

(2) The King and His Hawk

Once upon a time there lived a great king in a far land. He fought and won many battles. One morning, he rode out into a forest to hunt with a few friends. His favorite hawk was sitting on his arm. The hawk was smart. At a word from its master, it would fly high up into the air and look around for a deer or a rabbit.

The king and his friends were deep in the forest, but they didn't find any animals. It was nearly evening, so they decided to go home. The king's friends took the quickest way home. The king instead took a longer road that wended between two mountains.

It was warm, and the king was thirsty. But all the streams were dry because of the hot weather. The king rode slowly. He knew there was water nearby. If only he could find it now!

At last, he saw some water trickling down over the edge of a rock. He took his cup from his bag and climbed up the rock to catch the falling drops. It took a long time to fill the cup. The king was so thirsty that he could hardly wait.

At last the cup was full. The king put the cup to his lips and was about to drink. All at once, a bird flew down and knocked over the cup. The water spilled on the ground. The king looked up and was surprised to see that it was his pet hawk. The hawk flew back and forth and then sat on a rock by the water. The king picked up the cup and again held it to catch the trickling drops.

When the cup was half full, he lifted it toward his mouth. Once again, the hawk swooped down, and knocked it from his hands. The king became very angry. He filled the cup again, but before he tried to drink, he drew his sword. He killed his pet hawk just as it swooped down to knock over the cup. "This was the last time, sir Hawk!" he said.

The king climbed up the steep bank to the place from which the water trickled

down. When he reached the pool of water, he saw a dead snake lying in it and it was one of the most deadly kind. “The hawk saved my life!” he cried. “He was my best friend, and I killed him.” He carefully placed the dead bird in his bag, and rode home swiftly. He thought to himself, “I’ve learned a sad lesson today, and that is, one should never do anything in anger.”