The Boy Who Cried Wolf

Once, there was a boy who became bored when he watched over the village sheep grazing on the hillside. To entertain himself, he sang out, “Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is chasing the sheep!”

When the villagers heard the cry, they ran up the hill to drive the wolf away. But when they arrived, they saw no wolf. The boy was amused when he saw their angry faces.

“Don’t scream wolf when there is no wolf, boy!” the villagers warned. They angrily went back down the hill.

Later, the shepherd boy cried out once again, “Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is chasing the sheep!” To his amusement, the villagers came running up the hill to scare the wolf away.

As they saw there was no wolf, they said strictly, “Save your frightened cry for when there really is a wolf! Don’t cry ‘wolf’ when there is no wolf!” But the boy grinned at their words while they walked, grumbling down the hill once more.

Later, the boy saw a real wolf sneaking around his flock. Alarmed, he jumped on his feet and cried out as loud as he could, “Wolf! Wolf!” But the villagers thought he was fooling them again, and they didn’t come to help.

At sunset, the villagers went looking for the boy who hadn’t returned with their sheep. When they went up the hill, they found him weeping.

“There was a wolf here! The flock is gone! I cried out, ‘Wolf!’ but you didn’t come,” he wailed.

The Golden Touch

There once was a king named Midas who did a good deed for a satyr — a spirit of nature. Dionysus, the god of wine, then granted him a wish.

For his wish, Midas asked that whatever he touched would turn to gold. Despite Dionysus' efforts to prevent it, Midas pleaded that this was a fantastic wish, so it was bestowed.

Excited about his newly-earned powers, Midas started touching all kinds of things, turning each item into pure gold.

But soon, Midas became hungry. As he picked up a piece of food, he found he couldn't eat it. It had turned to gold in his hand.

Hungry, Midas groaned, "I'll starve! Perhaps this was not such an excellent wish after all!"

Seeing his dismay, Midas' beloved daughter threw her arms around him to comfort him, and she, too, turned to gold.

The Proud Rose

Once upon a time, in a desert far away, there was a rose who was so proud of her beautiful looks. Her only complaint was that she was growing next to an ugly cactus.

Every day, the beautiful rose would insult and mock the cactus about his looks, all while the cactus remained quiet. All the other plants nearby tried to make the rose see sense, but she was too swayed by her own looks.

One scorching summer, the desert became dry, and there was no water left for the plants. The rose quickly began to wilt. Her beautiful petals dried up, losing their lush color.

Looking to the cactus, she saw a sparrow dip his beak into the cactus to drink some water. Though ashamed, the rose asked the cactus if she could have some water. The kind cactus readily agreed, helping them both through the tough summer as friends.

The Bundle of Sticks

Once upon a time, there was a man who lived in a village with his three sons. Although his three sons were hard workers, they quarreled all the time. The old man tried to unite them but failed.

Months passed by, and the man became sick. He asked his grown sons to remain united, but they failed to listen to him. At that moment, the man decided to teach them a lesson — to forget their differences and come together in unity.

The man summoned his sons. When they had gathered, he said, “I will provide you with a bundle of sticks. Separate each stick, and then break each into two. The one who finishes first will be rewarded more than the others.”

And so, the sons agreed. The man provided them with a bundle of ten sticks each and then asked the sons to break each stick into pieces. The sons broke the sticks within minutes, then proceeded to quarrel among themselves again.

The old man said, “My dear sons, the game is not yet over. I will now give you another bundle of sticks. Only this time, you will have to break them together as a bundle, not separately.”

The sons readily agreed and then tried to break the bundle. Despite trying their best, they could not break the sticks. The sons told their father of their failure.

The old man said, “My dear sons, see! Breaking every single stick individually was easy for you, but breaking them in a bundle, you could not do. By staying united, nobody can harm you. If you continue to quarrel, then anyone can quickly defeat you.”