

Story 1: The Hunter and the loyal friend



Story shared by: *Dorris*

Representing: *Shri Lanka*

The Story:

Once upon a time, there was a hunting man in my country. His job was like that of a gypsy; gypsies are known for eating meat every day. He went hunting every day and killed animals to eat. One day, he set a trap in the jungle. He made this trap every morning to catch whatever animal might come into it.

One day, as he was going home through the jungle, he encountered many friends: a bird, a deer, and a tortoise. They were very friendly and always together. One day, the deer ran away. The hunting man followed the deer's tracks. The deer's friends, the bird and the tortoise, were very worried and started thinking of a good idea to save their friend.

The tortoise suggested:

"Okay, you wait here and cut the track slowly because the tortoise is very slow. I will go and disturb the hunter at his home. When I get there, the bird will make a lot of noise to distract him."

The bird began making loud noises while the tortoise cut the track very slowly.

When the hunting man arrived home, he heard the bird making a terrible noise and thought it was a bad day. He waited for a while and then went back to the jungle to check his trap.

Again, he heard the bird making a loud noise and thought:



"This is not a good day."

The tortoise continued cutting the track very slowly, and eventually, the deer was freed. The deer went back into the jungle, but the hunting man saw no one. He was puzzled and thought the day was very bad. When he returned, he saw the tortoise was also gone.

The tortoise had managed to save the deer and was very tired. He could barely walk and had lost some teeth. Despite this, he was happy because he had saved his friend's life. The friends were reunited and they were feeling very happy. They talked and celebrated their safety.

The tortoise, exhausted, went back into the jungle to search for the deer, but he couldn't find it. Eventually, he returned, realizing that the deer had already left. The tortoise thought about how the bird's three loud calls had been a sign of a very bad day.

He remembered the advice of his grandmother: friends are important, and they help each other in times of trouble.

The friends were all grateful for each other and their lives. They lived happily ever after.

Story Moral: *The moral of the story is that true friendship is about helping and supporting each other in times of need. Despite their differences, the bird, deer, and tortoise work together to save their friend, showing that cooperation and selflessness can overcome challenges. True friends make sacrifices for one another, and even the smallest effort can make a big difference.*

Story 2: The Village of the Returned

Story shared by: *Grace*

Representing: *Cameroon*

The Story:

In my village if you die, you will come back. If someone like me, if I die now, and they bury me, I will come back, like a ghost. It is for real because I've seen it too many times. Like in my village, like some particular family. You can not go to that house, because if you go to that house you see the person inside.

Story 3: The Curse of Mohini

Story shared by: *Nisansala*

Representing: *Sri Lanka*

The Story:

The grandmothers and grandfathers of the boys would prepare them to be cautious of women when they grew up, as it was said that there was a woman, Mohini, who had been raped in her previous life. Mohini returned to life with the intent of avenging men. It was said that Mohini would appear at night as an impressive woman in a long white dress, holding an infant in her arms. She would approach men and ask them to hold her baby so she could fix her dress, which was too big for her. This was a trap set by Mohini to lure the men, as she didn't actually need help but instead possessed them, causing them to lose their sanity until they died.

Story Moral: *The moral of the story is that this folktale, while supernatural in nature, was used by the grandparents to teach important life lessons and instill caution in the children. As Buddhists, they believed in the influence of supernatural forces, magic, demons, the afterlife, and curses, so the stories served as a way to guide the younger generation to be mindful of these beliefs and the potential consequences of their actions.*

Story 4: The Cursed Prince

Story shared by: *Nisansala*

Representing: *Shri Lanka*

The Story:

The Black Prince, as it is believed, was the son of a king in Sri Lanka. He was arrogant and frequently harassed women. Influenced by his lustful nature, he would secretly watch women during their baths. Additionally, he was obsessed with the wealth and power his father possessed, which drove him to seek his father's death in order to take his place on the throne. When his attempt to kill his father failed, the Black Prince decided to commit suicide. However, his punishment for his actions did not end with his death. He returned to earth in the form of a handsome demon, known as Kalu Kumaraya. At night, he would wander through dark, watery places, such as baths and lakes, where he would seduce his victims. Kalu Kumaraya was selective with his victims, preferring the most beautiful women of the city of Galle, carefully choosing them to destroy. Despite his beauty, some women were not swayed by his charm. However, if he managed to get close enough to them, he would "taint" their soul. This would result in them losing their dignity, being unable to bear children, and never being loved by any man.

Story Moral: The moral reflects the cultural belief in the need to protect women, particularly during vulnerable stages of life, such as puberty, when they transition into young women. The tale emphasizes the importance of dignity, self-respect, and the dangers of being swayed by external beauty or charm.

Story 5: The Tale of Snezhnika

Story shared by: *Nelly*

Representing: *Russia*

The Story:

Once upon a time, there lived an old man and an old woman. They had no children, so they decided to make a little girl out of snow. They went into the yard, where there was plenty of snow, and sculpted a girl. They named her Snowflake, and she became their daughter.

All winter long, Snowflake lived with the old man and the old woman, and everything was wonderful. When spring passed and summer arrived, Snowflake, who had many friends, decided to go with them to the forest to pick mushrooms. The old man and the old woman didn't want to let her go, but Snowflake insisted, and eventually, they allowed her to leave.

In the forest, the girls gathered mushrooms and flowers, and in the evening, they decided to light a fire and jump over it, like in a game. The first friend jumped, the second friend jumped, the third friend jumped, and then it was Snowflake's turn. Snowflake didn't want to jump, but her friends insisted, so she jumped over the fire. She jumped—and disappeared...

Story Moral: *The moral of the story is for the children to listen to their parents advice and trust their instincts.*

Story 6: The house of unexpected friends

Story shared by: *Nelly*

Representing: *Russia*

The Story:

One day, a little frog decided to build a small and beautiful house.

It built its house and lived happily in it.

A hare passed by the house and asked:

— "Little house, little house, who lives there?"

The frog answered:

— "I, the croaking frog. And who are you?"

The hare replied:

— "I, the hopping hare. Can I live with you?"

— "Come in," said the frog.

And so, the frog and the hare started living together.

A fox passed by the house. She saw the house and asked:

— "Little house, little house, who lives there?"

— "I, the croaking frog," answered the frog.

— "And I, the hopping hare," answered the hare.

— "Can I live with you?" asked the fox.

— "Come in," they replied.

And so, the frog, the hare, and the fox started living together.

A wolf passed by the house. He saw the house and asked:

— "Little house, little house, who lives there?"

— "I, the croaking frog," answered the frog.

— "And I, the hopping hare," answered the hare.

— "And I, the little fox-sister," answered the fox.

— "Can I live with you?" asked the wolf.

— "Come in," they replied.



And so, the frog, the hare, the fox, and the wolf started living together.

A bear passed by the house. He saw the house and asked:

— "Little house, little house, who lives there?"

— "I, the croaking frog," answered the frog.

— "And I, the hopping hare," answered the hare.

— "And I, the little fox-sister," answered the fox.

— "And I, the gray wolf," answered the wolf.

— "Can I live with you?" asked the bear.

— "Sure, come in," they replied.

The bear tried to enter the small house and broke it down.

Story 7: The Adventures of Pandatokyo

Story shared by: *Jessa*

Representing: *Philippines*

The Story:

One day, a smart and strong boy named Pandatokyo wanted to go find his brother. He also had two other brothers, but they didn't want to go with him. Pandatokyo also wanted to leave to find a better future for his mother. However, his two brothers didn't like Pandatokyo and refused to join him. That's why Pandatokyo decided to leave the house all by himself. He told his mother, "Mama, I want to go. I need to leave this house to find my brother." And then his mother replied, "Ok, you can go, but be careful."

And so, Pandatokyo set off on his journey. While traveling, he encountered a giant who laughed at him. Pandatokyo, feeling frustrated, asked, "Why are you laughing at me? Are you making fun of me?" The giant, in a deep voice, replied, "Oh, you think you're clever? Don't be so arrogant." They exchanged words, and Pandatokyo, feeling insulted, asked again, "Why are you making fun of me?" The giant responded, "What is this small body of yours compared to me? If I step on you, you'll be crushed like a cockroach."

Pangatokyo, confident and clever, reminded the giant, "Remember, giant, nothing big moves fast." Despite the giant's attempts to stomp on him, Pandatokyo was too quick. Then the giant took a stone, and they both prepared for a fight. The giant threw the stone into the distance, showing off his strength. But Pandatokyo, using his quick wit, said, "That stone took a long time to fall. Look what I can do." Pandatokyo then grabbed a small bird and threw it into the air, demonstrating his skill.

The giant was surprised, but Pandatokyo didn't stop there. They talked, and the giant was impressed by Pandatokyo's strength and intelligence. Pandatokyo continued his journey and eventually reached a place where the King of Giants ruled. He had heard stories about this kingdom and wanted to see it for himself. When he arrived, the King of Giants saw Pandatokyo and gave him a difficult task. The king said, "Before you can marry my daughter, you must defeat two giants."

Pangatokyo climbed a tall tree and waited. When the two giants appeared, he used his slingshot to hit one of them with a stone, tricking them into fighting each other. Thinking that the other giant had attacked him, they began to punch each other until both of them were killed. Pandatokyo had cleverly defeated them without directly fighting them.

The King was impressed but gave Pandatokyo another test. He told him to capture a wild buffalo that roamed the fields. Pandatokyo, small and fast, outwitted the buffalo. After a long chase, the buffalo grew tired and collapsed, and Pandatokyo emerged victorious once again.

Finally, the King gave Pandatokyo one last challenge: to capture a white bear that was terrorizing the city. Pandatokyo tracked down the bear, and after a fierce chase, he lured the bear into a chapel made of iron, trapping it inside. The bear was unable to escape, and the city was saved.



Impressed with Pandatokyo's bravery and intelligence, the King kept his promise and allowed him to marry the Princess, who had also admired his courage. The kingdom celebrated their wedding for an entire month, with plenty of food and drink for everyone. People from different kingdoms attended, and the King crowned Pandatokyo, making him the ruler of the land.

And so, Pandatokyo became the King, living happily ever after with his new queen.

Story Moral: *The moral of the story is that courage, intelligence, and perseverance can help overcome even the greatest challenges.*

Story 8: The River of Truth



Story shared by: *Godwyn*

Representing: *Cameroon*

The Story:

Many, many years ago, in a small village in Africa, there lived a family with two kids. One of the kids was named John, and the other was named Mary. One particular day, their mother told them, "When you come back, you'll have something special in your dish. Eat it and then join me on the farm."

When John and Mary came back from school, they ate the food - it was nice - and then they went to join their mother at the farm. The mother had prepared a special meal and kept some for dinner in the pot. But surprisingly, when they came back and she opened the pot to prepare dinner, there was no food left. She called John and Mary and asked them, "Did anyone eat the food from the pot?" John said, "No, I didn't touch it." Mary also said, "No, I didn't touch it either."

Since no one admitted to eating the food, it seemed as if some spirit had entered the house. At that time, in the village, there was a river called the River of Truth. So, they took John and Mary to this river. The belief was that if you told a lie, the water would rise. There was also a spirit known as "Mami Wata," the queen mother of the water, who would swallow you if you lied.

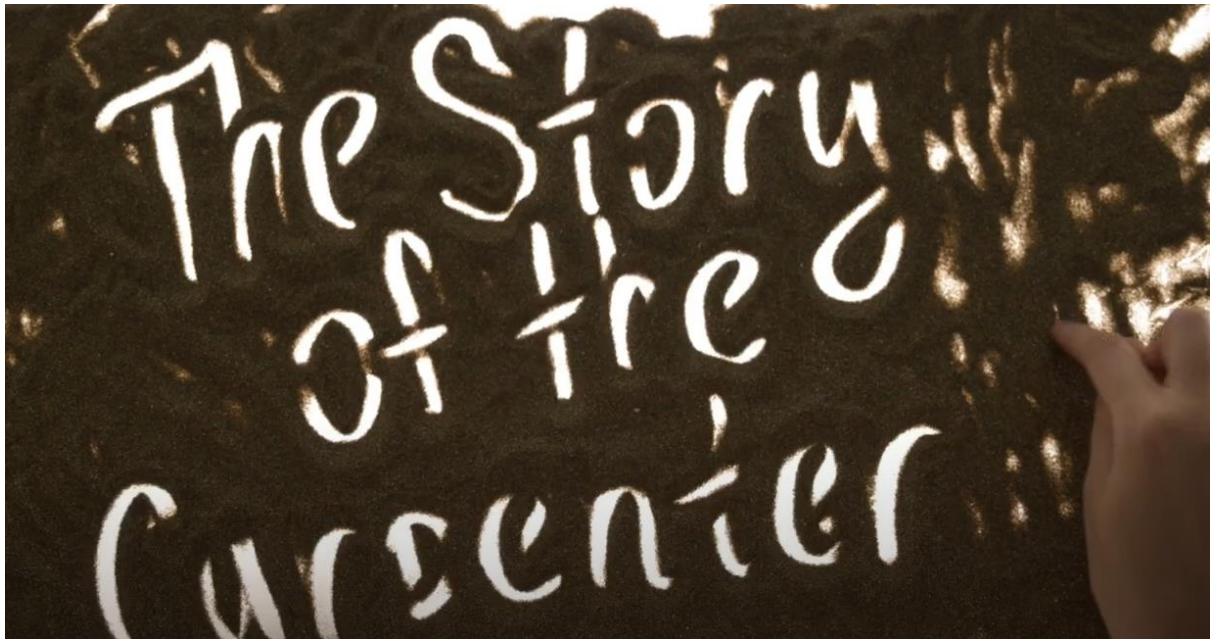
They put Mary in the river first and asked her, "Mary, did you eat the rice?" She replied, "No." They then asked her to sing a song: "If na me chop this rice, if na me chop this rice, oh cover, cover, cover me, oh Mami Wata, go swallow me, cha chu, cha chu..." As she sang, the water rose from her ankle to her knee, then to her waist. But when she sang again, the water returned to its normal level, showing she had not eaten the rice.



Next, they called John to step into the water. He was asked the same question and sang the same song: "If na me chop this rice, if na me chop this rice, oh cover, cover, co, co, co cover me, oh Mami Wata, go swallow me, cha chu, cha chu." The water rose to his waist and then to his chest as he kept singing. They asked him again if he ate the rice, and he continued to deny it. But with the final song, the water rose above his head and swallowed him, taking him away.

Story Moral: *The moral of the story is to always tell the truth, no matter how bad or difficult the situation may seem. The truth is slow, but it eventually comes out. It may take time, but it cannot be hidden forever. Nothing hides under the sun.*

Story 9: The story of the Carpenter



Story shared by: *Mohammed*

Representing: *Egypt*

The Story:

One day, Pelekanos the carpenter had a big problem with the king. He made something for him in the castle, and when the king saw it, he said, "I will kill this guy for this mistake." Pelekanos knew this and was waiting for the next day when the soldiers would come to take him to be executed. He was very, very sad, and his wife noticed. "Why are you sad?" she asked. He replied, "I made this and that, and I didn't mean to make the mistake. But when the king saw it, he decided to have me killed." She told him, "Leave tomorrow to tomorrow and leave today to today. Let us continue our day, and tomorrow will take care of itself." He agreed and thought, "Yes, I must live the rest of my time, and I won't worry about tomorrow."

The next morning, he heard the soldiers knocking on the door. He was terrified, thinking they had come to take him to the king. His body shook with fear as he went to open the door. When he opened it, he asked the soldiers what they needed.

The soldiers said, "We need you to make a box for the king, because the king has died, and we must have a box to put him inside for his funeral."

He looked at them and smiled. They hadn't come for him, not to kill him—the king had died.



Story Moral: *No matter what problems we face, it's important to focus on the present and live in the moment. Worrying about tomorrow won't change the outcome, so we should let the future take care of itself.*

Story 10: A lie has no trace



Story shared by: *Maryam*

Representing: *Somalia*

The Story:

It is said that one day a man saw a beehive full of honey on the top of a kura tree and he decided to steal the honey. The thief took with him three things: an ax to cut the beehive, a mat to rub the honey, and a torch to protect himself from the bees. Then he climbed the tree to carry out his task.

A few minutes later, the owner of the kura tree appeared. He asked the thief, "What are you doing on the top of my tree?"

"I was tired," said the thief.

"And I wanted to take a rest on the top of the tree."

The owner of the tree, who did not really believe him, said: "Fair enough, then I will ask you three questions."

"What are you doing with the ax up in my tree?"

"I wanted to cut some green branches for my sheep," answered the thief.

"And what is the mat for?"

"Because I want to sit on it, so that my clothes do not get dirty," said the thief.

"And what about the torch then? What do you need the torch for?"

And the thief said: "Mmm... I don't have an answer for that."

Story Moral: *The moral of the story is that the more lies we might tell, the more complicated and difficult the situation becomes, as we struggle to keep up with our own falsehoods. When we are*





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telling the truth, it's easy to answer without hesitation. But when we are lying, every question forces us to think and invent new stories. In the end, lies lead nowhere, and a liar cannot go far.

Story 11: Pineapple and the Eyes



Story shared by: *Luzy*

Representing: *Philippines*

The Story:

Once upon a time, there was a mother and a daughter. The mother loved her daughter very much because she was her only child. But, as the daughter grew up, the mother spoiled her.

One day, the mother fell ill, and the daughter had to do the household chores because her mother could no longer move. When the daughter was about to make noodle soup, she kept asking her mother for help, saying, "Mom, where's the pot?", "Mom, where are the matches?", and "Mom, where is...?" She kept asking her mother where to find the things she needed.

Although the mother wasn't angry, she became frustrated and said to her daughter, "I wish you had many eyes."

The next day, the mother searched for her daughter everywhere but couldn't find her. When she went to the yard, she noticed a plant that had grown there, bearing fruit. The fruit was shaped like a human head with many eyes.

She thought to herself that it was her daughter, Pinang. In the Philippines, the pineapple is called "Pinya." Over the years, the word "Pinya" became "Pinang", meaning Pineapple.



Story Moral: *The moral of the story is to be careful with words and actions, as they can have unintended consequences. The mother's wish for her daughter to have many eyes came true in an unexpected way, teaching us that impatience and frustration can lead to outcomes we don't foresee.*

Story 12: The Goha and the Sheep



Story shared by: *Randa*

Representing: *Syria*

The Story:

Once upon a time, Goha had a sheep, and his friends all desired to take it from him. They wanted to slaughter the sheep and turn it into kebabs, but Goha wasn't keen on the idea. "What do you plan to do with that sheep then?" they asked. Goha replied, "I'll hide it away until next year."

"But don't you know?" his friends said, "Judgment Day is coming tomorrow. What will you do with the sheep after that?"

Day after day, his friends came to him, repeating the same warning. One by one, they told him that Judgment Day was just around the corner. Eventually, after hearing it so many times, Goha began to believe them. Resigned, he decided to kill the sheep. After it was done, his friends left him to grill the meat. They stripped off their clothes, asked Goha to watch over them, and headed off to swim, leaving him alone to tend the fire.

As Goha stood by the fire, grilling the sheep, he grew angry. His friends were off enjoying themselves while he was left behind to do all the work. In his frustration, he took their clothes, threw them into the fire, and burned them.

When his friends returned, they were furious. "Goha, why did you burn all of our clothes? What are we supposed to wear now?"

With a shrug, Goha replied, "What does it matter? Judgment Day is coming today or tomorrow, isn't it?"



Story Moral: *The moral of the story is that blindly believing everything we hear, without questioning or thinking critically, can lead to unexpected and sometimes unfortunate consequences.*

Story 13: The Fiery Chili Challenge



Story shared by: *Daniel*

Representing: *Nigeria*

The Story:

Once upon a time, there was a great food competition among the animals, and everyone believed the tortoise didn't stand a chance. "He's too slow," they said, "there's no way he'll even make it to the top ten."

All the animals gathered around a large table, and the competition began. The challenge was to eat food spiced with lots of pepper and chili. There was only one rule: if anyone made the sound "shhhffff" because the chili was too hot, they would be disqualified.

The animals started eating, and one by one, they dropped out, until only ten were left. The tortoise, feeling the heat in his mouth but not showing it, would turn to the others and say, "I'm sure you're not about to do 'shhhffff,' right?" They would all reply, "No, no, no." And the tortoise would nod, "Good, good."

As the contest continued, only three animals remained. The tortoise reminded them, "Now, it's just the three of us. If anyone makes the 'shhhffff' sound, they're out." His competitors agreed. Then, it was down to just two—the tortoise and one other animal. The tortoise turned to him and said,



"Remember, if anyone does 'shhhffff,' they lose." The other animal, confident, replied, "Yes, yes, no problem."

But soon, the other animal couldn't bear the heat anymore and let out a big "shhhffff." And just like that, he was disqualified.

Everyone watching was in shock. "How could the tortoise win this competition with all that chili?" they cried. They had been focused on his actions but hadn't realized that his mind was sharper than theirs.

Story Moral: *The moral of the story is to never judge someone by their outward appearance or behavior. What truly matters is a person's mind and abilities, which may not always be visible at first. Someone who seems slow or quiet might be much more intelligent or capable than they appear. Therefore, it's important not to underestimate anyone based on how they seem.*

Story 14: The figure inside the moon



Story shared by: *Desmond*

Representing: *Cameroon*

The Story:

In the folktales passed down through generations in Africa, there was a story that stood out above the rest—the story of the moon.

The elders used to tell the children, "If you don't finish your chores during the day and leave them for the night, the moon will pull you in, and you will take the place of the man who is trapped there."

If you look closely at the moon on a clear night, you can see a shadow, like the figure of someone stuck inside it.

Story Moral: *The moral of the story is that sometimes, folktales rooted in fear can be used positively to teach important values. In this case, the story encouraged children to be responsible and diligent, ensuring they completed their tasks on time, while instilling a sense of discipline that stayed with them as they grew.*





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Story 15: Sampaguita: Love and Death



Story shared by: *Julie*

Representing: *Philippines*

The Story:

Once upon a time, there were two young lovers named Sampa and Guita. Sampa was a man who loved Guita deeply, and Guita was a woman of extraordinary beauty, with long, shiny black hair that flowed like silk. Their friendship blossomed into a deep love, but their happiness was not meant to last.

Their love faced a great obstacle—their families despised each other. No matter how much Sampa and Guita wanted to be together, their parents forbade it. The mothers of Sampa and Guita were especially harsh, and in their bitterness, they placed a curse on the couple. The curse was simple yet cruel: if the two ever united, they would never know happiness.

One fateful day, as the sky darkened with storm clouds, a great rainstorm came. Thunder crashed, and soon the rivers overflowed, causing a flood to sweep through their village. The waters rose higher and higher, washing away all the homes and leaving destruction in their wake.

Amid the raging waters, only Sampa and Guita remained. As the floodwaters surrounded them, Guita saw Sampa struggling and called out to him, "Come here, my love!" She swam towards him and pulled him close, whispering his name. "Sampa, come here," she said, holding him tightly. Together, they called out to each other—Sampa... Guita... Sampaguita.

And so, in the flood, the two lovers perished together. Their love, though doomed by the curse, was immortalized in the name Sampaguita, a symbol of their eternal bond.



Story Moral: *The moral of the story is that true love may face many obstacles, but even in the face of hardship, it remains strong and eternal. Despite the curse and the tragic circumstances, the love between Sampa and Guita was immortalized. It teaches us that love, no matter the challenges or opposition, can endure and leave a lasting legacy.*

Story 16: The Divine Palette



Story shared by: *Luzy*

Representing: *Philippines*

The Story:

Long, long time ago, there was only one being on earth, and his name was Bathala, the father god. Bathala lived alone, and from his great loneliness, he decided to create humans to keep him company.

He took some soil from the earth and carefully molded it into the shapes of a man and a woman. He placed them in the fire to bake, but while they were cooking, he became distracted. By the time he remembered, the figures had burned. Quickly, he pulled them out, but they were already blackened. And so, the first black people came to be.

Not satisfied, Bathala decided to try again. This time, he molded another man and woman from the soil. Afraid of burning them like before, he pulled them from the fire too quickly. They were still raw and pale. Thus, the first white people were created.

Bathala learned from these attempts and decided to give it one last try. He molded yet another man and woman with great care. This time, he was cautious and watched over them closely, making sure not to leave them in the fire too long or take them out too early. When the time was just right, he removed them, and they came out a perfect brown color—not too black, not too white. This color was called kayumanggi.

This beautiful brown shade became the color of the people of the Philippines, known as kayumanggi. It was said to be the perfect balance.



Story Moral: *The moral of the story is about embracing and loving one's unique identity and natural beauty. It teaches us that all skin tones have their own value and significance, and that we should take pride in who we are, rather than trying to change ourselves to fit certain ideals.*

Story 17: A Story to be told



Story shared by: *Sahar*

Representing: *Palestine*

The Story:

Once upon a time, there was a man who had two wives. One of his two wives was also his cousin. Both of these women could not become pregnant. So, the man went to the village doctor and told him, "My two wives cannot get pregnant."

The doctor replied, "Alright, why are you worried? Take this apple and give it to your wives to eat. Give half to one and the other half to the other." The man agreed, took the apple, and left it on the windowsill. While the apple was on the windowsill, a goat came and took a bite out of it.

When the man returned to get the apple, he found it half-eaten. So, he divided the apple: he gave the good piece to the first wife and the bitten piece to his wife-cousin. After nine months, both women became pregnant and gave birth to children.

The first wife gave birth to two children. His wife-cousin gave birth to one child who was very short and couldn't speak properly. When the children grew up, their father took them hunting. The first woman's children rode horses, but the cousin's son couldn't ride because he was too short, so he walked beside them.

The children on the horses were unable to hunt deer, but the cousin's son, who was short but very observant, managed to hunt 4-5 deer. When they returned home, the first woman said, "How is it that this child, who is only half a meter tall, managed to hunt 5 or 6 deer, while mine, who are tall and strong, couldn't?"



Her husband replied, "I don't know what to tell you, that's just how things are." However, she didn't believe him and said, "I'm sure you hunted the deer and gave them to him." The husband said, "Alright, to be sure, I'll send him to hunt on his own."

So, the son went to hunt the most fearsome of all animals. He remembered that his father had told him that if he managed to hunt this animal, he would become a hero. When he climbed the mountain, he took a lot of sweets with him because he knew that the animal loved sweets.

He went to the animal and said, "I have all these sweets for you. Come and see what I have." He started giving the sweets to the animal, and the animal ate them. "If you jump into the crate, you'll have all these sweets." The animal jumped into the crate, the boy closed the door, and took it with him.

When he returned home, he showed the animal to his mother and his father's first wife. The second wife said, "Look at that, a half-meter-tall man can actually do something after all." From that day on, people said that just because someone is different doesn't mean they are not useful.

Story Moral: *The moral of the story is that being different doesn't mean being incapable or less valuable. Even those who may seem weaker or less fortunate can possess unique strengths and abilities. It teaches us not to underestimate anyone based on their appearance or perceived limitations, as they may be able to achieve great things in their own way.*

Story 18: The Golden Bread

Story shared by: *Regie Lopez Patouna*

Representing: *Philippines*

The Story:

One day, there was a beautiful girl, beautiful but poor, who dreamed of becoming rich. Because she was beautiful, she did not want to do housework, fearing it would dirty her nails and make her look ugly. She didn't want any of the men in her village because she considered them unattractive and not wealthy. She preferred to stay at home and wait for a rich prince who would marry her and provide her with a good life.

One day, a prince came along. The prince was handsome and rich. Then, the girl's mother told the prince to marry her daughter and take her with him. The girl left with him without telling her parents anything.

When they arrived at his castle, the prince told her to sit down and eat because the girl was hungry. The table was filled with golden items because her dream was to eat golden bread. She wanted everything to be golden. However, when she went to eat the bread, she couldn't because it was made of gold. She couldn't bite it, as it was too hard, and she began to cry, since there was no way to eat it. She cried and begged to return home.

Eventually, the prince took her back, and the girl said to her mother, "I don't want to be rich. I don't want to eat gold because golden bread can't be bitten."

Story Moral: *The moral of the story is that one should not seek too much without putting in the effort. It teaches that to turn dreams into reality, we must work hard and be diligent..*



Story 19: The story of the blind hunter

Story shared by: *Daniel*

Representing: *Nigeria*

The Story:

Once upon a time, in a small village, there was a famous hunter named Kofi. He was the best hunter in the village, known for catching many animals and providing food for everyone. Kofi had a younger brother named Kwame, and they were very close. Whenever Kofi hunted, he would always share the meat with Kwame.

One day, Kofi went into the forest to hunt, like he always did. But something strange happened—he suddenly went blind and couldn't see anymore. A man from the village saw him and quickly ran to tell Kwame. Kwame rushed to the forest, found his brother, and brought him home. From that day, Kofi could no longer hunt, and it was also the last time he could see.

Kofi became very sad and angry because of his blindness. He couldn't do the things he used to do, and this made him frustrated. Kwame and his wife took care of him, but he was still upset. His anger grew, and he started doing things that no one believed he could do because he was blind.

Kwame's wife made money by selling snuff, a kind of tobacco that people put in their noses. She used the money to buy food for the family, including Kofi. But whenever she went to the market, Kofi would sneak into her storage and take some of the snuff. When she returned, she noticed that the snuff was missing, but no one believed her because Kofi was blind. "How could a blind man take the snuff?" the villagers asked.

After this happened a few times, Kwame's wife decided to test Kofi. One day, before leaving for the market, she mixed the snuff with chili pepper. She knew that if someone used the snuff, the pepper would burn their nose. While she was gone, Kofi took the snuff again, not knowing it had pepper in it. As soon as he used it, his nose started burning, and he screamed in pain.

Kofi shouted and rolled on the floor, crying out that Kwame's wife had hurt him. The neighbors heard his cries and rushed over. When they arrived, they saw Kofi in pain, with snuff all over his face. It became clear that he had been the one taking the snuff all along.

Everyone realized that Kwame's wife had been telling the truth. Kofi had tried to use his blindness to trick people, thinking no one would suspect him. But in the end, he was caught.

From that day on, Kofi stopped trying to deceive others and accepted the help of his brother and his wife. The villagers learned an important lesson: never use your troubles to take advantage of others, because the truth will always come out.

Story Moral: *The moral of the story is that we should not use our difficulties or challenges to take advantage of others. Even if people seem weak or powerless, the truth will eventually come out, and wrong actions will be revealed. Additionally, it teaches us to be patient and kind, as life can change unexpectedly, and today's strength or weakness may not last forever.*



Story 20: The Masquerade Spirit

Story shared by: *Daniel*

Representing: *Nigeria*

The Story:

In the past years, in a small nigerian village, people believed that when someone died, their spirit could come back as a masquerade during special festivals. They thought the masquerades were not just people in costumes but the spirits of their ancestors, returning to visit the living.

In this village, there was a man who was kind and loved by everyone. He passed away, but two years later, during the masquerade festival, a particular masquerade appeared and behaved exactly like him. It walked like him, acted like him, and everyone believed it was his spirit coming back.

The villagers were happy to see him again, even in this form. They gave the masquerade gifts like bananas and fruits to show respect, thanking him for being a good person when he was alive. The elders told the children, "This is your uncle. Because he was kind, he came back as a masquerade. If you want to be like him, you must be good too."

Hearing this, the children started behaving better. They listened to their parents, helped others, and were kind, hoping that one day they could come back as a respected spirit, like their uncle. But after a few months, they began to forget and went back to their old, stubborn ways.

As the children grew older, they realized the truth. The masquerade wasn't really their uncle's spirit, but just someone from the village dressed in a costume. The elders told them those stories to teach them to be good and kind. The masquerade was not magic—it was a way to remind people to live a good life.

Story Moral: *The moral of the story is that it's not about what happens after death, but how we live our lives while we are alive. Being kind, helping others, and living a good, respectful life is what truly matters..*