Compiled by A. Janthawan Anantaprayoon

The Hare With Many Friends

A Hare was very popular with the other beasts who all claimed to be her friends. But one day she heard the hounds approaching and hoped to escape them by the aid of her many Friends. So, she went to the horse, and asked him to carry her away from the hounds on his back. But he declined, stating that he had important work to do for his master. "He felt sure," he said, "that all her other friends would come to her assistance." She then applied to the bull, and hoped that he would repel the hounds with his horns. The bull replied: "I am very sorry, but I have an appointment with a lady; but I feel sure that our friend the goat will do what you want." The goat, however, feared that his back might do her some harm if he took her upon it. The ram, he felt sure, was the proper friend to apply to. So she went to the ram and told him the case. The ram replied: "Another time, my dear friend. I do not like to interfere on the present occasion, as hounds have been known to eat sheep as well as hares." The Hare then applied, as a last hope, to the calf, who regretted that he was unable to help her, as he did not like to take the responsibility upon himself, as so many older persons than himself had declined the task. By this time the hounds were quite near, and the Hare took to her heels and luckily escaped.

He that has many friends, has no friends.

The Lost Wig

A funny old lion, who had the misfortune to lose his mane, was wearing a wig as he was taking a stroll on a very windy day. Looking up, he spied one of the charming Tiger sisters across the street, and, wishing to make an impression, smiled blandly and made a beautiful low bow. At that moment a very smart gust of wind came up, and the consequence was that his wig flew off and left him there, feeling foolish and looking worse, with his bald head glistening like a billiard ball. Though somewhat embarrassed at first, he smiled at the Lady and said: "Is it a wonder that another fellow's hair shouldn't keep on my head, when my own wouldn't stay there?"

"Wit always has an answer ready."

The Man and His Two Sweethearts

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN, whose hair had begun to turn gray, courted two women at the same time. One of them was young, and the other well advanced in years. The elder woman, ashamed to be courted by a man younger than herself, made a point, whenever her admirer visited her, to pull out some portion of his black hairs. The younger, on the contrary, not wishing to become the wife of an old man, was equally zealous in removing every gray hair she could find. Thus it came to pass that between them both he very soon found that he had not a hair left on his head.

Those who seek to please everybody please nobody.

The Ant and the Dove

An Ant went to the bank of a river to quench its thirst, and being carried away by the rush of the stream, was on the point of drowning. A Dove sitting on a tree overhanging the water plucked a leaf and let it fall into the stream close to her. The Ant climbed onto it and floated in safety to the bank. Shortly afterwards a birdcatcher came and stood under the tree, and laid his lime-twigs for the Dove, which sat in the branches. The Ant, perceiving his design, stung him in the foot. In pain the birdcatcher threw down the twigs, and the noise made the Dove take wing.

The Bear and the Two Travelers

TWO MEN were traveling together, when a Bear suddenly met them on their path. One of them climbed up quickly into a tree and concealed himself in the branches. The other, seeing that he must be attacked, fell flat on the ground, and when the Bear came up and felt him with his snout, and smelt him all over, he held his breath, and feigned the appearance of death as much as he could. The Bear soon left him, for it is said he will not touch a dead body. When he was quite gone, the other Traveler descended from the tree, and jocularly inquired of his friend what it was the Bear had whispered in his ear. "He gave me this advice," his companion replied. "Never travel with a friend who deserts you at the approach of danger."

Misfortune tests the sincerity of friends.

Belling the Cat

Long ago, the mice had a general council to consider what measures they could take to outwit their common enemy, the Cat. Some said this, and some said that; but at last a young mouse got up and said he had a proposal to make, which he thought would meet the case. "You will all agree," said he, "that our chief danger consists in the sly and treacherous manner in which the enemy approaches us. Now, if we could receive some signal of her approach, we could easily escape from her. I venture, therefore, to propose that a small bell be procured, and attached by a ribbon round the neck of the Cat. By this means we should always know when she was about, and could easily retire while she was in the neighbourhood."

This proposal met with general applause, until an old mouse got up and said: "That is all very well, but who is to bell the Cat?" The mice looked at one another and nobody spoke. Then the old mouse said:

"It is easy to propose impossible remedies."

The Fox and the Cat

A fox and a cat were out walking together when the fox began boasting how clever he was.

“I’m prepared for any situation” said the Fox. “I have a whole bag of tricks to choose from if my enemies try to capture me.”

“I’m afraid I’ve only got one trick, but it has always worked for me” The cat said timidly.

The fox looked at the cat and shook his head “One trick, how dumb is that? I’ve got hundreds of ways of escaping” said the fox.

“I still think it’s better to have one trick that works than waste time trying to choose from a dozen that might” said the cat softly.

“Rubbish” shouted the fox. “You’re just not as smart as me”

Just then they heard a pack of dogs barking as they coming towards them. The cat immediately ran up the nearest tree and hid on one of the highest branches.

“That’s my trick” the cat called from high up in the tree. “You had better reach into that bag of tricks of yours and choose one right now or you're history”

“Ok, Ok, stay calm” said the fox to himself.

“Should I run and hide behind the nearest hedge?

Or should I jump down a burrow?”

The dogs were getting closer and closer.

“Down a burrow that’s the way to go” said the fox, and started running around the field looking for a burrow.

“No, that one’s too small, I can’t get down far enough. This one’s too big, they could get down too. Maybe that one over there?”

Too late. While the fox wasted time, confused by so many choices, the dogs caught him and killed him.

The cat looked down sadly and said, “It’s better to have one safe way than a hundred you can’t choose from.”

The Horse and the Lion

Once upon a time, there was a lion. He was very hungry because he was too old to go hunting. He could only wait for some unfortunate animals that came across his way.

A horse came by. The lion was quite pleased to have horse to eat, or so he thought. However horse could run very fast; the lion knew that he could not run fast enough. Lion thought of a plan to lure the horse to come to him and greeted the horse, “Hey, Mr. Horse. You run so swift and gracious. I am Lion the healer. Do you want to be examed?”

But the horse knew what the lion was up to and pretended to trust the lion. “Well, my foot is hurt. I might have stepped on a thorn.”

The lion was glad that he successfully tricked the horse. He asked the horse to come a little closer so, he could look at the foot. The horse lifted up his back leg to show where a

thorn might have been. Once he saw that the lion was not paying attention, the horse back kicked. The lion fell on his behind. The horse ran away and laughed out loud because he was able to beat the lion with his own little trick.

The Jay and the Peacock

A Jay venturing into a yard where Peacocks used to walk, found there a number of feathers which had fallen from the Peacocks when they were moulting. He tied them all to his tail and strutted down towards the Peacocks. When he came near them they soon discovered the cheat, and striding up to him pecked at him and plucked away his borrowed plumes. So the Jay could do no better than go back to the other Jays, who had watched his behaviour from a distance; but they were equally annoyed with him, and told him:

"It is not only fine feathers that make fine birds."

The Fox and the Crow

A CROW having stolen a bit of meat, perched in a tree and held it in her beak. A Fox, seeing this, longed to possess the meat himself, and by a wily stratagem succeeded. "How handsome is the Crow," he exclaimed, in the beauty of her shape and in the fairness of her complexion! Oh, if her voice were only equal to her beauty, she would deservedly be considered the Queen of Birds!" This he said deceitfully; but the Crow, anxious to refute the reflection cast upon her voice, set up a loud caw and dropped the flesh. The Fox quickly picked it up, and thus addressed the Crow: "My good Crow, your voice is right enough, but your wit is wanting."

The Ass Has No Brains

This is one more interesting story from the album of Panchatantra. Once upon a time, there lived an old lion. The lion, the king of the forest had grown old. He became frail and due to this, he could not hunt for his food. Many a times, he didn't get even a single animal to eat. With each passing day he became more and more weak. He realized that like this he could not live for long. Somehow, he had to manage for the food, otherwise he would definitely die. He thought that how could he arrange for his food? After much of the thought process, ultimately he decided that he should have an assistant.

The lion thought that a fox would be the best person to handle this position. He summoned the fox and said, "Dear friend, I have always liked you because you are intelligent and clever. I want to appoint you as my minister and advise me on all the affairs of the forest". The old lion also asked the fox, that he was the king of the forest; so he should not have to hunt for his food. In respect to this, the fox's first duty as minister was to bring him an animal to eat everyday.

The fox didn't trust the lion, but he could not even refuse the king. The fox said, "Your

Majesty, I am happy, that you have chosen me to serve you. I accept your offer". The lion was pleased to hear such words. After the conversation, the fox went out to find an animal for the lion. On the way, he met a fat ass. The fox went to the ass, "Friend, where have you been all these days? I have been looking for you for the past many days".

The ass asked, "Why? What happened? Is everything alright?" The fox replied, "I have got good news for you. You are very lucky. Our king, the lion has chosen you to be his chief minister. He asked me to meet you and inform you about his decision." Ass was scared of the lion and said, "I am afraid of the lion. He might kill me and eat me up. Why has he chosen me as his chief minister? I don't even fit enough to be a minister.

The clever fox laughed and said, "Dear, you don't know your great qualities. You have a special charm of your own. Our king is dying to meet you. He has chosen you because you are wise, gentle, and hard working. You must not lose your greatest chance in life. Now, come with me and meet our great king. He will be really happy to see you". So, the poor ass was convinced and got ready to go along with the fox.

As soon as they reached the lion's den, the ass got scared and refused to move forward. At this, the fox said to the lion, "Your majesty, the chief minister appears to be very shy and hesitates to come near you". The lion himself came forward and said, "I like such modesty". He limped towards the ass. The ass got so scared that he ran to save his life. The lion became angry and shouted at the fox, "You have played a trick on me. I was so hungry that I wanted to eat him at once. Go and bring that ass back. If you don't, I will kill you."

The fox replied," Your Majesty, you were in a hurry. You should have left it to me, to bring him near enough. But I will try again". The fox went back to the ass and said, "You are a funny fellow. Why did you run away like that?" The ass replied, "I was too scared. I thought that the lion was going to kill me"

The fox said, "What a fool you are? If the king wanted to kill you, he would have done so. You could not have escaped by running away. The thing is, the king wanted to tell you a secret about the kingdom and he did not want me, to hear it. Now, what will he think about you? Doesn't matter, Come with me and apologize for your mistake. You don't realize that by serving the king, you will be the second most powerful animal of our forest. Imagine, all the other animals will respect you and seek favors from you."

In this way, the fox managed to attract the ass to go back to the lion. When the fox and the ass approached, the lion was hungrier than ever. But this time he kept a smiling face and said, "Welcome, my dear friend. It was unkind of you to have run away like that. Come near me. You are my chief minister." As and when the ass came closer, the lion pounced on him and killed him instantly. The lion thanked the clever fox and was happy to get the food.

As the lion sat down to take his meal, the fox said, "Your Majesty, I know you are very hungry and it is time for your dinner, but the king must take a bath before his meal". The lion thought it was a good idea and said, "You are right. I should go and bathe first. You keep a watch on the carcass of the ass".

The fox silently sat down to keep a watch of the ass. He was very hungry and thought to

himself, “I took all the trouble of getting the ass here. It is I who deserve the best portion of the meal”. Thus, the fox cut open the head of the ass and ate up the whole brain. When the lion returned and looked at the ass, he felt that something was missing. He found that the head of the ass had been cut open. He inquired from the fox, “Who came here? What happened to the head of the ass?”

The fox pretended to be innocent and reminded the lion, “Your Majesty, You have given a powerful blow on the head of the ass when you killed him”. The lion was satisfied with the answer and sat down to take his meal. Suddenly, he shouted,” What happened to the ass’ brain? I wanted to eat the brain first”. The fox smilingly replied, “Your Majesty, Asses have no brains. If this had any, he would not have come here a second time”.

The Foolish Lion and the Clever Rabbit

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

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

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

The Gold Giving Serpent

Here is another interesting story from the collection of Panchatantra. Once upon a time, there was a poor Brahmin named Haridatta. He used to work hard in the fields, but could not get the result out of it. One day, after the tiring working hours, he laid down in the shade of the tree, in the middle of the field. Just then, he saw a terrible snake with a big hood coming out of an anthill. The poor Brahmin thought that the serpent might be the guardian deity of the field and he had not paid homage to it for once. This could be the reason for the barrenness of the field.

Instantly, he went to bring some milk and offered the milk to the serpent in a bowl. While offering the milk with due regard, he addressed the serpent, “O, Guardian of this field! I didn’t know that you reside here that’s why I never offered you anything. Please forgive me”.

After the whole event, he went to his home. Next day, when the farmer came to plough the field, he found a gold coin in the bowl near the anthill. Now this became a regular feature of Brahmin's life. Daily he served milk to the serpent and found a gold coin.

One day Brahmin had to go to the foreign lands and due to this reason, he asked his son to take care of the serpent. The son brought the milk to the anthill and offered it, to the serpent. Next day, when he came back found a gold coin in the bowl. After taking the gold coin, he thought, "This anthill must be full of gold coins. I would kill the serpent and take them all". Brahmin's son decided the plan and next day came to the field with the milk and a stick. He offered the milk to the snake and struck its hood with the stick. The snake escaped the blow of the stick and bit the boy to his death.

The whole village mourned over the sad death of Brahmin's son. Two days later, the Brahmin returned to his village and came to know about the death of his son. He came across the whole incident and again went to the field to serve the milk to the serpent. He praised the snake in a loud voice and kept the milk near the anthill.

The snake came out of the anthill and replied, "Brahmin, you have come here from greed, even you have left your grief for your son who has just passed. Now onwards, the friendship between you and me is not possible. Your youthful son who lacked understanding struck me and I bit him. How can I forget that stick's blow? How can you forget the pain and grief for your son? ". After saying this, the serpent gave him a diamond and said, "Never come to me again. That is why; I am giving you a costly diamond". The serpent disappeared into the anthill. The Brahman took the diamond and returned home, cursing the lack of understanding of his son.

Moral: Excess of greed is harmful.

The Lion that Sprang to Life

Another story from the album of Panchatantra goes like this. Once upon a time, there were four friends in a village. Three of these four friends were learned in all sciences, but had no common sense. The fourth friend by the name of Subuddhi was not much learned in scriptures or sciences, but had common sense. He was quite practical in his approach towards life and knew what was good or bad for him.

One day, the three learned friends thought that there was no use of their learning, unless it brought them money to fulfill their needs. They decided to travel to all distant towns and cities in order to try their luck. They didn't want to take their fourth friend with them, as he was not learned. However, they agreed to take him along with them, taking into account that he was their friend since childhood.

After this, the four friends set out on a long journey. They wandered from one town to another, looking for an opportunity to earn money. One day, during their journey, they had to cross a dense forest. While passing through the forest, they saw a heap of bones lying under a tree. On seeing the heap, one of the learned friends said, "Friends, this is a good opportunity to test our skills. I think these bones are of a certain animal. Let us bring it to life using the knowledge we have acquired."

The first friend said, “Fine. I will use my skills to assemble the bones into a skeleton”. Then he chanted some mantra and ordered all the bones to come together forming a skeleton. When the skeleton was ready, the second friend chanted some other mantra, commanding flesh and blood to fill the skeleton and skin to cover it. Now, it looked like a lifeless lion.

As the third learned friend stood up to do the final act of putting life into the lifeless body of the animal, the fourth friend shouted, “Stop! This looks like the body of a lion. If it comes to life, he will kill all of us.” The friend, who was to put life into the body of the animal said, “You are a fool. What do you know in the field of learning and knowledge? Do you think I will lose this opportunity to test my learning? It would be better, if you keep your mouth shut.”

Ignoring what the fourth friend had said, the learned friend started chanting the mantra to bring the animal back to life. The fourth friend shouted, “Wait a minute” and quickly climbed up a tree nearby. The three learned friends laughed on the act of their friend. The third friend put life in the lifeless body of the lion. The lion sprang to life and killed all the three learned men. The fourth friend safely went back to his village.

Moral: Knowledge without common sense is useless.

The Golden Swan

This is another nice story from the album of Jataka Kathaye (Tales). Once upon a time, there was a swan / goose that had striking golden feathers. This swan lived in a pond. There was a house near this pond, where a poor woman lived with her two daughters. The people were really poor and were leading a tough life. The swan found that the poor mother was passing a hard time with her daughters.

The swan thought, “If I give them one after another my golden feathers, the mother can sell them. She and her daughters can live in comfort with the money raised from it”. After thinking this, the swan flew away to the poor woman’s house. On seeing the swan inside the house, the woman said,” Why have you come here? We have nothing to offer you”.

The Swan replied, “I have not come to take anything, but I have something to give you. I know your condition. I will give my golden feathers one by one and you can sell them. With the money raised through it, you people can easily live in comfort”. After saying this, the swan shed one of her feathers and then flew away. This became a regular feature and from time to time, the swan came back and every time left another feather.

Like this, the mother and her daughters were happily leading their life by selling the feathers of the golden swan. Each golden feather got them enough money to keep them in comfort. But the mother became greedy to get all the feathers as soon as possible. One day, she said to her daughters, “Now, we will not trust this swan, possibly she may fly away and never come back. If this would happen, we will be poor again. We will take all of her feathers, when she will come the next time”.

The innocent daughters replied, “Mother, this will hurt the swan. We will not cause any pain to her”. But the mother was determined to catch hold the swan the very next time she comes.

Next time, when the swan came, the mother caught her and pulled out all of her feathers. Now, the golden feathers of the swan changed into some strange feathers. The mother was shocked to see such feathers.

The Golden Swan said, “Poor Mother, I wanted to help you, but you wanted to kill me instead. As per my wish, I used to give you the golden feather. Now, I think there is no need to help you. Now, my feathers are nothing more than chicken feathers for you. I am going from this place and will never come back”. The mother felt sorry and apologized for the mistake committed by her. The Golden Swan said, “Never be greedy” and flew away.

The Power of a Rumour

This one is a nice story from the album of Jataka Kathaye/ Tales. Once upon a time, it happened in a forest that a hare was resting under a banyan tree. He had an intuition of doom and thought, “What would happen to me, if the earth will break? “. Suddenly, he heard a weird striking sound. He said, “It’s happened, the earth is breaking up”. He jumped up and ran madly without even observing the direction.

When he was running through the forest, a hare saw him and asked, “What happened? Where are you going in such a hurry? “. The Hare cried,” The earth is breaking up. You better run too”. The second hare ran so fast that he overtook the first hare. As they were passing the forest, both of them shouted to other hares, “The earth is breaking up. The earth is breaking up”. Very soon, thousands of hares were running through the forest.

On seeing hares running through the forest, the other animals too got frightened. The news spread from mouth to mouth and soon, everyone came to know that the earth was breaking up. It didn’t take much time before all the animals joined the race. All creatures whether reptiles or birds, insects or four-footed animals, everyone was trying to escape and their cries of fear created chaos all around.

A lion standing on a hill saw all the animals running and thought,” What is the matter? “. He ran down the hill rapidly and positioned himself in front of the crowd. He shouted at them, “Stop! Stop! ”. The powerful presence of the lion curtailed the rising wave of fright among the animals. A parrot yelled, “The earth is breaking up”, alighting on a rock near him. The Lion asked,” Who said it? “. The parrot replied, “I heard it from the monkeys"
.
When the monkeys were asked, they replied that they had heard it from the tigers. When the tigers were asked, it was found that they were informed by the elephants. The elephants told that the buffaloes formed their source. Finally, when the hares were caught up, they pointed one to another until the one, who started this menace was recognized.

The Lion asked the hare, “What made you think that the earth is breaking up?” The hare wavering in fear answered, “Your Majesty, I heard it cracking with my own ears”. The Lion investigated the matter and explored the sound that the hare had heard. Ultimately, he came to know that the sound had been caused by a large coconut falling from a tree. The coconut fell on a pile of rocks causing a minor landslide.

The Lion said to all the animals, “ Go back to your homes. The earth is absolutely safe. Next

time onwards, check a rumour before acting on it". The animals, which were now looking quite stupid, went back to their homes.

Moral: Check a rumour before acting on it.

The Wind and the Moon

Here is another nice story from the collection of Jataka kathaye / tales. Once upon a time, there lived two friends in the shade of a rock. It would sound strange, but one of them was a lion and the other was a tiger. They were friends since their childhood. They knew each other from the time, when they were too small to understand the difference between the lions and the tigers. Thus, their friendship was not at all strange to them.

Moreover, the part of the mountain under which they lived was peaceful; it could be due to the presence of a monk who lived under the same rock. He was a hermit, one who lives far away from worldly affairs. One day, the two friends got into a stupid argument for some unknown reason. The Tiger said," Everyone knows that cold comes when the moon decreases from full to new". The Lion said, "You are a stupid fellow. From where did you hear such nonsense? Everyone knows that cold comes when the moon increases from new to full".

The argument between them became stronger and stronger. Both of them were firm at their own opinion. They could not arrive at any conclusion to resolve the growing disagreement. They even started calling ill names to each other. Suddenly, they thought that like this they would lose their friendship. At last, they decided to go and ask the learned monk, who would definitely know about the actual answer.

Both of them went together to the peaceful monk and bowed respectfully before him. The hermit asked them the reason for their sudden arrival. They put their question to him and said, "Sir, only you can answer to this problematic question". The hermit thought for a while and said, "It can be cold in any phase of the moon, from new to full and back to new again. It is the wind that brings the cold, whether from west or north or east. Therefore, both of you are right and neither of you is defeated by the other".

The hermit also said, "Both of you share healthy friendship since your childhood. It is not good to get into arguments and think about separation. The most important thing is to live without conflict, to remain united. Unity is best by all means". The Lion and the Tiger understood the message of the wise monk. They thanked him for the kind suggestion given by him. Both of them lived happily thereafter as good friends.

Moral: Weather comes and weather goes, but friendship remains.

An Old Tiger and a Greedy Traveler

This is another interesting story / tale from the Hitopadesha collection. Once upon a time, there lived a Tiger in a forest. With the passing years, he became too old to hunt. One day, the Tiger was walking by the side of a lake and suddenly, a gold bangle came across his sight.

Quickly he picked up the bangle and thought that he could use it as an allure to catch someone. As he was under the thought process, a traveler happened to pass through the opposite side of the lake.

The Tiger instantly thought to himself, “What a delicious meal he would make?” He planned a scheme to attract the traveler. He held the bangle in his paw making it visible to the traveler and said, “Would you like to take this gold bangle. I don’t require it”. At once, the traveler wanted to take the bangle, but he hesitated to go near the Tiger. He knew that it was risky, yet he sought the Gold Bangle. He planned to be cautious, so he asked the Tiger, “How can I believe you? I know you are a beast and would kill me”.

The Clever Tiger innocently said, “Listen Traveler, in my youth, I was wicked unquestionably, but now I have changed myself. With the advice of a Sanyasi, I have left all evil. Now I am all alone in this world and have engaged myself in kind deeds. Moreover, I have grown old. I have no teeth and my claws are blunt. So, there is no need to fear from me”. The traveler’s was taken in by this smart talk and his love for gold soon overcame his fear of the Tiger. He jumped into the lake to wade across the Tiger.

But as per the plan of the Tiger, he got trapped in the marsh. On seeing this, the Tiger consoled him and said, “Oh! You need not worry. I’ll help you”. Gradually he came towards the traveler and seized him. As the traveler was being dragged out, onto the bank, he thought to himself, “Oh! This beast's talk of saintliness took me in totally. A beast is always a beast. If only I had not let my greed overcome my reason, I could be alive”. However, it was too late; the Tiger killed the traveler and ate him up. Like this, the traveler became victim of greed and Tiger was successful in his evil plan.

Moral: Greed never goes unpunished.

The Birds and the Shivering Monkeys

This is another interesting tale/ story from the collection of Hitopadesha Tales. Once upon a time, there was a huge tree on the banks of a river. The tree made a comfortable home for the family of birds who had built their nests on its branch. The birds were living there happily as the tree with its widespread branches sheltered them from scorching sun and heavy rains.

One day, when the sky was overcast with dark clouds, it rained very heavily. Some monkeys who were playing nearby the tree got drenched and ran for shelter under the tree. All of them were shivering with cold. When the birds saw the monkeys in the pitiable condition, one of the birds said,” O Monkeys, you would not have to shiver like this, if you had built a home like us. You would not have to suffer like this. If we can build our nest with small beaks, then why cant you. By God’s grace, you have two hands and two legs. Why don’t you make a nice shelter for yourselves?”

On hearing this, the monkeys got annoyed and swore to teach a lesson to the birds. They said to themselves, “These birds are not afraid of the rain or of cold wind. They are living

comfortably that is why they are criticizing us like this. Let the rain stops, we'll show them how to build home". As soon as the rain stopped, the monkeys climbed up the tree and destroyed the nests of the birds. They also broke the birds' eggs and threw the young ones down.

The poor birds flew here and there in misery. They were full of regret for their words and realized that they should not have given advice that was not asked. Advice should only be given to learned, wise and to those who ask for it.

Moral: Never give advice to fools.

Wilde's The Nightingale and the Rose

"She said that she would dance with me if I brought her red roses," cried the young Student; "but in all my garden there is no red rose."

From her nest in the holm-oak tree the Nightingale heard him, and she looked out through the leaves, and wondered.

"No red rose in all my garden!" he cried, and his beautiful eyes filled with tears. "Ah, on what little things does happiness depend! I have read all that the wise men have written, and all the secrets of philosophy are mine, yet for want of a red rose is my life made wretched."

"Here at last is a true lover," said the Nightingale. "Night after night have I sung of him, though I knew him not: night after night have I told his story to the stars, and now I see him. His hair is dark as the hyacinth-blossom, and his lips are red as the rose of his desire; but passion has made his face like pale ivory, and sorrow has set her seal upon his brow."

"The Prince gives a ball to-morrow night," murmured the young Student, "and my love will be of the company. If I bring her a red rose she will dance with me till dawn. If I bring her a red rose, I shall hold her in my arms, and she will lean her head upon my shoulder, and her hand will be clasped in mine. But there is no red rose in my garden, so I shall sit lonely, and she will pass me by. She will have no heed of me, and my heart will break."

"Here indeed is the true lover," said the Nightingale. "What I sing of, he suffers - what is joy to me, to him is pain. Surely Love is a wonderful thing. It is more precious than emeralds, and dearer than fine opals. Pearls and pomegranates cannot buy it, nor is it set forth in the marketplace. It may not be purchased of the merchants, nor can it be weighed out in the balance for gold."

"The musicians will sit in their gallery," said the young Student, "and play upon their stringed instruments, and my love will dance to the sound of the harp and the violin. She will dance so lightly that her feet will not touch the floor, and the courtiers in their gay dresses will throng round her. But with me she will not dance, for I have no red rose to give her"; and he flung himself down on the grass, and buried his face in his hands, and wept.

"Why is he weeping?" asked a little Green Lizard, as he ran past him with his tail in the air.

"Why, indeed?" said a Butterfly, who was fluttering about after a sunbeam.

"Why, indeed?" whispered a Daisy to his neighbour, in a soft, low voice.

"He is weeping for a red rose," said the Nightingale.

"For a red rose?" they cried; "how very ridiculous!" and the little Lizard, who was something of a cynic, laughed outright.

But the Nightingale understood the secret of the Student's sorrow, and she sat silent in the oak-tree, and thought about the mystery of Love.

Suddenly she spread her brown wings for flight, and soared into the air. She passed through the grove like a shadow, and like a shadow she sailed across the garden.

In the centre of the grass-plot was standing a beautiful Rose-tree, and when she saw it she flew over to it, and lit upon a spray.

"Give me a red rose," she cried, "and I will sing you my sweetest song."

But the Tree shook its head.

"My roses are white," it answered; "as white as the foam of the sea, and whiter than the snow upon the mountain. But go to my brother who grows round the old sun-dial, and perhaps he will give you what you want."

So the Nightingale flew over to the Rose-tree that was growing round the old sun-dial.

"Give me a red rose," she cried, "and I will sing you my sweetest song."

But the Tree shook its head.

"My roses are yellow," it answered; "as yellow as the hair of the mermaiden who sits upon an amber throne, and yellower than the daffodil that blooms in the meadow before the mower comes with his scythe. But go to my brother who grows beneath the Student's window, and perhaps he will give you what you want."

So the Nightingale flew over to the Rose-tree that was growing beneath the Student's window.

"Give me a red rose," she cried, "and I will sing you my sweetest song."

But the Tree shook its head.

"My roses are red," it answered, "as red as the feet of the dove, and redder than the great fans of coral that wave and wave in the ocean-cavern. But the winter has chilled my veins, and the

frost has nipped my buds, and the storm has broken my branches, and I shall have no roses at all this year."

"One red rose is all I want," cried the Nightingale, "only one red rose! Is there no way by which I can get it?"

"There is away," answered the Tree; "but it is so terrible that I dare not tell it to you."

"Tell it to me," said the Nightingale, "I am not afraid."

"If you want a red rose," said the Tree, "you must build it out of music by moonlight, and stain it with your own heart's-blood. You must sing to me with your breast against a thorn. All night long you must sing to me, and the thorn must pierce your heart, and your life-blood must flow into my veins, and become mine."

"Death is a great price to pay for a red rose," cried the Nightingale, "and Life is very dear to all. It is pleasant to sit in the green wood, and to watch the Sun in his chariot of gold, and the Moon in her chariot of pearl. Sweet is the scent of the hawthorn, and sweet are the bluebells that hide in the valley, and the heather that blows on the hill. Yet Love is better than Life, and what is the heart of a bird compared to the heart of a man?"

So she spread her brown wings for flight, and soared into the air. She swept over the garden like a shadow, and like a shadow she sailed through the grove.

The young Student was still lying on the grass, where she had left him, and the tears were not yet dry in his beautiful eyes.

"Be happy," cried the Nightingale, "be happy; you shall have your red rose. I will build it out of music by moonlight, and stain it with my own heart's-blood. All that I ask of you in return is that you will be a true lover, for Love is wiser than Philosophy, though she is wise, and mightier than Power, though he is mighty. Flame- coloured are his wings, and coloured like flame is his body. His lips are sweet as honey, and his breath is like frankincense."

The Student looked up from the grass, and listened, but he could not understand what the Nightingale was saying to him, for he only knew the things that are written down in books.

But the Oak-tree understood, and felt sad, for he was very fond of the little Nightingale who had built her nest in his branches.

"Sing me one last song," he whispered; "I shall feel very lonely when you are gone."

So the Nightingale sang to the Oak-tree, and her voice was like water bubbling from a silver jar.

When she had finished her song the Student got up, and pulled a note-book and a lead-pencil out of his pocket.

"She has form," he said to himself, as he walked away through the grove - "that cannot be denied to her; but has she got feeling? I am afraid not. In fact, she is like most artists; she is all style, without any sincerity. She would not sacrifice herself for others. She thinks merely of music, and everybody knows that the arts are selfish. Still, it must be admitted that she has some beautiful notes in her voice. What a pity it is that they do not mean anything, or do any practical good." And he went into his room, and lay down on his little pallet-bed, and began to think of his love; and, after a time, he fell asleep.

And when the Moon shone in the heavens the Nightingale flew to the Rose-tree, and set her breast against the thorn. All night long she sang with her breast against the thorn, and the cold crystal Moon leaned down and listened. All night long she sang, and the thorn went deeper and deeper into her breast, and her life-blood ebbed away from her.

She sang first of the birth of love in the heart of a boy and a girl. And on the top-most spray of the Rose-tree there blossomed a marvellous rose, petal following petal, as song followed song. Pale was it, at first, as the mist that hangs over the river - pale as the feet of the morning, and silver as the wings of the dawn. As the shadow of a rose in a mirror of silver, as the shadow of a rose in a water-pool, so was the rose that blossomed on the topmost spray of the Tree.

But the Tree cried to the Nightingale to press closer against the thorn. "Press closer, little Nightingale," cried the Tree, "or the Day will come before the rose is finished."

So the Nightingale pressed closer against the thorn, and louder and louder grew her song, for she sang of the birth of passion in the soul of a man and a maid.

And a delicate flush of pink came into the leaves of the rose, like the flush in the face of the bridegroom when he kisses the lips of the bride. But the thorn had not yet reached her heart, so the rose's heart remained white, for only a Nightingale's heart's-blood can crimson the heart of a rose.

And the Tree cried to the Nightingale to press closer against the thorn. "Press closer, little Nightingale," cried the Tree, "or the Day will come before the rose is finished."

So the Nightingale pressed closer against the thorn, and the thorn touched her heart, and a fierce pang of pain shot through her. Bitter, bitter was the pain, and wilder and wilder grew her song, for she sang of the Love that is perfected by Death, of the Love that dies not in the tomb.

And the marvellous rose became crimson, like the rose of the eastern sky. Crimson was the girdle of petals, and crimson as a ruby was the heart.

But the Nightingale's voice grew fainter, and her little wings began to beat, and a film came over her eyes. Fainter and fainter grew her song, and she felt something choking her in her throat.

Then she gave one last burst of music. The white Moon heard it, and she forgot the dawn, and lingered on in the sky. The red rose heard it, and it trembled all over with ecstasy, and opened

its petals to the cold morning air. Echo bore it to her purple cavern in the hills, and woke the sleeping shepherds from their dreams. It floated through the reeds of the river, and they carried its message to the sea.

"Look, look!" cried the Tree, "the rose is finished now"; but the Nightingale made no answer, for she was lying dead in the long grass, with the thorn in her heart.

And at noon the Student opened his window and looked out.

"Why, what a wonderful piece of luck!" he cried; "here is a red rose! I have never seen any rose like it in all my life. It is so beautiful that I am sure it has a long Latin name"; and he leaned down and plucked it.

Then he put on his hat, and ran up to the Professor's house with the rose in his hand.

The daughter of the Professor was sitting in the doorway winding blue silk on a reel, and her little dog was lying at her feet.

"You said that you would dance with me if I brought you a red rose," cried the Student. "Here is the reddest rose in all the world. You will wear it to-night next your heart, and as we dance together it will tell you how I love you."

But the girl frowned.

"I am afraid it will not go with my dress," she answered; "and, besides, the Chamberlain's nephew has sent me some real jewels, and everybody knows that jewels cost far more than flowers."

"Well, upon my word, you are very ungrateful," said the Student angrily; and he threw the rose into the street, where it fell into the gutter, and a cart-wheel went over it.

"Ungrateful!" said the girl. "I tell you what, you are very rude; and, after all, who are you? Only a Student. Why, I don't believe you have even got silver buckles to your shoes as the Chamberlain's nephew has"; and she got up from her chair and went into the house.

"What I a silly thing Love is," said the Student as he walked away. "It is not half as useful as Logic, for it does not prove anything, and it is always telling one of things that are not going to happen, and making one believe things that are not true. In fact, it is quite unpractical, and, as in this age to be practical is everything, I shall go back to Philosophy and study Metaphysics."

So he returned to his room and pulled out a great dusty book, and began to read.