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Firefly **Plus!**

Magic Touch Reader

A collection of stories

3



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Magic Touch Reader - 3

1

Sleeping Beauty

A long, long time ago, there lived a King and his Queen. They were very happy, but they had no child. The King and Queen prayed for a child everyday.

One day, when the Queen was walking in her garden, she met a frog. The frog had magical powers. He told her, "In a year, your wish will come true. You will be blessed with a baby girl."

A year later, the Queen gave birth to a pretty little baby girl. The King was delighted! He invited the entire kingdom to a grand feast at the palace!



In the same kingdom, there lived thirteen wise fairies. They were good friends of the King and Queen. The King decided to invite them to the grand feast, too!

However, the King had only twelve beautiful golden plates and **goblets**. When he set them out on the table, he thought, "If I offer my best plates and goblets to twelve fairies only, the thirteenth fairy will feel left out. I must invite only twelve fairies."

Thus, the King invited twelve fairies and the rest of his subjects to celebrate the birth of his daughter. The feast was the **grandest** event the kingdom had ever seen!

The twelve fairies gave twelve magical gifts to the little girl. One fairy said, "May this girl grow up to be the most beautiful woman ever."

Another fairy said, "May this girl be kind and soft-spoken and loved by all."

Another fairy said, "May she have enough riches to keep her happy for life."

Eleven fairies had blessed the little girl with precious gifts. When the twelfth fairy stepped up to gift the child, the doors to the palace opened with a bang. It was the thirteenth fairy!

The thirteenth fairy walked in angrily. She marched up to the King and said, "You thought you could celebrate without me. You think I'm not important enough to be invited? I now curse your child. When she turns fifteen, she will prick her finger on a spindle and die!"

And the fairy stormed out of the palace! The King and Queen were **heartbroken**. Their little baby was cursed!



The Queen held the baby in her arms and started to cry. Just then, the twelfth fairy stepped up. She had not yet **bestowed** her gift upon the little child.

"I cannot undo the fairy's curse," she told the King, "but I can change it a little.

When your daughter pricks her finger on a spindle, she will not die, but she will fall asleep for a hundred years and so will the whole kingdom."

The King did not want his daughter to fall asleep for a hundred years. The next morning, he ordered his men to burn every spindle in the kingdom. "From this day onwards, spindles are banned in this kingdom," he **proclaimed**.

As days went by, the little girl grew up to be everything that the fairies had wished her to be. She was beautiful and soft spoken and adored by everyone. The King and Queen always kept a close eye on the Princess. They were afraid that the thirteenth fairy's curse would come true. Hence, they rarely let the little girl go off on her own.

Days went by. Soon, it was time for the King and Queen to celebrate their only daughter's fifteenth birthday. That morning, the Princess left her room to visit the royal dining hall for breakfast.

She was walking through a little corridor when she spotted a small wooden door in the wall. 'I don't think I have ever seen this door,' said the Princess to herself. 'What lies behind it?' she wondered.

The Princess opened the door and looked inside. It was a small room with just one stool by the window and a strange object. A crooked old woman sat on the stool, working on that object.

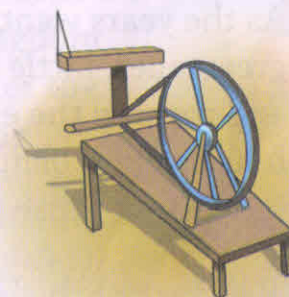
"Good day, dear lady," said the Princess politely. "May I ask what you are doing here?"

The old woman looked up at her and said, "Good day, Princess. I am spinning." The Princess asked her, "What is that strange object in front of you?" "Why, that is a spindle my dear!" said the old woman. "Haven't you seen one before?"

"No," replied the Princess. "It is a strange object indeed."

"Why don't you try it?" said the old woman. The Princess moved forward to touch the spindle. Watch out, Princess!

The Princess took the spindle and pricked her finger on the



needle! The moment she felt the prick, she dropped down on the ground and fell asleep.

The old woman stood up and magically transformed into the thirteenth fairy! She flew away and left the Princess lying asleep on the ground.

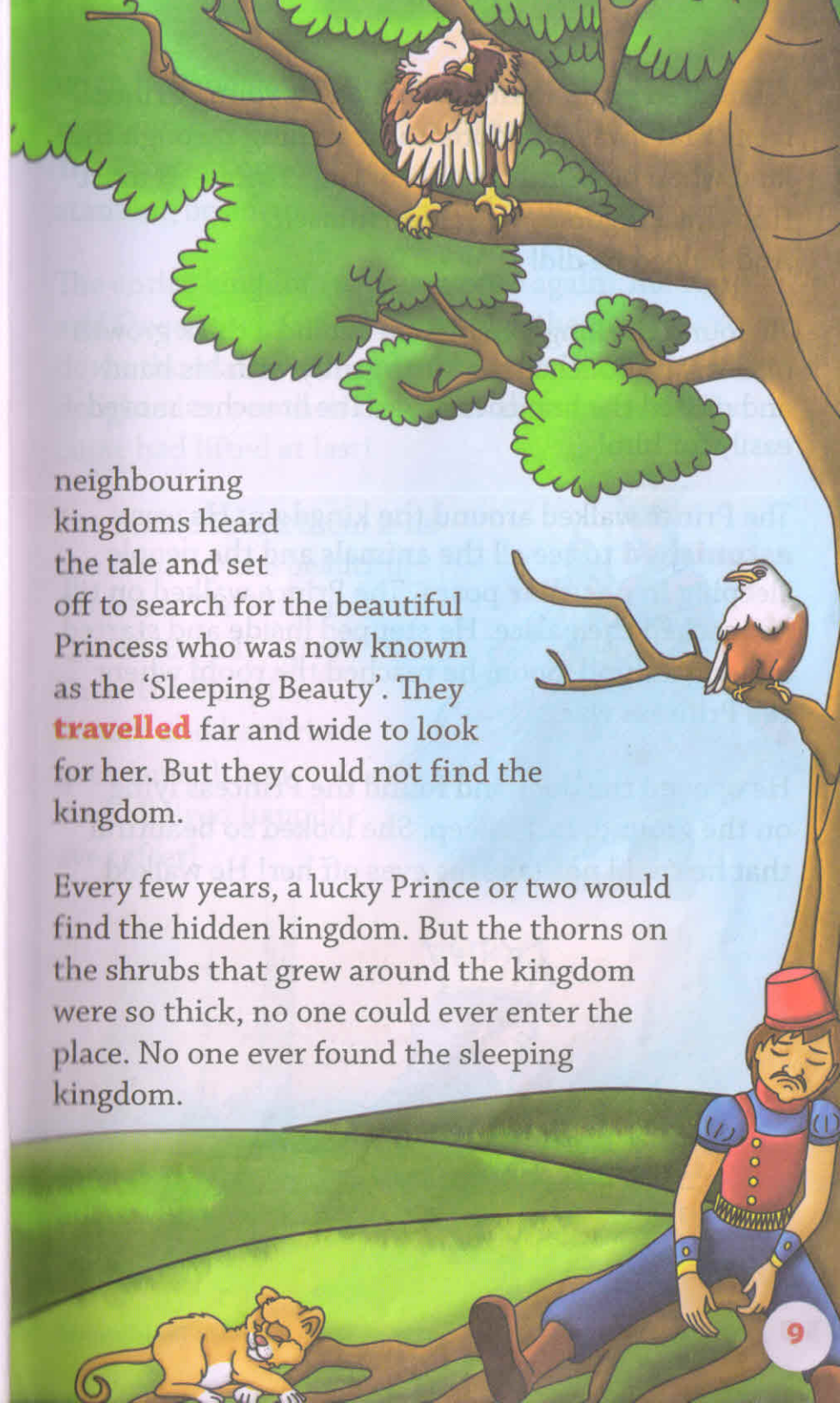
The Princess was not the only one to fall asleep. Along with her, the entire palace fell into a deep **slumber**. The King and Queen fell asleep on their thrones. They had been organising a grand breakfast in the royal dining hall when the Princess pricked her finger. The royal servants who were helping them with the **festivities** fell asleep, too.

Every little home in the kingdom was fast asleep. You couldn't find a single person moving around in the kingdom. The wind came to a standstill, too!

And thus the kingdom that had once been full of life, fell asleep for a hundred years.

As the years went by, the trees around the kingdom grew taller. Little shrubs and creepers sprang up and covered the entire palace and the surrounding houses like a blanket. The kingdom was hidden inside this dense growth.

The story of the beautiful Princess and the kingdom spread far and wide. Young Princes from



neighbouring kingdoms heard the tale and set off to search for the beautiful Princess who was now known as the 'Sleeping Beauty'. They **travelled** far and wide to look for her. But they could not find the kingdom.

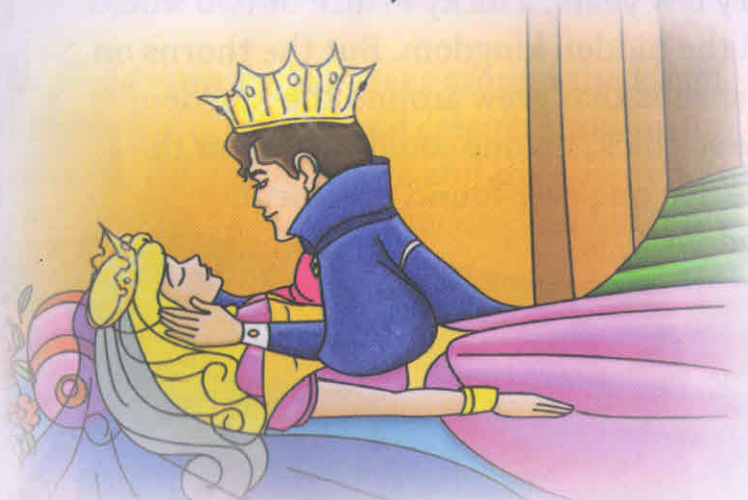
Every few years, a lucky Prince or two would find the hidden kingdom. But the thorns on the shrubs that grew around the kingdom were so thick, no one could ever enter the place. No one ever found the sleeping kingdom.

A hundred years went by. One day, a young Prince from a far away kingdom was travelling through the land when he heard the tale of the Princess. 'I must find this kingdom,' he said to himself. And indeed he did!

He found the kingdom hidden behind a thick growth of trees. He touched the trees gently with his hand and moved the branches aside. The branches moved easily for him!

The Prince walked around the kingdom. He was **astonished** to see all the animals and the people sleeping in **peculiar** poses. The Prince walked on till he reached the palace. He stepped inside and started looking around. Soon, he reached the room where the Princess was.

He opened the door and found the Princess lying on the ground, fast asleep. She looked so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off her! He walked



up to her and gently touched her face. At that very moment, the hundred years had come to an end. The Princess opened her eyes and saw the Prince standing beside her. She smiled at him **shyly**.

The entire kingdom woke up once again. The King and Queen woke up too. They saw the Princess come down the stairs with a handsome Prince. They were delighted to see their daughter alive and well. The curse had lifted at last!

The Prince asked them if he could marry the beautiful Princess. The King and Queen happily agreed. Thus, the Sleeping Beauty and her Prince got married, and they all lived happily ever after!



Now we know

Bad things can happen to good people,
but they don't last forever.

New Words We Learnt

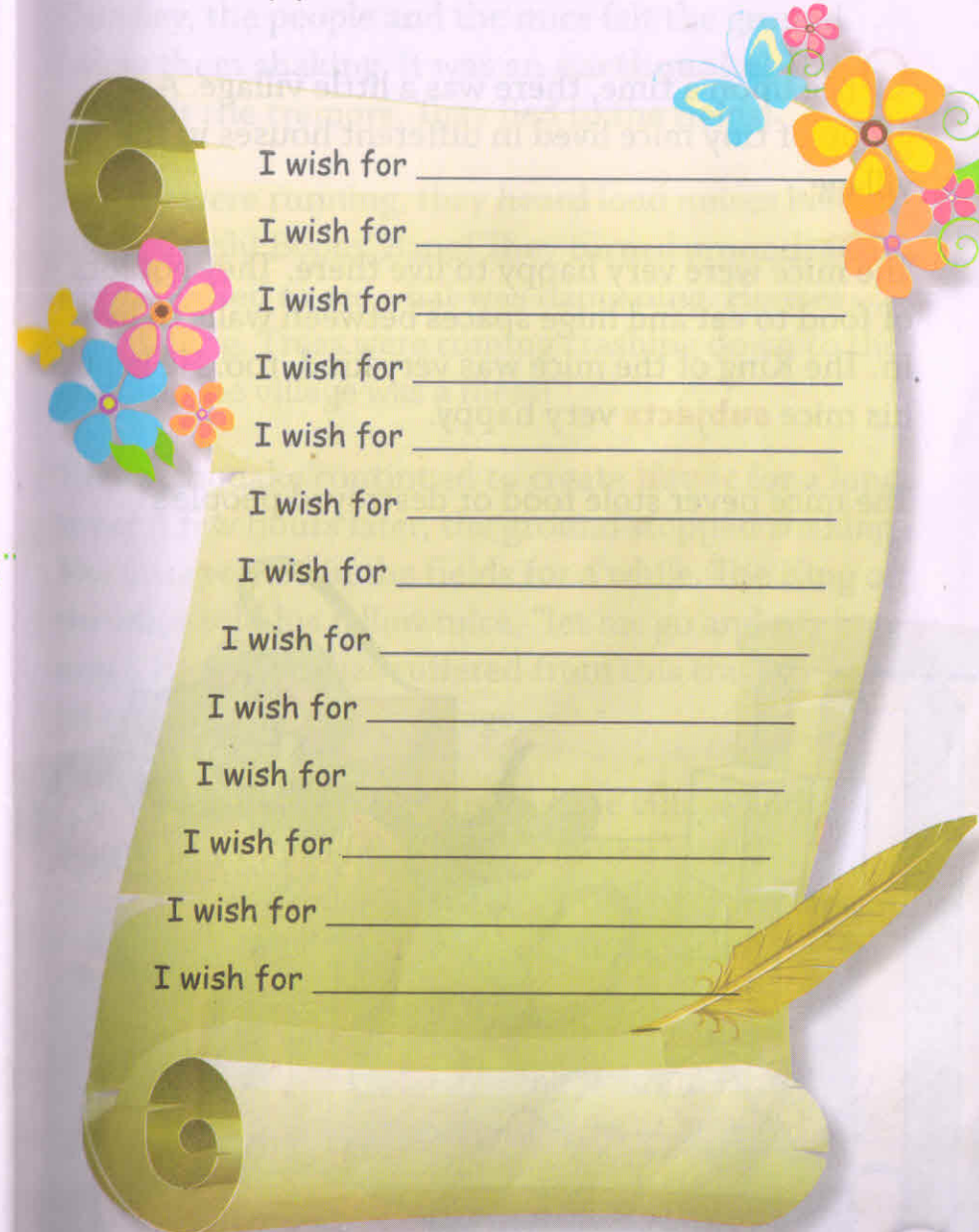
goblets	- a drinking glass with a base and a narrow stem, but without a handle.
grandest	- most magnificent
heartbroken	- suffering from sorrow or disappointment
bestowed	- presented as a gift or an honour
proclaimed	- announced officially
slumber	- sleep
festivities	- celebrations
travelled	- went from one place to another
astonished	- filled with sudden wonder or amazement
peculiar	- strange
shyly	- in a startled, nervous way

Fun Time

★ Why was the spindle so important to the story?
Can you write a few lines about it?

Fun Time

★ What if you were granted thirteen wishes? What would you wish for? Write down your wishes and tell us why you wish for them!



I wish for _____

I wish for _____

I wish for _____

I wish for _____

I wish for _____

I wish for _____

I wish for _____

I wish for _____

I wish for _____

I wish for _____

The little mice and the big elephants

Once upon a time, there was a little village. A group of tiny mice lived in different houses in the village.

The mice were very happy to live there. They got lots of food to eat and huge spaces between walls to live in. The King of the mice was very kind, too. He kept his mice **subjects** very happy.

The mice never stole food or destroyed people's



belongings. They ate the scraps that people threw away. Thus, the people in the village did not have a problem with the mice.

One day, the people and the mice felt the ground below them shaking. It was an **earthquake**! The mice felt the tremors. They fled to the fields!

As they were running, they heard loud noises behind them. Crash! Boom! Bang! They turned around, and were shocked to see what was happening. Houses were falling. Trees were coming crashing down to the ground. The village was a mess!

The earthquake continued to create **havoc** for a long time! A few hours later, the ground stopped shaking. The mice waited in the fields for a while. The King of the mice told his fellow mice, "let me go and see how much the village has suffered from this tragedy." And he set off towards the village.

The Mouse King walked around the village and looked sadly at the mess surrounding him. The houses where his people-friends had once lived were completely destroyed. The roads had cracks and the trees lay fallen on the ground.

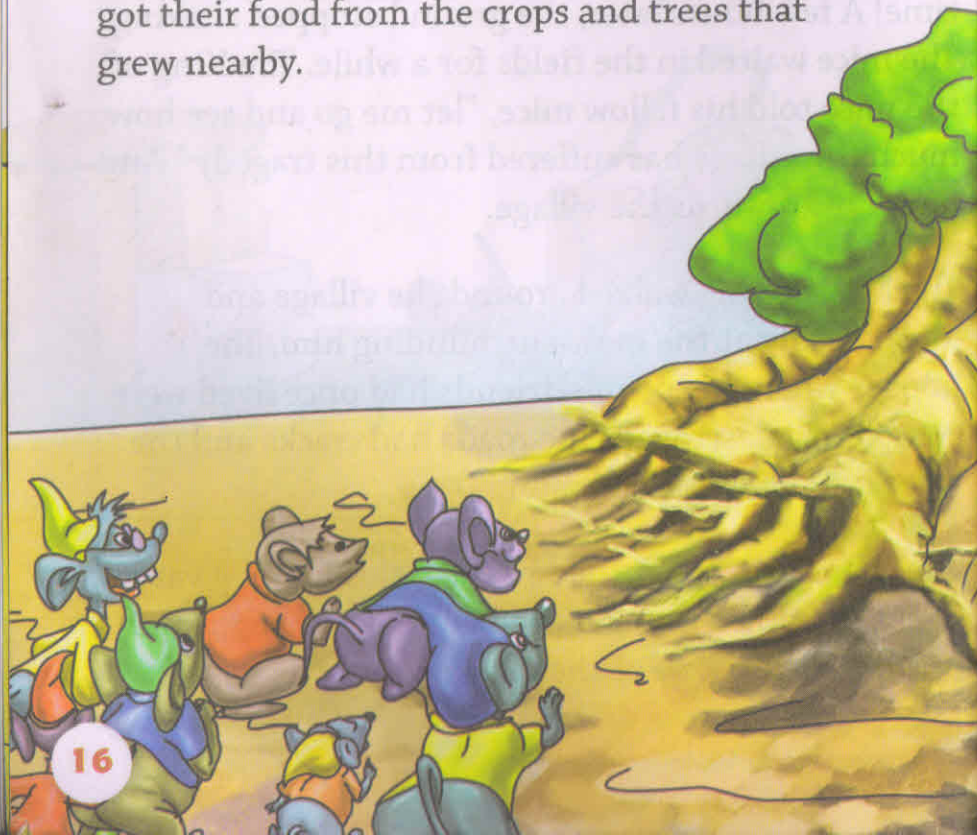
The Mouse King returned to the fields looking very upset. The mice were worried. "What has happened to the village?" one of them asked.

"Alas," said the King, "our village has been destroyed by that **ghastly** earthquake. Everything is ruined!"

The mice started talking amongst themselves. What would they do now? But, their King would not give up so easily. He told the mice, "We will go back to the village and start a new life there. It has been our home for so long. We can't just leave and go away."

The mice and their King returned to the village. They cleaned up the mess and built their own houses.

As time went by, the mice families grew bigger, and soon, more than a hundred mice were living happily together in their tiny village among the ruins. They got their food from the crops and trees that grew nearby.



The ruins thus became the home of the little mice.

A few days later, the mice were moving around doing their daily **chores** when the ground started to shake once again. Another earthquake? The mice were really scared. They ran around the village trying to gather their friends together and move to the fields.

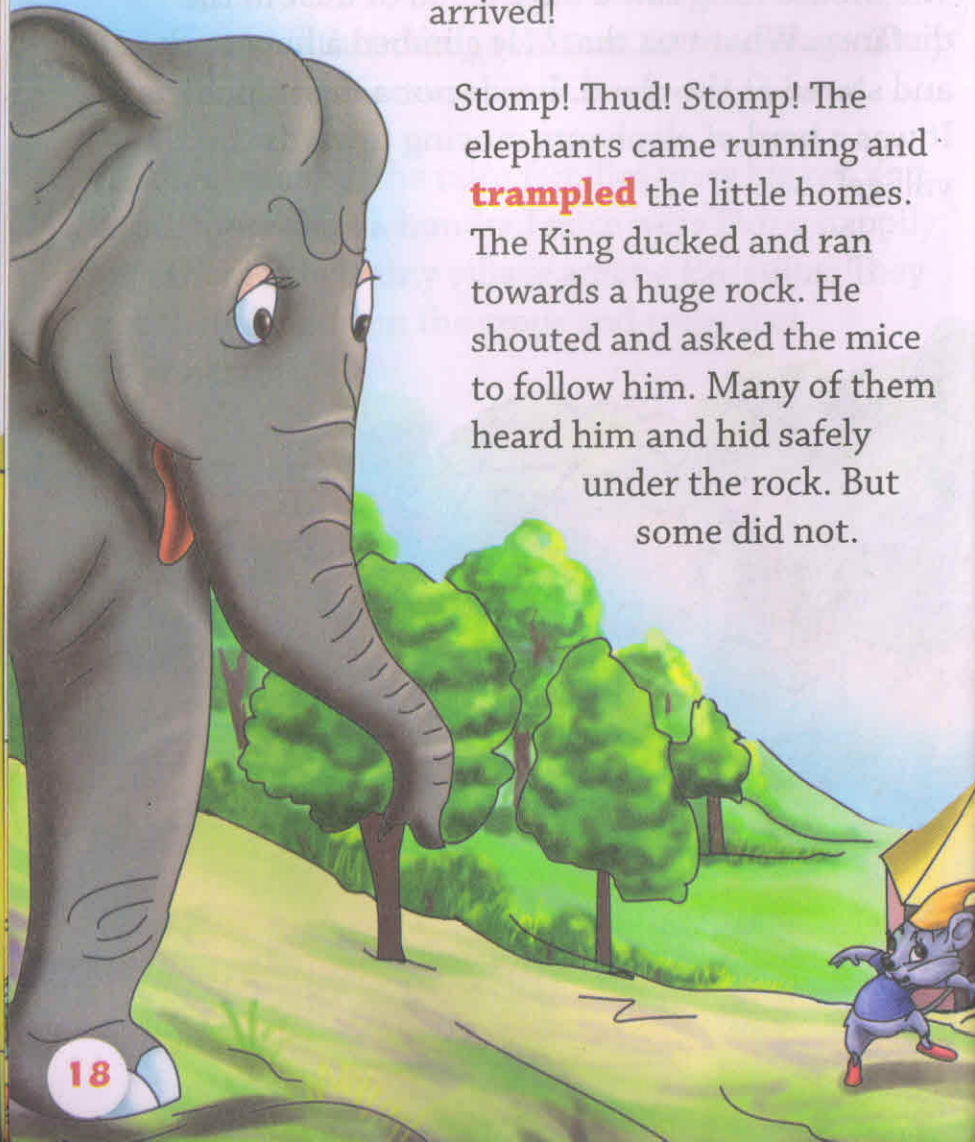
The Mouse King saw a huge cloud of dust in the distance. What was that? He climbed a huge rock and stared at the cloud. It was not a dust cloud! It was a herd of elephants moving towards their village!



The elephants were huge. When they stomped their big feet on the ground, it shook beneath their weight. That was causing the **tremors**! This was no earthquake after all!

The King hurriedly climbed down and tried to warn his fellow mice. They were running about, looking scared. But the elephants had arrived!

Stomp! Thud! Stomp! The elephants came running and **trampled** the little homes. The King ducked and ran towards a huge rock. He shouted and asked the mice to follow him. Many of them heard him and hid safely under the rock. But some did not.



The King and his fellow mice hiding under the rock stood and watched their houses and friends being trampled upon by these large monsters. They could not do a thing to save their homes from the trampling of the mighty beasts. They were very sad.

The mice lost many friends and homes that night. A few days later, the elephants arrived again. This time, the mice knew it was not an earthquake. They ran towards a huge rock and hid under it.

The elephants were going to the lake to drink water. Just like the last time, they trampled on the homes built by the little mice and destroyed everything that came in their way.

The mice were very upset. They were too small to fight back, but something had to be done! The Mouse King wanted to protect his fellow mice from these **gigantic** beasts. He thought he would talk to the King of the Elephants.

The next day, the little Mouse King followed the herd of elephants. He found the King of the Elephants sitting by the stream, chewing sugarcane

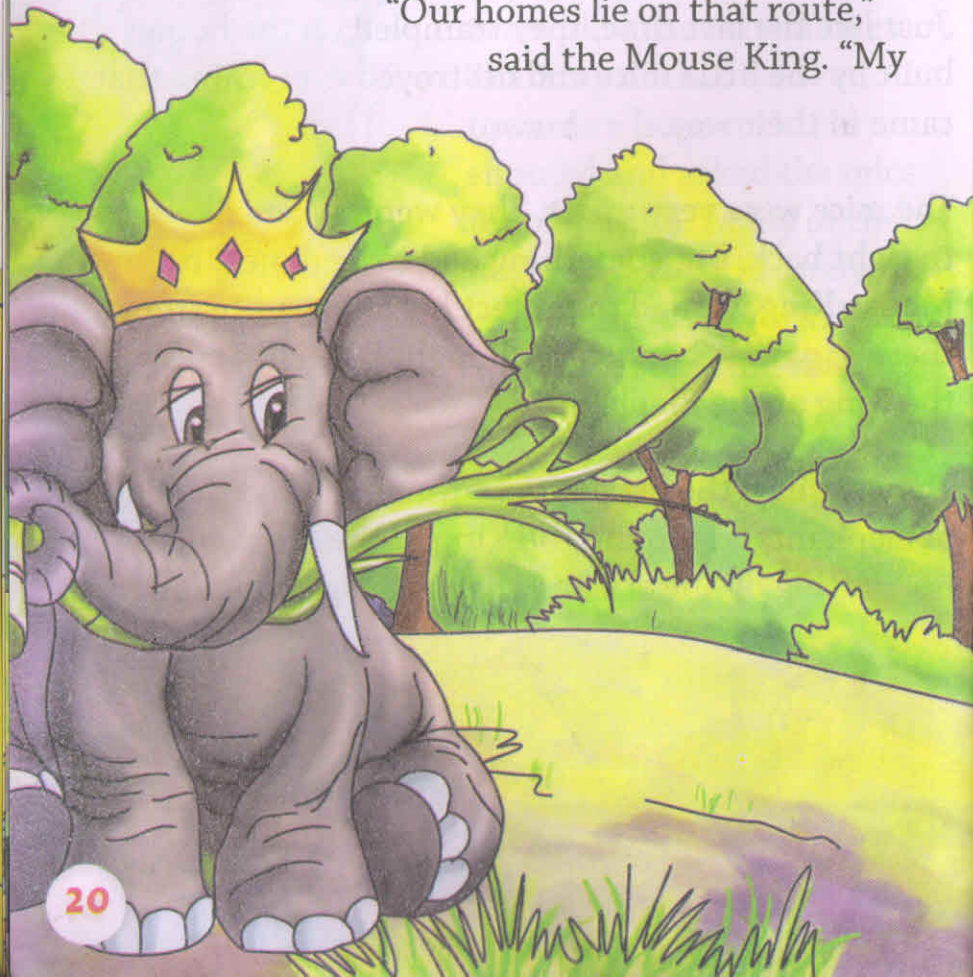


stalks. The Mouse King went up to him and said, "Greetings, King of the Elephants. I am the King of the Mice. I have come to ask you for a favour."

The King of the Elephants looked down and saw the tiny mouse. "What do you want, my friend?" he asked. The Mouse King spoke up, "I want your herd to choose a different route to go to the lake."

"Why would I do that? The route we use suits us well," said the Elephant King.

"Our homes lie on that route," said the Mouse King. "My



brothers and sisters have lost their lives under your mighty feet. Our homes have been destroyed. If you take a different route, my fellow mice will be safe once again."

"I will talk to my herd and find a new route," the Elephant King said. The Mouse King was happy. He thanked the Elephant King and said, "If you ever need help, we will do our best to help you."

The Elephant King laughed. "You are so tiny. What makes you think you could help us?" The Mouse King smiled and went away, thanking the Elephant King once again.

The elephants did not come back to the Mouse King's village. The mice were happy.

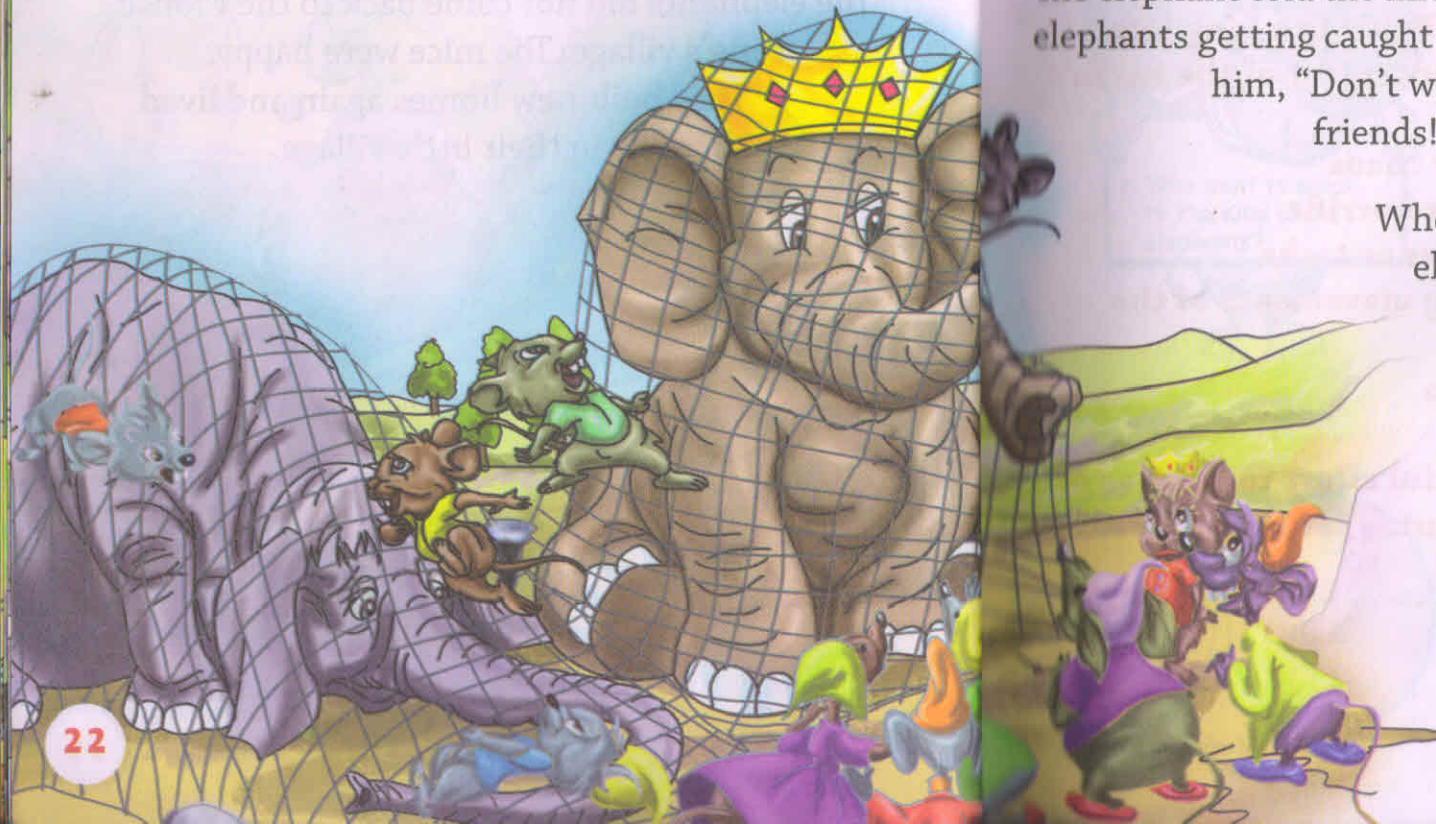
They built new homes again and lived happily in their little village.



Meanwhile, the elephants had found a new route to the lake. One day, when they were going towards the lake, an elephant got caught in a huge net. It was a trap!

The elephant **struggled** to get out of the net. He kicked at it with his feet and tugged at it with his trunk. But the net wouldn't come off.

Some of the other elephants were trapped in the net too! The Elephant King was one of them. He tried to help the elephants get out of the net, but he was helpless. Suddenly, he remembered the little Mouse King's promise.



The Elephant King needed help from the little mice. He told one of the elephants, who was safe outside the net, "Go find the mice. Ask them to help us."

The elephant ran to the village where the mice lived. The mice felt the ground shaking and wondered what was happening. They looked around and saw an elephant rushing towards their village.

The mice thought that he was about to destroy their village once again. They tried to hide under a rock. But, the elephant halted before their homes and said, "My friends, I have not come here to destroy your village. I have come to ask for your help."

The elephant told the mice about his fellow elephants getting caught in a trap. The mice told him, "Don't worry. We can help your friends! Lead us to the trap."

When the mice saw the elephants trapped inside the net, they rushed forward to help them. They **gnawed** at the net with their sharp teeth and tore the threads apart.

Within minutes, the mice had torn the huge

net apart. The elephants were free! They thanked the mice. The Elephant King said to the Mouse King, "I am sorry I laughed at you the other day. You have truly been a good friend to me."

After that day, the mice and the elephants became good friends and lived happily together.

Now we know

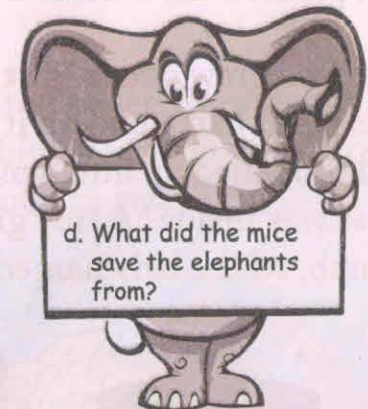
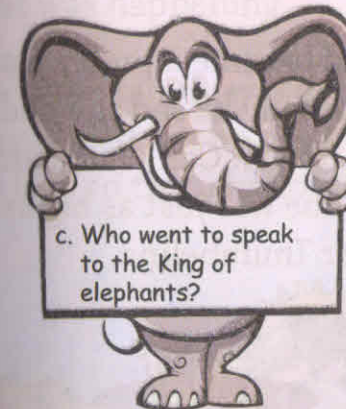
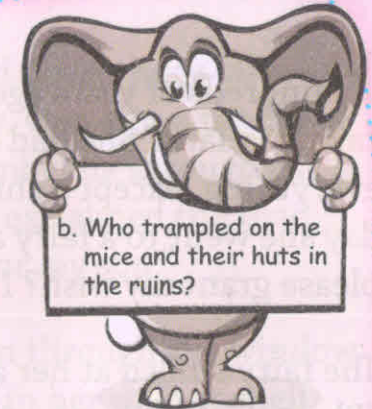
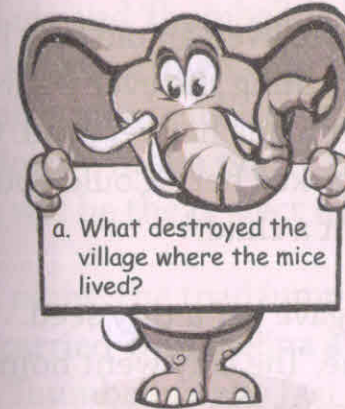
A true friend is the one who helps you when you are in trouble.

New Words We Learnt

subjects	- the people living in a kingdom
earthquake	- a sudden movement of the Earth's crust
havoc	- disorder or chaos
ghastly	- shocking or horrific
chores	- minor duties or tasks
tremors	- the shaking movements of the ground
trampled	- stamped on
gigantic	- huge
struggled	- make forceful effort to get free of any restraint.
gnawed	- chewed at

Fun Time

★ Read the questions on the elephants and answer them correctly.



a.

b.

c.

d.

The little mice and the big elephants

Hundreds of years ago, there lived an old lady in a **faraway** land. She had everything she ever wanted – everything, except a child. It made her very sad. One day she went to a fairy and asked her, “Could you please grant my wish? I want a child.”

The fairy smiled at her and gave her a tiny seed. “Plant this in a pot,” said she. The lady went home and planted the seed in a flower pot.

The seed grew **overnight** and became a pretty plant. This plant had a bud on it. The lady kissed the bud and it opened up into a pink flower. Can you guess what was inside? A tiny girl! She was just as big as a thumb, so the lady named her Thumbelina.



Thumbelina slept on pink petals in a walnut shell. During the day, she floated on a large tulip leaf in a big bowl of water. She was a sweet girl with the sweetest voice.

The lady and Thumbelina lived near a huge lake. This lake was filled with toads. One day, a toad was hopping by when he saw Thumbelina through the window. “What a pretty girl!” exclaimed the toad. “She will be the perfect wife for my son.”

That night, the toad jumped in through the window and carried Thumbelina away in her walnut shell bed. Thumbelina was fast asleep, so she didn’t know what was happening.

The frog’s family was delighted to see Thumbelina. They placed her on a water lily leaf in the middle of the lake so that she could not run away.



When Thumbelina woke up the next day, she was shocked to find herself in the middle of the lake. She was so scared! She wanted to go home but she could not.

Just then, the toad's son came up to her and said, "Finally, you are awake! My mother will help you dress up for the wedding. I am so **thrilled** to marry you!" He hopped away to get his mother.

The toad was going to marry her! Thumbelina was shocked. She started weeping bitterly. 'I want to go home to my mother. I don't want to marry a toad!' she cried.

A little fish swimming in the lake heard Thumbelina cry. He told her, "Don't worry, little one. I will help you escape." He chewed the stalk of the water lily leaf. Soon, the leaf started to float away.

The leaf floated towards the shore and stopped just outside the woods. Thumbelina jumped out and ran into the woods. She thought to herself, 'I don't know the way back home, so I will make a new home right here.'

She spotted a little tree and decided to live on it. She wove herself a soft bed with blades of grass and hung it under a broad leaf. The tree became her new home. Every morning, she drank the dew from the leaves and ate the honey from the flowers.

Thumbelina soon had many friends too! The birds visited her everyday and brought her tasty fruits. She sang to them and they all had a merry time. Thumbelina's new home was **suited** her quite well.

When winter arrived, Thumbelina's bird friends flew away to warmer places. Thumbelina stayed back in the woods, but what a **miserable** time she had! The trees shed their leaves and there wasn't much food for her to eat. It was too cold for her to stay in the woods. She thought it was time to look for another home.

One day, she was walking through the woods when she spotted a small house on a tree. It looked so charming! She went up and knocked on the door softly. A small field mouse opened the door. The mouse saw Thumbelina **shivering** and said, "Come in, little one. Sit by the fire, it's nice and warm."

Thumbelina smiled at the mouse and went in. As they sat by the fire, she told the mouse about her adventure on the lake and her home in the woods.

The mouse felt sorry for her. She told Thumbelina, "You may stay here and help me keep the house clean." Thumbelina agreed happily and started living with the mouse.

Thumbelina was happy with the mouse and took good care of her house. Soon winter was over and the mouse told her, "It's summer time at last! My neighbour will visit us soon!"

Thumbelina was curious about their visitor. The mouse said, "He is a fine fellow with rich tastes, but he is blind. You must tell him a lot of stories and keep him busy."

A few days later, the mouse's friend arrived. He was a jolly old mole who loved listening to stories. He became a good friend of Thumbelina too and visited them both everyday. They would have dinner and Thumbelina would tell him a new story. After that,



she would walk back with him to his house, which was just a few trees away. Soon the mole fell in love with Thumbelina.

One day Thumbelina was walking with the mole when she found a dead swallow lying on the ground. She was looking at him sadly when the mole walked ahead and kicked the swallow aside.

Thumbelina was shocked to see the mole behave in such a cruel manner. She bent down and gently lifted the swallow. She carried him home and laid him down gently on the carpet. 'I will bury him tomorrow,' she thought to herself and slept next to him.



That night, she heard a soft, **chirpy** sound. She woke up and saw the swallow move slightly. He wasn't dead after all! Thumbelina decided to look after him and nurse him back to good health.

For the next few days, Thumbelina and the mouse looked after the swallow. They kept him warm and brought food for him. Thumbelina would tell him stories every night.

When the swallow could fly again, he asked Thumbelina to come with him. But little Thumbelina did not want to leave her mouse friend alone. She let the swallow fly away. She would miss him, she thought sadly, as the swallow flew away.

When Thumbelina returned to the mouse's house, the mouse came up to her and said, "The mole wants to marry you, Thumbelina. He won't take no for an answer."

Thumbelina sadly agreed to marry the mole. The mole was overjoyed. "We will get married on the last day of summer. We can settle down in my house for the winter then!"

Thumbelina did not want to live with the mole in his house through the long winter. She told the mouse that she did not want to marry the mole.

The mouse was furious. She shouted, "He is a rich mole. He can give you everything you want! I won't let you do this. You have to marry the mole!" Poor Thumbelina did not have a choice.

A day before her wedding, Thumbelina stepped out for a walk in the woods. She wanted to bid her bird friends goodbye.

She told one of the birds, "Tell my good friend, the swallow, that I won't see him for a long time." Thumbelina realised that she would miss her friends and the beautiful flowers and trees in the woods. She sat on the ground and wept. She did not want to marry the mole!

Just then, she heard a familiar chirpy sound next to her. It was the swallow!

The swallow asked her why she was so upset. She told him about her wedding and how she would have to live underground.

"Come away with me," said the swallow. This time, Thumbelina did not refuse. She climbed onto the swallow's back and held on tight as he



flew away. They flew to a large meadow filled with beautiful flowers. "This will be your new home," said the swallow. "Choose a flower."

Thumbelina chose the biggest and brightest flower. "I want to live there!" she said and ran towards the flower.

When Thumbelina reached the flower, she saw that someone was already sleeping in it! He was just as small as Thumbelina and wore a golden crown on his head. He had tiny wings too, and they were **tucked** into his back. He was the Flower Prince!

Thumbelina thought that he was a very handsome man. She stood there looking at him until he woke up.



The Flower Prince was surprised to see the pretty little girl staring at him. He **introduced** himself and they became good friends.

A few days later, the Flower Prince asked Thumbelina to marry him. Thumbelina agreed at once and they lived happily ever after in their beautiful **meadow**.

Now we know

If we are kind to others, they will also be kind to us.

New Words We Learnt

- | | |
|------------|--|
| faraway | - very distant, remote |
| overnight | - lasting for the entire night |
| thrilled | - excited |
| suiting | - fitting well |
| miserable | - feeling uncomfortable or unhappy |
| shivering | - to shake as though feeling cold |
| cheerful | - cheerful or humorous |
| tucked | - gathered up, folded and placed inside something |
| introduced | - To present someone by name to another person in order to form (friendship) acquaintance. |
| meadow | - a long patch of grass, often used for grazing |

★ Thumbelina has some questions for you. Can you answer them all?



a. Who kidnapped Thumbelina from the old lady's house?

b. Who wanted to marry Thumbelina?

c. Who did Thumbelina marry in the end?

d. Who did Thumbelina live with during the winters?

e. Which sick animal did Thumbelina look after?

Many, many years ago, in the deep blue ocean, lived a great sea King. He lived in a **magnificent** palace at the bottom of the ocean with his daughter, a pretty mermaid.

She was the most beautiful mermaid in the ocean, with long hair, glowing scales and a **melodious** voice. Every evening, she would swim to the shore



and sit on a rock. There, she would sit and sing till the sun went down. All the fish would swim up and listen to her melodious voice.

The little mermaid loved to sit by the shore. But her father would not let her stay out for too long. "Be careful when you go up there," he would say. "You must not be seen by a human."

The mermaid would sit by the shore and talk to the fish and the turtles. "I wish I could spend more time outside the ocean," she would sigh. "The turtles say that the land has pretty flowers and mountains. I wish I could see them all."

The turtles often told her about all the pretty things they saw on land. The little mermaid was eager to see them too, but she couldn't. She did not have legs, so she couldn't walk towards those beautiful mountains and fields of flowers.



When the little mermaid told her father what she wished, he shook his head sadly. "You were meant to live in the ocean, child. You may not have feet, but you have a beautiful tail. You can swim to all the beautiful places in the ocean!"

One day, a turtle came up to the little mermaid as she sat on her favourite rock. "I know of a shore where you can sit hidden among the reeds and watch the beautiful ships set sail."

The mermaid swam towards this shore with the turtle. She was really excited. She would get to see the beautiful ships set sail! All she had to do now was hide well among those reeds. She did not want the humans to spot her.

They swam as fast as they could until they reached the shore. What a strange place it was!

The mermaid and her fish friends hid among the reeds and watched the shore. A ship was about to leave the shore and sail away. A few women stood



on the shore, waving their scarves at the men on the ship. Everyone on the ship looked busy, carrying strange objects and running around.

Just then, she spotted a handsome man standing on the front deck. He was looking at the **horizon** and asking his men to adjust the sails. The little mermaid couldn't take her eyes off him.

The mermaid sat still, watching the man for a long time. For the next few days, she followed the ship on its course, just to get a **glimpse** of the handsome man.

One day, the mermaid and her friends were following the ship when a fish noticed something. It spoke up **nervously**, "Princess, we are about to get caught in a storm." The mermaid looked up at the skies. A **fierce** storm was approaching!



The little mermaid was about to swim away when she thought, 'the storm will destroy the ship. I must warn the humans!'

She started to swim towards the ship, but a turtle held her back. "You must not be seen by the humans, Princess!" he **exclaimed**. "It's too late to warn them anyway. The storm is approaching fast. Their ship will sink any moment now."

Just then, a wild **gust** of wind blew their way. The force of the wind cracked the huge sail of the ship. The men tried to raise the sail again and save their ship, but all their efforts were in vain. The ship was sinking fast.

The mermaid and her friends swam underwater, away from the surface. They waited till the storm ended. The mermaid was worried about the man on the ship. What if something had happened to him?

A few hours later, they swam up to see if the storm had ended. The wind was calm again, but it had **wreaked** havoc. The ship was broken into bits! The mermaid swam towards the **wreckage** and looked for the man.

She spotted him hanging on to a wooden plank. The mermaid swam hurriedly towards him. She gently lifted him and swam towards the shore. There, she

lay him down on a huge rock. He opened his eyes **drowsily** and looked at her. "Who are you?" he asked softly, just before he fainted.

The mermaid sat next to him and sang for a while. Just then, a few people came to the shore. The mermaid swam away and hid among the rocks. The people saw the man lying on the rock. "Get help! This man is **unconscious**!" screamed a man.

The mermaid was sorry to see him go. She swam back towards her palace. Her father was very worried about her. "Where have you been?" he asked her. The mermaid told him about the incident.

The King was very upset. "I asked you to stay away from the humans. Why don't you do as you are told? You will not go up to the shore again!" he exclaimed angrily.

The mermaid could not stop thinking about the man she had saved. She wanted to become a human, just so she could go out and meet the man again. She went to visit the merwitch of their kingdom. The merwitch had great magical powers. She could help the mermaid turn into a human!

The mermaid did not know that the merwitch was quite wicked. The merwitch told her, "I will help you become a human. But you must give me your voice in exchange."

The mermaid agreed. But the merwitch told her, "Be warned. If the man marries another woman, you will have to return to the ocean and become my slave!"

The mermaid agreed once again. She took a magic potion from the merwitch and went to the shore. When she reached there, she gulped the potion. Instantly, she was **transformed** into a pretty girl! Gone was her tail, and in its place were a pair of long legs.

The mermaid ran around on the shore. She was a human at last! She was so excited. She clapped her hands and walked towards the houses on the shore.

As she was walking, she spotted the man! He stood near one of the houses, staring at the horizon. She stopped running and stood still, looking at him. He looked her way, and was amazed to see the beautiful girl standing on the beach.

The man walked up to her and said, "Greetings, young lady. Are you new to this town? I am the Prince. Who are you?"

The mermaid could not tell him who she was. She shook her head and pointed at her mouth. The Prince understood that she could not speak. "What a pity," said he. "I am sure your voice would have been just as beautiful as you. Come to my palace with me. I will look after you."

The mermaid went with the Prince and lived at the palace. They spent a lot of time together and became the best of friends.

The wicked merwitch saw the two of them falling in love with each other. "This will not do at all. I want the mermaid Princess to become my slave girl!" she said aloud. She transformed herself into a beautiful woman and went to the palace.



The evil merwitch used her magical powers to make the prince fall in love with her instead. The little mermaid was heartbroken! Her Prince loved another woman! She ran to the shore and sat on her favourite rock, sobbing bitterly.

The turtles guessed what happened to the little mermaid. They swam to her father, the King and told him the mermaid's tale. He swam up to the shore and greeted his daughter, "Don't worry, dear child. I will teach that wicked merwitch a lesson," he declared.

The King and the turtles thought of a plan together. They asked the mermaid to bring the Prince and the merwitch to the shore the next day. The mermaid agreed and went back to the palace.

The next morning, the little mermaid went to the gardens. The Prince was enjoying a delicious breakfast with the merwitch. She tugged at his sleeve and pointed towards the ocean. The Prince and the merwitch looked puzzled.

"Do you want to go to the beach?" asked the Prince. The mermaid nodded. "Let's go to the beach then," said the Prince. The merwitch thought that the little mermaid was finally giving up all hopes. She smiled eagerly and walked with them towards the beach.

When they reached the beach, the little mermaid ran towards the shore. She stopped near the water and asked the merwitch to step forward.

'At last,' thought the merwitch, 'She will ask me to transform her into a mermaid again. She will then be my slave for life.' The merwitch **cackled** and stepped closer to the water. "Ready to give up and be my slave?" she asked the little mermaid.

Just then, the little mermaid's father came towards the shore. The merwitch was shocked to see the King! He swam angrily towards them and said, "Reveal yourself, merwitch!"

The merwitch could not disobey a direct order from the King. She turned into her true self at once. The Prince was shocked to see the merwitch. The spell the merwitch had cast on him wore off and he realised that he had been tricked!

The King ordered the merwitch, "Restore my daughter's voice to her!" The merwitch did as she was told. She chanted a spell and the little mermaid could talk again.

"You will never do any magic again. Return to your home at the bottom of the ocean and stay put," the King told the merwitch. She cried and fled home.

The mermaid was very happy. She sang a song of joy. The Prince recognised her voice at once! "You are the one who saved me!" he exclaimed. "Yes! You remember me," the mermaid replied happily.

The king was upset to see his daughter as a girl. He asked her, "Do you wish to remain as a human?" The girl nodded. "So be it!" exclaimed the King. "I wish





you both a happy life together.”
The Prince and the little
mermaid were very happy.
They were married and lived
happily ever after.

Now we know

If you are good, kind and helpful, you
will overcome all evil.

New Words We Learnt

magnificent	- splendid in appearance
melodious	- pleasant tune
horizon	- the thin line we see where the sky and the earth meet
glimpse	- a brief look
nervously	- in a stressed manner
fierce	- Severe or violent
exclaimed	- cried out suddenly
gust	- a strong rush of wind
wreaked	- brought about
wreckage	- the remains of something ruined
drowsily	- dull with sleepiness
unconscious	- temporarily lacking awareness
transformed	- changed into
cackled	- laughed or talked in a shrill manner

Fun Time

★ Isn't the mermaid a fascinating creature? Use the
adjectives from the star and write a paragraph
about her with them!

beautiful
naughty
adventurous
playful
kind
clever



The Hermit and The Mouse

On the **outskirts** of a huge forest there lived a mouse. He went to the forest everyday to look for food and water.

The forest was also home to many wild animals. The mouse was afraid of them as they were large and scary. But he needed food and water to live, so he had no choice but to go to the forest.

The mouse would sneak into the forest during the day. He would hide among the trees and bushes while looking for food but he would always return home before sunset.

The mouse wished that he could have been big and strong too. Then, he wouldn't have to hide from the other animals.

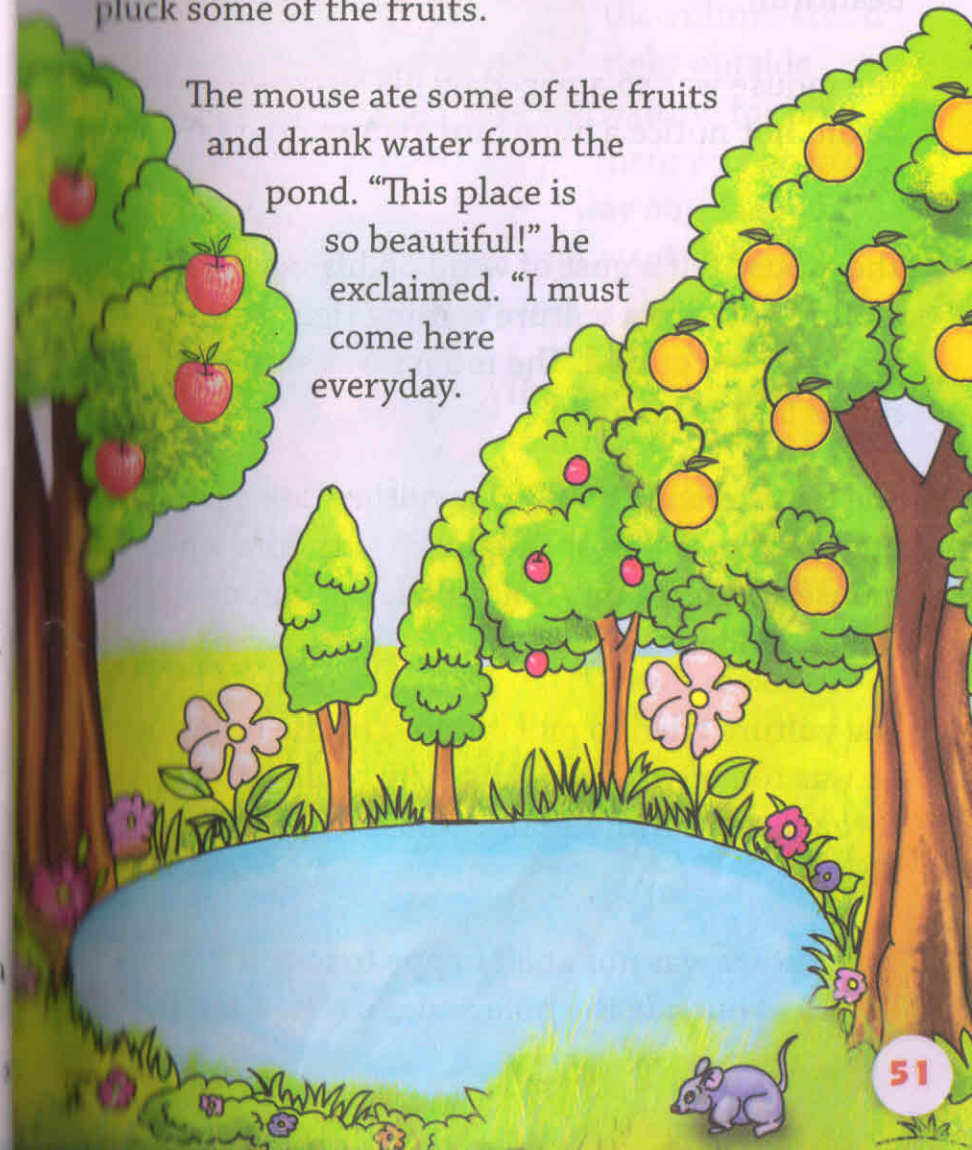
One day, the mouse decided to be brave. He stepped out of his mouse hole and said proudly, "Today, I won't try to hide myself. I will walk about proudly. I will go **farther** into the forest."

Silly little mouse! He held his head high, turned his tail up, and marched proudly into the forest. He walked around in the open and decided to go down a different path.

He walked down the new path and looked around curiously. He had never seen this part of the jungle before. He didn't even come across any animal as he walked along.

Soon he reached a pond. It was surrounded by beautiful trees with delicious fruits on them! The mouse smacked his lips and climbed a tree to pluck some of the fruits.

The mouse ate some of the fruits and drank water from the pond. "This place is so beautiful!" he exclaimed. "I must come here everyday."



I will get good food and fresh water.”

He noticed a plant with huge leaves near the pond. ‘I must rest here for a while,’ thought the mouse.

He crawled under a big leaf and fell asleep. The sun was about to set when he woke up. He looked at the reflection of the sun in the pond. It looked so beautiful!

The mouse was so amazed by his **surroundings** that he did not notice a huge bird **swoop** down from the sky.

The mouse felt a gust of wind on his neck. He turned around and saw a vulture coming right towards him, his claws **extended**. The mouse was so scared! He ran as fast as he could.

The mouse ran fast, but the vulture flew faster. The huge bird had almost caught up with him when the mouse spotted a tiny hole at the bottom of a tree. He ran and hid in the hole.

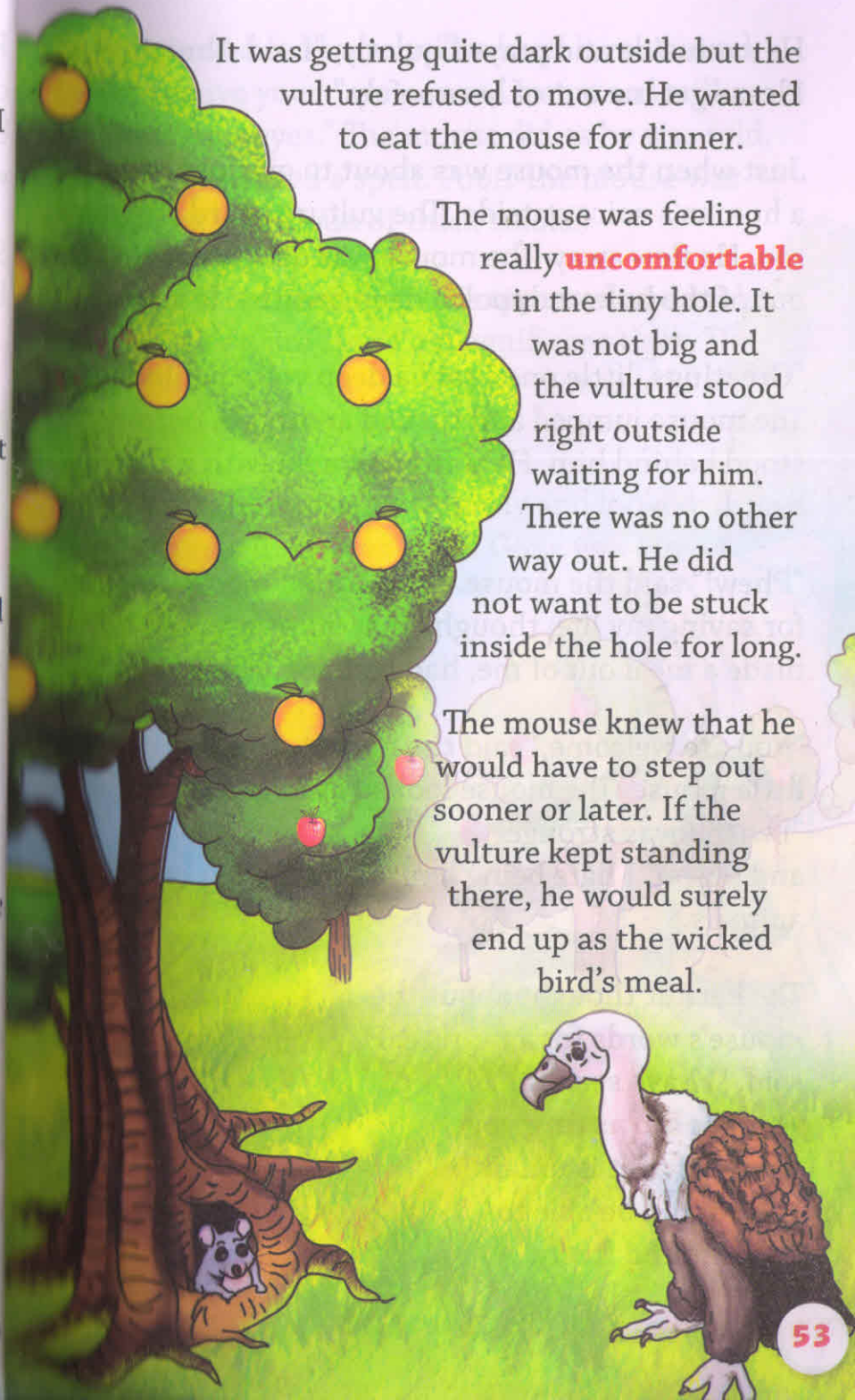
The vulture tried to pull him out of the hole but he was too big to fit in. His beak could barely fit through the tiny hole. The mouse was safe inside. Phew!

The vulture was not at all happy to lose the mouse. He stood outside the hole and **shrieked** loudly.

It was getting quite dark outside but the vulture refused to move. He wanted to eat the mouse for dinner.

The mouse was feeling really **uncomfortable** in the tiny hole. It was not big and the vulture stood right outside waiting for him. There was no other way out. He did not want to be stuck inside the hole for long.

The mouse knew that he would have to step out sooner or later. If the vulture kept standing there, he would surely end up as the wicked bird’s meal.



He sat inside and prayed quietly, "Lord Almighty! Please get me out of here safely."

Just when the mouse was about to give up, he heard a human's voice outside. The vulture heard the voice too. He flew away. The mouse was delighted! He ran out of the hole and took a deep breath. He was safe!

"Greetings, little one," said a deep voice behind him. The mouse jumped and turned around. A hermit stood behind him. He was a tall man with a flowing beard.

"Phew!" said the mouse. "You scared me. Thank you for saving my life, though. That vulture would have made a meal out of me, had you not arrived on time."

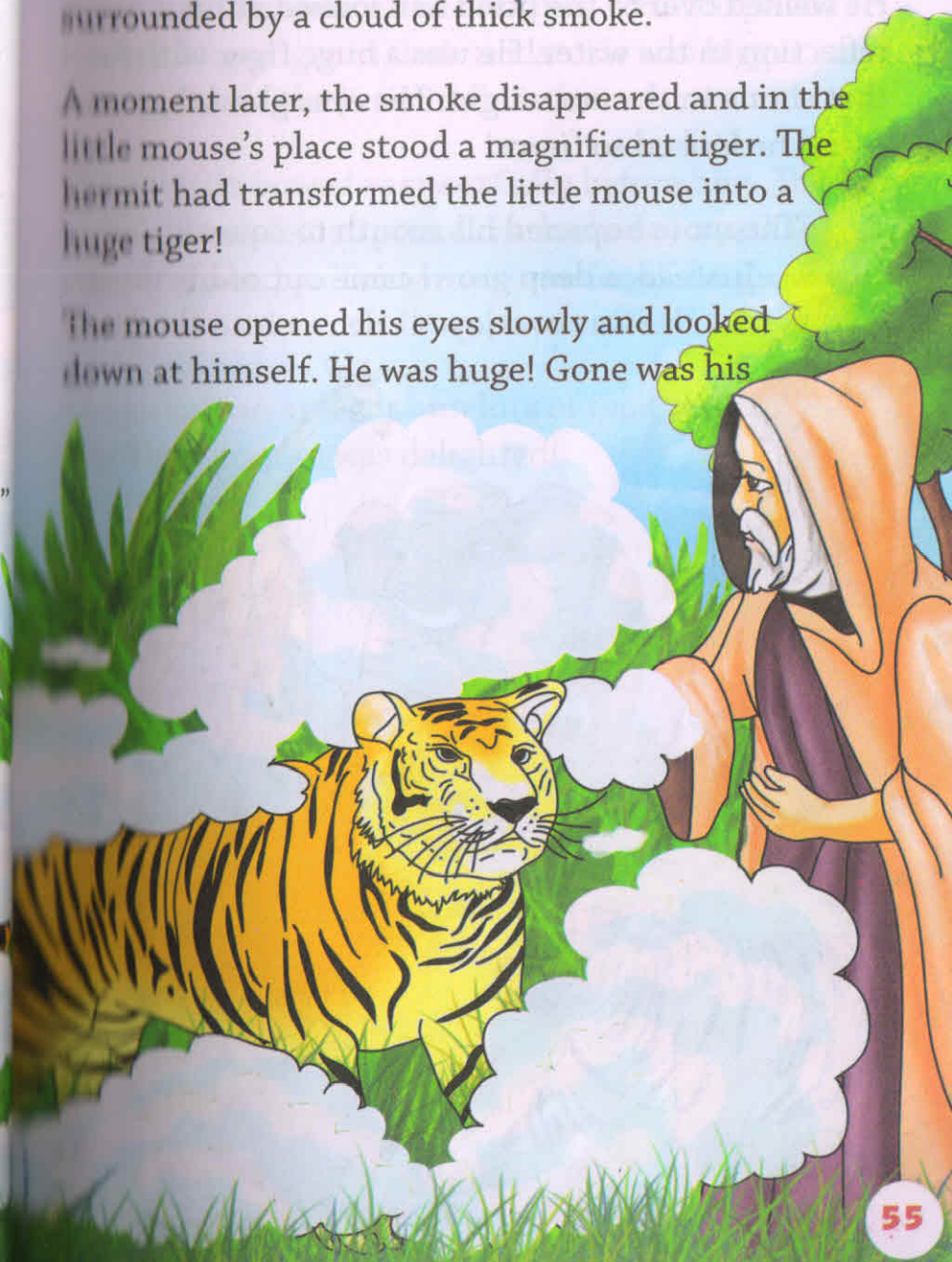
"You are welcome," said the hermit, smiling at the little mouse. The mouse looked at him and said, "I wish I was stronger and bigger. I hate being hunted by the big animals."

The hermit thought about the mouse's words for a minute. He said, "I have seen the bigger animals **harassing** you. I agree that it is unfair. You should be able to walk around freely."

The mouse nodded eagerly. The hermit continued, "I want to give you more power. Just stand still and close your eyes." The mouse did as he was told. The hermit chanted a spell. Poof! The mouse was surrounded by a cloud of thick smoke.

A moment later, the smoke disappeared and in the little mouse's place stood a magnificent tiger. The hermit had transformed the little mouse into a huge tiger!

The mouse opened his eyes slowly and looked down at himself. He was huge! Gone was his



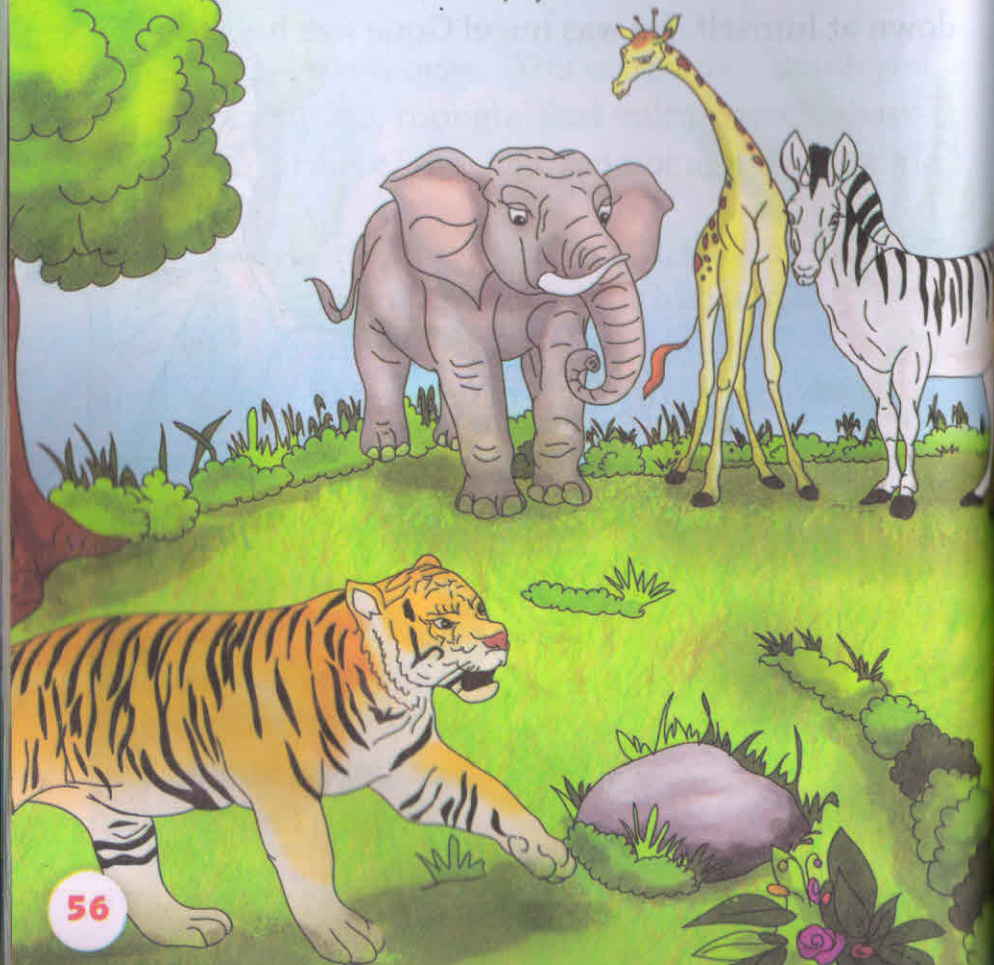
soft, brown, mousy body. He had yellow and black stripes now. Instead of his tiny little paws, he had huge, thick ones.

He walked over to the pond and looked at his reflection in the water. He was a huge tiger with fur that shone in the moonlight. His eyes glowed green and he looked so fierce!

The mouse opened his mouth to squeak.

Instead, a deep growl came out of his throat.

He was overjoyed! He ran into the forest



just to see how fast he could run. He was so happy, he even forgot to thank the hermit.

The mouse ran and ran until he reached a spot where many animals were gathered. They were surprised to see a huge tiger in their midst. He was bigger and stronger than the lions in their forest!

The animals bowed **respectfully** before him. The 'tiger' mouse felt so proud! He looked at a jackal standing nearby. "Bring me some food!" he growled loudly.

The jackal ran and got him lots of food to eat. The 'tiger' mouse was delighted!



He asked a deer to put some leaves together and make a soft bed for him. The deer ran and did as he was told. The 'tiger' mouse climbed on to the bed and fell asleep.

The 'tiger' mouse was mean and cruel to all the animals around him. He growled at his mice friends if they came close to him. He made the deer and other animals bring food and water for him everyday.

He believed that he was the strongest animal in the forest. If any animal refused to follow his orders, he would roar loudly and attack them.

All the animals in the forest hated him. The smaller animals were scared to go near him. The bigger animals, too, tried to stay away from him as much as they could.

The hermit had been closely watching the behaviour of the 'tiger' mouse. He saw how mean and cruel he had become. He did not deserve to be strong and powerful at all.

One day, the hermit approached the 'tiger' mouse and said, "You have become vain, little friend. You should use your power to help the other animals, not to hurt them."

The 'tiger' mouse laughed at him and said, "Go

away hermit. I am powerful enough to kill you." The hermit got angry. He **chanted** a powerful spell.

A moment later, the mouse had been transformed back to his original self. Gone was the powerful body. He was back to his tiny form again. He realised what a big mistake he had made. He apologised to the hermit and went away sadly.



Now we know

**We must not misuse
our powers.**

New Words We Learnt

outskirts	- an area outside the main city or town
farther	- at a more distant or remote point
surroundings	- the area or environment around a person
swoop	- rush in towards the ground
extended	- stretched or pulled out
shrieked	- cried out in a shrill manner
uncomfortable	- uneasy
harassing	- to make repeated small scale attacks on a person you dislike.
respectfully	- to speak to someone with good regard or great politeness.
chanted	- a string of words spoken in a rhythmic tone

Fun Time

★ Let's learn homonyms. The sentences below have an incorrect word in them. Circle the incorrect word and replace it with the correct word that sounds just like it! The first one has been done for you.

a. The hair and the tortoise ran towards the lake.

hare

b. The bear stored ate big jars of honey in her house.

c. She wore a blew sweater.

d. Good buy, friends! See you later!

e. That shop cells sweets.

f. The dear is a graceful animal.

6

Hansel and Gretel

Once upon a time, a very poor woodcutter lived in a tiny cottage in the woods. He had two children, Hansel and Gretel. A few years after Hansel and Gretel were born, their mother died. The woodcutter married again, but his second wife did not like the children at all.

One day the wife said, "There is not enough food in the house for all of us. There are too many mouths to feed! We must get rid of the two children. Take them far away from the house so that they can never find their way back."



The poor woodcutter did not know what to do. He knew that his wife did not like his children, but he loved them. He thought to himself, 'I won't take them too far. They will be able to find their way back home then.'

The children heard what their step-mother had said. Gretel started crying. Hansel put his arm around her and comforted her. He said, "Don't worry! If they leave us in the forest, we'll find the way home."

That night, Hansel **crept** outside the house and filled his pocket with little white pebbles. He came back quietly and fell asleep.

The next morning, the woodcutter woke his children up and took them to the woods. As they walked, Hansel kept dropping a white pebble every few steps. The clever boy was leaving a trail that would lead him home again!

Soon, the woodcutter left his two children all alone in the woods and went home. Gretel was scared when she couldn't find her father. Hansel comforted her and said, "Don't worry I can take you home." He told her about the trail of pebbles.

Hansel and Gretel waited for the moon to come out. A few hours later, the moonlight made the white pebbles shine brightly! The children followed the trail of shiny pebbles and found their way home.

It was dark when they reached. They knocked on the door and the woodcutter opened it. He was overjoyed to see his little children! He **apologised** for leaving them in the forest and took them in.

When the woodcutter's wife saw the children the next morning, she was very angry. She screamed at her husband and locked the two children up for the whole day. All she gave them was a dry crust of bread and water for their **supper**.

The next day, the woodcutter's wife dragged the children to the forest. They did not have any pebbles this time. But Hansel had breadcrumbs that he had saved from supper. He dropped those breadcrumbs as he walked and left a trail for them to follow later.

Alas! A few hungry birds spotted the breadcrumbs and gobbled them all up. Poor Hansel's trail had disappeared. The woodcutter's wife had taken the children deep into the forest and left them there.

That night, Hansel held his sister's hand and tried to find the trail of breadcrumbs. They looked everywhere, but they could not find a single crumb.

Gretel was really frightened. She was hungry and wanted to go home. Hansel took her hand and tried to find his way out of the forest. They walked on till they came to a huge apple tree. A few apples lay on the ground.



Hansel and Gretel ate the apples and **huddled** under the tree that night and fell asleep there. The next morning, Hansel and Gretel set off to find their home again.

The children wandered all over the woods, but could not spot any familiar place. They were truly lost! They walked on and on till they reached a strange cottage.

The cottage was made of the most delicious things ever! The roof had huge tiles of chocolate, and the doors had striped candy frames. The walls were made of sugary scones and **croissants** and the windows had huge gummy bears on them.

The hungry children ran towards the house and broke a few pieces of the scone wall. It was the most delicious scone they had ever tasted! They continued to break off chunks of food and eat.

"This chocolate is the best ever!" Gretel exclaimed.

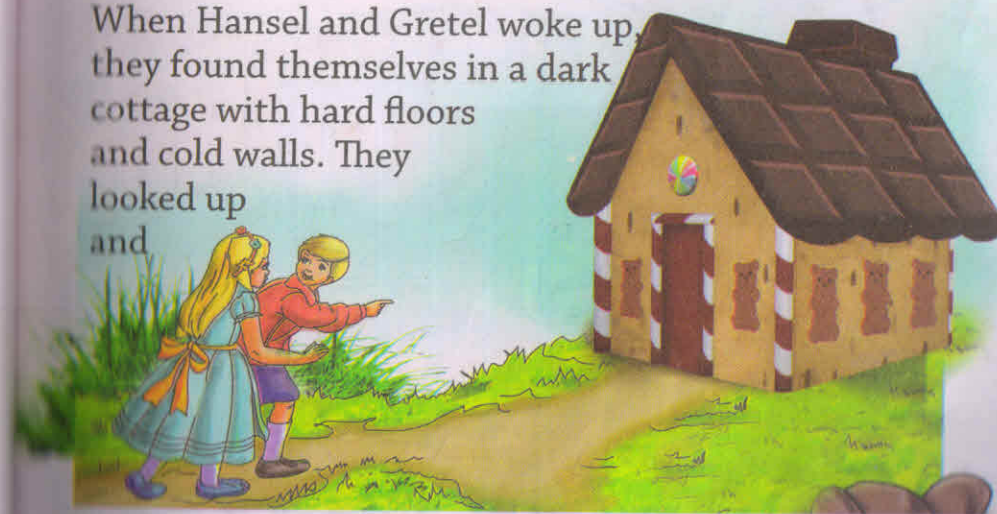
"The Turkish Delights just melt in your mouth!" said Hansel.

The children ate and ate till their stomachs were full. "I need to rest for a while," said Gretel. Hansel agreed. The two children sat on the lawn and were asleep within minutes.

The cottage belonged to an evil witch. She had made her cottage delicious just to **lure** little children in so she could lock them up and make them her slaves. Then she saw the little children come to her house and eat greedily.

The wicked witch waited till they fell asleep on the lawn. Then she cackled evilly and stepped outside to catch them. Watch out, Hansel and Gretel!

When Hansel and Gretel woke up, they found themselves in a dark cottage with hard floors and cold walls. They looked up and



Hansel and Gretel

saw the wicked witch looking at them.

"You think you can just eat my house and walk away?" she screamed. "You will now live here and work as my slaves!"

The witch pulled little Gretel up and made her clean the whole cottage! She locked Hansel up in a cage and kept feeding him all day long.

Everyday, the witch would make Gretel work hard and keep Hansel locked up. She would feed Hansel and he grew fatter and fatter each day. Poor Gretel barely got anything to eat. She worked all day long and grew thinner and thinner.

One day, the witch told Gretel, "I think your brother is fat and juicy enough now. I want to eat him for supper tonight." Gretel began



to cry. She did not want the wicked witch to eat her brother!

"Please let us go," begged Gretel, but the witch wouldn't listen to her. "Go and fetch some fresh water from the well," she ordered.

Gretel tried to beg and plead but the witch refused to listen. "Go and get the water now, or I will turn you both into donkeys!" she screamed. Gretel went to the well, sobbing bitterly.

She came back with a huge pail of water. As she stood near the pot, she had an idea. She called out to the witch, "I have never made soup before. What do I do with the water?"

The witch came **grumbling** and poured the water into the pot. She lit a fire under the pot and told Gretel, "Now wait till the water gets hot."

A few minutes later, Gretel asked the witch, "How do I know if it's hot?" The witch went to the pot and bent over it to see if the water was hot.

Gretel quickly pushed the witch into the pot! The witch fell in, screaming loudly.

Gretel freed Hansel and they ran out of the cottage. They ran and ran until they found a way home!



They ran ahead and knocked on the door. The woodcutter opened the door and was delighted to see his children standing there! "I have been looking for you everywhere!" he cried.

The woodcutter sent his cruel wife away. No one ever saw her or the wicked witch again. Hansel and Gretel lived with their father happily in the cottage.

Now we know

Never enter a stranger's property. You never know what danger lies ahead.

New Words We Learnt

crept	- moved cautiously
apologised	- say sorry to someone
supper	- a light evening meal
huddled	- a close gathering of two or more people
croissants	- moon shaped rolls
lure	- to tempt someone with a promise/reward
grumbling	- muttering under one's breath

Fun Time

★ The witch wants to know more about Hansel and Gretel. Can you answer her questions?

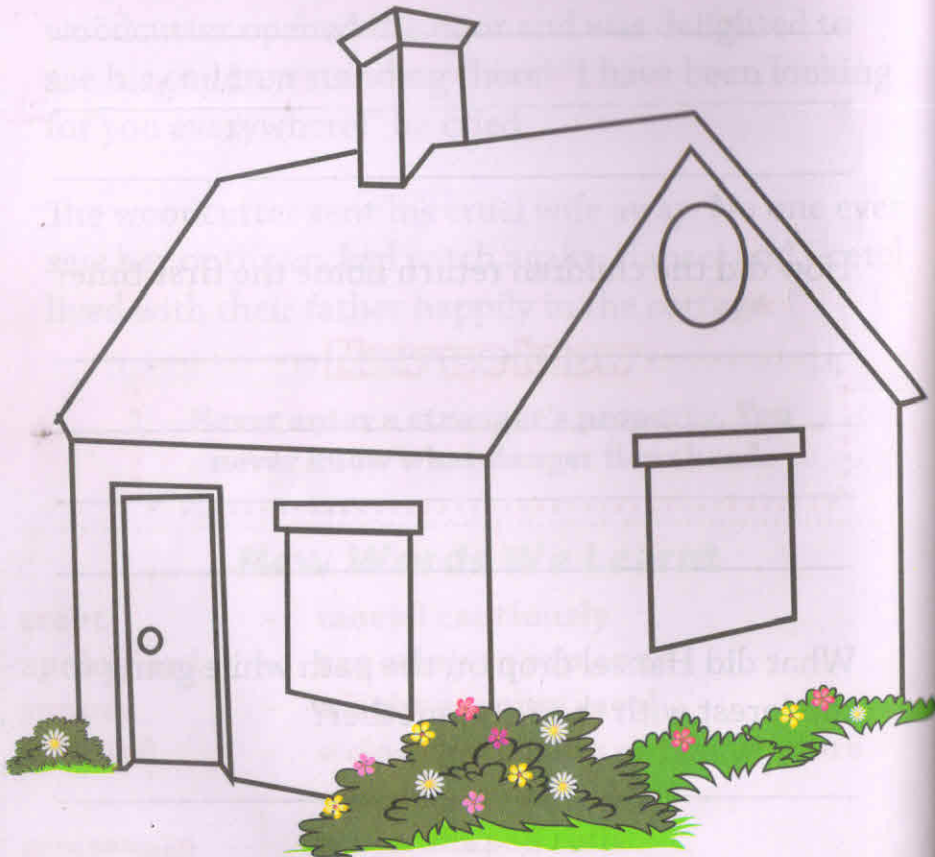
Why did Hansel and Gretel's father take them to the forest?

How did the children return home the first time?

What did Hansel drop on the path while going to the forest with their stepmother?

Fun Time

- ★ If you could make your own house, what would you make it from? Decorate this house with all the things you like.



7

The Wolf In Sheep's Clothing

Years and years ago, there was a wolf. He lived in the woods near a tiny village. He always found food in the woods. Hence, he was quite happy to live there.



One morning, the wolf set out to find food. He searched here and there and everywhere. Alas! He could not find food! Where had all the food gone?

The wolf was hungry and upset. This was the first time he was unable to find food in his beloved woods. That night, the wolf went to sleep without any food. How his stomach grumbled through the night!

The wolf was so hungry, he could not sleep well that night. The next morning he woke up early and went around hunting for food. He walked and walked till he reached the village.

The village! The wolf thought to himself, 'There are so many people in this village. I am sure they have a lot of food to eat. I must look around here. I will **definitely** find some food somewhere in this village.'

So the wolf walked into the village. It was very quiet, as everyone was sound asleep. The wolf spotted a few open windows and peeped in. He saw people sleeping on their cots. There were a few papers lying around. But he could not find any food.

He spotted some farms in the distance. Farms should have fields and food growing there, he thought. He walked towards them. Just then, he heard a loud sound. "Baa! Baa!"

The sound was coming from a little **backyard**. He followed the sound which was coming from a farmhouse. There, in the backyard, stood a flock of fat sheep, grazing on a grass in the **wee** hours of the morning.

The wolf **smacked**



his lips. 'Food at last!' he thought. 'The sheep look so delicious, I must grab at least two!' He crept closer to the backyard. The poor sheep didn't know they were in danger!

The wolf walked closer to the sheep. He couldn't help thinking how hungry he was. He stood close to the **fence**, ready to **pounce** on the sheep.

Just then, he heard footsteps. He turned around to see who it was. A **shepherd** was coming his way. The man was tall and hefty with a big, scary moustache. He had a thick stick in his hand and he

looked very angry. Uh oh!

The wolf was sure that the man had seen him. He ran out of harm's way and hid among the crops in another farm.

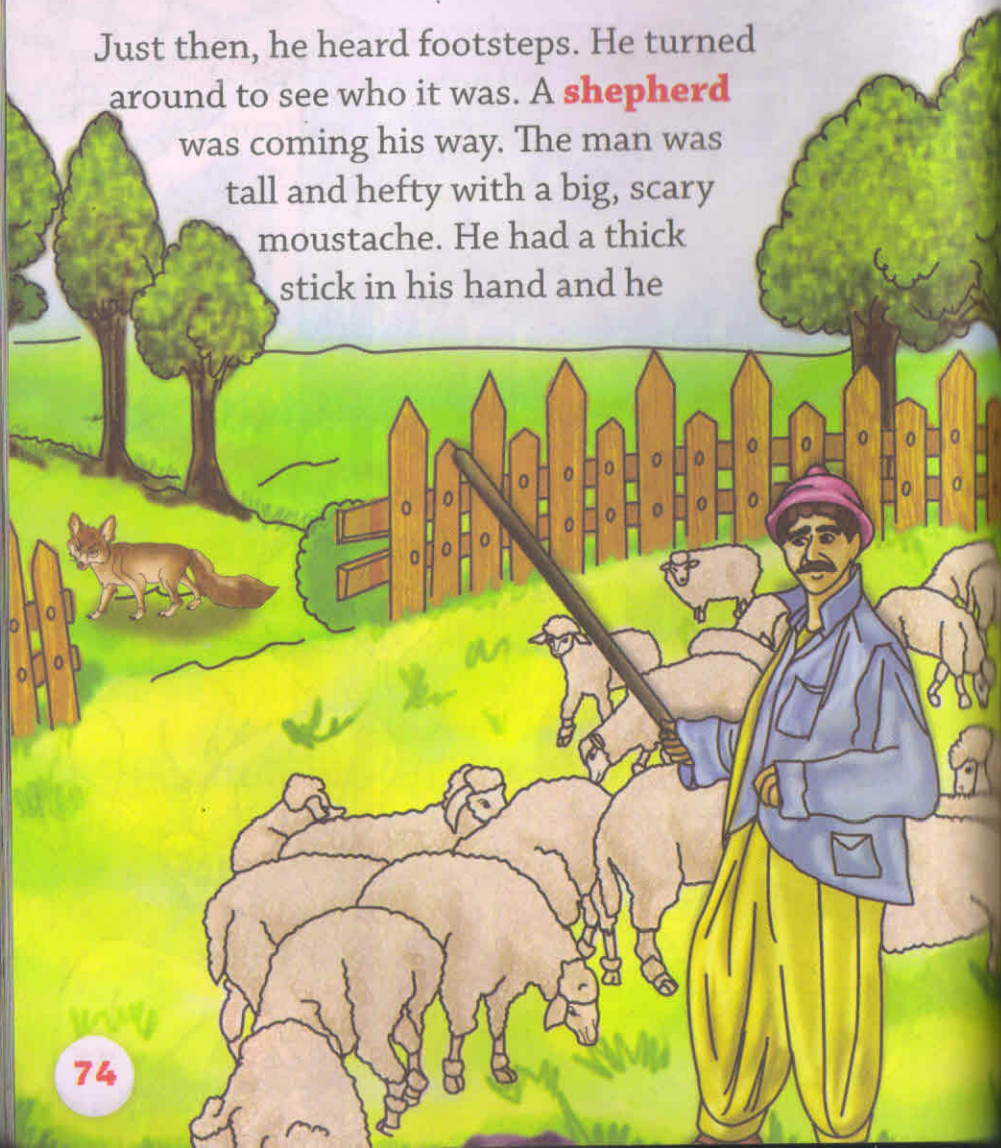
The wolf was really hungry. He knew that the sheep would make a good meal. So he waited and watched the sheep and their shepherd closely. He was going to feast on a sheep today!

A few hours later, the shepherd left the sheepfold and went away to eat breakfast. The wolf was delighted! At last, he thought, he was free to hunt!

He ran towards the fence and jumped over it. There was no time to wait now. He was hungry and he needed to grab his food before the shepherd returned.

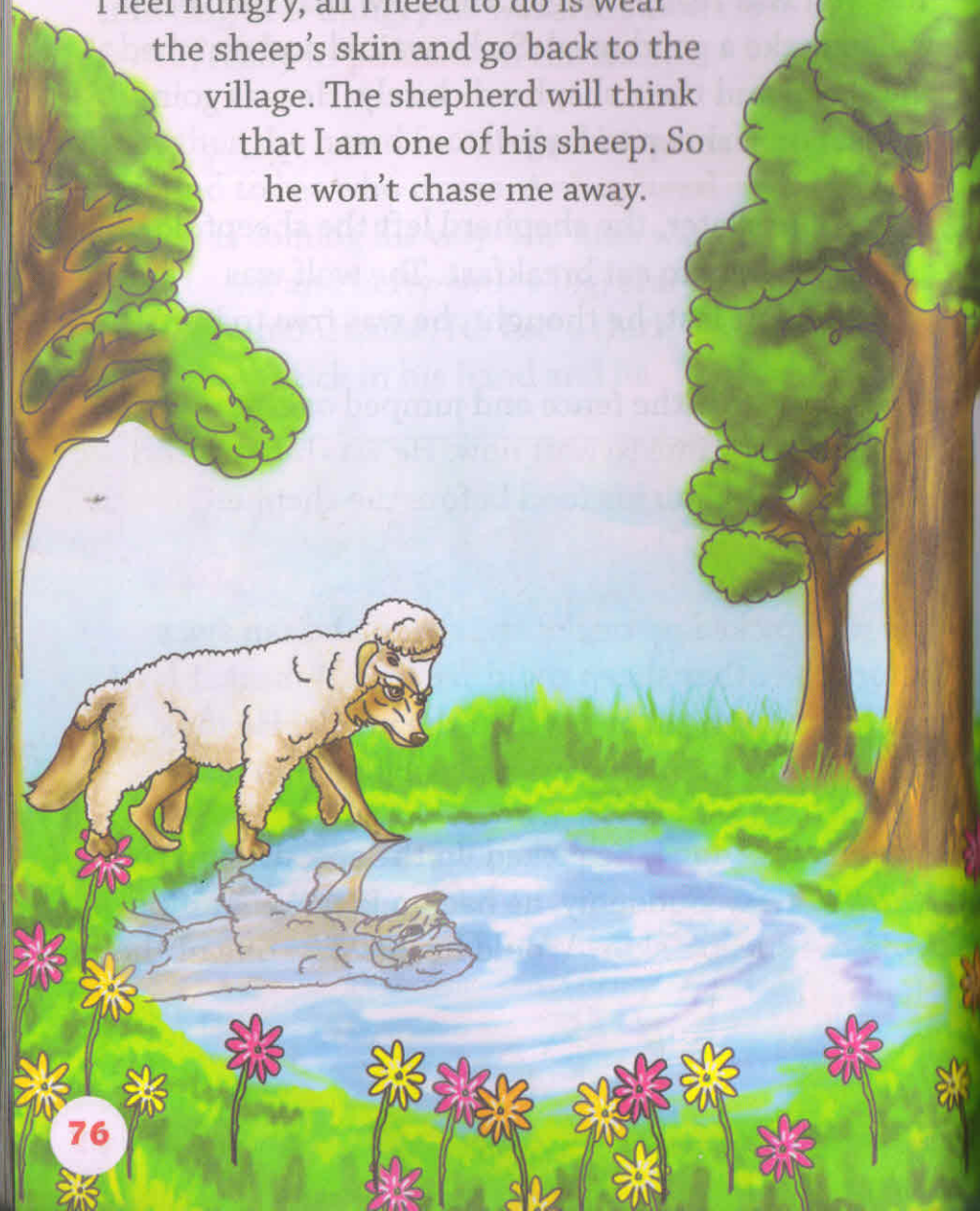
The wolf picked up one of the sheep and ran away before the other sheep could see him. A meal at last! He ran and ran till he reached the jungle. He took the poor sheep to his cave and gobbled him up!

After he was done, he picked up the sheep's skin to throw it away. Suddenly, he had an idea. What if he wore the sheep's skin? Would he look like one of the sheep?



He put the sheep's skin over himself. The sheep had been a fat one, so the skin covered the wolf. The wolf went to the river and looked at his reflection in the water. He looked just like a sheep!

The wolf thought to himself, 'Whenever I feel hungry, all I need to do is wear the sheep's skin and go back to the village. The shepherd will think that I am one of his sheep. So he won't chase me away.'



When he goes to have his meal, I will grab mine!

A few days later, he could not find food in the woods again. He wore his sheep skin and went to the village.

He reached the backyard of the farm where the sheep were grazing, he looked at them hungrily. Just then the shepherd arrived.

The shepherd looked at the wolf in the sheep's skin. He thought it was the sheep who had been missing from his flock.

"There you are!" cried the shepherd, "We thought the wicked wolf had taken you away. Get inside the gate with your brothers."

The wolf got into the backyard with the other sheep. He was thrilled. 'I won't have to jump over the fence or dodge the shepherd anymore,' he said to himself.

When the shepherd went away for lunch, the wolf wanted to snatch another sheep. 'I want to eat one for supper,' he thought. He looked at the sheep and spotted a fat one among them.

'He looks nice and juicy,' thought the wolf and smacked his lips. The sheep saw the wolf looking at him hungrily. He got scared and moved away from the wicked animal.

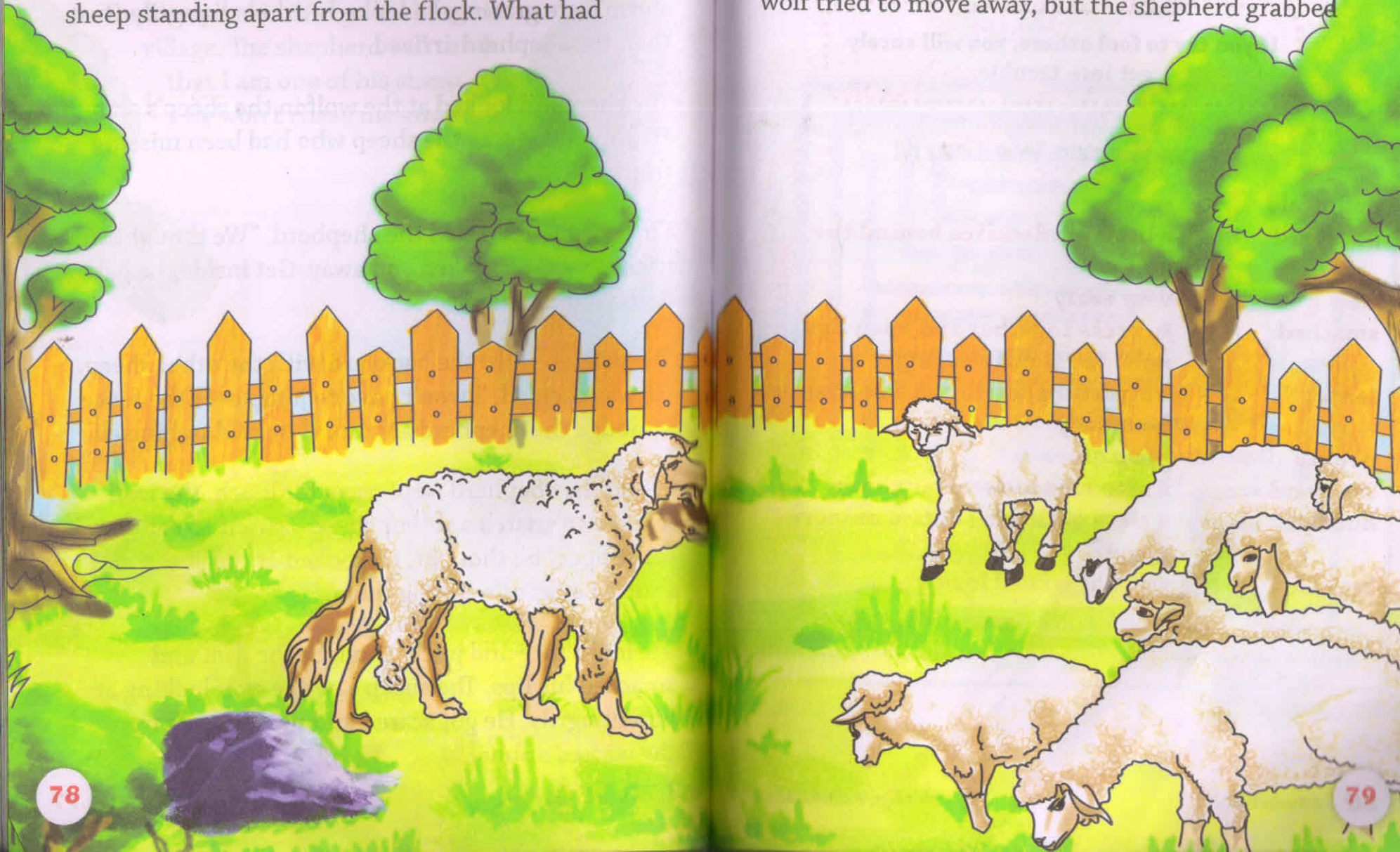
The other sheep knew that this animal was not one of them. They gathered in a corner near a tree and **huddled** together. They refused to go near the bad wolf.

When the shepherd came back, he noticed that the sheep were acting strange. Then he saw one sheep standing apart from the flock. What had

happened here?

The shepherd looked at all the sheep closely. The wolf in the sheep's skin stood alone. He did not eat grass with the others. He looked different too.

The shepherd moved closer to the strange sheep. The wolf tried to move away, but the shepherd grabbed



him. Off came the sheep skin!

The shepherd was shocked to see the wolf. He beat him with his stick and chased him away. The wolf was so scared! He **howled** loudly and ran away. The wicked wolf never returned to the village again.

Now we know

If you try to fool others, you will surely get into trouble.

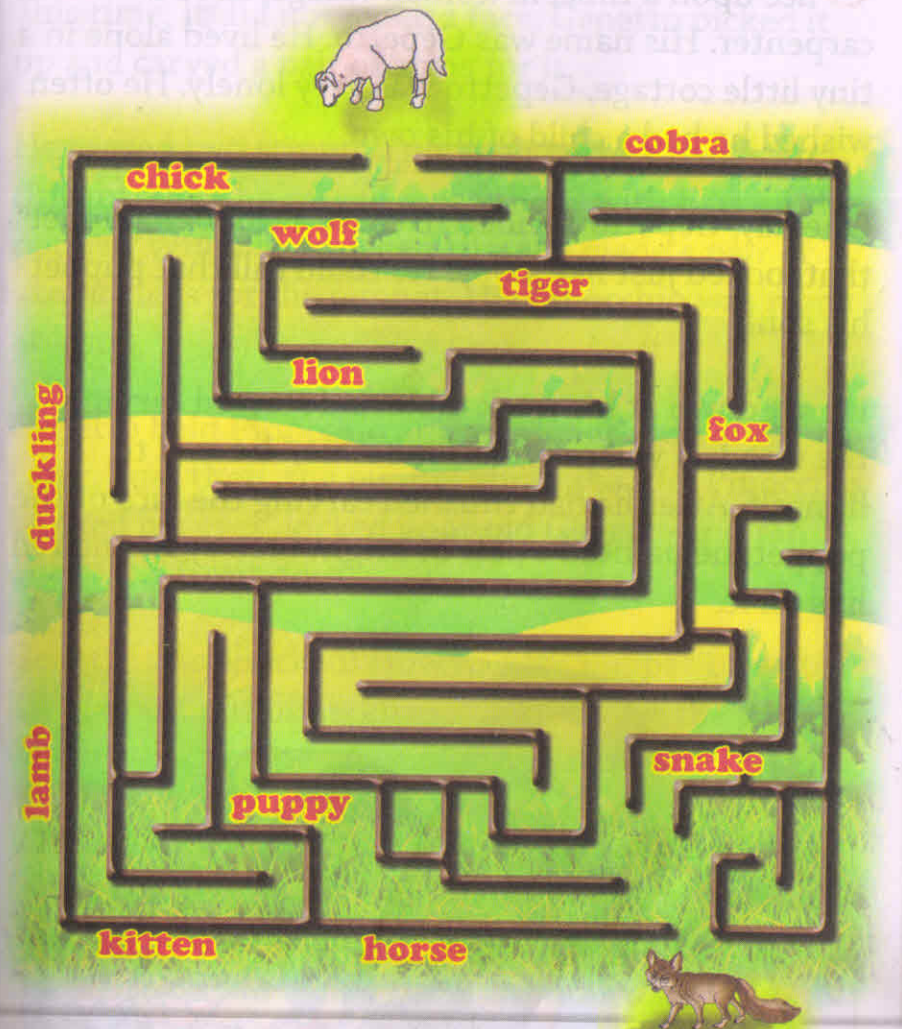
New Words We Learnt

definitely	- surely
backyard	- a little garden area behind the house
wee	- very early
smacked	- to press together and open lips noisily as though eating
fence	- a structure serving as a barrier or a boundary
pounce	- jump on
shepherd	- a man who looks after sheep
huddled	- a close gathering of two or more people
howled	- cried or wailed loudly

Fun Time

★ Help the sheep escape the wolf by drawing a path through the maze!

Clue: Avoid the path that has scary animals in it.



Once upon a time, in a small village, lived a carpenter. His name was Gepetto. He lived alone in a tiny little cottage. Gepetto was very lonely. He often wished he had a child of his own.

One day, Gepetto decided to carve a wooden puppet that looked just like a boy. He could call that puppet his son!

He sat down at his work table and started carving the wood. "I will call him Pinocchio," he said to himself. After he had finished carving the face of the puppet, he painted a pair of bright blue eyes, and red lips on it.



As soon as Gepetto had finished painting the puppet's face, it opened its mouth and stuck out its tongue. Gepetto was shocked!

Gepetto thought his mind was playing tricks on him. He blinked his eyes and looked at the puppet again. This time, it did not make a face. Gepetto picked it up and carved a pair of arms for it.

He carved two strong arms with perfect hands and fingers. Then he carved a neat head with hair on the puppet. When he finished that, he made a pair of **sturdy** legs for the puppet. His Pinocchio was ready at last!

Gepetto held Pinocchio at arm's length to admire his work. Just then, the puppet sprang to life! Pinocchio blinked his eyes, kicked poor old Gepetto and ran out of the front door.

Gepetto was shocked! How had his puppet come to life? He got out of his chair and ran after the puppet, which was running around on the street.

"Come back!" cried Gepetto as he ran after Pinocchio. It was a strange sight indeed, an old man running behind a wooden puppet. A group of little children saw the two of them running down the street. They joined the chase too.

Pinocchio was so excited to come alive, that he ran without paying any attention to where he was going. Crash! He bumped into a grumpy old policeman.

The policeman was furious. He caught Pinocchio's hand and screamed at him. Pinocchio was shocked! A few moments later, Gepetto caught up with them.

The policeman screamed at Gepetto, too. "You are under arrest for **disrupting** the peace in this town," he told Gepetto and took him away.

Pinocchio was tired after his long run. He went back to Gepetto's cottage. He spotted a chair near the fireplace and thought to himself, 'Let me rest here.'

Pinocchio lit a fire and sat on the chair. Soon, he was fast asleep, his legs dangling dangerously close to the fire.

When Pinocchio woke up, he found Gepetto standing next to the fireplace, staring at him. He tried to jump off the chair and run away, but he fell down! Pinocchio looked down at his feet. They were burnt and out of shape!

"Don't worry," said Gepetto. "I will carve a new pair of feet for you." Pinocchio stuck out his legs and Gepetto carved a new pair of feet for him. When he was done, he stitched a set of clothes for Pinocchio too.

Gepetto also stitched a fine pair of shoes for Pinocchio. He now looked like a real little boy. "May I go to school like the other children do?" Pinocchio asked Gepetto. But Gepetto did not have money to send Pinocchio to school.



That day, Gepetto sold his coat and his favourite table. With that money, he bought Pinocchio's books and sent him to school. Pinocchio was very happy. He danced his way down the street and waved at everyone he saw.

When he reached the school gate, he heard music playing in the fields. Silly little Pinocchio forgot all about school. He went to the fields where the music was playing. There, he saw a puppet show going on!

Little puppets were running about in the field and playing with each other. One of the puppets spotted Pinocchio and asked him to join them. Pinocchio joined them happily. He completely forgot about Gepetto and going to school.

The puppet master saw Pinocchio and guessed at once that this puppet was special. He asked Pinocchio to perform for his show that night. Pinocchio agreed happily.

The audience loved Pinocchio's performance! He sang and danced merrily and made everyone happy. When the show was over, the puppet master gave Pinocchio five gold coins.

"Come back tomorrow morning!" said the puppet master. Pinocchio nodded happily and went away.

Pinocchio walked through the woods to get home faster. The woods were scary at night, as robbers hid there. Pinocchio did not know this, and happily walked along the path, whistling a soft tune.

As he walked, Pinocchio spotted a cat and a fox coming towards him. "Good evening," said the fox. "We seem to have lost our way. Can you help us?"

Pinocchio agreed to help them. He did not know that they were thieves! Suddenly Pinocchio felt the fox's hands in his pockets. He kicked the fox as hard as he could and tried to run away.

But the fox caught him and locked him up in a cage! Pinocchio sat inside, feeling very sad. Just then, a fairy appeared in front of him. "Who are you?"

Pinocchio asked the fairy. She smiled at him and said, "I am a fairy, Pinocchio." He was shocked. "How do you know who I am?" he asked. The fairy smiled and said that she knew everything.

"How many coins do you have?" she asked him. Pinocchio wanted to keep two coins for himself. So, he lied to the fairy and said he had three coins. As soon as he said that, his nose started to grow longer. Pinocchio was shocked, "What's happening to my nose?" he asked the fairy.

"Your nose will grow longer if you lie," replied the fairy.



"I have five coins," cried Pinocchio, "and I am not lying now!" The fairy smiled and his nose shrank back to its normal size. "You must never tell a lie," the fairy warned Pinocchio. She set him free and he went back to Gepetto's cottage.

When Pinocchio returned to the cottage, it was empty. He started to cry. The cricket sitting on the window sill told him that Gepetto had gone out to sea to look for his little puppet. Pinocchio left the cottage and went to look for Gepetto.

He came out of the cottage and walked down the street. Just then, he saw a group of boys chasing a little dog. Naughty Pinocchio joined them!

The beautiful fairy saw what Pinocchio and his friends were doing. She came to them and said, "This is what happens to naughty boys!" She waved her wand and turned them all into donkeys!

The four 'donkey' boys were walking down the street when a circus manager saw them. He dragged them off to the circus! The poor boys had to jump through rings and **perform** silly tricks that made people laugh!

Pinocchio felt sorry for what he had done. He sat in a corner and cried. He wanted to go back to Gepetto.

He promised himself that he would behave like a good boy and do as he was told.

The circus manager was furious to see Pinocchio sitting in a corner. He dragged him by his ears and pushed poor donkey Pinocchio into the sea!

As soon as Pinocchio's feet touched the sea water, he was transformed into a puppet again! But alas! He did not know how to swim. Slowly, he sank into the sea.

As Pinocchio went deeper and deeper into the sea, he was amazed at all the beautiful fish and plants he saw there! Just then, a giant fish jumped at him and gobbled him up!

Pinocchio landed right inside the fish's belly. He got up and walked around, trying to find a way out. Suddenly, he heard a familiar voice. It was Gepetto! The old man had been swallowed by the fish too!

Gepetto and Pinocchio were very happy to be reunited. Together they hatched a plan to escape from the fish's belly.

When the fish was fast asleep, Gepetto and Pinocchio crawled out of its belly and swam away.

They swam as fast as they could till they reached the shore.

Gepetto and Pinocchio walked home happily. When they reached the cottage, Pinocchio made Gepetto sit in a chair and put a blanket around him. The little puppet prepared **steaming** hot soup for the old man to keep him warm.

Over the next few days, Pinocchio behaved like such a good boy! The fairy was watching him from a distance. One day, she went to Gepetto's house and said, "I am happy to see you behave so well Pinocchio. I will grant you a wish as a reward."

Pinocchio looked up at the fairy and said, "I wish I was a real boy!" The fairy smiled at him and an **instant** later, Pinocchio was **transformed** into a real boy!

Gepetto was overjoyed to see his little puppet come to life! He thanked the fairy with all his heart. From that day on, Pinocchio and Gepetto lived happily together in their little cottage.

Now we know

If we speak the truth and behave well,
good things will happen to us.

New Words We Learnt

sturdy	- in a good state
disrupting	- causing disorder in a peaceful place
perform	- to do or act something
steaming	- causing vapour/smoke to rise from very hot water or tea.
instant	- immediately
transformed	- changed into



Fun Time

★ Pinocchio lied, and his nose grew so long! He made sure he never lied again. Tell us three instances where you have been honest and rewarded for it.



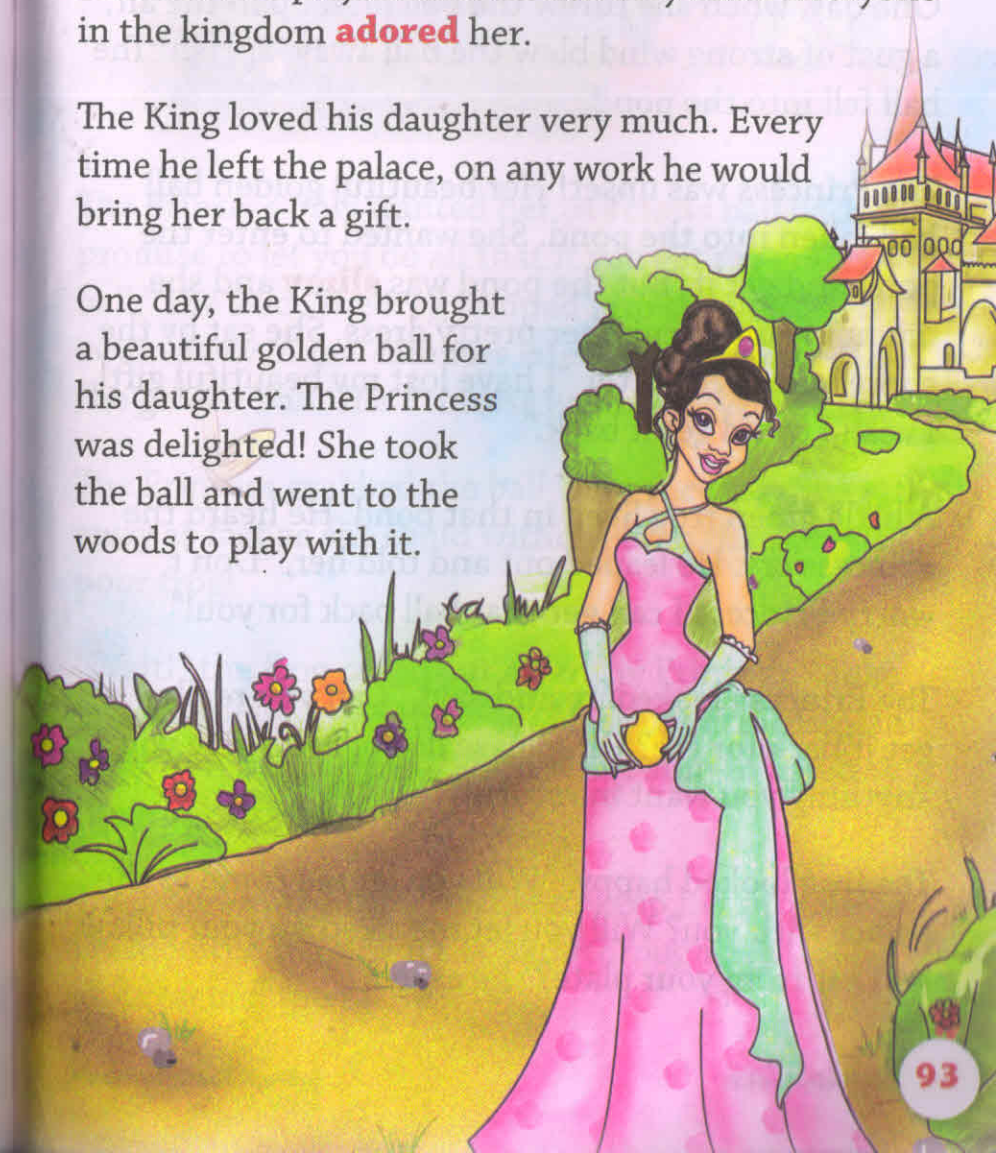
9

The Princess and The Frog

Once upon a time, there was a beautiful Princess. She lived with her father in a huge castle. The Princess was playful but she was very kind. Everyone in the kingdom **adored** her.

The King loved his daughter very much. Every time he left the palace, on any work he would bring her back a gift.

One day, the King brought a beautiful golden ball for his daughter. The Princess was delighted! She took the ball and went to the woods to play with it.



The woods were just behind the palace and the Princess went there every day to play.

The Princess took her golden ball to the woods everyday. She would stand by the pond and throw the ball high up in the air. When it came down, she would catch it and **giggle** with delight!

One day, when she threw the ball high up in the air, a gust of strong wind blew the ball away. Splash! The ball fell into the pond.

The Princess was upset! Her beautiful golden ball had fallen into the pond. She wanted to enter the pond and get it. But the pond was **slimy** and she did not want to ruin her pretty dress. She sat by the shore and cried softly, "I have lost my beautiful gift! I wish I could get it back."

A little green frog lived in that pond. He heard the Princess cry. He leaped out and told her, "Don't worry Princess I can get that ball back for you!"

The Princess looked up and said, "Can you really get it back for me? Oh, please do so! I will give you anything you want in return!"

The frog looked happy. "Will you let me come to the palace with you? Will you let me sleep on your pillow and eat from your plate?" he asked.



The Princess only wanted her **precious** ball back. "I promise to let you do all that if you get my golden ball," she said. The frog jumped into the pond and swam away. A few minutes later, he returned with the golden ball. The Princess was overjoyed!

The Princess grabbed the ball from the frog. She ran away as fast as she could without even thanking the poor frog!

"Wait!" the frog called out after the Princess. "Take me with you!" cried the frog. Alas! The Princess had forgotten her promise. She did not stop to listen to the frog's cry.

The frog wanted the Princess to keep her promise. He followed her down the path through the woods and reached the castle.

That evening, the Princess sat with her father in the royal dining hall for dinner. Just as they were about to begin, they heard a knock on the door. A maid hurried to open the door. There stood the frog.

"Greetings, Princess!" exclaimed the little frog. "I think you forgot all about the promise you made to me."



"Promise?" asked the King. "What is this all about?" The frog replied, "I did a **favour** for your daughter and she promised to bring me to the palace. She also promised to let me eat from her plate and sleep on her pillow."

"I don't want to share my food with him, daddy!" cried the Princess. "I can't let him sleep on my pillow!" She looked really upset to see the frog.

The King was a fair ruler and a very just man. He told his daughter, "You promised to grant this little frog's wish. You must keep your promise."

"But I can't do that, Daddy. Look at him!" cried the Princess. "He is so slimy and ugly!"

"Hush!" said the King in a stern voice. "You will not behave like a spoilt child. If you make a promise, you must learn to keep it. Ask your friend to join us and share your dinner with him."

The Princess got up quietly and asked the frog to come in. The frog smiled and happily hopped towards the dining table.

The King put down his hand and told the frog, "Hop on! I'll put you on the table." The frog thanked the King and hopped on to his hand. The King lifted him gently and set him down next to a plate.

When the food was served, the frog moved closer to the Princess. He stood in front of her plate and looked up at her. The Princess was shocked! Surely he did not expect her to share her food with him!

The Princess tried to pull her plate away, but her father was watching her closely. She pushed her plate towards the frog, who looked very happy. "Thank you, Princess," he said as he leaned forward to eat.

The frog loved the delicious food prepared by the royal chefs. He gobbled it until he was full! The poor Princess just picked at her food. She did not want to share a plate with a slimy frog!

After dinner, the frog followed the Princess to her room. The Princess looked like she was about to cry. 'Why did I make such a silly promise?' she asked to herself.

The Princess sat down on her bed and looked at the frog. He smiled at her and jumped up on the bed. Then he settled down comfortably on her pillow.

"Aah!" sighed the frog, "This pillow is so comfortable! When I lived in the pond, I slept on a rock. Imagine that!"

The Princess began to cry. She did not want to share her bed with the frog! But he ignored her and fell asleep on her pillow. The Princess pulled up the covers and cried herself to sleep that night.

The next morning, she woke up to find the frog looking at her. He thanked her and **leaped** out of the bed. He hopped out of the window and **disappeared** into the gardens.



The frog did not return that day. The Princess thought to herself, 'He must have left. I hope he doesn't come back.' She was happy again.

But the frog returned for dinner that evening. He shared a plate with her once again. When dinner was over, he followed her to her room. The Princess was very upset.

That night, she did not cry herself to sleep. "I must get used to this. I don't think the frog is going to leave in a hurry," she said to herself, and fell asleep.

After a few days, she got used to the frog eating from her plate and sleeping on her pillow. They actually became good friends!

One day, the Princess woke up to find the frog missing. She looked around, and guess what she saw? A handsome Prince standing next to her bed! The Princess asked him, "Who are you and how did you get in here?"

The Prince smiled at her and replied, "I am your little frog friend, Princess. A few years ago, an evil witch cast a spell on me and turned me into a frog. She said the spell would be broken if I ate from the plate of a Princess and slept on her pillow." The Princess thought about the way she had treated him earlier. She felt so sorry for what she had done. She apologised to him. The Prince said, "I will accept your apology only on one condition – you must marry me!"

The Princess laughed shyly and agreed. Soon, the Princess and her frog Prince were married. They lived happily ever after.

Now we know

**We must always keep
our promises.**

New Words We Learnt

adored	– loved
giggle	– laugh in short fits
slimy	– something foul and slippery, usually cold to touch
precious	– something that matters a lot
favour	– helping someone for a good reason
leaped	– jumped
disappeared	– to go away quickly

Fun Time

★ Spot the nouns and the adjectives in these sentences.

The beautiful Princess threw her shiny, golden ball into the pond.

The slimy, green frog fetched the ball from the pond.

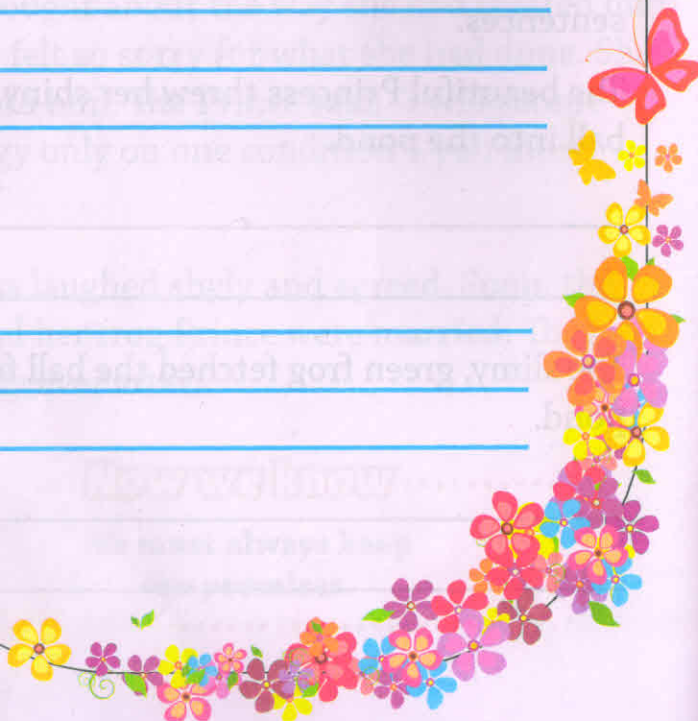
Fun Time

- ★ The Princess was so nice to the frog in the end, wasn't she? Write down three instances where you have been nice to someone else!

★

★

★



10

Beauty and The Beast

Once upon a time there lived a merchant who had a beautiful daughter. Everyone called her Beauty. She was a sweet, gentle girl who was loved by everyone.

One day, the merchant had to go to the market. He told his daughter to look after the house while he was gone.

"Be careful Father," said Beauty, "I think a storm might be approaching. Return home safely before you get caught in it." The merchant nodded and went off to the market.

The merchant did his work and left the market after a few hours. He set off for his house, but he was caught in a mighty storm on the way. His horse was scared by the storm and ran around in the jungle, dragging the poor merchant along. Soon they were lost!

The merchant tried to **steer** his horse onto a path, but the horse had a mind of its own. It trotted off in a different direction and halted in front of a huge castle.

The merchant looked at it curiously. "I have never heard of this castle before," he said to himself. "I wonder who lives in it. It looks so dark and gloomy." And indeed it did.

Creepers grew around the castle and its gates. The lawn looked like it had not been mowed for years. It was a very spooky castle.

The merchant went closer to the gates. He pushed the gates open and entered the grounds of the castle. He wanted to go in and ask someone if he could stay for a night. He called out, "Is anyone in there? Could you please help me?" But no one answered.

He walked to the castle and pushed the front door open. The castle was large and empty. A few pieces of furniture lay scattered around the place. The merchant walked in and looked around. He spotted a huge dining table in the room ahead.

The table had so many delicious dishes on it! The merchant realised that dinner was about to be served. So he walked in and waited for the owner of the house to arrive.

The merchant waited for a long time, but no one arrived for dinner. He decided to go upstairs and explore the castle. He walked up the **creaky** stairs and

down a long corridor. There, he found a huge door. He opened the door and went in.

The room had been ripped apart! The curtains had been torn to **shreds** and the furniture had been smashed into pieces. The merchant was scared. What kind of beast had done that? Then he noticed a tall figure standing on the balcony.

The merchant moved ahead nervously and called out, "Er..Ex..Excuse me, I have l..lo..lost my way. c..could you let me stay here for a night?" The figure turned around and the merchant was shocked at what he saw!



The tall figure was a **ferocious** beast! He looked angrily at the merchant and growled, "How dare you enter my castle. I will kill you!"

The merchant tried to flee from the castle, but the beast caught up with him. "What makes you think you can run away from me? What makes you think you can enter my castle without my permission? You will not be spared!" he roared.

The merchant begged for mercy. "Please let me go home. My daughter must be worried about me." The beast looked at the merchant and said, "I will let you go, but you must send your daughter to me instead. If you don't, you will die!" The merchant was desperate to leave, so he agreed.

When he reached home, he told his daughter about the beast. "We must go away to another town. We can't live here, or the beast will find us and take you away. Pack your bags. We must leave right away!"

Beauty looked at her father and said, "You promised to send me to the beast, Father. You must not break your promise. I will go to the beast." The merchant was shocked. He did not want his only daughter to live with that ferocious beast.

But Beauty wanted her father to fulfill his promise. Hence, the merchant bid his daughter a tearful

farewell and she set off towards the castle.

When Beauty reached the castle, the beast was waiting for her impatiently. "Why are you late?" he growled at her. Beauty was afraid of this ferocious creature. She did not utter a single word.

The beast took her into the castle and showed her a room. "You may stay here," he growled. Beauty nodded and replied softly, "Thank you." The beast was surprised. She had not screamed or fainted or even tried to run away on seeing him. He nodded quietly and left the room.

Over the next few days, Beauty rarely uttered a word to the beast. She spent all day cleaning the castle and the lawns. Every evening she sat down with him for dinner, but she barely spoke to him.



The beast wanted this strange girl to be his friend. He decided to be polite to her. At first, Beauty was surprised by the sudden change. But she soon got used to it.

He would **accompany** her to the garden every morning and help her clean the **lawns**. During the day, he would help her dust the furniture and keep the castle neat and tidy. He even took her to his huge library and let her borrow a few books.

Beauty soon learnt that the beast was not as wild and ferocious as he looked. He was gentle and kind and even pleasant. They soon became good friends. Every night after dinner, they would sit by the fire and talk to each other. As days passed by, the beast fell in love with Beauty.

The beast had a magic mirror that showed him anything he wanted. One day, he gifted the mirror to Beauty. "Take this," said the beast, "It will show you anything you want to see."

Beauty smiled excitedly and took the mirror. "May I see my father please?" she asked politely. The mirror shone brightly and showed a picture of Beauty's father in their cottage. But alas! He looked so ill!

Beauty was shocked to see her father suffering. She began to cry bitterly. "My poor father is unwell and



all alone. Who will look after him?" She looked up at the beast and said, "Please let me go to my father. He needs me! I promise to return to you when he is well again!"

The beast did not want Beauty to go away, but she looked so upset. "Go!" he said. "Take good care of your father."

Beauty's father was overjoyed to see her again. She looked after him and soon, he was well again. He did not want Beauty to go back to the beast.

Beauty realised that she was missing the beast. She missed living in the castle with him. She missed sitting by the fire and talking to him. One day, she looked into the magic mirror and said, "May I see the beast please?" The mirror showed her the beast in his castle.

The beast looked sad and lonely. He sat on the balcony, weak and depressed. Beauty looked up at her father and said, "I must go back to the beast. He needs me!"

Beauty rushed back to the castle and went to find the beast. He stood on the balcony, looking just as upset as she had seen him in the mirror. She called out to him and rushed to greet him.

The beast was **overjoyed** to see her again. He held her close and asked her, "Beauty, will you marry me?" Beauty had fallen in love with the beast too. She nodded shyly and, the beast stepped back.

He was lifted off the ground and surrounded by a bright light. The light shone until Beauty couldn't look at the beast anymore. Poof! The light went out and in place of the beast stood a handsome young man.

"Many years ago, a wicked witch had cast a spell on me and turned me into a beast. Only true love had the power to break her spell," said the young man.

Beauty was overjoyed to know that the spell had been broken. She invited her father to the castle and told him about the spell the witch had cast on the beast.



Her father was happy to learn that the beast was actually a handsome, well-mannered man. Soon, Beauty and her beast got married and they lived happily ever after.

Now we know

We must not judge a person by their looks. True beauty lies within.

New Words We Learnt

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| steer | - to turn the wheel towards a particular direction |
| creaky | - making sounds as though about to break or come apart |
| shreds | - in little bits and pieces |
| ferocious | - scary |
| accompany | - go along with |
| lawns | - patches of plain grass, usually in a garden |
| overjoyed | - very happy |

Fun Time

★ See if you can answer these questions correctly!

a. What did the Beast ask for in exchange for the merchant's freedom?

b. What magical object did the Beast have?

c. What happened to the Beast in the end?

d. Why did Beauty want to return to her father?

Evaluation Time

You must have read all the stories by now. Did you learn new words? Let us see how much you have learned!

★ Unscramble the letters to find the hidden word. 'zimkana'

★ What is another word for 'trampled'?

★ Find the verb here. 'The wolf donned the sheep's skin and returned to the field.'

★ Where did Thumbelina go with the swallow when she escaped from her wedding?

★ What was Pinocchio's maker's name and what did he do for a living?

★ 'The frog walked slowly behind the Princess.' Spot the adverb here.

★ 'The little mermaid lost her beautiful voice because of the wicked witch.' Spot the adjectives here.

★ What was the witch's house made of?

★ 'The hermit transformed the mouse into a ferocious tiger.' Mark the nouns in this sentence.

★ What magical object did the Beast have?



Have you answered all the questions correctly?
Well done! You are a Rapid Reading Whiz!