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The Cunning Tomcat



Quarrelling with one another is always harmful for both of the persons. Both have to lose something. Do you remember the story of two cats who quarrelled over a piece of bread, and a money took advantage of their quarrel, ate the whole bread while the two cats have to go hungry? Here is one more story where a tomcat pretended to be a holy man and made a meal out of two partridges quarrelling over a home to own.

Once, there were two **partridges**, who lived in a certain tree in the jungle. While one of them lived on the branches, the other lived inside a hole at the foot of the tree.

They became good friends, and they would spend long hours with each other telling each other stories and events of their lives. In this manner, the partridges spent their time in happiness.

One day, one of them went away with some more partridges in search of food.

As was usual, when he did not return back even at sunset, the other partridge started worrying. He thought, "He has not done this ever. Why has the partridge not returned home today? Has he been **trapped** by some hunter? Or maybe even killed? I cannot live without him. I am certain there is some reason why he has not returned even at nightfall."

He did not return even the next day, or the day after. For several days, the partridge kept worrying. Then he gave up **hope** of his friend's return. He said to himself, "I spent several days worrying."

One night, a hare came to the tree and observing an **empty** hole at the foot of the tree, took **shelter** inside. Since the partridge had given up hope, he did not **object** to the hole being occupied by the hare.

After a few days, the partridge returned. He had gone to a place where there was plenty of food to eat. He had grown fat, but remembering his dear friend, he thought of returning.



On his return, when he found that a hare had taken over his house, he objected strongly, "Hare! This hole is my home and you have taken over during my absence. This is very unfair of you. I demand you to leave **immediately**."

The hare said, "This place is mine now. I am not leaving. I found this hole empty, and therefore made it my home." Thus, they began to quarrel.

The partridge understood there was no point in quarrelling with the greedy hare. He said, "Hare! You seem to lack the basic **ethics**. Let us approach someone holy and **knowledgeable**. Let someone well-versed in holy books decide who is right, and thus, who shall have the right to occupy the hole."

The hare agreed as suggested, and they went to **look for** a holy man to settle their **dispute**.

Meanwhile, a wild tomcat came to know that they wanted to settle their dispute through a holy man. He quickly **posed** as a learned animal. He held a blade of holy Kusha grass in his paw and stood on the bank of a river, where he would be quickly spotted. Standing on his hind legs with his eyes closed, he started **chanting**.

When the partridge and the hare came across him, the hare said, "He looks holy and a learned. Let us go and seek his advice."

The partridge agreed and said, "Yes, let us seek his opinion. But he is a wild cat by birth and a natural enemy for both of us. We should be careful and speak only from a distance."

As decided, they came to the wild tomcat, but stood at a distance, "Holy person! We have a dispute between us. Will you please settle our dispute and **advise** us who is right in accordance to **Holy Scriptures**? If you decide that one of us has sinned, you may as well eat him!"

The tomcat replied, "O my friends, I have **denounced** the violent life as it leads to hell. Non-violence is the very **essence** of true religion. I shall not harm any of you. However, I will hear both of you and settle your dispute with the knowledge I have gained."

Both the partridge and the hare were impressed. The wild tomcat continued, "But I am old and cannot hear you from that distance. Fear not! I do not even harm a louse, bug or a mosquito. Come close and explain the reason of your dispute. I shall make the most just **settlement**."

With all these sayings, he won the confidence of both of them. Both the partridge and the hare came near him and sat close to him to explain the reason of their dispute. This was the very **opportunity** that the tomcat was looking for. As soon as they sat beside him, he jumped and seized one of them in his teeth and the other with his claws. He killed both of them and made a meal out of them.

The wise indeed say that **beware** of a **rascal** who pretends to be holy.



Word-Web

- **partridge** : a brown bird with a round body and a short tail, that people hunt for sport or food.
- **trapped** : caught in a net
- **empty** : having nothing or nobody inside
- **object** : to stand against, oppose
- **ethics** : humane behaviour
- **look for** : in search of
- **wild** : living in forest
- **chanting** : to say hymns
- **holy scriptures** : books of religious importance
- **essence** : gist, outcome
- **opportunity** : chance, right time
- **rascal** : wicked person
- **hope** : expectation, want for something to happen
- **shelter** : a safe place for protection
- **immediately** : at once, within no time
- **knowledgeable** : wise, prudent
- **dispute** : quarrel, disagreement
- **posed** : pretended
- **advise** : to tell to do what is right
- **denounced** : gave up, quit
- **settlement** : solution, decision
- **beware** : be careful of



Comprehension

» Multi-Menu

Multiple Choice Questions

A. Tick the correct answers.

1. The other partridge lived inside a hole at the _____ of the tree.
(a) top (b) foot (c) branch
2. When the partridge did not return back, the other partridge started _____.
(a) weeping (b) calling (c) worrying
3. The partridge returned _____.
(a) after a week (b) after a few days (c) after three years
4. The tomcat quickly posed as a _____ animal.
(a) gentle (b) fearful (c) learned
5. Beware of a _____ who pretends to be holy.
(a) rascal (b) tomcat (c) partridge

» Pick and Fill

B. Fill in the blanks with correct words from the box.

immediately quickly strongly denounced several

1. For _____ days, the partridge kept worrying.
2. He objected _____.
3. I demand you to leave _____.

4. He _____ posed as a learned animal
5. I have _____ the violent life.

C. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false statements.

1. The two partridges became good friends.
2. The partridge did not return for several days.
3. A snake began to live in the partridge's empty hole at the foot of the tree.
4. The hare refused to leave the partridge's home.
5. Both the partridge and the hare were not impressed by the tomcat.

» **Matching-Mania**

D. Match the adjectives in Column A with correct nouns in Column B.

Column A

1. long •
2. empty •
3. basic •
4. holy •
5. just •

Column B

- (a) ethics
- (b) scriptures
- (c) settlement
- (d) hours
- (e) hole



» **Question-Queue (Short)**

E. Answer each of the following questions in one or two sentences.

1. Where did the other partridge live?
2. With whom did one of the partridges go away in search of food?
3. Who came to live in the empty hole at the foot of the tree?
4. Who came to know about the dispute between the partridge and the hare?
5. Who decided to seek advice of a learned man to settle the dispute?

» **Question-Queue (Long)**

F. Answer each of the following questions in detail.

1. How did the two partridges spend their time?
2. Why did the other partridge not object to the hole being occupied by the hare?
3. What was the cause of quarrel between the partridge and the hare?
4. What did they decide to do to settle their dispute?
5. How did the tomcat impress the partridge and the hare?

6. What happened when the partridge and the hare came close to the tomcat?
7. What lesson does this story teach you?



Vocabulary

▶ Study the following phrases as used in the story

in search of taken over look for

These are called **prepositional verbs**. Prepositional verbs have more than one word. And a slight change in them, completely changes their meanings.

For example: take over means: to get control of something
 take in means: to make somebody believe something
 take off means: to leave the ground and start flying
 look for means: to search
 look into means: to study or examine something
 look out means: to pay attention in order to see

▶ Now fill in the blanks with correct prepositional verbs given in the box.

pulled down gave up carryout came across go through

1. The obedient son agreed to _____ his father's order.
2. My father _____ smoking altogether.
3. The poor have to _____ many hardships.
4. The municipality authorities _____ the encroachment.
5. I _____ some old friends of mine yesterday.



Think-n-Thrive

- Can you tell some solution that the partridge and the hare could have tried? How could they have saved themselves from the crafty tomcat?



Grammar-Grip

» Formation of Nouns

▶ Read this line:

I was going to a distant town in the southwest.

The noun **southwest** is a combination of two nouns, **south** and **west**. Nouns can be used in combination to form new nouns.

Examples: flowerpot toothpaste bookshop homework

▶ Use the words in the box given below to form at least six new nouns of your own.

path man foot master way post road cover bed head seat water

Examples: bedcover _____
headman _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

Nouns may also be formed by adding a prefix to a noun. The addition of the prefix modifies the noun and changes its meaning.

Examples: sense becomes nonsense
pilot can change to co-pilot

▶ Select a prefix from the box below and add it to the nouns given in the brackets and use the new word so formed to fill in the blanks.

re- un- semi- mis- non- auto-

1. Gandhiji preached and practised _____ (violence)
2. Neetu asked her brother to _____ her shoelaces, because she did not want to do it herself. (tie)
3. The children sat in a _____ facing the magician. (circle)
4. After writing a few bestsellers, Hamid decided to write his _____ . (biography)
5. The flowers and balloons hung around the house were pulled down by the children, so we had to _____ the house. (decorate)
6. There was no reason for the king to _____ the loyal old soldier. (trust)

» Reading Skills

▶ Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

India too has a desert— the Thar desert, also known as the Great Indian Desert. The Thar desert is located in the state of Rajasthan in India. The Thar desert is home to a variety of animals and birds. The Thar desert is also home to many tribes of people.

One of the most interesting tribes that lives in the deserts of Rajasthan is the Bishnoi tribe. The Bishnois are a tribe who worship and respect everything in nature. The Bishnois consider themselves to be the protectors of every form of life— animals, birds and trees.

The most surprising thing when reaching a Bishnoi village is the fact that you can see deer everywhere. The Bishnois respect and protect them at all costs. The animals around a Bishnoi village are not afraid of humans.

1. Where is the Thar desert located in India?
2. Which is the most interesting tribe of Rajasthan and where does it live?
3. What do the Bishnois worship and respect?
4. What is the most surprising thing when you reach a Bishnoi village?
5. Why are the animals around a Bishnoi village not afraid of humans?
6. Pick out the words from the passage which are antonyms to :
(i) destroy _____ (ii) boring _____

» **Fun to Write**

Image yourself to be the first partridge. Your friend, the other partridge has gone somewhere and did not return for many days. How would you feel? Write your feelings in the form of a diary entry.
