

The Talkative Turtle



*L*ong ago in India, there lived a turtle who was always talking. His endless chatter annoyed the creatures who shared the pond, and they avoided him. He spent his days mumbling to himself as he climbed in and out of the water.

One day two visiting geese landed along the shore. The turtle admired their sleek feathers and spent many hours praising their beauty. At last, to avoid the turtle's ceaseless chatter, the geese prepared to fly off to another pond. "Take me with you!" cried the turtle. "I am lonely here, and you are fine company."

"How can we do such a thing?" asked the birds. "You cannot fly."

"Nothing is impossible," said the turtle. "I will think of a plan."

To the amusement of the geese, the turtle said, "It is quite simple. First, let us find a long, strong stick. Each of you can hold one end of it in your beaks. I will then bite hard in the middle. When you fly up together, I will cling to the center of the stick with my strong mouth. That way you can carry me over the trees, and we can land in the pond of your choice."

The geese replied, "What a ridiculous idea! You could fall to your death!"

The turtle protested, "I will not fall. My mouth is strong. I will hold on tightly."

"Your mouth is strong from endless talking," squawked the geese. "You will be safe only if you can keep your mouth shut."

The turtle indignantly replied, "You think that I cannot keep quiet, but I can. I am not a fool. I know when to be silent and when to speak. Admit it. My idea is excellent. Be kind enough to let me try my invention and fly with you."

"Very well," said the geese. "But we cannot guarantee your safety on this

journey."

"Then go and get the stick," ordered the turtle. "You'll see how quiet I can be when silence is important."

The geese flew off and returned with a long, strong stick. They each took an end in their beaks. The turtle clamped his mouth onto the middle. As the geese beat their wings and flew into the air, the dangling turtle went up too.

Soaring high above the trees, they were a vision to behold. Some children at play looked up and noticed the strange trio. "Look! Look!" cried one child. "Two geese are carrying a turtle on a stick!"

Another child chimed in, "What clever birds! They thought of a way to carry turtles!"

Another cheered, "Good thinking, geese!"

The turtle heard the children's voices. Their words infuriated him. He fumed, "They should be complimenting *me* for this fine plan, not the geese."

Outraged, the turtle exploded with sound.

"It was my idea!" he sputtered as he tumbled to the ground.

amusement - a feeling
of being entertained

trio - a group of
3.

behold - to see

fumed - expressed
angrily