

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 Somalia



[Small map with region highlighted]

Ethiopian Somalia is a hot, dry region in the east of Ethiopia where most of the people are Somali, and speak the Somali language. In the old days, people used to move around, looking for good grass for their cattle to eat. They took their houses with them.

To read the stories, click on the titles below.

The Stories

1. The Bride's Test
2. Wak and the Raven
3. Deya Ali and the Thieves
4. Adam's Friend
5. The Head and the Tea-seller
6. The Lion's Bride
 - Part One: The Lion's Wedding
 - Part Two: Fatuma Runs Away
 - Part Three: Fatuma and the Bird
7. The Cat and the Woman
8. Hirsi and Kabaalaf
9. Ahmed and the Clever Woman

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The Bride's Test

Before you read the story

- What kind of person do you want to marry?
- How can you choose a good husband or wife?
- Is it important to know someone well before you agree to marry them?

Now read the story

One day, a boy was walking near his village. He looked up, and saw a beautiful girl. She was looking after her father's goats. The boy fell in love with the girl at once. He wanted to marry her.

"You're the most beautiful girl in the world!" said the boy. "I want to marry you!"

The girl smiled at him.

"I like you, too," she said. "But I can't marry you. My father will not agree."

"Then let's run away together," said the young man. "I'll come with my friend tomorrow and take you to my home."

They talked for a long time, and at last the girl agreed.

The next night, the young man came back to the girl's village. His friend was with him.

"Come, my beautiful one!" he called softly. "Run away with me!"

The girl heard him. She ran out of her village and found the young man and his friend. They laughed and smiled at each other. They were happy.

"Let's go," said the young man. "It's a long way to my village."

They walked all night. In the morning they were hungry.

The girl said, "Let's find something to put in our mouths."

"How can we do that?" the young man said. "There's no food here. You know that already."

But his friend smiled at the girl.

"She's not talking about food," he said. "She means, 'Let's find some twigs to brush our teeth with.'"

The girl smiled back at him.

"You're right," she said. "I did mean that."

They went on together. The sun was high in the sky now. It was midday, and they were all tired.

"Let's rest," said the girl.

They all sat down under the trees. The girl and the young man's friend took off their shoes, but the young man didn't take off his shoes.

"Why don't you rest?" the girl said to him.

"I am resting," the young man answered.

"This boy is stupid," thought the girl. "How can he rest with his shoes on his feet?"

The young man's friend was looking at her.

"The young lady sees your shoes," he said to his friend. "Why are you still wearing them? If you want to rest, you must take them off."

The girl looked at him.

"Yes," she said. "You understand."

Soon they went on, and came to a village. The people were kind. They invited them to eat.

At the end of the meal, the girl said, "Some of the meat is still left. Let's get rid of it."

"What do you mean?" said the young man. "Look at the plate. It's empty. The meat is finished."

His friend was watching the girl. He stood up and went to a bush. He broke off a thorn and gave it to her.

"Some of the meat is stuck between our teeth," he said. "She wants us to get it out."

"Really? Oh dear, I didn't understand," said the young man.

"You don't understand anything," said the girl. She was smiling at his friend.

The evening came at last. The three travellers arrived at the house of the sheikh. He was ready to marry the young man and the girl.

"Are you ready to marry?" the sheikh said to the girl.

"Yes," she answered.

"Do you want to marry this young man?" said the sheikh.

"Oh no," the girl said. "I want to marry his friend."

So the girl and the young man's friend were married. The poor young man shook his head.

"I made a mistake," he said. "I chose the wrong friend to come with me. If I take another bride from her father's house, I will choose my friend more carefully. I will make sure that he is poorer, less handsome and less clever than me!"

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

These sentences retell the story. Are they true or false?

1. The young man and the girl met when the girl was going to fetch water.
2. The girl agreed to run away with the young man.

3. The young man, his friend and the girl walked all night, and in the morning they were hungry.
4. The girl told the young man to find her some food.
5. The girl wanted to find twigs to brush their teeth.
6. In the middle of the day, the young man's friend rested with his shoes on.
7. Some kind people in a village gave them food to eat.
8. The young man, his friend and the girl didn't finish eating all the meat.
9. The girl married the young man's friend.

B. What did the girl mean?

The young man doesn't understand the meaning of the girl's words, but his friend explains them.

These sentences are what the girl says. Match them to the friend's explanations below.

1. "Let's find something to put in our mouths."
 2. "Why don't you rest?"
 3. "Some of the meat is still left. Let's get rid of it."
- a) "Some of the meat is stuck between our teeth. She wants us to get it out."
 b) "Let's find some twigs to brush our teeth with."
 c) "The young lady sees your shoes. Why are you still wearing them?"

C. Where, what, when, who?

Answer these questions.

1. What was the girl doing when the boy met her?
2. When did the young man come to take her away?
3. Where did the young man want to take her?
4. When did they sit down to rest?
5. Who gave them some food?
6. What did the girl use to clean her teeth?
7. In the evening, the three travellers arrived somewhere. Where was it?
8. Who said, "I made a mistake."

D. What do you think?

Was the girl right to marry the young man's friend?

Do you feel sorry for the young man?

Do you think that the girl and her husband will be happy together?

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

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

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

These sentences retell the story. Are they true or false?

1. The young man and the girl met when the girl was going to fetch water.

False. She was looking after her father's goats.

2. The girl agreed to run away with the young man.

True

3. The young man, his friend and the girl walked all night, and in the morning they were hungry.

True

4. The girl told the young man to find her some food.

False. She said, "Let's find something to put in our mouths."

5. The girl wanted to find twigs to brush their teeth.

True

6. In the middle of the day, the young man's friend rested with his shoes on.

False. The young man rested with his shoes on.

7. Some kind people in a village gave them food to eat.

True

8. The young man, his friend and the girl didn't finish eating all the meat.

False. The plate was empty. The meat was finished.

9. The girl married the young man's friend.

True

B. What did the girl mean?

1/b "Let's find something to put in our mouths." **"Let's find some twigs to brush our teeth with."**

2/c "Why don't you rest?" **"The young lady sees your shoes. Why are you still wearing them?"**

3/a "Some of the meat is still left. Let's get rid of it." **"Some of the meat is stuck between our teeth. She wants us to get it out."**

C. Where, what, when, who?

1. What was the girl doing when the boy met her?

She was looking after her father's goats.

2. When did the young man come to take her away?

The next night

3. Where did the young man want to take her?

To his home/To his village

4. When did they sit down to rest?

Midday

5. Who gave them some food?

Kind people in a village

6. What did the girl use to clean her teeth?

A thorn

7. In the evening, the three travellers arrived somewhere. Where was it?

The house of the sheikh

8. Who said, "I made a mistake."?

The young man

Wak and the Raven

Before you read the story

- What makes a good sheikh or judge?
- Is it right for a sheikh or judge to take more for him or herself?
- Do you know a great sheikh?
- Do you respect that person? Why?

Now read the story

Once upon a time, there was a Sun God. His name was Wak. The Raven was Wak's messenger. He used to fly from the earth to the sky and from the sky to the earth with messages in his beak. In those days, the Raven was a great sheikh. He was all white, and there was not a black feather on him.

Now the birds could not live together peacefully. They fought every day over their food. The little birds tried to take the meat from the big birds. The big birds tried to steal the seeds and fruit from the little birds. They could not agree.

At last, they called a meeting.

"We must share our food between us," they said, "or there will never be peace. We need a judge to help us. Let's ask our sheikh, the Raven. He can tell us what to do."

The Raven listened carefully to all the other birds.

"I will ask our master, Wak, the Sun God," he said, and he flew up into the sky.

The other birds waited for the Raven for a long time. At last, he flew back to them.

"Listen," he said. "Wak has given me the answer to your question. Let the big birds eat only meat. Let the small birds eat only fruit and seeds."

"But who is a big bird? Am I big?" asked the partridge.

"And who is a small bird? Am I small?" asked the parrot.

The Raven thought for a moment.

"If the birds are bigger than me, they are big birds," he said. "They can eat meat. But if they are smaller than me, they can only eat fruit and seeds."

"And you?" a little bird called out. "What will you eat, Raven?"

The Raven smiled.

"Oh," he said, "I am in the middle, not big, not small. Also, I am your sheikh and the messenger of Wak. I can eat meat and fruit, and anything I like."

The other birds were angry.

"You have cheated us!" they said.

They tried to catch the Raven, but he flew away from them. He went up, up into the sky, to find his master, Wak.

"Wak!" he called. "Wak! Wak! Help me!"

On he flew, closer and closer to the sun. The heat burned his feathers, and they became black. Now there was not a white feather on him.

From that day, the Raven's feathers have always been black, and he still calls out, "Wak! Wak! Help me!"

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Put these sentences in the right order.

1. "Let the big birds eat only meat. Let the small birds eat only fruit and seeds."
2. Now the birds could not live together peacefully.
3. On he flew, closer and closer to the sun.
4. The Raven was Wak's messenger.
5. "I can eat meat and fruit, and anything I like."
6. "Let's ask our sheikh, the Raven."

B. Who said these sentences?

1. "We need a judge to help us."
2. "I will ask our master, Wak, the Sun God."
3. "But who is a big bird? Am I big?"
4. "And who is a small bird? Am I small?"
5. "And you? What will you eat, Raven?"
6. "I am in the middle, not big, not small."
7. "You have cheated us!"
8. "Wak! Wak! Help me!"

C. Find out about birds

Ethiopia has more wild birds than most places in the world. The birds of Ethiopia are famous and people come from many different countries to see them.

Find out about Ethiopian birds. Make a list of all the bird names that you know.

What do they eat? Where do they make their nests?

Do you know why some birds are black, some are white, some are brown and some are brightly coloured?

[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 4, 2, 6, 1, 5, 3

The Raven was Wak's messenger.

Now the birds could not live together peacefully.

“Let's ask our sheikh, the Raven.”

“Let the big birds eat only meat. Let the small birds eat only fruit and seeds.”

“I can eat meat and fruit, and anything I like.”

On he flew, closer and closer to the sun.

B. Who said these sentences?

1. "We need a judge to help us."

All the birds

2. "I will ask our master, Wak, the Sun God."

The Raven

3. "But who is a big bird? Am I big?"

The partridge

4. "And who is a small bird? Am I small?"

The parrot

5. "And you? What will you eat, Raven?"

A little bird

6. "I am in the middle, not big, not small."

The Raven

7. "You have cheated us!"

The other birds

8. "Wak! Wak! Help me!"

The Raven

Deya Ali and the Thieves

Before you read the story

- Do you ever feel jealous of other people?
- What makes you feel jealous?
- Can jealousy make people do bad things?
- Can you think of an example?

Now read the story

Part One

Deya Ali the fox lived with her uncle, the lion. With them lived a group of friends, the hyena, the bag of coffee husks, the forked stick, the butter gourd and the sack of barley chaff.

They lived happily together, with their goats and their cows and their camels.

But Deya Ali was jealous of all her friends.

"There are too many of us here," she thought. "We have to share everything. There is never enough for me."

One day, Deya Ali said to the lion, "Uncle, let me take the cows and the goats out tomorrow, and let the hyena come with me."

"All right," said the lion.

So the next day, Deya Ali and the hyena took the cattle out together.

When it was nearly evening, Deya Ali said to the hyena, "I'm very hungry. I must eat something soon."

"I'm hungry, too," said the hyena. "Let's eat one of the cows."

"Oh, we can't do that," said Deya Ali. "The lion will beat us. Look, over there, near the river, I can see some men. They have some nice, fat cows. Why don't you kill one of them for us?"

So the hyena ran down to the river, and tried to kill a cow. The men saw him and ran after him. The hyena was frightened, and he ran and ran, over the hills and far away.

"That's the end of him," thought Deya Ali. "Now the first one has gone."

She drove the cattle back to the village.

"Oh Uncle," she said to the lion. "I'm very tired. I have been looking after the cattle all day, alone. That stupid hyena ran after the men's cows. They chased him away. You won't see him again. And I was working, working, all day long."

"That's bad, dear niece," said the lion. "Come and rest."

The next day, the lion said to Deya Ali, "Who will help you today?"

Deya Ali thought for a moment.

"Send the vulture with me," she said.

So the next morning, Deya Ali and the vulture went out with all the cows and goats.

"Please, dear Vulture," said Deya Ali. "I'm so hungry. You stay and look after the cattle. I'll look for some food. If I find something good, I'll bring it back for you."

The vulture agreed, so Deya Ali ran away. All day she looked for food, and she found many good things to eat.

In the evening, when the sun was going down, she came back to the vulture.

"Deya Ali, did you bring something for me?" said the vulture. "I'm so hungry."

"Yes, here's something nice for you," said Deya Ali. "Open your mouth wide."

So the vulture opened her mouth and Deya Ali put a big stone inside it. The vulture tried to swallow the stone but it stuck in her throat.

Deya Ali drove the cattle back to the village.

"Oh Uncle," she said. "I'm so tired. That stupid vulture went off early this morning to look for food. She has been eating all day. Her throat is full now and she can't even speak. All she can say is "Humu! Humu!". But I was working and working all day long."

"Is this true?" the lion roared to the vulture.

"Humu! Humu!" the vulture said.

The lion was angry. He tried to beat the vulture. She flew up into the sky, and went over the hills and far away.

"That's the end of her," thought Deya Ali. "The second one has gone."

The next morning, Deya Ali said to the lion, "Let the forked stick come with me today. He can help me guard the cattle."

So the forked stick and Deya Ali went out together. They looked after the cattle all day. When the evening came, Deya Ali saw some farmers. They were cutting sticks to make a fence for their cattle.

"Look," she said to the forked stick. "There are your uncles, the sticks. Why don't you go and greet them?"

"All right," said the forked stick, and he went to greet his uncles.

The farmers picked him up at once. They broke him into two pieces, and tied the pieces to the fence. Now the forked stick could not move any more.

"That's the end of him," thought Deya Ali. "The third one has gone."

Deya Ali drove the cattle back to the village.

She said to the lion, "That stupid forked stick ran to greet his uncles. The farmers caught him, and broke him, and tied him to the fence. And I have been guarding the cattle alone all day."

"My poor niece," said the lion. "You are tired. Come and rest."

The next morning, Deya Ali said to the lion, "Let the coffee husks come with me today. He can help me guard the cattle."

So the next day, Deya Ali and the coffee husks took the cattle out. In the afternoon, some travellers passed them on the road.

"Look at those people!" said Deya Ali. "They are very hot and thirsty. They need a drink. Coffee husks, can you help them?"

"All right," said the coffee husks, and he went up to the people.

"Look!" the people said. "Coffee husks! Let's boil some water and roast the husks and make coffee."

So they boiled some water and roasted the coffee husks and put them in the water. And then they drank the coffee.

"That's the end of the coffee husks," thought Deya Ali. "The fourth one has gone."

She drove the cattle back to the village, and said to her uncle, the lion, "That stupid bag of coffee husks went to speak to some thirsty travellers. They made a drink with him, and drank him up. But I was working, guarding the cattle all day long."

"You are tired, then," said the lion. "Come and rest."

The next morning, Deya Ali said to her uncle, "Let the butter go out with me today."

"All right," said the lion.

So the next morning, Deya Ali and the butter went out with the cattle together.

When the sun was high in the sky, Deya Ali said to the butter, "You are tired, butter. Sit on that stone and rest."

"Thank you, Deya Ali," said the butter, and she sat down on the stone.

But the stone was hot. At once, the butter melted and ran down, into the ground.

In the evening, Deya Ali took the cattle home.

"Oh, Uncle," she said, "that stupid butter sat on a hot stone. I have been looking after the cows alone all day long. I'm so tired and hungry."

"You must eat," said the lion. "Eat, then and rest."

The next day, the lion said to Deya Ali, "Take the barley chaff with you today."

So Deya Ali and the barley chaff took the cattle out together. They guarded the cattle

all day.

In the evening, Deya Ali said to the barley chaff, "We are hot and dirty. Let's go to the river and bathe."

"All right," said the barley chaff.

So they went to the river and bathed. The chaff tried to swim, but the water carried him away, one little piece after another.

That evening, Deya Ali took the cattle home.

"That stupid barley chaff has gone," she said to the lion. "He tried to swim in the river."

"So who will go with you tomorrow?" asked the lion.

"You must come with me, dear Uncle," said Deya Ali. "I can't go alone."

So the next day, Deya Ali and the lion went out together.

At midday, Deya Ali made a big hole in the ground. She put a fire inside it, then she covered it with a cowskin.

"Uncle, you are tired," she called out to the lion. "Come and rest."

The lion came and sat on the cowskin. At once it fell down. The lion fell into the hole and the fire burned him. Soon he was dead.

Deya Ali was happy.

"I'm rich!" she shouted. "All the cows and goats and camels are mine!"

Part Two

Not far away, some thieves were hiding in the bushes. They heard Deya Ali.

"Deya Ali, the fox, is alone now," they said to each other. "Nobody is helping her. Come, brothers, this is our chance!"

When it was dark, the thieves came out of the bushes. One tried to take a cow from one side. Another tried to take a goat from the other side. Deya Ali heard them. She began to run round the cattle very fast. She was shouting loudly in different voices.

"Be careful, Uncle!" she cried. "The thieves are coming. Hey, brother, where's your stick? Mother, sister, come quickly!"

The thieves ran back into the bushes.

"Deya Ali isn't alone," they said. "We heard many voices. Perhaps her family have come to help her."

Deya Ali was happy. She sat outside her hut and sang a song.

"The wicked thieves came

But they can't catch me!

I'm the wonderful,

Clever, Deya Ali!"

The next night, the thieves watched Deya Ali again.

"She's alone tonight," they said to each other. "Perhaps her family have gone."

When it was dark, they came out of the bushes. One tried to take a cow from one side. Another tried to take a goat from the other side.

Deya Ali took some empty gourds and tied them to her body. She began to run around. The gourds hit each other, and made a noise like this: chellalum, chellalam, chellalum!

The thieves looked at each other.

"Horses are coming!" they said.

Deya Ali called out, "Hey, Omer, your horse is too close. Move away! Idris! Ahmed! Don't go so fast! Your horse is touching mine!"

The thieves listened carefully.

"We know that voice," they said. "It's Deya Ali."

Deya Ali was running faster and faster.

Chellalum, chellalam, chellalum, chellalam, went the gourds.

"Osman! Abdi! Move back! Go there! Come here!" Deya Ali was shouting.

The thieves smiled.

"That's only Deya Ali," they said. "Nobody is with her. She is alone. Come, brothers, the cows and goats and camels are ours!"

So the thieves ran up and took all the cows and goats and camels. And they beat Deya Ali and she began to cry.

"Oh Uncle, where are you now?" she said. "Oh my dear hyena, and vulture, and forked stick, and coffee husks, and butter, and barley chaff! I was foolish and wicked and I drove you all away. I made a terrible mistake. But I have learned my lesson now. It is good to have friends, and it is bad to be alone."

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand in Part One of the story?

In the first part of the story, Deya Ali gets rid of all her friends.

Read these sentences. Who is Deya Ali talking to?

1. "Let's go to the river and bathe."
2. "They are very hot and thirsty. They need a drink. Can you help them?"
3. "You are tired. Sit on that stone and rest."

4. "Uncle, you are tired. Come and rest."
5. "You stay and look after the cattle. I'll look for some food."
6. "Look, over there, near the river, I can see some men. They have some nice, fat cows. Why don't you kill one of them for us?"
7. "There are your uncles. Why don't you go and greet them?"

Deya Ali's friends all obeyed her. What happened to them?

1. The hyena was frightened. What did he do?
2. Deya Ali told the vulture to open her mouth. What did she put in it?
3. What did the farmers do to the forked stick?
4. What did the people do with the coffee husks?
5. What happened when the butter sat on the stone?
6. What happened when the barley chaff went to bathe?
7. What happened when the lion sat on the cowskin?

How much did you understand in Part Two of the story?

True or false?

Are these sentences about Part Two of the story true or false?

1. The first night, when the thieves came, Deya Ali's uncle, brother, mother and sisters came to help her.
2. The thieves went away because they thought that they heard many voices.
3. On the second night, the thieves went away because Omer, Idris and Ahmed were bringing their horses.
4. Nobody was with Deya Ali. She was alone.
5. Deya Ali was sad because she had driven all her friends away and there was no one to help her.

B. Where were they?

1. When Deya Ali was with the hyena, they saw some men with their cows. Where were the men?
2. Where did the vulture go, when she flew up into the sky?
3. Where did the farmers put the forked stick?
4. Where were Deya Ali and the coffee husks, when the travellers passed them?
5. Where did the butter go, when she melted off the stone?
6. Where did Deya Ali go with the barley chaff in the evening?
7. Where did Deya Ali sit, when she sang her happy song?
8. Where were the thieves hiding?

C. What do you think?

Do you think that Deya Ali's uncle was stupid to believe her lies?

What does this story teach us about friends?

Can you think of another title for this story?

D. A play

This story can make a good play. Choose a tall person to be the forked stick and a short person to be the butter. The person who plays Deya Ali needs to run fast!

[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 in Part One of the story?

1. "Let's go to the river and bathe."

Deya Ali is talking to the barley chaff.

2. "They are very hot and thirsty. They need a drink. Can you help them?"

Deya Ali is talking to the coffee husks.

3. "You are tired. Sit on that stone and rest."

Deya Ali is talking to the butter.

4. "Uncle, you are tired. Come and rest."

Deya Ali is talking to the lion.

5. "You stay and look after the cattle. I'll look for some food."

Deya Ali is talking to the vulture.

6. "Look, over there, near the river. I can see some men. They have some nice, fat cows. Why don't you kill one of them for us?"

Deya Ali is talking to the hyena.

7. "There are your uncles. Why don't you go and greet them?"

Deya Ali is talking to the forked stick.

1. The hyena was frightened. What did he do?

He ran and ran, over the hills and far away.

2. Deya Ali told the vulture to open her mouth. What did she put in it?

A stone

3. What did the farmers do to the forked stick?

They broke him into two pieces and tied him to the fence.

4. What did the people do with the coffee husks?

They boiled some water and roasted the coffee husks and put them in the water.

5. What happened when the butter sat on the stone?

She melted and ran down, into the ground.

6. What happened when the barley chaff went to bathe?

The chaff tried to swim, but the water carried him away, one little piece after another.

7. What happened when the lion sat on the cowskin?

The lion fell into the hole and the fire burned him.

How much did you understand in Part Two of the story?

True or false?

1. The first night, when the thieves came, Deya Ali's uncle, brother, mother and sisters came to help her.

False. No one came to help Deya Ali. She only pretended to call to her uncle, brother, mother and sisters.

2. The thieves went away because they thought that they heard many voices.

True

3. On the second night, the thieves went away because Omer, Idris and Ahmed were bringing their horses.

False. There was no one called Omer, Idris and Ahmed, and there were no horses.

4. Nobody was with Deya Ali. She was alone.

True

5. Deya Ali was sad because she had driven all her friends away and there was no one to help her.

True

B. Where were they?

1. When Deya Ali was with the hyena, they saw some men with their cows. Where were the men?

Near the river

2. Where did the vulture go, when she flew up into the sky?

She went over the hills and far away.

3. Where did the farmers put the forked stick?

They tied him to the fence.

4. Where were Deya Ali and the coffee husks, when the travellers passed them?

On the road

5. Where did the butter go, when she melted off the stone?

She ran down, into the ground.

6. Where did Deya Ali go with the barley chaff in the evening.

They went to the river.

7. Where did Deya Ali sit, when she sang her happy song?

Outside her hut

8. Where were the thieves hiding?

In the bushes

Adam's Friend

Before you read the story

- Most wild animals are frightened of human beings. How do they show their fear?
- Are you afraid of wild animals? Which ones do you fear most?

Now read the story

Our father, Adam, lived in the Garden of Eden. One day, God sent him out and closed the gate behind him. Then all the animals saw Adam for the first time.

"Who is this new animal?" they asked each other. "Look, he has only two legs. He has hands, like a monkey, but he is not a monkey. He has no fur, like the fish, but he is not a fish. Is he a friend or an enemy? Does he want to live peacefully with us? Or does he want to fight us?"

They talked for a long time, and at last they called the dog.

"Dog," they said, "you can run fast, and you are brave and strong. Go to the man and talk to him."

So the dog ran to Adam.

"What kind of animal are you?" he asked Adam. "My brothers and sisters, the other animals, are afraid of you. Are you a friend or an enemy? Do you want to live peacefully with us, or fight us?"

Adam smiled at the dog.

"I have been in the Garden of Eden," he said. "I am a stranger here. I want to be your friend, not your enemy. I want to live peacefully with you."

"That's good news," said the dog, and he turned and began to run back to his friends. He ran as fast as the wind.

The other animals saw him.

"Oh, look!" they said. "The dog is running! The man is chasing him. The dog is running away from an enemy!"

And they all ran away.

The dog ran after them.

"Wuf!" he shouted. "Stop!"

But the animals were too frightened to stop. They hid themselves in the forest. Sadly, the dog ran back to Adam.

"They didn't listen to me," he said. "They are afraid of you."

"If they don't want to be my friends," said Adam, "I will hunt them. Stay with me, Dog, and help me."

So from that day, the dog stayed with the man, and they hunted the animals together.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

These sentences retell the story. Fill in the gaps from words you will find in the text.

1. God sent Adam out of the Garden of Eden, and the animals saw him for
2. The animals were surprised to see Adam. "Is he a or an enemy?" they asked each other.
3. After the animals had talked for a long time, they called
4. Adam said to the dog, "I want to live with you."
5. The animals were frightened when they saw the dog running away from Adam. They hid themselves in
6. Adam said, "If the animals don't want to be my friend, I will them."

B. Make whole sentences

These sentences have been cut in half. Match the first halves 1-5 with the other halves a-e to make whole sentences.

1. God sent him out.....
2. He has hands
3. He has no fur
4. My brothers and sisters, the other animals,
5. Stay with me, Dog,

- a)..... but he is not a monkey.
- b)..... and help me.
- c)..... are afraid of you.
- d)..... but he is not a fish.
- e)..... and closed the gate behind him.

C. What do you think?

Do you think that our early ancestors really wanted to be friends with all the animals, or did they always hunt them?

There are not many wild animals in the world now, because people have hunted so many of them. Do you think we should take care of the wild animals that are left?

[[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. God sent Adam out of the Garden of Eden, and the animals saw him for **the first time**.
2. The animals were surprised to see Adam. "Is he a **friend** or an enemy?" they asked each other.
3. After the animals had talked for a long time, they called **the dog**.
4. Adam said to the dog, "I want to live **peacefully** with you."
5. The animals were frightened when they saw the dog running away from Adam. They hid themselves in **the forest**.
6. Adam said, "If the animals don't want to be my friend, I will **hunt** them."

B. Make whole sentences

These sentences have been cut in half. Match the halves 1- with the other halves 2- to make whole sentences.

- 1/e God sent him out **and closed the gate behind him**.
- 2/a He has hands **but he is not a monkey**.
- 3/d He has no fur **but he is not a fish**.
- 4/c My brothers and sisters, the other animals, **are afraid of you**.
- 5/b Stay with me, Dog, **and help me**.

The Head and the Tea-seller

Before you read the story

- This story is full of surprises. Have you ever had a really big surprise?
- What surprised you?
- Have you ever done something that surprised someone else?

Now read the story

Part One

Once there was a man and his wife. The wife loved her husband. She worked hard for him. She always cooked his favourite meals and she helped him in every way.

But the man was angry with his wife.

"This stupid woman has no children," he thought. "And soon she will grow old. I will divorce her and marry another woman."

So he divorced his wife and married another one. His first wife was unhappy now. She was very poor. No one looked after her.

The man and his new wife waited for a long time, but they didn't have a child. Then, one day, the woman became pregnant.

Her husband was happy.

"Soon I will have a son," he thought.

At last the baby was born. But oh, what a terrible disappointment! The baby had no arms and no legs. It had no body at all. It was only a head!

"Take it away!" the man's wife said. "It's a horrible thing! I don't want to see it again!"
So the man put the head in a sack. He took it to the road and left it there. Then he went away.

Soon, some travellers came down the road. The head began to jump about in the sack.

"Help! Take me out! Help!" the head began to shout.

The travellers stopped.

"What is inside this sack?" they asked each other.

One of them opened it, and they all saw the head. They were frightened, and they wanted to run away.

"Stop!" said the head. "Please don't leave me here, or I'll die!"

"What shall we do with you then?" asked the travellers.

"Take me to the town," the head said. "Find a tea-shop and leave me there."

So the travellers picked up the head and carried it to the town. They stopped at the first tea-shop.

"Here's something for you," they said to the tea-seller, and they gave the head to him.

The tea-seller was very surprised.

"I don't want this thing," he said, and he began to carry the head out of his shop.

But the head began to talk to him.

"Tea-seller," he said. "Listen to me. Do you want to be rich?"

The tea-seller stopped.

"Yes, of course," he said.

"Then I will help you," said the head. "Look after me, give me food and keep me here. Soon, I promise you, you will be rich."

So the head stayed with the tea-seller, and the tea-seller looked after him. Every day, the head gave the tea-seller his advice.

"Buy your tea in this place today," he said.

Or, "Don't buy tea today. The price is not good."

The tea-seller always listened to the head. Soon, he became rich.

Part Two

Now, in that town there was a king. The king had no sons and only one daughter. The daughter was ready to be married. All the young men in the town wanted to marry the king's daughter. They came to the king one by one.

"Please, sir," they all said. "Let me marry your daughter."

"What will you give me?" asked the king.

"What do you want?" the young men asked.

The king asked for many things. Some things were too big. Some things were too small. Some things were from countries far, far away. Nobody could find the things that the king wanted.

The head heard about the king's daughter. He said to the tea-seller, "My friend, this is a chance for me. Go to the king and say to him, 'My friend wants to marry your daughter. What do you want for her?'"

So the tea-seller went to see the king. He went into the palace and greeted him.

"Sir," he said. "My friend wants to marry your daughter. Tell me, what must he give you?"

"A camel is a fine thing," said the king.

"That's easy," thought the merchant, and he smiled.

"A he-camel," said the king. "A big, strong camel with good teeth is a very fine thing."

The merchant laughed.

"I will find the best camel in the world for you, sir," he said, and he began to leave the room.

"Wait," said the king. "The camel must come here, into my palace. It must greet me and speak to me in my own language."

The tea-seller stopped laughing.

"That's impossible, sir!" he said.

"If your friend cannot find this camel," said the king, "he cannot marry my daughter."

Sadly, the tea-seller went home.

The head was waiting for him.

"What did the king say?" he asked the tea-seller.

The tea-seller shook his head.

"My poor young friend," he said. "It's impossible. The king wants a camel, a big, strong he-camel with good teeth."

"But that's easy," said the head.

"No, no," said the tea-seller. "The camel must go to the king's palace and greet him, and speak to him in his own language."

"Very well," said the head. "Now take me to the camel market."

So the tea-seller took the head to the camel market. They looked at many camels, and at last the head chose one.

"Now," said the head, "take this camel to the palace."

The tea-seller was frightened.

"But this is only a camel," he said. "It cannot greet the king, or talk in his language."

"Don't be frightened," said the head. "Everything will be all right."

So the tea-seller took the camel to the king's palace. The room was full of people. Everyone was looking at him. The tea-seller's knees were shaking.

The king saw the tea-seller and the camel beside the door.

"What is this?" he shouted. "Why has this man brought a camel inside my palace?"

"Please, sir, you asked for a camel," said the tea-seller.

Then the king remembered his words. He began to laugh.

"This is only a camel," he said. "It cannot greet me, or talk to me in my own language."

The camel suddenly lifted its head.

"Peace be with you, sir," it said.

"Ah! Oh! How wonderful!" everyone said.

The king stood up, and went to the camel.

"Can you really speak?" he asked. "Was that your voice?"

"Yes," answered the camel. "I can speak, and it was my voice."

The tea-seller was even more surprised than the king, but he was very happy for his friend.

"Sir," he said. "You asked for this animal and I have brought it to you!"

The king looked at him.

"And now my daughter must marry your friend," he said. "Who is this young man? What kind of man is he?"

The tea-seller was very frightened now.

"You - you will see, sir," he said.

Quickly, he ran home.

Part Three

"Head!" he called out. "Listen to this! The camel greeted the king and spoke to him in his own language! Now the king wants to give you his daughter! You must go to the palace tomorrow. Oh, what shall we do?"

"What shall we do?" answered the head. "We will go to the palace, of course, and I will marry the princess."

"But - " said the tea-seller.

"Everything will be all right," said the head. "I promise."

So the next day, the tea-seller took the head to the palace in a bag. The king and queen and all their guests were waiting for them.

"Where is the young man?" asked the king.

The poor tea-seller could not look at the king. His knees were shaking.

"He is here, sir," he said, and he opened the bag.

"Yes, I am here," said the head. "And I have come to marry your daughter."

"Oh, oh! How terrible!" said everyone.

The king was angry and sad.

"My poor daughter, what have I done?" he thought.

But it was too late now.

"I made a promise," he said, "and I will keep my promise. My daughter is yours."

So the head and the princess were married. The feast went on for a long time. At last it was finished. The king and the queen took the princess and the head to the bedroom, and shut the door. The princess was crying loudly.

At once, the head became a handsome young man! He had arms and legs and a body! The princess stopped crying, and looked at him. She fell in love with him at once.

The king and queen did not sleep that night.

"Oh, my poor daughter," the queen said again and again. "Husband, what have you done?"

Early the next morning, the king and queen went to the bedroom door. They were very worried.

"How is our girl?" they said to each other. "Is she all right?"

Suddenly, the door opened and the princess came out. She was laughing. She was

happy.

"My husband and I are hungry," she said. "Please give us some breakfast."

The head, who was now a young man, came out after her.

"Yes," he said, "we are hungry." And he smiled at the king and queen.

Everyone was very happy. After a year, the princess gave birth to a son. The king gave his kingdom to his son-in-law. The tea-seller became the richest merchant in the country.

But the new king's old father was not happy. He and his wife had no more children, and they were very poor.

"He was cruel to his first wife because she had no children," everyone said. "And then he threw away his only child. For these things, God has punished him."

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

These sentences are from Part One of the story. Put them in the right order.

1. "Help! Take me out! Help!" the head began to shout.
2. So the head stayed with the tea-seller, and the tea-seller looked after him.
3. The baby had no arms and no legs.
4. The man and his new wife waited for a long time, but they didn't have a child.
5. So the travellers picked up the head and carried it to the town.

These sentences are from Part Two of the story. Put them in the right order.

1. So the tea-seller took the camel to the king's palace.
2. They looked at many camels, and at last the head chose one.
3. So the tea-seller went to see the king.
4. All the young men in the town wanted to marry the king's daughter.
5. The tea-seller was even more surprised than the king, but he was very happy for his friend.

These sentences are from Part Three of the story. Put them in the right order.

1. So the next day, the tea-seller took the head to the palace in a bag.
2. But the new king's old father was not happy.
3. At once, the head became a handsome young man!
4. Early the next morning, the king and queen went to the bedroom door.
5. "I made a promise," he said, "and I will keep my promise."

B. What were they feeling?

These sentences retell the story. Fill the gaps with words from the list below to show what the people in the story were feeling. You will need to use some words more than once.

1. A man's wife had no children, so he divorced her and married another. Now his first wife was
2. When the man's new wife became pregnant, her husband was
3. Some travellers found a sack in the road. When they opened it and found the head, they were
4. The travellers gave the head to the tea-seller. He was very
5. When the camel spoke, the tea-seller was even more than the king.
6. When the king saw the head, he was and

7. The morning after the wedding, the princess was
8. The princess and her husband wanted to eat breakfast because they were
9. When everyone saw the handsome young man, they were very

frightened, angry, happy, sad, surprised, unhappy, hungry

C. Who said these sentences?

1. "What is inside this sack?"
2. "Take me to the town."
3. "Here's something for you."
4. "Soon, I promise you, you will be rich."
5. "Buy your tea in this place today."
6. "Who is this young man? What kind of man is he?"
7. "We will go to the palace, of course and I will marry the princess."
8. "I made a promise, and I will keep my promise."
9. "Oh, my poor daughter. Husband, what have you done?"
10. "Please give us some breakfast."

D. Make faces

This is a funny story, and here's a game to make you and your friends laugh.

Think of a word for a feeling (for example, happy, sad, frightened, worried, surprised, hungry, cold, hot).

Take turns to act the words with your face, and see if your friends can guess what you are feeling.

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to go back to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to go back to the story](#)]

A. How much did you understand?

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

The man and his new wife waited for a long time, but they didn't have a child.

The baby had no arms and no legs.

"Help! Take me out! Help! " the head began to shout.

So the travellers picked up the head and carried it to the town.

So the head stayed with the tea-seller, and the tea-seller looked after him.

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

All the young men in the town wanted to marry the king's daughter.

So the tea-seller went to see the king.

They looked at many camels, and at last the head chose one.

So the tea-seller took the camel to the king's palace.

The tea-seller was even more surprised than the king, but he was very happy for his friend.

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

So the next day, the tea-seller took the head to the palace in a bag.

"I made a promise," he said, "and I will keep my promise."

At once, the head became a handsome young man!

Early the next morning, the king and queen went to the bedroom door.

But the new king's old father was not happy.

B. What were they feeling?

1. A man's wife had no children, so he divorced her and married another. Now his first wife was **unhappy**.
2. When the man's new wife became pregnant, her husband was **happy**.
3. Some travellers found a sack in the road. When they opened it and found the head, they were **frightened**.
4. The travellers gave the head to the tea-seller. He was very **surprised**.
5. When the camel spoke, the tea-seller was even more **surprised** than the king.
6. When the king saw the head, he was **angry** and **sad**.
7. The morning after the wedding, the princess was **happy**.
8. The princess and her husband wanted to eat breakfast because they were **hungry**.
9. When everyone saw the handsome young man, they were very **happy**.

frightened, angry, happy, sad, surprised, unhappy, hungry

C. Who said these sentences?

1. "What is inside this sack?"

The travellers

2. "Take me to the town."

The head

3. "Here's something for you."

The travellers

4. "Soon, I promise you, you will be rich."

The head

5. "Buy your tea in this place today."

The head

6. "Who is this young man? What kind of man is he?"

The king

7. "We will go to the palace, of course and I will marry the princess."

The head

8. "I made a promise, and I will keep my promise."

The king

9. "Oh, my poor daughter. Husband, what have you done?"

The queen

10. "Please give us some breakfast."

The princess

The Lion's Bride

Part 1: The Lion's Wedding

Before you read Part 1

- Have you ever been in great danger?
- Who did you ask to help you?
- If your parents do not help you, where can you go?

Now read the story

Fatuma was waiting for her bridegroom.

"Is he handsome? Is he clever?" she asked her mother.

"You will see," her mother answered. "He is coming with your dowry today."

Not far away, Fatuma's bridegroom was driving the dowry cows over the river.

Suddenly, a lion jumped out of the bushes. It caught one of the dowry cows and killed it. The bridegroom did not see the lion, but he heard the noise.

"Who is there?" he called out. "Who has killed my cow?"

"I killed it," said the lion, "and I'm a better man than you are."

He came out of the bushes, and the bridegroom saw him.

"What?" said the bridegroom. "You think you are a man? I'll show you!"

He jumped on the lion and they began to fight. Soon the lion was on the ground, and the bridegroom was on top of him.

"You see?" said the bridegroom. "You are not better than me. I am much stronger than you."

"That's not true," said the lion. "You are only strong because you have a right hand. Tie your right hand behind your back and fight with me again."

The bridegroom agreed and the lion tied his right hand behind his back. They fought again. Again, the lion fell to the ground, and the bridegroom was on top of him.

"Now what do you say?" said the bridegroom. "Who is the strongest? You or me?"

"Oh, I am the strongest," said the lion. "You won because you have a left hand. Tie your left hand behind your back and fight with me again."

So the lion tied the bridegroom's left hand behind his back. Now the bridegroom was helpless. He couldn't fight at all. At once, the lion killed him and ate him.

Then the lion put on the bridegroom's clothes and he began to drive the cows to Fatuma's village.

Everyone in the village ran out to greet the bridegroom. They clapped and shouted and sang a wedding song:

"The bridegroom comes
Take him inside!
He brings the dowry
For the bride!"

They greeted the lion and took him inside the house. He sat down with them, and they brought him food. The first dish was boiled meat.

"Take it away," the lion said. "I can't eat boiled meat."

Fatuma's family took the meat away. They fried it and brought it back.

"I can't eat this," said the lion.

Fatuma's father was surprised.

"What do you like to eat?" he asked.

"Bring me raw meat," answered the lion. "Don't cook it at all."

So Fatuma's father gave the lion some raw meat and he ate it.

When the feast was finished, it was time to go to bed. Fatuma's family took the lion and his bride to their hut.

"I can't sleep on this bed!" the lion said.

"Why?" asked Fatuma's father. "What kind of bed do you want?"

"I sleep on sticks and straw," said the lion.

So they took the bed away, and brought him sticks and straw. Now Fatuma and the lion were alone together. The lion took off his clothes, and Fatuma saw his fur. She was very frightened.

"Oh! Oh! You're a lion! You're not a man at all!" she shouted. Then she called out:

"Father, Mother
Help your child!
My husband's a lion,
Hungry and wild!"

She ran off to her parents' hut. The lion followed her quietly. Fatuma didn't see him. Fatuma called out to her father and mother.

"What is it, Fatuma?" her father said. "Are you sick?"

"No, Father," said Fatuma, "but you must help me. My husband is not a man. He's a lion! You have given your daughter to a wild animal!"

"That's impossible," her father said.

"No, no, it's true," said Fatuma. "His teeth are long, and his body is covered with fur."

"We will test him, then," said her father. "Tomorrow morning the village will move. We are going to find water and grass for the cattle. The men will come out of their huts and shout, 'The time to move has come!' If your husband is a lion, he will not shout. And if he does not shout, I will believe you."

The lion was listening. He heard Fatuma's father's words. Quietly, he ran back to his hut.

"Now go back to your husband," Fatuma's father went on. "Do you want us to be ashamed?"

Sadly, Fatuma went back to the lion.

The next morning, the lion woke up very early. He ran outside his hut and roared:
 "Why is the village still asleep?
 When will the people begin to wake?
 The time to move has come!"
 Fatuma's father heard his voice.
 "My daughter is a fool," he thought. "Her husband is not an animal. He is a man."

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

In the beginning of this story the bridegroom is going to his bride's village to marry her. Put these sentences in the right order.

1. Suddenly, a lion jumped out of the bushes.
2. Then the lion put on the bridegroom's clothes and he began to drive the cows to Fatuma's village.
3. Again, the lion fell to the ground, and the bridegroom was on top of him.
4. So the lion tied the bridegroom's left hand behind his back.

Then the lion marries Fatuma.

Put these sentences in the right order.

5. "We will test him, then," said her father.
6. "Bring me raw meat," answered the lion. "Don't cook it at all."
7. The next morning, the lion woke up very early.
8. The lion took off his clothes, and Fatuma saw his fur.

B. Who said these sentences?

Who said these sentences?

1. "Is he handsome? Is he clever?"
2. "Who is the strongest? You or me?"
3. "What do you like to eat?"
4. "I can't sleep on this bed!"
5. "What is it, Fatuma? Are you sick?"
6. "His teeth are long, and his body is covered with fur."
7. "Do you want us to be ashamed?"
8. "Why is the village still asleep?"

C. Questions with "what"

Answer these questions

1. What was the bridegroom doing when the lion jumped out of the bushes?
2. What did the lion tie behind the bridegroom's back?
3. What did the lion want to eat?
4. What did the lion want to sleep on?
5. What did Fatuma see when the lion took off his clothes?

What do you think?

Why did the bridegroom let the lion tie his hands behind his back?
 Why didn't Fatuma's parents believe her?

Do you think that girls are sometimes afraid of their husbands when they get married?

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

[Click here to read Part Two]

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 1, 3, 4, 2.

Suddenly, a lion jumped out of the bushes.

Again, the lion fell to the ground, and the bridegroom was on top of him.

So the lion tied the bridegroom's left hand behind his back.

Then the lion put on the bridegroom's clothes and he began to drive the cows to Fatuma's village.

The right order of these sentences is 6, 8, 5, 7.

"Bring me raw meat," answered the lion. "Don't cook it at all."

The lion took off his clothes, and Fatuma saw his fur.

"We will test him, then," said her father.

The next morning, the lion woke up very early.

B. Who said these sentences?

Who said these sentences?

1. "Is he handsome? Is he clever?"

Fatuma

2. "Who is the strongest? You or me?"

The bridegroom

3. "What do you like to eat?"

Fatuma's father

4. "I can't sleep on this bed!"

The lion

5. "What is it, Fatuma? Are you sick?"

Fatuma's father

6. "His teeth are long, and his body is covered with fur."

Fatuma

7. "Do you want us to be ashamed?"

Fatuma's father

8. "Why is the village still asleep?"

The lion

C. Questions with "what"

Answer these questions

1. What was the bridegroom doing when the lion jumped out of the bushes?

He was driving the dowry cows over the river.

2. What did the lion tie behind the bridegroom's back?

The bridegroom's right hand/left hand/ hands.

3. What did the lion want to eat?

Raw meat

4. What did the lion want to sleep on?

Sticks and straw

5. What did Fatuma see when the lion took off his clothes?

His fur

Part Two: Fatuma Runs Away

Everyone in the village was preparing to move. They were packing their huts and loading their camels.

The lion went to Fatuma's father.

"We must leave you now," he said. "We will not come with you. I want to take my wife to my relatives."

The family all agreed.

"That's good. That's right," they said. "You must take her to your own family."

So Fatuma and the lion left the village. They began to travel alone.

"You, girl," the lion said. "One of us can ride on the camel. The other one must lead it. Do you want to ride on the camel, or lead it?"

"I will lead it," Fatuma answered. "If you are tired, you can ride."

So the lion climbed up on to the camel and they began their journey. But the lion was hungry. He bit the camel's hump and ate a piece of it.

"Aah!" shouted the camel.

Fatuma turned round.

"What's the matter with the camel?" she said.

"He doesn't like your black scarf," said the lion. "It frightens him. Take it off and throw it away."

So Fatuma took off her scarf and threw it away.

They went on a little further, but the lion was still hungry. He bit the camel's hump again.

"Aaarh!" shouted the camel.

"What's wrong now?" asked Fatuma.

"Your bracelets and your necklace are making a noise," answered the lion. "The camel doesn't like it. Take them off and throw them away."

So Fatuma took off her bracelets and her necklace and threw them away.

They went on quietly for a while, but then the lion bit the camel's hump again.

"Harrumph! Haraah!" the camel shouted.

"Now what is it?" asked Fatuma.

"He doesn't like your dress," said the lion. "Take it off and throw it away."

So Fatuma took off her dress and threw it away. Now she was like the animals. She had no clothes on at all.

At last, they came to a wild, empty place. There was no village here, no people and no cattle.

"This place is good," said the lion. "We will stop here."

So Fatuma unpacked the camel and put up her hut.

"Stay here," the lion said. "I will go and look for my relatives, and I will bring food for us to eat. Listen for me carefully. If you hear, gogobuk, gogobuk I will have camels with me. If you hear chachaka, chachaka I will have goats. If you hear chump, chump I will have cows."

The lion went away. Now Fatuma was alone.

"My husband is not a man," she thought. "He is a wild animal, and his friends and relatives are animals too. Perhaps he will bring them back here with him, and they will eat me. What can I do? I can't go back to my family. They will not believe me, and they will be ashamed. No, I must run away."

She took out a knife and cut off her little finger. She put it in the mortar. Then she went out of her hut and began to run.

She ran, and ran, and ran.

At last, she came to a big lake. There was a tree in the middle of the lake. It was dead, but its branches were still strong.

"I will be safe in that tree," thought Fatuma, "but how can I climb it?"

She looked everywhere on the ground. At last, she found a rope. She picked the rope up, and with its help she crossed the water and climbed the tree.

The lion called all his friends, the leopard, the snake, the hyena, the baboon and the rat. They came with him to his house. But the hut was empty. The door was shut.

"Fatuma! Fatuma!" called the lion.

No one answered. No one was there.

The lion was very angry. He broke the door of the hut and ran inside.

Fatuma's little finger was in the mortar.

"Fatuma is not here! She has ran away!" the little finger shouted.

The lion pushed the mortar over. Then he picked the finger up, and ate it.

"Where is she? Where is my wife?" he roared.

The snake, the leopard, the hyena and the baboon shook their heads.

"We haven't seen her. We don't know," they said.

But the rat looked up at the lion and said, "I saw a girl. Perhaps she was your wife. She was running to the lake. She was climbing the big dead tree."

"What lake? What tree?" said the lion. "Show it to us, rat."

So the rat ran to the lake and all the animals followed him. They stood at the edge of the water and looked up into the tree.

Fatuma was there.

The lion was very, very angry. He was ashamed in front of all his friends.

"You, wife! Come down from that tree!" he roared.

"No," answered Fatuma. "I will not."

The lion changed his voice. He tried to make it kind and loving.

"Dear wife, dear Fatuma," he said. "Please come down. My friends want to greet you."

Fatuma looked at the lion. His voice was soft now, but his eyes were wild.

"No," she said again. "I will not come down to you. You must come up here to me."

"How can we do that?" said the lion. "How can we cross the water and climb the tree?"

"I have a rope," said Fatuma. "I will throw one end down. Hold the rope, and I will pull you up. Now, who will come first?"

"I am your husband," said the lion. "I will come first."

So the lion took the rope and Fatuma began to pull it. She pulled and she pulled. Now the lion was half way up the tree.

Then Fatuma took out her knife, and cut the rope. The lion fell, with a big splash, into the water. He died at once.

"Who wants to come up now?" said Fatuma.

The other animals looked at each other.

"She is our sister-in-law, the wife of our brother," they said. "She will not cut the rope for us."

They took the rope and Fatuma began to pull it. She pulled and she pulled. Now all the animals were half way up the tree.

Then Fatuma took her knife and cut the rope again. All the animals fell, with a splash, into the water. They all died.

"I am alone again," thought Fatuma. "I am safe, but there is no one to help me."

She began to cry.

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Fatuma and the lion go to meet the lion's relatives.

Put these sentences in the right order.

1. "We will not come with you. I want to take my wife to my relatives."
2. So Fatuma took off her dress, and threw it away.
3. But the lion was hungry. He bit the camel's hump and ate a piece of it."
4. The lion went away. Now Fatuma was alone.

Fatuma is afraid that the lion's relatives will eat her. She runs away.

Put these sentences in the right order.

5. "How can we cross the water and climb the tree?"
6. Then Fatuma took out her knife and cut the rope again.
7. She took out a knife and cut off her little finger.
8. The snake, the leopard, the hyena and the baboon shook their heads.

B. Who is speaking?

Who said these sentences?

1. "One of us can ride on the camel. The other one must lead it."
2. "What's the matter with the camel?"
3. "Fatuma is not here! She has run away!"
4. "We haven't seen her. We don't know."
5. "Please come down. My friends want to greet you."
6. "Hold the rope, and I will pull you up."
7. "She is our sister-in-law, the wife of our brother."

C. Questions with "what"

Answer these questions

1. What did the lion bite?
2. The lion told Fatuma to throw away four things. What were they?
3. Where did Fatuma put her little finger?
4. What did Fatuma climb in the middle of the lake?
5. What did Fatuma throw down to the lion?

D. What do *you* think?

Was Fatuma right to run away from the lion?

Do you think that Fatuma was brave?

Why did the lion make Fatuma throw away her clothes and jewellery?

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

[[Click here to read Part Three](#)]

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 1, 3, 2, 4

"We will not come with you. I want to take my wife to my relatives."
But the lion was hungry. He bit the camel's hump and ate a piece of it."
So Fatuma took off her dress, and threw it away.
The lion went away. Now Fatuma was alone.

The right order of these sentences is 7, 8, 5, 6

She took out a knife and cut off her little finger.
The snake, the leopard, the hyena and the baboon shook their heads.
"How can we cross the water and climb the tree?"
Then Fatuma took out her knife and cut the rope again.

B. Who is speaking?

Who said these sentences?

1. "One of us can ride on the camel. The other one must lead it."

The lion

2. "What's the matter with the camel?"

Fatuma

3. "Fatuma is not here! She has run away!"

Fatuma's little finger

4. "We haven't seen her. We don't know."

The snake, the leopard, the hyena and the baboon

5. "Please come down. My friends want to greet you."

The lion

6. "Hold the rope, and I will pull you up."

Fatuma

7. "She is our sister-in-law, the wife of our brother."

The other animals/the snake, the leopard, the hyena, the baboon and the rat

C. Questions with "what"

1. What did the lion bite?

The camel's hump

2. The lion told Fatuma to throw away four things. What were they?

Her black scarf, her bracelets and necklace, and her dress

3. Where did Fatuma put her little finger?

In the mortar

4. What did Fatuma climb in the middle of the lake?

A tree

5. What did Fatuma throw down to the lion?

A rope

Part Three: Fatuma and the Bird

Suddenly, she heard a noise. She looked up. A little bird was sitting on a branch beside her.

"Please, girl," said the bird. "My wing is broken and I'm very hungry. Give me a date from your tree.

"Yes, little bird," said Fatuma. "I will give you a date from my tree. But then, please, do something for me."

"What can I do?" said the bird.

"Fly to my village," said Fatuma. "Take a message to my father and mother."

"What is your message?" asked the bird.

Fatuma said,

"I'm hungry, I'm cold,
I'm alone in the tree.
Oh Father, Oh Mother,
Please come to me!"

"My wing is broken," answered the bird, "but I'm sorry for you, dear Fatuma. I will fly to your father and mother and give them your message."

So Fatuma gave the bird a date. He ate it, and rested. Soon, he felt stronger. He flew away to Fatuma's village.

Fatuma's mother was making butter. She was shaking the milk in her butter churn. The bird sat on the roof of her house and called to her.

"Woman, what are you doing? Why are you shaking your butter churn? Your daughter, Fatuma, needs your help. Can't you hear her crying?"

"What?" said Fatuma's mother. "You stupid bird, what do you mean?"

"Your daughter is on the old dead tree in the lake," the bird told her. "She's calling out to you,

'I'm hungry, I'm cold,
I'm alone in the tree.
Oh Father, oh Mother,
Please come to me!'"

"I don't believe you. It's impossible," said Fatuma's mother, and she went on churning butter.

The bird was angry. He sang,
"I'm a poor little bird with only one wing,
I can't fly fast, but I can sing!
Wicked woman, leave your butter.
Go to the lake, and help your daughter!"

But Fatuma's mother did not listen to the bird.

"Be quiet," she said. "Go away."

Then the bird went to Fatuma's father. He was sewing a pair of shoes.

The bird sat down on the branch of a tree and called to him, "Old man, what are you doing? Why are you sewing shoes? Your daughter, Fatuma, needs your help. Can't you hear her crying?"

"What?" said Fatuma's father. "You stupid bird, what do you mean?"

"Your daughter is on the old dead tree in the lake," the bird told her. "She's calling out to you,

'I'm hungry, I'm cold,
I'm alone in the tree.
Oh Father, oh Mother,
Please come to me!'"

But Fatuma's father did not listen to the bird.

"I don't believe you. It's impossible," he said, and he went on sewing shoes.

The bird was angry. He sang,
"I'm a poor little bird with only one wing,
I can't fly fast, but I can sing!
Wicked father, don't refuse
To help your daughter. Leave your shoes!"

But Fatuma's father did not listen to the bird.

"Fly away, bird," he said. "Leave me alone."

So Fatuma stayed in the tree, and the little bird brought food to her every day.

Now one day, a prince was passing by. His shepherd went in front of him. He was looking for good grass for the prince's cows and sheep.

The shepherd was deaf and dumb. He could not hear and he could not speak. He came to the edge of the lake, and he looked up, and saw Fatuma in the tree.

The prince rode near the lake on his horse. The shepherd ran up to him.

"Mmmm! Mmmm!" he said.

"What is it, shepherd? What do you want?" asked the prince.

The shepherd could not say. He took the bridle of the prince's horse and began to lead him to the lake. They stopped at the water's edge. The prince looked up and saw Fatuma. At once, he fell in love with her.

"Beautiful girl, how did you climb this tree?" he called up to her. "Let me come up to you! I want to marry you!"

"Wait," said Fatuma. "First I must test you. I will spit. If my spit reaches you, and if it changes to gold, I will marry you."

So Fatuma spat at the prince, and her spit reached him, and changed to gold.

Then Fatuma climbed down from the tree, and she married the prince, and she went to live with him in his palace.

The years passed, and Fatuma's mother and father became very poor. Now they had no cows and camels, no sheep and goats. They were hungry. They had nothing to eat.

"We must go to the prince's palace," they said, "and beg for food."

So they went to the palace.

"Help us, for God's sake!" they cried. "We are dying of hunger! Give us something to eat!"

Fatuma heard their voices.

"Is that my father? Can it be my mother?" she thought.

She went out to see them. At once, she recognised them.

"Give these people food," she said to her servants. "Give them clothes and shoes."

So Fatuma saved her parents, and she lived happily with her prince for the rest of her life.

[Click here to listen to the whole story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

*A little bird takes a message from Fatuma to her mother and father.
Put these sentences in the right order.*

1. Then the bird went to Fatuma's father. He was sewing a pair of shoes.
2. She looked up. A little bird was sitting on a branch beside her.
3. "Be quiet," she said. "Go away."
4. "Woman, what are you doing? Why are you shaking your butter churn?"

A prince meets Fatuma.

Put these sentences in the right order.

1. "Beautiful girl, how did you climb this tree?"
2. "Give these people food," she said to her servants.
3. The years passed, and Fatuma's mother and father became very poor.
4. "If my spit reaches you, and if it changes to gold, I will marry you."

B. Who is speaking?

Who said these sentences? Sometimes more than one person says the same thing.

1. "I will fly to your mother and father and give them your message."
2. "I don't believe you. It's impossible."
3. "You stupid bird, what do you mean?"
4. "What is it, shepherd? What do you want?"
5. "First I must test you."
6. "We are dying of hunger! Give us something to eat!"
7. "Give them clothes and shoes."

C. Questions with "what"

Answer these questions

1. What had the bird broken?
2. What did Fatuma promise to give the bird?
3. What was Fatuma's mother doing when the little bird came to her?
4. What was Fatuma's father doing when the little bird came to him?
5. What did the little bird bring to Fatuma every day?
6. Fatuma told her servants to give three things to her parents. What were they?

D. What do you think?

Can you find any words to describe Fatuma's mother and father?

Did you like the little rhymes in the story? Do you think that they make the story more interesting?

Was Fatuma right to help her parents when they were old and hungry? Didn't they deserve to be punished?

[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, 4, 3, 1

She looked up. A little bird was sitting on a branch beside her.

"Woman, what are you doing? Why are you shaking your butter churn?"

"Be quiet," she said. "Go away."

Then the bird went to Fatuma's father. He was sewing a pair of shoes.

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

"Beautiful girl, how did you climb this tree?"

"If my spit reaches you, and if it changes to gold, I will marry you."

The years passed, and Fatuma's mother and father became very poor.

"Give these people food," she said to her servants.

B. Who is speaking?

1. "I will fly to your mother and father and give them your message."

The little bird

2. "I don't believe you. It's impossible."

Fatuma's mother and father

3. "You stupid bird, what do you mean?"

Fatuma's mother and father

4. "What is it, shepherd? What do you want?"

The prince

5. "First I must test you."

Fatuma

6. "We are dying of hunger! Give us something to eat!"

Fatuma's mother and father

7. "Give them clothes and shoes."

Fatuma

C. Questions with "what"

Answer these questions

1. What had the bird broken?

His wing

2. What did Fatuma promise to give the bird?

A date

3. What was Fatuma's mother doing when the little bird came to her?

She was making butter/she was shaking the milk in her butter churn.

4. What was Fatuma's father doing when the little bird came to him?

He was sewing a pair of shoes.

5. What did the little bird bring to Fatuma every day?

Food

6. Fatuma told her servants to give three things to her parents. What were they?

Food, clothes and shoes

The Cat and the Woman

Before you read the story

- Do you think that you're a strong person, or a weak person?
- Do you like to have a friend who is stronger than you, or weaker than you?

Now read the story

At the beginning of the world, the cat was the friend of the antelope. They lived together and played together. But one day, a hungry lion killed the antelope.

"The lion is the strongest animal," thought the cat. "I'll be the lion's friend."

So the cat became the friend of the lion. They hunted together and ate together.

One day, a herd of big elephants came to the forest. The lion tried to kill one of their little ones. The elephants were very angry. The biggest of them killed the lion.

"The elephant is stronger than the lion," thought the cat. "I'll be the elephant's friend."

So the cat became the friend of the elephant. They walked together through the forest.

There was a village near the forest and the people there were hungry. One day, a brave man hunted the elephant and killed him.

"The man is stronger than the elephant," thought the cat. "I'll be the man's friend."

She followed the man for many days. At last, he returned to his hut and she went with him.

Now the man had a wife, and the wife was angry with her husband.

"Where have you been?" she shouted at him. "You didn't come home for days and days!"

And she ran after her husband with a big stick.

"Stop! Listen!" the man began to say. "I went hunting, and..."

But his wife didn't listen. She began to beat her husband with the stick. He ran away.

"Hmm," said the cat. "The woman is stronger than the man. I'll be the woman's friend."

She went into the hut, and lay down beside the fire. And she became the woman's friend for evermore.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

These sentences show the cat's thoughts. Put them in the right order.

1. I'll be the woman's friend.
2. I'll be the lion's friend.
3. I'll be the man's friend.
4. I'll be the elephant's friend.

These sentences show the cat's actions. Put them in the right order.

1. She went into the hut, and lay down beside the fire.
2. She followed the man for many days.
3. They hunted together and ate together.
4. They walked together through the forest.
5. They lived together and played together.

B. Stronger, the strongest

*Fill the gaps in these sentences with **stronger than** or **the strongest***

1. "The lion is animal," thought the cat.
2. "The elephant is the lion," thought the cat.
3. "The man is the elephant," thought the cat.
4. "The woman is the man," thought the cat.

C. What do you think?

Do you think that the cat was right? Are women are stronger than men?

In what ways are they stronger?

Cats were wild animals once. How do you think people tamed them?

[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, 4, 3, 1

I'll be the lion's friend.

I'll be the elephant's friend.

I'll be the man's friend.

I'll be the woman's friend.

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

They lived together and played together.

They hunted together and ate together.

They walked together through the forest.

She followed the man for many days.

She went into the hut, and lay down by the fire.

B. Stronger, the strongest

1. "The lion is **the strongest** animal," thought the cat.
2. "The elephant is **stronger than** the lion," thought the cat.
3. "The man is **stronger than** the elephant," thought the cat.
4. "The woman is **stronger than** the man," thought the cat.

Hirsi and Kabaalaf

Before you read the story

- Has anyone ever cheated you?
- How did you feel about it? Were you angry?
- Did you try to catch the cheat?

Now read the story

Once upon a time, there were two thieves. One was called Hirsi. The other was called Kabaalaf. They lived in different towns. Everyone knew Hirsi in his town. Everyone knew Kabaalaf in his town. The people watched them all the time.

"It's difficult for me in this town now," thought Hirsi. "Everyone watches me. I can't cheat anyone. I can't steal anything. I'll go to Kabaalaf's town. No one will know me there."

On the very same day, Kabaalaf was thinking too.

"People know me here, in this town," he thought. "I can't get anything from anyone here. I'll go to Hirsi's town. They don't know me there."

Hirsi took a sack and he filled it with ashes. He started travelling towards Kabaalaf's town. And Kabaalaf took a sack. He filled it with goat dung. He began to go to Hirsi's town.

They met on the road.

"Hirsi! My friend! How are you? Are you well?" said Kabaalaf.

"Oh, Kabaalaf, is that you? Yes, I am very well. Are you well?" said Hirsi.

"Yes," said Kabaalaf. "I'm going to the market."

"Really?" said Hirsi. "And what are you going to sell?"

"A sack full of the best coffee," said Kabaalaf, and he pointed to his sack full of goat

dung. "And you? What are you going to sell?"

"Oh, the finest flour," said Hirsi, and he lifted up his sack full of ashes.

"Flour?" said Kabaalaf. "That's wonderful. I want to buy flour in the market."

"Do you?" said Hirsi. "Really? And I want to buy coffee in the market!"

"I've got a good idea," said Kabaalaf. "Let's exchange our sacks. You can give me your sack of flour, and I'll give you my sack of coffee. Then we can both go home."

"That's a very good idea," said Hirsi.

So Hirsi gave Kabaalaf his sack of ashes, and Kabaalaf gave Hirsi his sack of goat dung, and they both went home.

Hirsi arrived at his house and opened his bag of coffee. Inside, there was only goat dung.

"Oh! That wicked Kabaalaf! He cheated me!" he shouted.

Kabaalaf arrived at his house and opened his bag of flour. Inside, there were only ashes.

"Hirsi's a thief! He cheated me!" shouted Kabaalaf.

"The thieves have cheated each other," everyone said.

And they laughed.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Put these sentences in the right order.

1. "Let's exchange our sacks."
2. Hirsi took a sack and he filled it with ashes.
3. Everyone knew Hirsi in his town. Everyone knew Kabaalaf in his town.
4. "A sack full of the best coffee," said Kabaalaf.
5. "The thieves have cheated each other," everyone said.
6. And Kabaalaf took a sack. He filled it with goat dung.

B. Fill the gaps

Fill the gaps in these sentences with words from the list below to retell the story.

1. Hirsi and Kabaalaf lived in different
2. Everybody watched Hirsi, so he couldn't anyone.
3. Hirsi filled his sack with
4. Kabaalaf filled his sack with
5. Hirsi and Kabaalaf met on the
6. "I have a sack full of" said Kabaalaf.
7. "I have sack full of" said Hirsi.

goat dung, road, towns, flour, ashes, cheat, coffee

C. What do you think?

What is the right punishment for cheats and thieves?

Can you think of another title for this story?

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Answers to the Exercises

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

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

A. How much did you understand?

The right order of these sentences is 3, 2, 6, 4, 1, 5

Everyone knew Hirsi in his town. Everyone knew Kabaalaf in his town.

Hirsi took a sack and he filled it with ashes.

And Kabaalaf took a sack. He filled it with goat dung.

"A sack full of the best coffee," said Kabaalaf.

"Let's exchange our sacks."

"The thieves have cheated each other," everyone said.

B. Fill the gaps

1. Hirsi and Kabaalaf lived in different **towns**.
2. Everybody watched Hirsi, so he couldn't **cheat** anyone.
3. Hirsi filled his sack with **ashes**.
4. Kabaalaf filled his sack with **goat dung**.
5. Hirsi and Kabaalaf met on the **road**.
6. "I have a sack full of **coffee**," said Kabaalaf.
7. "I have sack full of **flour**," said Hirsi.

Ahmed and the Clever Woman

Before you read the story

- "Hypocrites" are people who pray to God and seem very religious, but at the same time they do bad things.
- Do you know any hypocrites?
- How do you know they are hypocrites?

Now read the story

Once upon a time, there was a man called Ahmed. He worked at a well. He used to pull up water for the people.

"I am a holy man," Ahmed used to tell everyone. "I am very good. I pray to God. I study the Koran. I am a sheikh!"

Everyone believed Ahmed.

"Yes, Ahmed is very holy. He is a sheikh," they all said.

But Ahmed was not a holy man at all. He was a trickster.

Every day, a beautiful woman came to the well to fill her water pot. Ahmed fell in love with her. But the woman was married already, and she had a son.

One day, the woman's son came to the well to fetch water for his mother. Ahmed refused to give water to the child.

"You are too small," he said. "You can't carry this big water pot. Your mother must come."

The next day, the woman came. Ahmed talked to her.

"You are so beautiful," he said. "Meet me here tonight, when it is dark."

The woman did not answer him.

"This man is in love with me," she thought. "But I love my husband. I must be careful. Ahmed is rich and powerful. I don't want him to be our enemy."

That evening, she told her husband about Ahmed.

"What shall I do?" she said. "I don't want to meet Ahmed secretly. But if I don't meet him, perhaps he will be angry. Perhaps he will quarrel with us. Then people will know about it. There will be trouble."

They talked about it for a long time, and at last they made a plan.

The next morning, the woman went back to the well. Ahmed was waiting for her.

"Oh, my darling, you are here at last!" he said. "Well? Did you think about me last night? Will you meet me here tonight?"

The woman smiled at him.

"I can't meet you here," she said. "People often come this way. Someone will see us. They will tell my husband and he will be very angry. No, I have a better plan. Today, my husband is going away to another town. He will not be at home this evening. Come to my house then, after your evening prayers."

Ahmed was very happy.

"She loves me!" he said to himself. But then he began to think.

"I must be careful," he said to himself. "I always stay at home in the evening. I never go out. My wife will be surprised. She will ask me many questions. What can I say to her?"

At last, he had an idea. He smiled, and hurried home. He ate his supper quickly, and said his prayers.

Then he said to his wife, "I must go out this evening."

"Why?" she said. She was very surprised.

"Oh," he answered. "I met some friends today. We were talking about the Koran. There are some very difficult verses in the Koran. They want to study them tonight. They think that I am a sheikh. They want me to help them."

His wife was pleased.

"That's good," she said. "If you want to study the Koran, of course you must go."

Ahmed went to the woman's house. He was happy.

"She loves me!" he thought.

The woman opened the door for him. She was wearing a beautiful dress. Ahmed went inside. He sat down on the mat and she gave him some tea.

"Wait," she said, "I will lock the door."

She went to the door and locked it. Now, the woman's husband was hiding behind the house. He was listening.

"Ah!" he thought. "She has locked the door. That's the signal for me."

He ran to the door and began to knock.

"Wife! Wife!" he called out. "Open the door! Why have you locked it? It's me, your husband. I have come home early."

Ahmed jumped up. He was frightened.

"Your husband?" he said. "This is terrible! If he finds me here, he will kill me. What shall we do?"

The woman ran to her chest and took out a dress.

"Quickly," she said. "Put on this dress. My husband will think that you are a woman." So Ahmed put on the woman's dress, and the woman opened the door.

Ahmed was frightened. He pulled his scarf over his face. The woman's husband came in. He carried a sack of maize in his arms.

"What happened?" his wife said. "Why have you come home early?"

"I wanted to travel with some friends," her husband said, "but they didn't go today. They are going tomorrow. But I brought you this sack of maize."

Then he saw Ahmed.

"Oh, that's lucky," he said. "Has this girl come to help you? She can pound the maize. There is a lot of it. It's too much for you. Bring your mortar and pestle. She can pound it now."

So the woman brought her mortar and pestle and Ahmed began to pound the maize.

The sack of maize was big, and it was full. Ahmed pounded, and pounded, and pounded.

"Why doesn't this stupid husband go away?" he thought. "Why has he brought so much maize?"

At last, he finished pounding all the maize. The woman's husband gave him some money.

"You can go now," he said.

Ahmed ran out of the house, and back to his home. His wife was waiting for him.

"Husband!" she cried. "What's happened? Why are you wearing a woman's dress?"

Ahmed thought quickly.

"Ah," he said. "Well. I was discussing the Koran with my friends."

"In a woman's dress?" asked his wife. She was shocked.

"Yes," said Ahmed. "You see, we were talking about some very difficult verses."

"What verses?" asked his wife.

"They were about Satan, the Evil One," Ahmed said. "Oh, my dear wife, it was terrible! We were sitting quietly, talking about Satan. Suddenly, he came to us!"

"What? Satan came to you?"

"Yes. He began to beat us all with a big stick. But I was lucky. I saw this dress on the mat near me. Quickly, I put it on. Satan beat all my friends, but he didn't want to beat a woman. It was too shameful, even for him. So I escaped and ran away."

"That was very clever," said his wife. "You are a wonderful man, husband. You know

all the verses in the Koran, and you can even escape from Satan!"

The next day, Ahmed went to the well again. He began to pull up the water. Soon, the woman came. She smiled at him.

"Listen," she said. "We had bad luck last night. But come to my house this evening. My husband is going away. His friends came for him this morning."

Ahmed shook his head.

"Oh no," he said. "I'm not coming to your house again. I don't want to pound maize all night. If I want to pound some maize, I can do it at home!"

The woman went home and told her husband everything. They laughed and laughed.

"Our plan was a good one," they said. "Ahmed will not trouble us again. But he has not become our enemy."

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Exercises

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

A. How much did you understand?

In the first part of the story, Ahmed falls in love with a beautiful woman, and he asks her to meet him.

Are these sentences about the story true or false?

1. Ahmed was a holy man.
2. The beautiful woman was in love with Ahmed.
3. The woman told her husband about Ahmed.
4. The woman and her husband made a plan.
5. The woman asked Ahmed to come to her house after his evening prayers.

In the second part of the story, Ahmed goes to the woman's house.

Are these sentences about the story true or false?

1. Ahmed was happy because he thought that the woman loved him.
2. When Ahmed went into the house, the woman's husband locked the door.
3. The woman was frightened when her husband knocked on the door.
4. Ahmed put on a woman's dress and pulled a scarf over his face.
5. A girl had come to help the woman, and she pounded all the maize.

In the third part of the story, Ahmed goes home to his wife.

Are these sentences about the story true or false?

1. Ahmed's wife was angry with Ahmed because he was wearing a woman's dress.
2. While Ahmed and his friends were talking, the Evil One came and beat them.
3. The next day, the woman invited Ahmed to come back to her house.
4. Ahmed became the enemy of the husband and wife.

B. Who, what, where?

Answer these questions

1. Where did Ahmed work?
2. Who did the woman send to the well to fetch the water for her?
3. What was the woman wearing when she opened the door of her house to Ahmed?
4. Where was the woman's husband hiding?
5. When the woman's husband came into the house, what was he carrying?
6. What did the woman's husband give Ahmed when he had finished pounding the maize?
7. Who was waiting for Ahmed when he went home?

C. Make a play

This story can make a funny play. You can act the part of Ahmed, the beautiful woman and her husband. You will certainly make your friends laugh!

Answers to the Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

In the first part of the story, Ahmed falls in love with a beautiful woman, and he asks her to meet him.

Are these sentences about the story true or false?

1. Ahmed was a holy man.

False. Ahmed was really a trickster.

2. The beautiful woman was in love with Ahmed.

False. The beautiful woman loved her husband.

3. The woman told her husband about Ahmed.

True

4. The woman and her husband made a plan.

True

5. The woman asked Ahmed to come to her house after his evening prayers.

True

In the second part of the story, Ahmed goes to the woman's house.

Are these sentences about the story true or false?

1. Ahmed was happy because he thought that the woman loved him.

True

2. When Ahmed went into the house, the woman's husband locked the door.

False. The woman locked the door.

3. The woman was frightened when her husband knocked on the door.

False. The woman expected her husband to knock on the door.

4. Ahmed put on a woman's dress and pulled a scarf over his face.

True

5. A girl had come to help the woman, and she pounded all the maize.

False. Ahmed pounded all the maize.

In the third part of the story, Ahmed goes home to his wife.

Are these sentences about the story true or false?

1. Ahmed's wife was angry with Ahmed because he was wearing a woman's dress.

False. Ahmed's wife was not angry, but she was surprised.

2. While Ahmed and his friends were talking, the Evil One came and beat them.

False. This was a story that Ahmed told his wife.

3. The next day, the woman invited Ahmed to come back to her house.

True

4. Ahmed became the enemy of the husband and wife.

False. Ahmed did not become their enemy.

B. Who, what, where?

Find the right words in the story to fill in the gaps in these sentences.

1. Where did Ahmed work?

At a well

2. Who did the woman send to the well to fetch the water for her?

Her son

3. What was the woman wearing when she opened the door of her house to Ahmed?

A beautiful dress

4. Where was the woman's husband hiding?

Behind the house

5. When the woman's husband came into the house, what was he carrying?

A sack of maize

6. What did the woman's husband give Ahmed when he had finished pounding the maize?

Some money

7. Who was waiting for Ahmed when he went home?

His wife