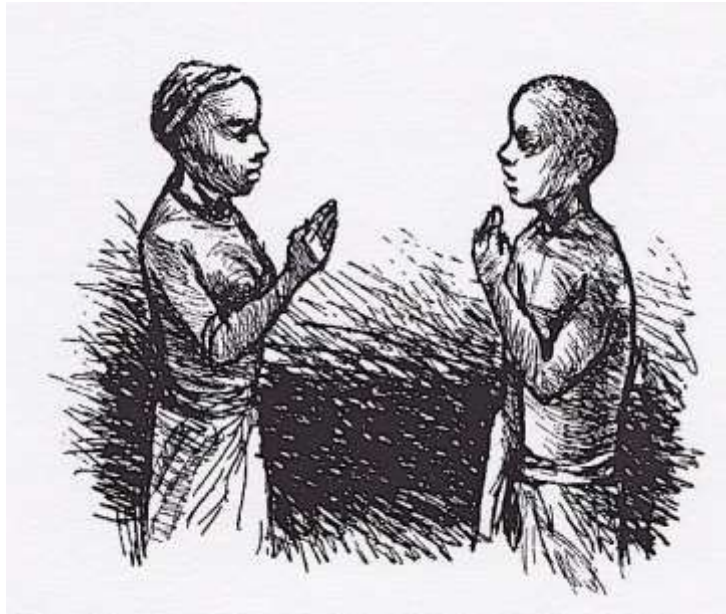
*The chief*

10. Where did the bear go to live?

*In the forest*



**The Hyena Woman**  
**An Ari Story**



**Before you read the story**

- When you meet a stranger, how can you know if he or she is a good person or a bad person?
- Do some people seem good and kind, when they are really cruel?
- Do you know anyone like that?

This is a long story, in three parts. Answer the questions after each part of the story before you read the next part.

*The word "inset" in this story means a kind of false banana plant that some people in Ethiopia eat.*

*Tef is a cereal that grows in Ethiopia.*

*Injera is a kind of flat bread made from tef.*

**Now read Part One of the story**

A man and his wife had two children, a son and a daughter. One sad day the two parents died. The children were alone now. The girl looked after the house, and the boy looked after the cattle.

Every day, the boy took the cattle to the river, and the girl went out to look for food. Then a hyena came to their house. She cooked inset for them, and left it for their supper.

"Who is doing this?" the girl asked her brother one day. "Who is leaving this food for us to eat?"

"We must find out," her brother answered. "Tomorrow, you will take the cattle to the river, and I will climb into the tree beside our house and hide."

So the next day, the girl took the cattle to the river, and her brother climbed the tree and hid. Soon, the hyena came. She began to cook. But she did not use the girl's cooking pot, or her spoons. If she wanted a cooking pot, she called out, "Cooking pot! Come to me!" and a

pot flew to her through the air.

"Here I am," it said.

If the hyena wanted a spoon, she called out, "Spoon, come to me!" and a spoon flew into her hand.

"I am here," it said.

Then the hyena called for a knife, and a pot of butter, and wood for the fire. Soon the food was ready.

The boy was watching. He was frightened.

"She's not a hyena," he thought. "She's a witch."

His hands shook, and the leaves of the tree shook too. The hyena heard the noise. She looked up, and saw the boy.

"Come down here," she said.

The boy came down from the tree. The hyena talked to him. She was kind to him.

"Don't be frightened," she said. "I will not hurt you. I'm your friend. You are a strong, handsome boy. I want to marry you. I will bring you delicious food every day. You will have inset, and meat, and milk."

The boy looked at the hyena. Her smile was full of magic.

"She's good and kind," he thought, "and I like inset, and meat, and milk."

"I want to marry you," he said, "but I can't. I live with my sister. She hates hyenas. She will never agree."

"Talk to her," the hyena said. "She will listen to you. I will hide in the store room. Call me when you are ready."

So the hyena hid in the store room. Soon, the girl came home with the cattle.

"What happened?" she asked her brother. "Who brings our food every day? Did you see them?"

"Yes," her brother answered. "It was a kind hyena."

His sister was frightened.

"A hyena?" she said. "But hyenas are never kind. They are cruel, and wicked, and..."

"This one is good," her brother said. "She is waiting to meet you."

He called out, and the hyena came out of the store room.

The girl looked at her. She was frightened.

"This hyena is not good at all," she thought. "She's a witch."

Then she looked at her brother.

"Her magic is working on him," she thought. "I must take him away."

That night, she talked to her brother.

"Don't you understand?" she said. "This hyena is not good. She's a witch. She will marry you, and then she'll eat you. Please listen to me, dear brother. We must run away!"

She talked for a long time. At last, her brother agreed. He went to the cattle pen, and opened it. Then he quietly drove the cattle into the forest.

"God will help us," his sister told him. "Perhaps we'll be safe in the forest."

So the brother and sister began to live in the forest. Other boys were living in the forest. They were looking after cattle too. The boy became their friend.

## Exercises

### A. How much did you understand?

*In this part of the story, a hyena woman comes to live with the boy and the girl. Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. If the hyena wanted a spoon, she called out, "Spoon, come to me!"
2. "Who is leaving this food for us to eat?"
3. "This hyena is not good at all," she thought. "She's a witch."
4. The boy looked at the hyena. Her smile was full of magic.
5. One day a hyena came to their house.
6. "Please listen to me, dear brother. We must run away!"

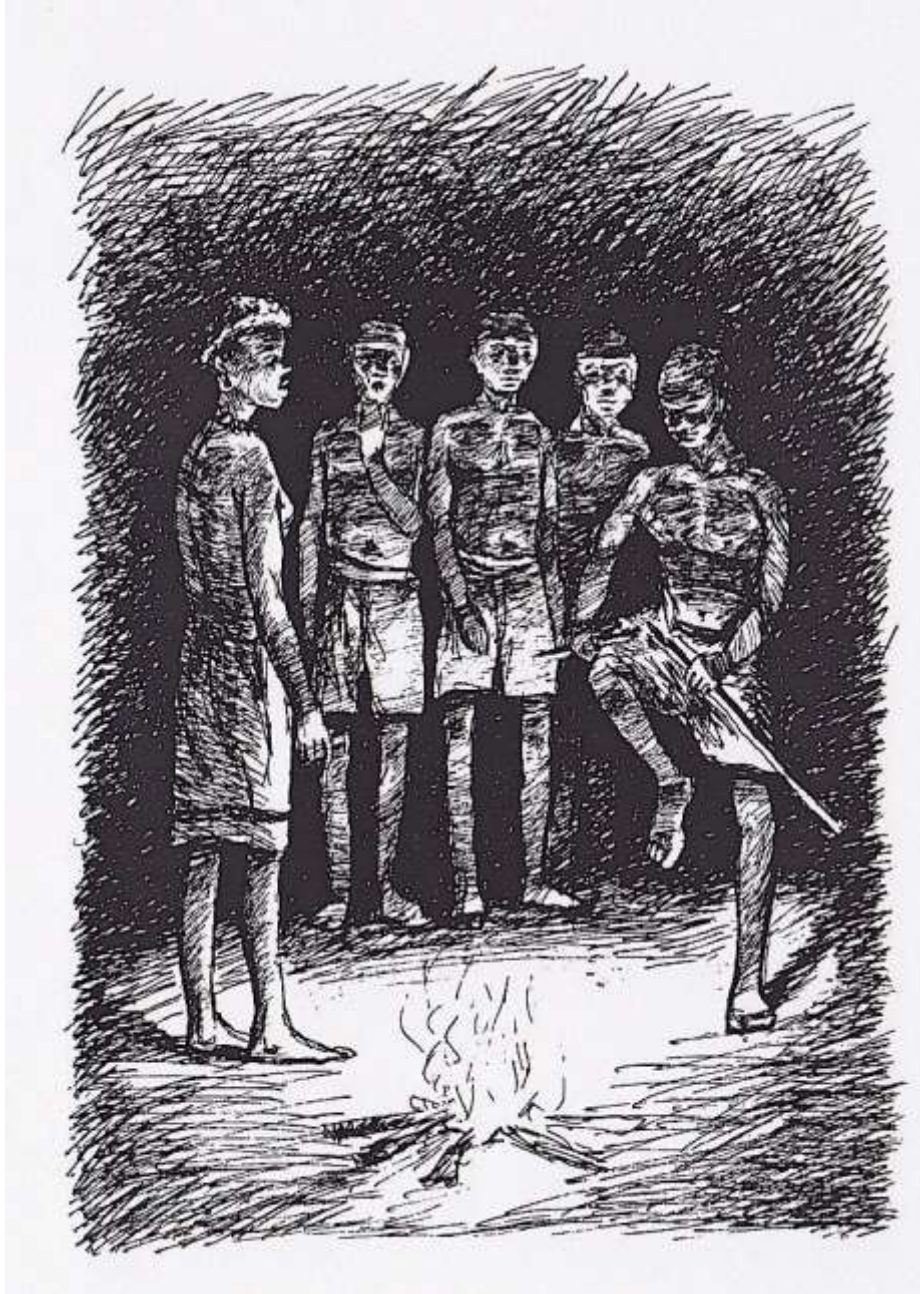
**B. Who, what, where?**

*Answer these questions*

1. When the girl took the cattle to the river, where did her brother hide?
2. When the hyena was cooking, she called for five things. What were they?
3. What did the hyena promise to bring the boy if he married her?
4. Where did the hyena hide while the boy talked to his sister?
5. When the boy and the girl decided to run away, where did they go?

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

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



The hyena didn't forget the boy and the girl. She looked for them everywhere. At last she found them, in the forest. She used her magic and changed herself. She wasn't a hyena now. She was a young woman.

One evening, the boy and his friends were sitting together near their fire. The hyena woman came to them. She was very beautiful. All the boys loved her. They all wanted to marry her.

"Look," she said to them. "I have a long stick here. Only my husband can break this stick."

All the boys wanted to be her husband. They all tried to break the stick. Only the girl's brother could do it.

The hyena woman smiled at the boy.

"I will marry you," she said.

The boy was very happy. He looked at her, and he didn't see a hyena. He only saw a beautiful woman.

The hyena woman married the boy, and she began to live with him and his sister. Every day, the hyena woman cooked good food for them, and looked after the house.

One day, the sister went to a friend's house. They talked for a long time.

"It's late," her friend said to her. "It's dark already. You can't go home now. Stay here with me."

So the sister slept in her friend's house that night.

In their house, the boy and his wife went to bed. Soon, the boy was asleep. The hyena woman got up quietly, and put a piece of iron in the fire. The iron became hotter and hotter.

A rat came up out of his hole. He saw the iron in the fire.

"Wake up, wake up, you foolish boy," he called out. "The iron is hot! Your wife is going to kill you!"

The boy didn't hear the rat, but his wife heard him. She woke the boy up.

"Husband, wake up!" she said. "A rat is eating our food. Kill the rat! Kill the rat!"

The boy jumped up and killed the rat. Then he went back to his bed and slept. And the iron grew hotter in the fire.

A chicken by the door saw the hot iron. She walked into the house.

"Wake up, wake up, you foolish boy," she called out. "The iron is hot! And your wife is going to kill you!"

The boy didn't hear the chicken, but his wife heard her. She woke the boy again.

"Husband, wake up!" she said. "A chicken is eating our food. Kill the chicken! Kill the chicken!"

The boy jumped up, and killed the chicken.

The iron was very hot now. It was not black, but red. The hyena woman picked it up, and pushed it into the boy. At once, he died. Then the hyena woman picked up the boy's body, and hid it in the inset field.

## Exercises

### A. How much did you understand?

*In the second part of the story, the hyena marries the boy, but then she kills him.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. The boy jumped up, and killed the chicken.
2. The hyena woman married the boy, and she began to live with him and his sister.
3. She used her magic and changed herself. She wasn't a hyena now.
4. A rat came up out of his hole. He saw the iron in the fire.
5. Then the hyena woman picked up the boy's body, and hid it in the inset field.
6. So the sister slept in her friend's house that night.

### B. Who, what, where?

*Answer these questions.*

1. Who was living in the forest with the boy and the girl?
2. The hyena woman asked the boys in the forest to break something. What was it?
3. When the boy was asleep, what did the hyena woman put in the fire?
4. Who came up into the house out of his hole?

5. Where was the chicken when she saw the hot iron?
6. Where did the hyena woman hide the boy's body?

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

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



The next morning, the girl came home. The hyena was lying on her bed.

"Where is my brother?" the girl asked her.

"He is at the market," the hyena said. "And I am sick. I must go to the medicine man and get some medicine."

She got up from her bed and went to the door.

"Stay here," she said, "and grind the tef. I will make injera today."

She took one of her hairs, and made a key for the door. She went outside, and locked it. Then she went to call her relatives.

The girl began to grind the tef. She looked up. A rat was watching her.

"Listen," the rat said. "Your sister-in-law is not a woman. She is a hyena. She has killed your brother, and my brother, the rat. Now she is going to find her relatives. They will come here together and eat your brother's body. Then they will kill you and eat you too."

The girl began to cry.

"Oh, who will help me now?" she said. "My father is dead, and my mother is dead, and now my brother is dead too!"

"I will help you," said the rat. "Your brother's body is in the inset field. Take a gourd, and go to your brother. Put some of his blood in the gourd. Then run away, and hide."

"But my sister-in-law has locked the door," said the girl. "I can't get out of the house."

"I will open it for you," said the rat.

He went to the door and began to chew the lock with his teeth. Soon, the door was open.

The girl took a gourd and ran to the inset field. She found her brother's body, and poured some of his blood into the gourd. Then she ran away.

Soon, the hyena woman came back to the house with her relatives. They looked inside the house, and they looked outside the house, they looked in the cattle pen, and in the inset field. The girl wasn't there.

"She has escaped!" the hyena woman said to her relatives. "Wait here, and I will go and find her."

The girl was running through the forest. She met a monkey.

"Why are you running, girl?" asked the monkey. "Are you frightened of someone?"

"Yes. My sister-in-law, the hyena, is looking for me," said the girl. "She has killed my brother, and now she wants to kill me."

"Don't worry," said the monkey. "I'm not frightened of hyenas. I'll stop her."

He stood in the path, and waited, but when he saw the hyena, he was very, very

frightened, and he ran up into a tree.

The girl ran on.

"God, help me!" she prayed. "My father is dead, my mother is dead. The hyena has killed my brother, and now she wants to kill me too."

God heard the girl's prayer. He came and stood in front of her.

"What is in your gourd?" he asked.

"My brother's blood," said the girl.

"Give it to me," said God.

The girl gave it to him.

"Now go and hide in the forest," said God.

So the girl hid in the forest. Soon, the hyena ran up.

"Where are you going?" God asked her.

"I'm looking for my sister-in-law," said the hyena. "Have you seen her?"

"Yes," said God. "You will find her there, at the end of this path. Run quickly!"

The hyena ran quickly down the path. There was a gorge at the end of the path. The hyena fell into it, and there she died.

"Daughter, come here!" God called out, and the girl ran to him, out of the forest.

"Your enemy is dead," said God, "and now your brother is alive."

He put his hand into the gourd and touched the boy's blood. At once, the blood became the boy.

The brother and sister went home, and lived happily in their house, and the hyenas never came near them again.

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

## Exercises

### A. How much did you understand?

*In the last part of the story, the girl finds her brother's body and brings him back to life. Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. "I will help you," said the rat.
2. The brother and sister went home, and lived happily in their house.
3. God heard the girl's prayer.
4. "Where is my brother?" the girl asked her.
5. The girl was running through the forest. She met a monkey.
6. There was a gorge at the end of the path. The hyena fell into it.

### B. Who, what, where

*Answer these questions*

1. Where was the hyena when the girl came home from her friend's house?
2. What did the hyena use to make a key for the door?
3. The rat told the girl to take something to the inset field. What was it?
4. The hyena woman locked the door. Who opened it for the girl?
5. Where did God tell the girl to hide?
6. Who touched the boy's blood with his hand?

### C. Other stories

Did you like this story? Do you like stories about magical characters, like the hyena woman, or ogres, or witches? Think of any other stories like this that you know, and tell them to your friends.

#### **D. Make a play**

This story can make a very good play. Choose different people to play the boy, the girl, the hyena woman, the rat, the chicken and God himself.

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

If you liked reading this story, you might like *The Lion's Bride*, a story from Somalia. Click on the link to read it.

**[The Lion's Bride]**

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

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

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

## Part One

### A. How much did you understand?

*The right order of these sentences is 5, 2, 1, 4, 3, 6*

One day a hyena came to their house.

"Who is leaving food for us to eat?"

If the hyena wanted a spoon, she called out, "Spoon, come to me!"

The boy looked at the hyena. Her smile was full of magic.

"This hyena is not good at all," she thought. "She's a witch."

"Please listen to me, dear brother. We must run away!"

### B. Who, what, where?

*Answer these questions*

1. When the girl took the cattle to the river, where did her brother hide?

*In the tree beside the house*

2. When the hyena was cooking, she called for five things. What were they?

*A pot, a spoon, a knife, a pot of butter and wood for the fire*

3. What did the hyena promise to bring the boy if he married her?

*Delicious food, inset, meat and milk*

4. Where did the hyena hide while the boy talked to his sister?

*In the store room*

5. When the boy and the girl decided to run away, where did they go?

*Into the forest*

## Part Two

### A. How much did you understand?

*The right order of the sentences is 3, 2, 6, 4, 1, 5*

She used her magic and changed herself. She wasn't a hyena now.

The hyena woman married the boy, and she began to live with him and his sister.

So the sister slept in her friend's house that night.

A rat came up out of his hole. He saw the iron in the fire.

The boy jumped up, and killed the chicken.

The hyena woman picked up the boy's body, and hid it in the inset field.

### B. Who, what, where?

*Answer these questions.*

1. Who was living in the forest with the boy and the girl?

*Other boys*

2. The hyena woman asked the boys in the forest to break something. What was it?

*A long stick*

3. When the boy was asleep, what did the hyena woman put in the fire?

*A piece of iron*

4. Who came up into the house out of his hole?

*A rat*

5. Where was the chicken when she saw the hot iron?

*By the door*

6. Where did the hyena woman hide the boy's body?

*In the inset field*

### **Part Three**

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

*The right order of these sentences is 4, 1, 5, 3, 6, 2*

"Where is my brother?" the girl asked her.

"I will help you," said the rat.

The girl was running through the forest. She met a monkey.

God heard the girl's prayer.

There was a gorge at the end of the path. The hyena fell into it.

The brother and sister went home, and lived happily in their house.

#### **B. Who, what, where**

*Answer these questions*

1. Where was the hyena when the girl came home from her friend's house?

*Lying on her bed*

2. What did the hyena use to make a key for the door?

*One of her hairs*

3. The rat told the girl to take something to the inset field. What was it?

*A gourd*

4. The hyena woman locked the door. Who opened it for the girl?

*The rat*

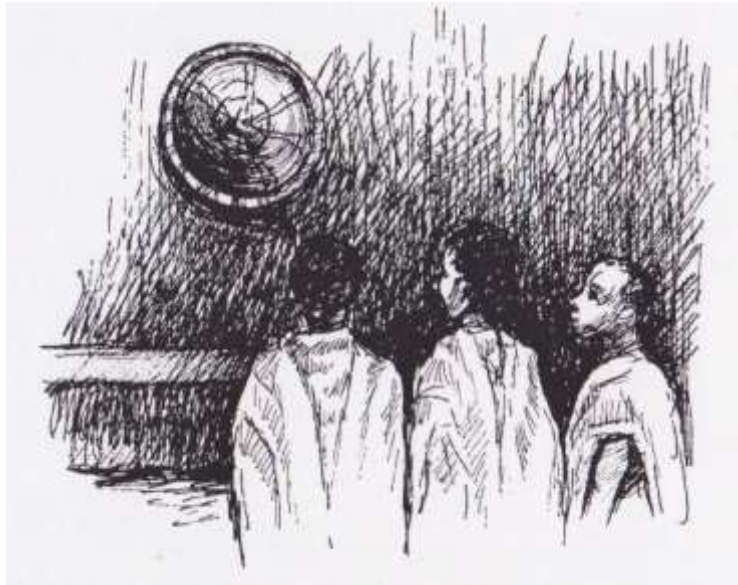
5. Where did God tell the girl to hide?

*In the forest*

6. Who touched the boy's blood with his hand?

*God*

**The Father's Shield**  
**A Sidama Story**



**Before you read the story**

- What does it mean to be kind?
- Are you a kind person?
- What kind things have you done for other people?

*Inset is a kind of false banana plant that many people in Ethiopia eat.*

**Now read the story**

In the old days, in Sidama, there was a man with three sons. He was a good man, but he had an enemy. This enemy was a merchant. He cheated the good man, and stole things from him.

After many years, the father became old. He could not look after his cattle or work in his fields now. He was tired.

He called his sons to him.

"Listen," he said to them. "I'm going to give you all my property. You, my eldest son, can have my cattle. You, my second son, can have my fields. And you, my youngest son, can have the inset plantation. But one thing I will keep."

"What's that, Father?" his sons asked him.

"It's my shield," their father answered. "My shield belonged to my father, and to his father, and to his father. It's very old. It's the best thing in our family."

The three brothers looked at the shield. It was hanging on the wall, above their father's bed. They all wanted it.

"I can only give it to one of you," their father said.

His sons looked at each other.

"Will you give it me, Father?" the oldest brother asked.

"Or to me?" asked the second brother.

"Or to me?" asked the youngest one.

"I don't know," his father said. "I'm going to give you a test. I want you all to go away

from home. Travel to many places. Go to cities, towns and villages. You will meet many people on the road. Be kind. Remember, kindness is the greatest thing of all. After your journey, come home. Then I will decide."

The three brothers obeyed their father. They said goodbye to him, and went away. Their father lay in his bed, under the shield, and waited.

At last, his three sons came home. They stood beside their father's bed.

"Oh Father," the eldest one said. "I saw wonderful things on my journey. I saw the sea, and great rivers, and..."

"Yes, yes, my son," his father said. "But were you good? Were you kind to people on the road?"

"Oh yes, Father," his eldest son said. "One day, I was passing a river. A mother was there with her little child. The child ran away from her and fell into the river. Big crocodiles were swimming towards the child, but I jumped into the water and saved it. Wasn't that kind?"

His father smiled at him.

"Yes, it was kind," he said. "But it was your duty. Everyone wants to help a mother and her child. Now, my second son, tell me about your journey."

"Well, Father," the second son said, "I passed through forests, and saw lions, and leopards, and..."

"That's good, my son," his father said. "But did you meet people? Were you kind to them?"

"Of course, Father," his second son said. "One day, I was walking through a valley. It was a lonely place, in the middle of the mountains. I met a rich man there. He had a hundred silver dollars in a bag. He said to me, 'I want to visit my relatives in a village near here, but I don't want to take my money with me. Please look after it for me.' I agreed. I sat beside the road and kept his bag of silver dollars for him. I didn't steal it, and run away. After a long time, he came back. He wanted to give me ten dollars. 'No,' I said. 'This is your money. I don't want any of it.' I was kind, Father, wasn't I?"

"No," his father said. "You were honest. That was good, but it was not kind. Now, my third son. What did you do?"

"Oh Father," his third son said, "I went into the mountains, and I saw deep gorges, and..."

"But who did you meet?" his father asked. "Were you kind to them?"

"Well, Father," the youngest son said. "One day, I was walking in the high mountains. I saw a man there. He was asleep. He was lying near the edge of a deep gorge. 'If he turns, he will fall,' I thought. 'I must wake him, and bring him back from the edge.' I went near him, and then I saw that it was our enemy, the merchant. He has cheated you and stolen your money for many years. But I didn't stop. I woke him, and brought him back from the edge of the gorge."

His father smiled at him.

"My son," he said, "you did a very good thing. You showed true kindness. That man hates us, but you saved his life. You forgave him, and didn't try to punish him. The shield of my fathers is yours."

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

## **Exercises**

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

*In the first part of the story, the father tells his son about the shield. He gives them a test to find out which brother is the kindest.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. "I want you all to go away from home."
2. "My shield belonged to my father, and to his father, and to his father."
3. This enemy was a merchant.
4. "Will you give it to me, Father?" the oldest brother asked.

*In the second part of the story, the brothers return and tell their father what they have done.*

*Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. "I sat beside the road and kept his bag of silver dollars for him."
2. "He has cheated you and stolen your money for many years."
3. Their father lay in his bed, under his shield, and waited.
4. "The shield of my fathers is yours."

### **B. Which brother?**

*The old man gave his property to his sons. Which brother (the oldest brother or the second brother or the youngest brother) received which thing?*

the inset plantation

the cattle

the fields

*The brothers saw different things on their journeys. Which brother saw these things?*

mountains and deep gorges

forests, lions and leopards

the sea and great rivers

*The brothers helped different people. Which brother helped which person?*

a rich man with a bag of silver dollars

the family's enemy

a mother with her little child

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

Do you think that the old man gave the shield to the right son?

Why was the youngest son kinder than his brothers?

Was the youngest son right to save the life of the family's enemy?

Imagine that you are the youngest son. Would you do the same thing? Would you save your family's enemy?

### **D. More stories to enjoy**

If you enjoyed this story, there are others in this collection that you might like. Click on the links below.

**[Three Boxes for Three Sons]**

**[The Father's Plan]**



[\[Click here for the answers to the exercises\]](#)

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

### A. How much did you understand?

*The right order of these sentences is 3, 2, 4, 1*

This enemy was a merchant.

"My shield belonged to my father, and to his father, and to his father."

"Will you give it to me, Father?" the oldest brother asked.

"I want you all to go away from home."

*The right order of these sentences is 3, 1, 2, 4*

Their father lay in his bed, under his shield, and waited.

"I sat beside the road and kept his bag of silver dollars for him."

"He has cheated you and stolen your money for many years."

"The shield of my fathers is yours."

### B. Which brother?

*The brothers who received the property were:*

the inset plantation – **the youngest brother**

the cattle – **the oldest brother**

the fields – **the second brother**

*What the brothers saw on their journeys:*

mountains and deep gorges – **the youngest brother**

forests, lions and leopards – **the second brother**

the sea and great rivers – **the oldest brother**

*Who the brothers helped on their journeys:*

a rich man with a bag of silver dollars - **the second brother**

the family's enemy - **the youngest brother**

a mother with her little child - **the oldest brother**

**The Merchant and the King**  
**A Sidama Story**

**Before you read the story**

- This is a very beautiful and ancient story, with a deep meaning. Just read it and enjoy it!

Once there was a merchant. Every year, he left home and travelled through the whole land of Ethiopia. He bought goods and sold them again; then he went home with his money.

One day, the merchant was travelling along a road in Sidama. A crowd of people was standing near the road. They were looking at a field.

The merchant stopped, and looked at the field too.

A farmer was ploughing the field, but he was not using an ox. A man was pulling the plough. The plough was tied to his back, and the farmer was beating him with a stick.

"Go on! Pull!" the farmer was shouting. "You lazy man! Pull my plough!"

"How sad," thought the merchant. "This unhappy man is not an animal. He is a man!"

Tears came into his eyes.

The poor man looked up and saw him.

"Don't cry for me, my friend," he said.

"But I am sad for you," said the merchant. "You are a man, not an animal. How can you pull a plough, like an ox?"

The poor man smiled.

"Everything changes," he said. "Nothing stays the same. My sad life will change too. I will not pull this plough for ever."

The merchant shook his head, and went on down the road.

The next year he came to Sidama again. As he was travelling past the field, he remembered the man tied to the plough. He stopped in the town and talked to a woman in the street.

"Last year," he said, "I came this way. I saw a poor man. He was in a field, pulling a plough, and the farmer was beating him. Where is that man now? Did he die?"

"Oh no," the woman said. "He didn't die. God looked down from Heaven and was sorry for him. He gave the man money and power. That man is now our king."

The merchant was very surprised.

"Your king?" he said. "Where is he? I must see him."

"Go to the palace then," the woman said. "You'll find him there."

So the merchant went to the palace. He stood inside the gate with a crowd of people, and waited. At last, the king came out of the palace.

"Is it him? Is it the same man?" the merchant thought. "Yes! It is! He's rich and powerful now. This is wonderful!"

And the merchant began to laugh.

The king heard him.

"Who is that man?" he asked his servants. "Bring him to me."

The servants brought the merchant to the king.

"Who are you?" the king asked him. "Why are you laughing?"

"I am a merchant," the merchant answered. "Last year, I came to Sidama. I saw you. You were tied to a plough. You were pulling it, and the farmer was beating you. I was very sad, and tears came to my eyes. Now I am here again. I asked for news of you. 'That man is now our king,' they told me. So I came here to see you. God has blessed you, and I am very happy for you."

"I remember you," the king said. "Come and sit beside me, my friend. Let us eat and drink, and be happy together. But I told you something last year. Do you remember my words? Everything changes. Nothing stays the same. This happy life will change too, and I will not be a king forever."

The merchant and the king ate and drank together, and talked for a long time. Then the king gave the merchant gold and money, and the merchant went on down the road.

The next year, the merchant came to Sidama again. He was happy.

"I will see my friend, the king," he thought, and he hurried to the palace. He went in through the gates and waited. At last, the king came out of the palace.

"But I don't know this man," thought the merchant. "Who is he? And where is my friend?"

A man was standing next to the merchant.

"I was here last year," the merchant said to him, "and this man was not the king. Where is the old king now?"

"Oh, he died," the man said. "This is our new king."

The merchant was very sad when he heard this.

"Where is the old king's grave?" he asked the man. "I want to see it."

"Come with me. I will show you," the man said.

So the merchant went with the man to the old king's grave, and he read the words on the gravestone.

"Everything changes," they said. "Nothing stays the same. This grave stone will not be here for ever."

Sadly, the merchant went on, down the road.

Five years later, he came back to Sidama.

"I must visit my old friend's grave," he thought.

But he could not find the grave, or the gravestone. He stopped a boy in the street.

"Where is the old king's grave?" he asked him. "I saw it here, five years ago."

"Oh," said the boy. "Didn't you know? We have a new town plan now. Our city is growing bigger and bigger. The old things must go. Do you see that modern building? It's the tallest in our city. It's fifteen storeys high. The king's grave was in that place. The builders broke it up, and threw the stones away."

The merchant was very sad when he heard this. He went up to the big modern building, and looked at it. It was made of concrete, glass and steel. And over the door some words were written.

"Everything changes," they said. "Nothing stays the same. This building will not be here for ever."

"You were right, my friend," the merchant said, and he went on, down the road.

## Exercises

### A. How much did you understand?

*These sentences retell the story. Fill in the gaps using the verbs from the list below.*

1. Every year, a merchant left home and ..... through the whole land of Ethiopia.
2. The merchant saw a man in a field, who was ..... a plough.
3. The farmer was ..... the man with a stick.
4. When the merchant returned to Sidama, he ..... the man tied to the plough.
5. The merchant stood inside the gate of the palace and .....
6. The merchant and the king ate and drank together, and ..... for a long time.
7. The merchant went to the old king's grave, and he ..... the words on the gravestone.
8. The merchant met a boy, who said to him, "This town is ..... bigger."
9. There were words over the door of the building. They said, "Everything ....."

*remembered, waited, travelled, growing, talked, changes, pulling, read, beating*

### B. Who is talking?

*Who said these sentences? Choose the right answer from the list below*

1. "You lazy man! Pull my plough!"
2. "Don't cry for me, my friend."
3. "You are a man, not an animal."
4. "God looked down from Heaven and was sorry for him."
5. "Who is that man? Bring him to me."
6. "Now I am here again. I asked for news of you."
7. "Come and sit beside me, my friend."
8. "This is our new king."
9. "Where is the old king's grave?"
10. "We have new town plan now."

*a boy, the merchant, a farmer, the poor man, a woman, the king, a man*

### C. What do you think?

Do you think that life brings many changes?

If you are happy now, do you fear that one day you will be unhappy?

If you are unhappy now, do you hope that one day you will be happy?

What can you do to change your life and make it happier?

### D. Make a play

This story can make a very good play. Choose two good actors to be the merchant and the king. There are also parts for crowds, and for the woman, the man, and the boy who talks to the merchant.

## Answers to the Exercises

### A. How much did you understand?

1. Every year, a merchant left home and **travelled** through the whole land of Ethiopia.
2. The merchant saw a man in a field, who was **pulling** a plough.
3. The farmer was **beating** the man with a stick.
4. When the merchant returned to Sidama, he **remembered** the man tied to the plough.
5. The merchant stood inside the gate of the palace and **waited**.
6. The merchant and the king ate and drank together, and **talked** for a long time.
7. The merchant went to the old king's grave, and he **read** the words on the gravestone.
8. The merchant met a boy, who said to him, "This town is **growing** bigger."
9. There were words over the door of the building. They said, "Everything **changes**."

### B. Who is talking?

1. "You lazy man! Pull my plough!"

*The farmer*

2. "Don't cry for me, my friend."

*The poor man*

3. "You are a man, not an animal."

*The merchant*

4. "God looked down from Heaven and was sorry for him."

*The woman*

5. "Who is that man? Bring him to me."

*The king*

6. "Now I am here again, I asked for news of you."

*The merchant*

7. "Come and sit beside me, my friend."

*The king*

8. "This is our new king."

*A man*

9. "Where is the old king's grave?"

*The merchant*

10. "We have new town plan now."

*A boy*