

Elephants and Hares

Deep in the jungle, there lived a big group of elephants. The elephants lived in a certain place beside a pond, and did not require venturing out.

There came a time, when the pond started drying up due to lack of rain for a few years.

Some of the elephants met the king of the elephants, and said, "Your Majesty! We do not have any more water. Some of our little ones are on the verge of death. We must find some other place which has abundant water."

After thinking a while, the elephant king said, "I remember knowing a place where there is a very big lake. It must still be full of water. Let us go there."

Next morning they started to march. After travelling for five days and five nights, the elephants finally reached the place. There was indeed a big lake, full of water.

There were innumerable holes in the soft earth around the lake, in which a group of hares lived.

When the elephants saw so much water in the lake, they rejoiced, and started jumping into the water without a care in the world.

All this sudden commotion caused the holes to be destroyed. Many hares were trampled under the elephants. While many died, many others were seriously injured. But the hares could do nothing to stop this misery, and those who ran away could save themselves.

When the elephants left in the evening, the hares that had run away started returning. They assembled in sorrow, "Oh dear! Because of scarcity of water everywhere else, the elephants will come here every day. We must think of something, or more of us will get trampled tomorrow. What can we do against the mighty elephants? We must leave this place to survive."

One of the hares disagreed, "Friends! This is our ancestral home. If we can frighten the elephants off, they will not return. I can think of a way to frighten them away. We may be only small hares, but we are capable of executing my plan."

As planned, a hare sat on a hillock which was on the path of the elephants. After a while the king of the elephants came with the rest of his herd. The hare shouted, "You wicked elephant! I prohibit you to enter the lake. This lake belongs to the Moon-God. Go back at once!"

The king of the elephants was taken aback. But he would not dare to enrage any God either. He asked what message the hare had for him.

The hare said, "I am the messenger of the Moon God. He has sent me to inform you that he forbids you from entering his lake. Yesterday, many hares were trampled due to your visit. The hares live under the protection of the Moon God, and he is very angry with you. If you wish to survive, you should not enter the lake again."

The elephant king kept quiet for some time, and then said, "If that is so. Tell me where your Moon-God is, and I will go away with my herd, once we have asked for his forgiveness."

It was already evening, so the hare said, "The Moon God has come down to his lake to console the families of the hares who got killed yesterday. If you want to meet him, come with me!"

The clever hare led the king of the elephant to the bank of the lake from where the reflection of the moon could be seen in the water. He said, "He is very aggrieved today, please bow to him silently

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and leave. You must not disturb his meditation. Otherwise, he will be furious.”

The king of the elephant was wonder-struck on seeing the moon in the water. He believed the hare, and left trembling as soon as he bowed respectfully. And so, the hares lived happily, without being disturbed by the elephants anymore.

Moral: The weak must make use of all tactics to survive.