
Panchatantra Stories



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Story of PanchTantra

The Story Of Panch Tantra

"Long ago in the kingdom of Mahilaropya,
there lived a king who was ruling very ideally.

He had three sons, who were not intelligent.



None of his sons were smart enough to rule his kingdom.

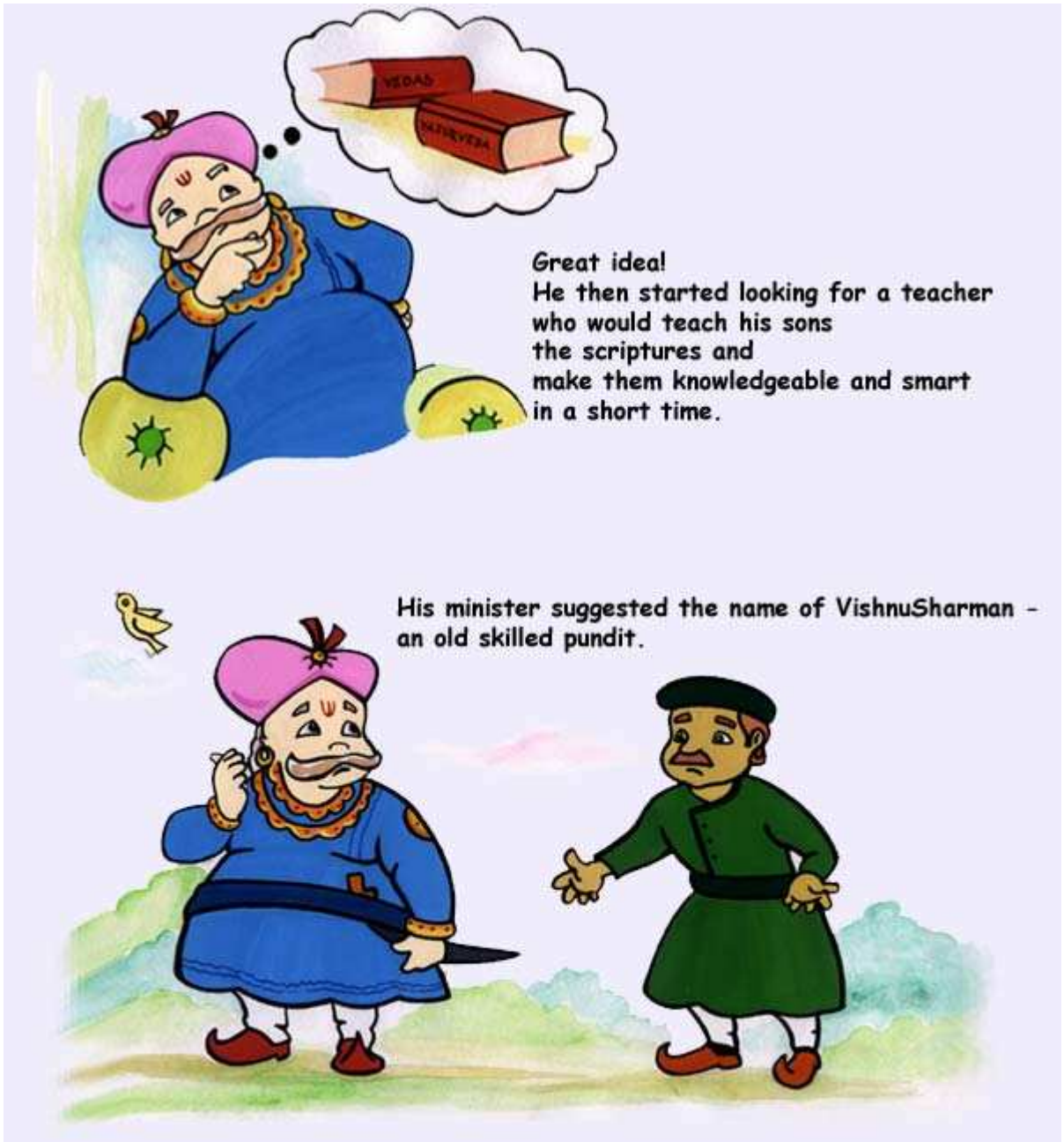


The king was worried.

He kept thinking for a long time.

'How can I make my sons smart
in a very short time?'

'Yes of course' he thought 'if my sons would know the scriptures
they would become smart very fast.'



Great idea!
He then started looking for a teacher
who would teach his sons
the scriptures and
make them knowledgeable and smart
in a short time.

His minister suggested the name of VishnuSharman -
an old skilled pundit.

But there was another problem.
It would take more than twelve years,
even for an intelligent man to grasp all the elements of the scriptures.

Then how could this old teacher accomplish the teaching in a short time?



But VishnuSharman was wise.

He convinced the king that he would teach
the princes about kingly conduct,
through a series of stories, which would be
more effective than the scriptures.

Thus VishnuRaman compiled the stories in five volumes known
as 'PANCHATANTRA' meant to serve as the guide for the princes to learn
about kingly behaviour."

The five volumes of Panchatantra are:

1. The Loss of Friends
2. The winning of friends
3. Crows and Owls
4. Loss of Gains
5. Ill-considered action

The Brahmin and The Cobra

Haridatta was a Brahmin who was very poor. He was a farmer but the piece of land he cultivated gave him very little to survive. One day, unable to stand the heat of the summer sun, he went to a big tree in his land to rest for a while. Before he could spread himself on the ground he saw in the nearby anthill a huge cobra swaying with his hood open.

He thought, "This cobra must really be the Goddess of this land. I have never worshipped her, which is why I am not able to get anything from the land. From today, I will worship her."

At once he went back to his village and returned with a glass full of milk.

He poured it in a bowl and turning to the anthill said, "O ruler of the land, I did not know you were living in this anthill. That is why I have not paid my tribute to you. Please excuse me and accept this humble offering."

He then placed the bowl of milk at the anthill and left the place.



Next day when the Brahmin came to his land before the Sun was up, he saw a gold coin in the bowl he had left at the anthill. Henceforth, he came alone every dawn, collected the coin, offered the milk in the bowl and left. One day the Brahmin, leaving for another village on business, asked his son to go to the anthill and offer milk. When the son went the next day, he found a gold coin in the bowl.

He collected the coin and thought, "This anthill must be full of gold. If I kill the cobra, I can collect all the gold in one go instead of coming here every day."

He then struck the cobra with a big stick. But the cobra deftly dodged the blow but stung the son to death with his poisonous fangs. Returning to his village the next day, Haridatta heard the story of his son's death and at once realised that greed was behind it.

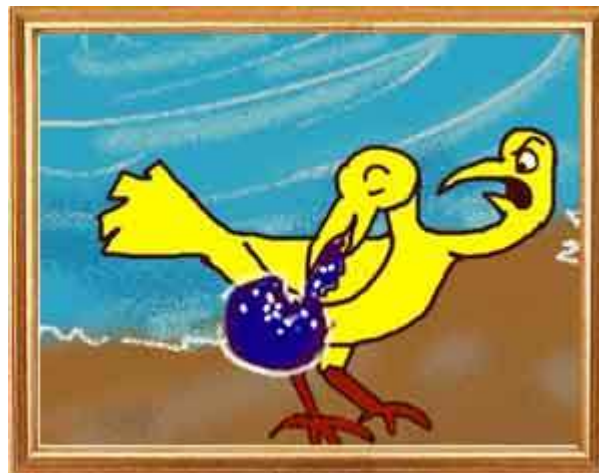


The Brahmin went to the anthill the day after his son's cremation and offered milk to the cobra. Without coming out of his hole, the cobra told Haridatta,

"You have come here for gold forgetting that you had lost a son and that you were in mourning. The reason is greed, pure greed. From today, there is no meaning in our relationship. Blinded by his youth, your son has struck me and I bit him back. How can I forget that blow? How can you suffer the grief of your son's death? Finally, I am giving you this diamond, don't come back again."

MORAL: Excess of greed is harmful.

The Bird With Two Heads



A great bird named Bharunda lived on the banks of a lake. He had two heads but a single body. One day, as the bird was wandering on the bank of the lake, he found a fruit, which was as delicious as ambrosia. One of his heads mumbled, "Oh what a fruit. I am sure the heavens have sent it for me. I am so lucky."

Hearing this, the second head said, "O brother, let me also taste the fruit you are praising so much."

The first head laughed and said, "Both of us have the same stomach. It makes no difference whether I eat it or you eat it. I shall give it to our beloved. She will be very happy." Bharunda thus gave the fruit to his wife. The second head was disappointed at this action of the first head.

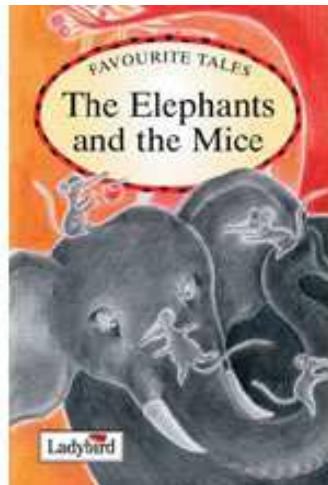
One day, the second head found a poisonous fruit and told the first head, "You treacherous fellow. For what you have done to me, I will eat this poisonous fruit and avenge your insult."

The second head said, "You fool, if you eat that, both of us will die because we have the same body."

Ignoring his warning, the second head ate the poisonous fruit and both of them died.



MORAL: Sharing of a good thing with others is always good.



Once upon a time there lived a group of mice under a tree peacefully. But once a group of elephants came that way and destroyed the homes of all the rats as a result of which many of them were crushed to death. Then the king of rats decided to approach the elephant chief and request him to guide his herd through another route. The elephant king agreed to this and took another route to the water. And so the lives of the rats were saved.

One day a group of elephant-hunters came and trapped the group of elephants in huge nets. Then the elephant king suddenly remembered the king of the rats. He summoned one of the elephants of his herd which had not been trapped, to go and contact the king of rats.

On listening to the elephant, the rat king took his entire group of mice and they cut open the nets which trapped the elephant herd. So the elephant herd was totally set free.

MORAL: A friend in need is a friend indeed.

The Blue Jackal

Once upon a time there was a forest by a city. The forest was the home of many animals. Among them was a jackal. There were many other jackals who belonged to the same pack but the others moved around together and seldom left the forest.



Now this particular jackal was more adventurous and often strayed into the village in search of food. He had already tasted the wonderful things the human beings were fond of cooking and went to look for some whenever he could. It was not a particularly easy thing to do. He knew that the human beings would give him a sound beating if he were caught. Besides, the city was full of dogs and the jackal was afraid of them. They were sure to kill him or hurt him badly if they ever managed to catch him. But the lure of food proved too strong for him and the jackal went to the city again and again.

One day just as he was about to enter a big house he heard the sound of loud barking. To his horror he saw a group of dogs running towards the house. They looked fierce and the jackal was soon trembling in fear. He ran willy-nilly and tumbled right inside a tub of blue dye. The dogs missed him and ran the other way. By the time the jackal climbed out of the tub he was dyed blue from head

to foot. He looked really strange and totally unlike any other animal. The jackal was very happy. "No one will be able to recognize me now" he told himself, "I can easily fool everyone in the forest."

The jackal was quite right. When he entered the forest once again everyone was surprised to see such a strange animal. There had never seen any animal of that color before.

"Who are you?" the smaller animals asked him. "Where have you come from?" asked the mighty lion with a frown. "Did anyone send you?" asked the fierce tiger giving him a keen look. "Lord Indra, king of heaven, has sent me to look after you" said the blue jackal in a grand voice, "I'll be your king from now on." "But I have always been the king of the forest" protested the mighty lion.

"All that must change now as I am the king" said the blue jackal enjoying himself, "all of you must serve me and do exactly as I tell you."

"What if we don't?" asked the tiger. "Then Lord Indra will destroy the entire forest and all of you with it" said the blue jackal.

The animals did not dare to say anything more.

"What would you like us to do?" they asked the blue jackal. "Bring me lots of food, to start with" said the blue jackal promptly, "I am hungry and can't take care of you unless I am properly looked after."

The animals rushed off in different directions. Before long they were back with lots of food. They took care to bring whatever they could find and offered the best of everything to the blue jackal. The jackal was happy and had his fill. Needless to say, there was far more food than he could eat. "Now all of you can eat up the rest of the food" he said, "But mind you, you must bring me fresh food every day."

The animals promised to serve him faithfully. He assigned special duties to all the animals but banished the pack of jackals from the forest because he was afraid they might recognize him some day.

The blue jackal had a wonderful time after that. He did not need to step out of the forest or risk confronting the dogs. He now got the best of everything without doing anything at all. He laughed by himself whenever he remembered how cleverly he had tricked the lot - including the tiger, the mighty elephant and the lion who considered themselves too grand for words. But one day something unexpected happened. The banished pack of jackals was roaming just outside the forest and howled together loudly. The blue jackal forgot himself and joined in the howling just as he used to do before.

The other animals were present when it happened and stared at him incredulously. Here was their mighty blue king howling just like a jackal! So he was a jackal after all and not a strange creature sent from heaven! He had merely colored himself somehow and had been fooling them all these days! Fooling the lion king, the fierce tiger and mighty elephant!

Well, they were not going to be fooled any longer. They fell upon the blue jackal and killed him before he could explain or protest. And that was the end of the blue jackal's reign as king!

MORAL: DO NOT PRETEND TO BE SOMEONE ELSE BE YOURSELF

The Jackal and the War Drum

Once there was a hungry jackal who was starved, as he had not eaten a thing for days together. "I must soon find myself something to eat, else I shall starve to death, he thought to himself."



While hunting for food he reached a battlefield. Old and broken weapons were strewn all over the field. Broken swords, arrows and wheels, lay scattered. There was not a soul there. The jackal was really disappointed. "I do not think I will find any food here," so thinking the jackal, who was nearly faint with hunger, sat under an old banyan tree to take a short nap. Soon he was asleep.

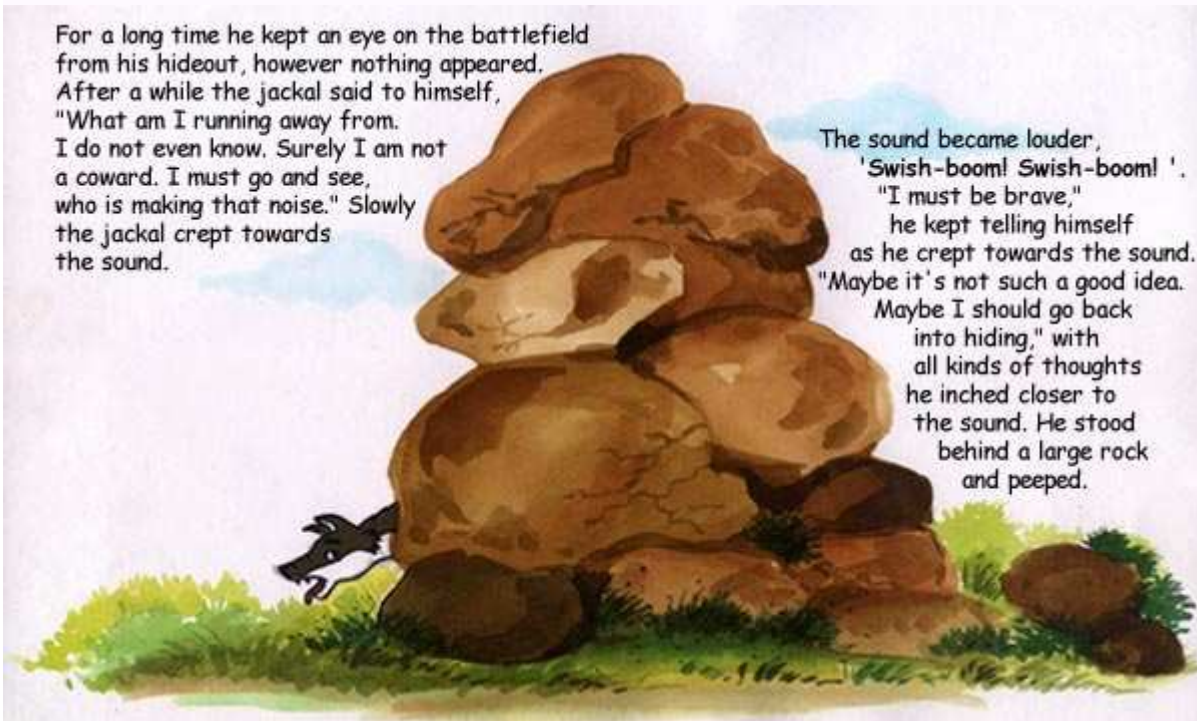




He woke up with a start, when he heard a strange sound-'Swish-boom, Swish-boom.' The jackal was terrified, "Now what is that," he thought. "I have never heard anything like that, could that be a big animal. I must getaway at once," and the jackal made a dash for the shrubs.

For a long time he kept an eye on the battlefield from his hideout, however nothing appeared. After a while the jackal said to himself, "What am I running away from. I do not even know. Surely I am not a coward. I must go and see, who is making that noise." Slowly the jackal crept towards the sound.

The sound became louder, 'Swish-boom! Swish-boom!'. "I must be brave," he kept telling himself as he crept towards the sound. "Maybe it's not such a good idea. Maybe I should go back into hiding," with all kinds of thoughts he inched closer to the sound. He stood behind a large rock and peeped.



Then he laughed and he laughed.
A large drum once used in battles,
lay next to the Banyan tree.
The roots of the tree were brushing against
the drum. Every time they hit the drum, the sound
'Swish-boom! Swish-boom!' could be heard.

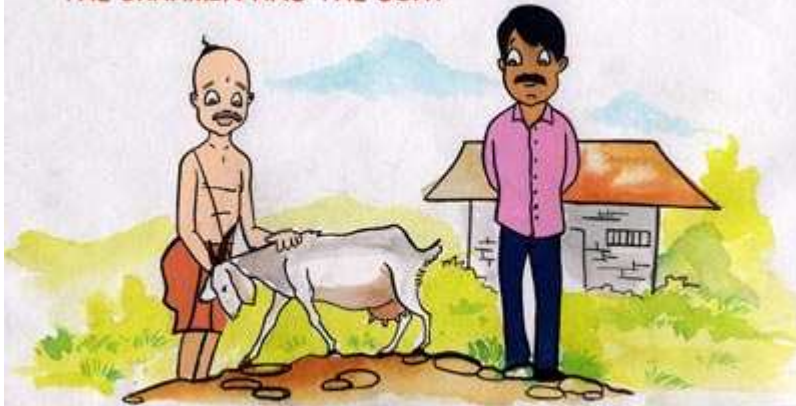
The jackal laughed again, "How stupid I was,
to be afraid of an old drum!"



Suddenly the jackal noticed a lot of food lying next to the drum. He simply couldn't believe his eyes, "Someone must have left this behind," he thought as he started to eat the food. After days of searching he finally had managed to find some food. "Had I not been brave, I would have died of hunger!" the jackal thought to himself as he gobbled up the food.

Moral: Fear of the unknown brings no gain.

THE BRAHMIN AND THE GOAT



In a village by the Ganges, there once lived a Brahmin. He was a religious and god-fearing man. He earned his living by performing prayers in other people's homes. One day the Brahmin went to a neighbouring village to perform prayers. In return for his services, he received a goat as a present.



The Brahmin was very pleased and as he set off home with the goat on his shoulders, he thought to himself, "this was a generous family, to have given me a goat. My wife and children will be very pleased."



As he walked down the winding path to his village, he did not notice that he was being followed by three crooks. "We have to get that plump goat," said the first crook. "It will make a great dinner for us," said the second crook. "We need to think of a plan fast, if we have to get the goat," said the third crook. The three crooks then hatched a plan to fool the Brahmin.



The first crook approached the Brahmin and said, "Dear Brahmin, you are a holy man. Why are you carrying a dirty dog on your shoulders?" "A dirty dog, you say! Can't you see that it is a poor little goat. Are you blind?" said the Brahmin angrily. "I am not blind, you certainly are if you can carry a dirty dog on your shoulders, and call it a goat." So saying the first crook laughed and walked away.



The Brahmin looked at the goat, it indeed was a goat, and so he resumed his journey homeward. A little further down the path, the Brahmin came across the second crook, "O Brahmin!" said the second crook with a bewildered look. "You are a holy man why are you carrying a dead calf on your shoulders?" "A dead calf!" the Brahmin was furious, "This is a live goat and not a dead calf." "Well, do not get upset, it certainly is a dead calf. You are free to do as you please," the second crook laughed and left. "I wonder what is wrong," thought the poor Brahmin. "Am I crazy or are these people crazy."



The Brahmin had barely walked some distance when the third crook came running, waving his arms towards the Brahmin. "Stop! Stop! Brahmin, drop that donkey at once. If people see you carrying a donkey on your shoulders, you can imagine what they will think of you."



By now the Brahmin was very confused . Three different people had told him he was carrying an animal other than a goat. Something must be wrong."This is not a goat. This must be a monster that keeps changing its form."



The terrified Brahmin threw the goat down and ran home as fast as he could.



The three crooks had a great laugh. They had succeeded in their plan. How foolish the Brahmin was not to believe in himself. They picked up the goat and left.

Moral: TRUST YOURSELF BEFORE YOU TRUST OTHERS.

Ekabuddhi

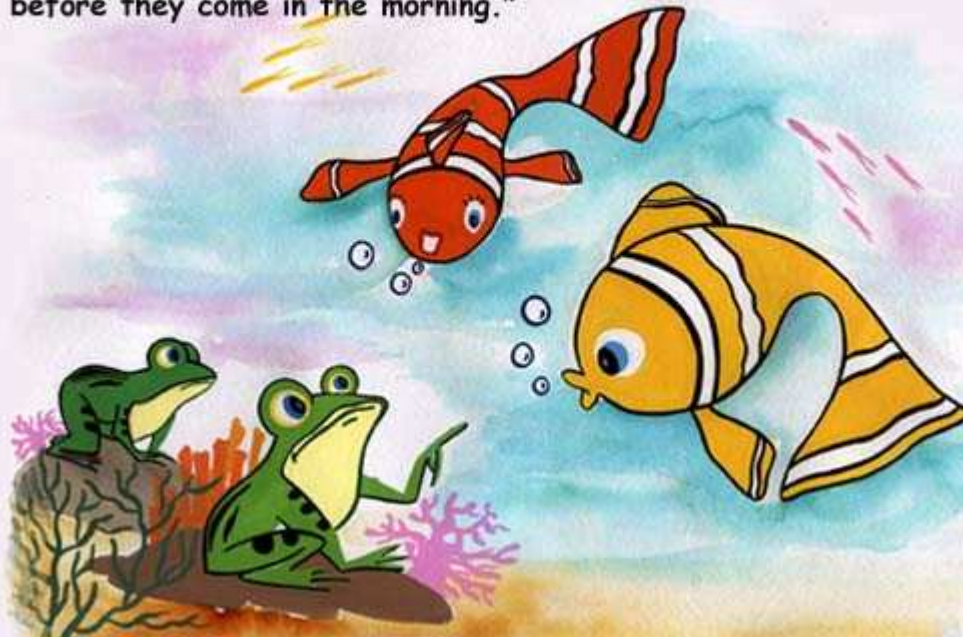


Two fish named Shatabuddhi and Sahasrabuddhi, lived together with a frog named Ekabuddhi and his wife, in a shallow pond.

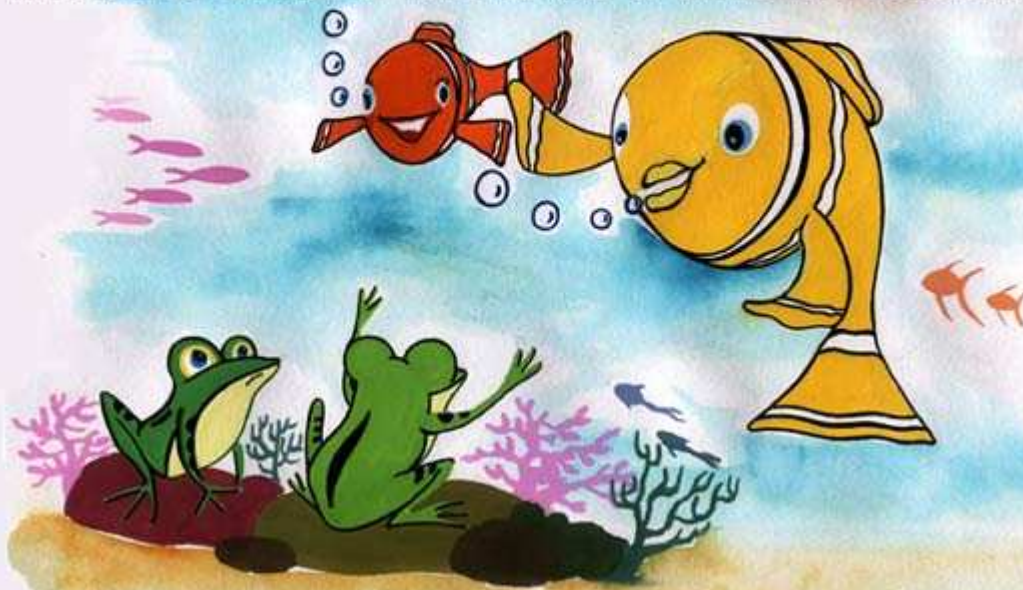
One evening, two fishermen passed by the pond. They saw the beautiful fish and decided to catch them. Since it was dark they decided to come back the next morning.



On hearing this Ekabuddhi hurried to his friends, "Did you hear that? We better flee from here before they come in the morning."



Shatabuddhi replied, "Certainly not. We will stay on. Anything can happen, they might not even come tomorrow. And even if they do come, I know a thousand tricks by which I can save all four of us. No, Ekabuddhi, we should not abandon our home for fear of the words of some fishermen."



Ekabuddhi was a cautious frog, he did not want to take a chance, he said, "The only trick I know is to foresee danger and act accordingly." He left to a safer place with his wife.



Next morning the two fishermen came and spread their net in the pond.



Shatabuddhi and Sahasrabuddhi along with the other sea animals got caught in the net. Poor Shatabuddhi, he tried very hard but could not escape from the net or help his fellow fish.



The fishermen were very happy with their catch, especially with Shatabuddhi and Sahasrabuddhi, who were big in size and would fetch a good price.



As the fisherman walked away, Ekabuddhi who was hiding nearby with his wife said, "But for my cautious nature, we too would have been in the basket."

Moral: **Prevention is better than cure.**

