

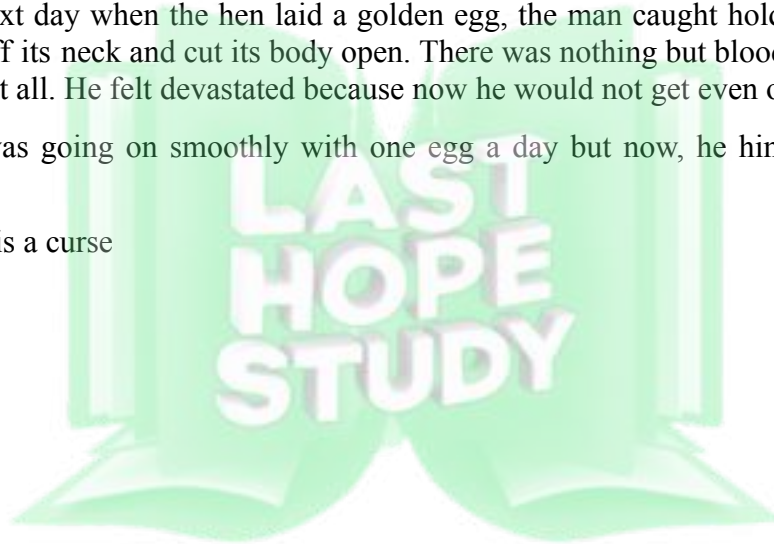
The Hen that Laid Golden Eggs

Once upon a time there lived a cloth merchant in a village with his wife and two children. He used to remain worried because his business was not going well. People would buy cloth, but they used to pay him in installments. Sometimes they would not even pay him. One day he went to collect money from an old man, but he was not at home. He picked one of the old man's hens and came back. He did not know that his luck was about to change. The hen which he brought was not an ordinary hen as it used to lay golden eggs. Next morning, when he was about to pick the eggs his happiness knew no bounds, the hen had laid a golden egg. His lifestyle changed: he bought a big, beautiful house, and he opened a new shop in the expensive area of that town. His family could afford any luxury they wanted. But the merchant was not satisfied with what he used to get daily. He was a get-rich-trice kind of a person. The man wanted to get all the golden eggs from his hen at once. So, one day he thought hard and at last hit upon a plan. He decided to kill the hen and to get all the eggs together.

So, the next day when the hen laid a golden egg, the man caught hold of it, took a sharp knife, chopped off its neck and cut its body open. There was nothing but blood all around and no trace of any egg at all. He felt devastated because now he would not get even one single egg.

His life was going on smoothly with one egg a day but now, he himself made his life miserable.

Moral: Greed is a curse



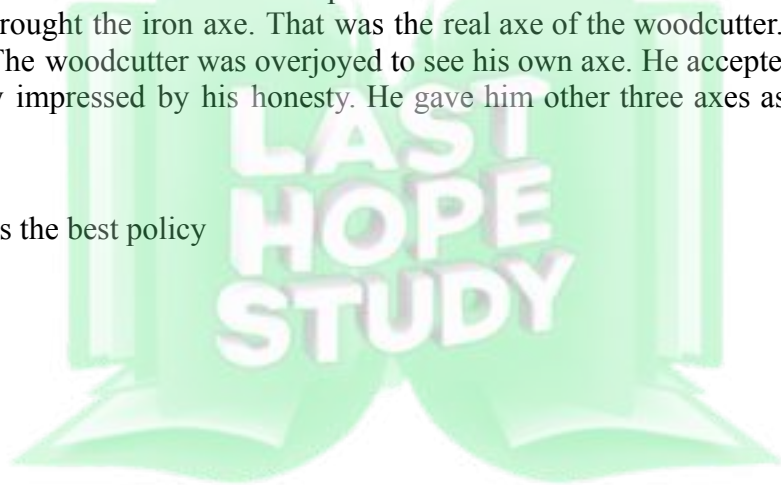
The Woodcutter and his Axe

Honesty demands truthfulness, integrity, loyalty, faith, and more. It is the most crucial ingredient of a strong moral character and it teaches us the difference between right and wrong. Honest people have a unique way of looking at life, they do not compromise on their moral values for materialistic gains. They are the foundation of a prosperous society.

Once there lived a woodcutter in a village. He was very poor. He used to cut the trees in the nearby forest to sell the wood in the market to earn money for his family. One day, he was cutting a bough of a tree on the bank of a river. By chance, his axe slipped and fell into the river. He was helpless. His axe was the only source of earning for him. He was too poor to buy a new axe. He started crying bitterly.

An angel appeared before him. He asked the woodcutter why he was crying. The woodcutter told him the whole matter. The angel took pity on him. He dived into the river and came up with a golden axe. He asked the woodcutter if that was his axe. The woodcutter said that that was not his axe. The angel dived into the water again and appeared with a silver axe. The woodcutter again refused to take that axe as that was not his. The angel dived again and brought a bronze axe. The woodcutter did not accept this axe because that was not his. The angel dived fourth time and brought the iron axe. That was the real axe of the woodcutter. The angel offered this axe to him. The woodcutter was overjoyed to see his own axe. He accepted that at once. The angel was greatly impressed by his honesty. He gave him other three axes as the reward of his honesty.

Moral: Honesty is the best policy



A Thirsty Crow

Life is full of challenges and only those can enjoy it who face the obstacles with determination and courage. We come to realize our true strength in tough times. Difficulties can be overcome when we refuse to give up and make every effort to achieve the result of our choice. No matter what the nature of obstacles is, we can turn the tide in our favor with persistence.

On a hot summer day, a crow felt very thirsty. He was in search of water. He flew here and there but could not find water anywhere. He was much worried. At last, he reached a garden. He looked around and found a pitcher of water under a tree. He at once hopped towards it. He peeped into the pitcher. He tried to drink the water but was disappointed to find the water level too low.

He tried to break the pitcher with its beak but could not do so. He tried to go as deep into the pitcher as he could, but its beak could not touch the level of the water. Then he tried to overturn the pitcher, but it was too much for his strength. The crow was clever and optimistic. He began to think of new ways. He saw a heap of pebbles nearby. He hit upon a plan.

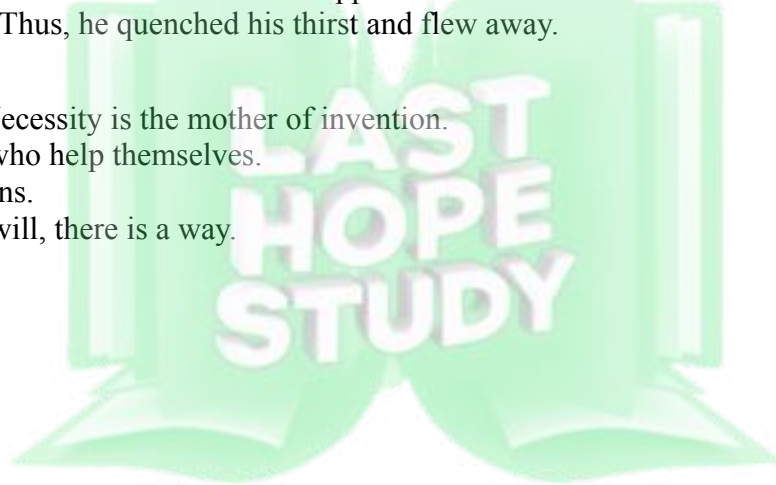
He picked up a stone and dropped it into the pitcher. He dropped some more stones one by one. The water rose a little. Then he dropped more stones till the water level rose so high that he could drink it. Thus, he quenched his thirst and flew away.

Moral Lesson: Necessity is the mother of invention.

God helps those who help themselves.

No Pains, No Gains.

Where there is a will, there is a way.



A Foolish Stag

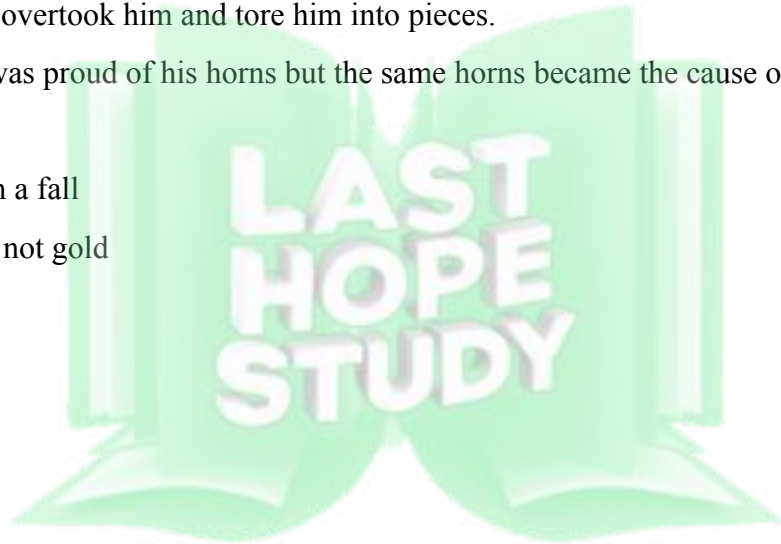
It is said that appearances are often deceptive. What appears useful and good may prove useless and harmful. Therefore, we should not be jealous of the appearance of people and things. That's why it is said, "All that glitters is not gold." The following moral story, "A Foolish Stag," proves the truth of this saying.

One day a stag went to a pool to quench his thirst. The pool water was so clear and still that he could see his reflection in it quite vividly. He looked at the reflection of his horns and felt proud of their beauty. Suddenly, his eyes fell on the reflection of his forelegs, he thought they were thin and ugly. He felt sad and with a heavy heart, he quenched his thirst. As he was about to leave, he saw hounds coming towards him. So, he took to his heels and the hounds were left far behind. The stag took a sigh of relief. But unfortunately, his horns got caught in bushes. He tried his best to free himself but could not. In the meantime, the hounds came quite close. The stag now cursed himself for condemning his legs and praising his horns. But now he could do nothing. The lion overtook him and tore him into pieces.

The stag was proud of his horns but the same horns became the cause of his death.

Moral: Pride hath a fall

All that glitters is not gold



The Slave and the Lion

All religions teach to be good to others. A happy social life is only possible if people are kind and generous to one another. If a person does a good deed to others, it is always reciprocated. Only the merciful may hope for mercy from others. The following story illustrates the frequently quoted moral in a very appropriate way. The story of a slave and a lion shows that love begets love and one good turn deserves another.

Once there was a slave. He was very hardworking. Unfortunately, his master was very cruel. The slave worked day and night but his master never got pleased with his work. He also did not give the slave enough food. Besides, the slave was abused and punished from time to time. He was upset and could not bear that any longer. One day, he decided to run away to some other place. He passed through a thick jungle. While running he got tired and decided to rest for a while. He laid down and dozed off.

Suddenly, he heard a noise and woke up. When he came to senses, he saw a lion lying down on the ground. It was moaning with great pain. Its paw was badly swollen as a thorn was stuck in it. The slave took pity on the lion and plucked out the thorn from its paw. The lion felt comfort and great relief. Being grateful, the lion did not harm the slave and went away. After a couple of months the master caught the slave. He wanted to punish him for his offence. It was decided that the slave would be thrown before a hungry lion. The slave was made to stand in an arena. A hungry lion was led by some hunters. The lion rushed towards the slave. But as soon as it came near the slave, the lion started licking the feet of the slave. The lion had recognized him. The lion knew that he was the same fellow who had plucked the thorn out of its paw. Upon inquiry, the slave told the whole story to the king. He was much impressed by the incident and set the slave free.

Moral: Kindness never goes unrewarded.

Two Friends and a Bear

Sometimes we come across people who claim to be faithful and loyal but they prove to be fair-weather friends in the hour of need. One needs to be careful of such people, they usually leave people in the lurch. The following story aptly illustrates the oft-quoted moral: A friend in need is a friend indeed.

Once there were two friends. They loved each other's company. One of them was cleverer and sharper. Once they went on a long journey. They promised to help each other through thick and thin. The two friends met with serious accidents a couple of times, but luckily each time they had a narrow escape. One such incident proved a test for their friendship. It so happened that while moving on they had to pass through a thick forest. After some time they saw a bear coming towards them at a distance. They ran for their life. The bear first chased the clever boy.

Luckily, he gripped a branch of a nearby tree and climbed on it. The bear jumped as high as it could but could not reach him. It looked at him angrily and turned back to the other boy. It found him lying still and flat on the ground. It touched his body and sniffed him several times, but he was neither moving nor breathing. Thinking that the boy must be dead, the bear went away. Thus the boy's trick worked. He knew that the bear would not harm him if he held his breath. So he pretended to be dead and saved his life. When the bear had gone, the clever boy got down the tree and came to him. By way of a joke, the selfish boy asked his friend, "what secret did the bear say in your ear?" He told him that the bear gave him a golden piece of advice.

It told him the truth of life. "What was that?" said the clever boy. He said that the bear advised him to be careful in choosing friends and "Never make selfish people your friends." Saying this, he said goodbye to the selfish boy and went away.

Moral : A friend in need is a friend indeed.

The king and the Spider

Optimism is one of the pillars of success. Some people lose heart on an occasional loss, give up all hope and resign themselves to their fate. There are those too who have a positive and optimistic approach about life and never abandon hope. They do not lose heart and can find hope even in hopeless situations. Men who have hope can see the light, and ultimately reach their destination. The story of the king and spider shows us a conflict between hope and fear.

Robert Bruce was a brave king. He ruled Scotland for many years. During his rule many battles were fought between Scotland and England. In each battle, Robert Bruce was defeated. Once he had to run away from the battle field to save his life. He was chased by the enemy. Luckily, he saw a cave where he hid himself. He started thinking about his bad luck. The more he thought about his misfortunes, the more he got worried. Clouds of sorrow and dejection circled him. He seemed to have lost all hope. By chance, he saw a spider which had fallen from its web. The spider tried several times to reach the web, but each time it fell down. In spite of this, it did not lose heart. These repeated failures could not discourage it. It kept on trying.

Finally, in its tenth attempt it was able to reach the destination. This incident gave Bruce a new hope. He said to himself, "Look! How brave this tiny creature is, and how cowardly you are! Can't you be as firm as this tiny spider is?" Soon he realized that he had gotten rid of despair.

He regained his confidence and came out of the cave to gather his forces. He raised the morale of his soldiers by asking them to put faith in their bravery. He decided to regain the lost honor with a new zeal and he attacked the English army. This time he crushed the enemy and won freedom for his countrymen.

Moral: Try try Again.

The Wolf and the Lamb

This world is full of butchers and cruel people. People corrupted by power think that they are above law, morality and decency. As a result, they want to deprive the weak ones of all their rights. The story of the wolf and the lamb shows the truth of the saying: "Might is Right." In this story the lamb presents its case in the logical way, but the wolf turns its back on reasoning and logic.

Once a wolf was very hungry and thirsty. He looked for his prey here and there, but could not find any. On his way, he saw a stream and stopped there to drink water. He drank water to his fill. Now he wanted something to eat, but could not find anything. All of a sudden he saw a lamb drinking water downstream. The wolf got angry as he saw a meek animal standing beside him. He wanted to teach lamb a lesson. He thought of a plan. He walked towards the lamb and said, "Oh poor creature, why are you making water muddy and dirty?" The lamb was very surprised to hear that. The little creature said to the wolf, "This is a false allegation. You know the water is flowing from your side and I can't make it dirty." The wolf felt ashamed as his trick did not work. Then he thought of another trick. He said to the lamb, "You know it very well that you abused me last year. I was very patient then. But tell me, why did you do that? Did you know that you were abusing someone who is respected by all birds and animals? Tell me, why you abused me."

The lamb was disturbed and shocked. The lamb said to the wolf, "Again, this is a false allegation. That is not fair. Surely, I could not abuse you last year. Dear Sir, I am only six months old." The wolf felt insulted over this plain talk of the lamb. Quite angrily, the wolf said to the helpless creature, "If it wasn't you, then it might be your mother. Yes, it must be your mother because you resemble her a lot. I was patient enough for a long time. Now it is time to punish you." The lamb said to the wolf, "Even if it was my mother, it was not my fault. Why do you want to punish me for my mother's offence?" Unfortunately, the lamb's logic could not impress the wolf. He pounced upon the lamb and tore it into pieces. So this truly justifies the given moral that might is right.

Moral: Might is Right.

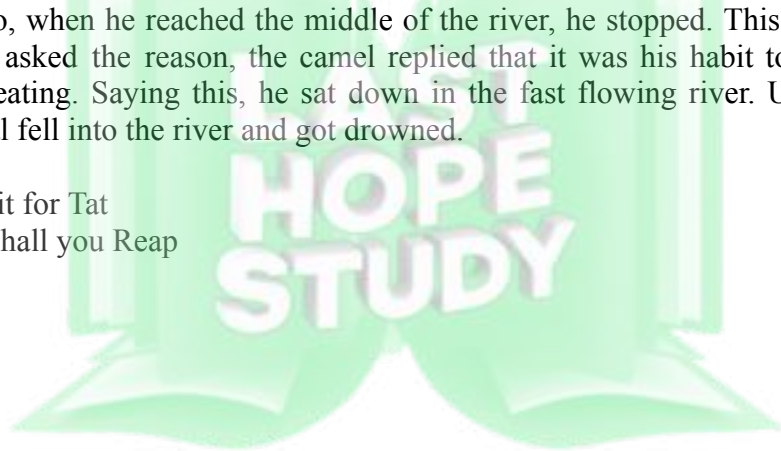
A Jackal and a Camel

Once there lived a jackal in a jungle present on the bank of a river. There were melon fields on the other bank of the river. The melons were ripe and juicy in the summer season, and the very sight of them made the jackal's mouth watered. The jackal could not do anything because he did not know how to swim across the river and the river was deep and wide. Luckily, he was friends with a camel. He requested the camel to take him across the river. The camel readily agreed to it.

One day, the camel with the jackal on his back, waded through the cold water. On reaching the other bank, both of them started eating the melons. Suddenly, the jackal started to howl. The camel was taken aback on hearing the noise created by the jackal. He, therefore, requested the jackal not to howl. The jackal replied that it was his habit to howl after having a meal. The villagers, on hearing the howls, came rushing to the fields with sticks in their hands. The jackal, being small in size, slipped under a bush, but the camel was caught because of his height. The villagers beat him well and drove him out of the fields.

As soon as the camel entered the river, the jackal came out from his hide-out and jumped onto the camel's back. It angered the camel, but he remained quiet. He thought to teach the jackal a good lesson. So, when he reached the middle of the river, he stopped. This thing alarmed the jackal. When he asked the reason, the camel replied that it was his habit to take a bath after getting a good beating. Saying this, he sat down in the fast flowing river. Unable to keep his balance, the jackal fell into the river and got drowned.

Moral Lesson: Tit for Tat
As You Sow, So shall you Reap



A Foolish Merchant

Once upon a time, a merchant earned a large sum of money by selling his goods. He had to go a long way to reach home. He went to an inn to get his horse. The stableman brought out his horse and said, "Sir, your horse has lost a shoe nail. You better wait and have it put in." The merchant said, "Sorry! I have no time now. Moreover, one nail more or less in the shoe does not matter much." Saying so, he got on his horse and galloped it towards his destination.

After some time, another nail from the shoe of the horse came off. The horse began to limp. Being in a hurry, the merchant did not stop to repair the damage. After some time, the horse began to stagger. Very soon darkness of the night prevailed everywhere. This further decreased the speed of the horse.

In the meantime, a gang of robbers appeared from the forest. The merchant could not speed up his horse and save his money. He was at the mercy of the robbers. They thrashed him harshly and snatched his money. Finally, the merchant returned home with a lame horse and empty pocket as his carelessness had cost a heavy price.

Moral Lesson: A Stitch in Time Saves Nine



The Bat, the Animals and the Birds

Once upon a time birds and animals gathered in a forest to choose their king. The birds wanted to make a ruler out of them, while animals insisted that an animal should be the king. They discussed the matter for several days but could not reach any conclusion. At last, they began to fight.

The bat played a strange role in the war between the birds and the animals. If the birds seemed to be winning, it would go over to their side and say, "I am with you with my heart and soul. I am a bird because I fly like you." However, if the animals seemed to be winning, the bat would take no time in changing the side. It would switch on its loyalty to animals and say, "I am with you. I am an animal because I give milk to my young ones like you." The behavior of the bat brought disgrace to it. At last, the war came to an end and the animals carried the day.

The lion was made the king of the forest. The bat went to congratulate the victor. But, the animals turned it out of the court saying, "You are not an animal because you fly." It then flew over to the camp of the birds. They also turned it out saying, "you are not a bird because you give milk to your young ones." Since that time, the bat has become a symbol of duplicity. So, neither it can show its face to animals nor to birds. It comes out only in the dark.

Moral Lesson: A rolling stone gathers no moss.

