

The Friendly Clouded Leopard











शुभकामना सन्देश

हामीले विजत १३ वर्षदेसि नेपालका विभिन्न जिल्लाहरूमा ध्वाँसे चितुवाको अध्ययन र संरक्षणका कामहरू जर्दे आएका छौं । क्यामेरा ट्रयापीङ्ग प्रविधीबाट यिनीहरू भए-नभएको पत्ता लजाउने, छन भने कति छन्, यिनको संरक्षणमा कस्ता चुनौतीहरू छन्, यिनलाई कसरी जोजाउन सकिन्छ भन्ने बारेमा विविध कार्यऋमहरू जर्दे आइरहेका छौ । साना साना बालबालीकाहरूलाई यो लजालु प्रजातीको बारेमा जानकारी जराउनका लाजि रेडियो कार्यक्रम, पोस्टर प्रकाशन आदि कामहरू जरिएको छ । यो पुस्तीका तिनै कार्यऋमहरू मध्येको एक हो । यो पुस्तिका पढेर विद्यार्थीहरू मनोर्डजीत हुनका साथै ध्वाँसे चितुवाको संरक्षण प्रतिको उनीहरूको चाहना पनि बढ्नेछ भन्ने आशा लिएको छु । पुस्तीका प्रकाशनको लाजि विकाश धिमिरे र सुमन सापकोटालाई विशेष धन्यवाद ।

शुभकामना ।

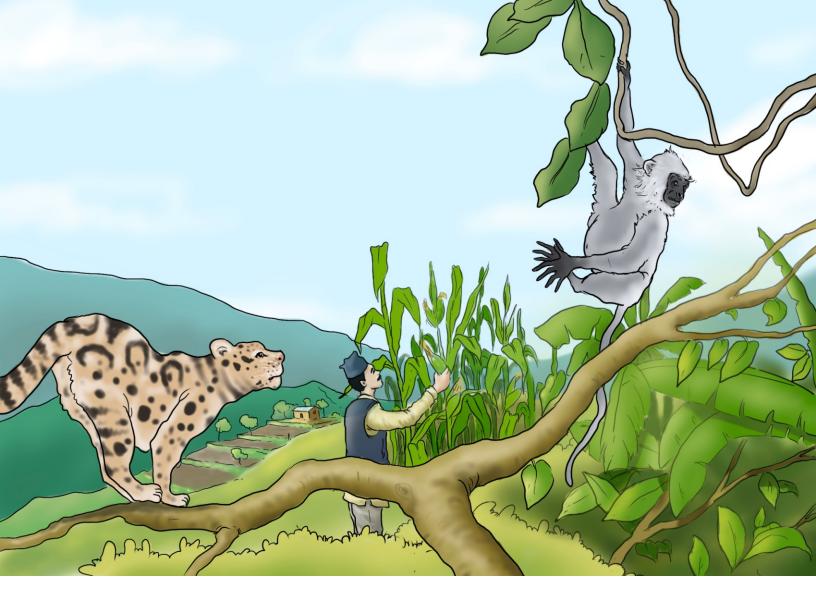
सुनिल थापा अध्यक्ष प्रकृतिका साथीहरू

Wish Message!

"or the past 13 years we have been working on issues related to research and conservation of Clouded Leopard in Nepal. These include carrying out surveys to assess their presenceabsence in certain areas, estimating their abundance-occupancy in areas where they are present, assessing the threats they have been facing in their natural habitat and sensitize people on how can they be conserved. We have produced radio programs and posters on clouded leopard conservation before and this booklet is another effort in the same direction. We hope that this booklet will serve two purposes i.e. 1) help student enjoy themselves while reading and 2) sensitize students on Clouded Leopard conservation. Special thanks goes to Mr. Bikash Ghimire and Suman Sapkota for the publication of this booklet.

Good luck!

Sunil Thapa Chairperson Friends of Nature



लेखन तथा अवधारणा यादव प्रसाद घिमिरे

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सिद्धार्थ आफ्ना विद्यालयका अन्य बच्चाहरू जस्तै एक हँसिलो र जिज्ञासु बच्चा हुन् । सिद्धार्थ बिदाका बेला आफ्ना हजुरबुवालाई भेटन जान आमाबुवासँग अनुमति माวछन् । उनका हजुरबुवा भेडीगोठाला हुन् । त्यसैले उनको अधिकांश समय जंगलमै बित्छ । सिद्धार्थका आमाबाबुलाई उनको यो योजना खासै मन पर्दैन तर पनि छोरालाई वृद्ध हजुरबुवासँग भेटन जान दिनुबाहेक अन्य कुनै विकल्प पनि थिएन । सिद्धार्थका बुवाले उनलाई जङ्गलस्थित हजुरबुवाको घरमा लैजान्छन्, त्यसपछि उनी घर फर्कन्छन् ।

सिद्धार्थः नमस्ते हजुरबुवा ! म हजुरलाई भेट्न आएँ नि । हजुरबुवाः अहो, कस्तो अचम्म ! तँलाई केले लिएर आयो त यहाँ ? सिद्धार्थः म हजुरलाई भेट्न अनि संधाउन चाहन्थें । हजुरबुवा (रमाइलो जदै): तँ मलाई संधाउने ? साँच्चै हो? सिद्धार्थः हजुरलाई विश्वास लाजेन ? हजुरबुवा (आश्वस्त हुन खोज्वै): लाज्यो लाज्यो ! म तिमीलाई जिस्क्याउँदै थिएँ । सिद्धार्थ : आज अलि धाकेको छु , म हजुरलाई भोलिबाट संधाउँछु नि हुन्न ? हजुरबुवाः हुन्छ नि बाबु ! ल खाना खा अनि राम्रोसँज सुत् । हामी भोलिदेखि काम जरौँला ।

The Friendly Clouded Leopard

Siddhartha is like every other kid in his school—cheerful and curious. An adventure-seeker, he asks his parents if he can visit his grandfather during his school holidays. His grandfather is a sheep herder who spends most of his time in the forest. Though Siddhartha's parents do not like the idea, they have no choice but to let their son visit the old man. Siddhartha's father takes him to his grandfather's corral in the forest, then returns home.

Siddhartha: Namaste Grandfather! I am here to see you.

Grandfather: Oh, what a nice surprise! What brings you here?

Siddhartha: I wanted to see you and help you with your work.

Grandfather (Amused): You want to help me? Are you sure?

Siddhartha: Why not? Don't you believe me?

Grandfather (Trying to look convinced): Sure I do! I was just kidding with you.

Siddhartha: I am little tired today. I will help you from tomorrow, ok?

Grandfather: Oh, yes my boy! Eat this food and have a good sleep. We will work from tomorrow.



तरकारीसंग अलिकति भात र्याएर सिद्धार्थ सुटन जान्छन् । जब उनी विहान ब्यूँभन्छन, घरमा हजुरबुवालाई पाउँदैनन् । उनी अलिक छक्क पर्छन्, तर विचलित नभई उनी बाहिरिन्छन् र हजुरबुवा गाई दुहिरहेको देरच्छन् । सिद्धार्थ मुस्कुराउँछन् किनकि उनलाई दुध मन पर्छ ।

सिद्धार्थ: हुजुरबुवा ! हामीसँ ज कतिवटा जाई र भेडा छन्?

हजुरबुवा : अहो नसोध् यस्ता कुरा । पहिले त हामीसँग धेरै थिए । त्यो मोरो ध्वाँसे चितुवाका कारण अहिले धेरै बाँकी छैनन् नि बाबु ।

सिद्धार्थ स्तब्ध भए । तर पैले कहिले पनि नसुनेको अनौठो जनावरको नामले उनमा उत्सुकता जञायो ।

सिद्धार्थ: ध्वाँसे चितुवा ? कस्तो मिठो नाम । मैले त यो नाम कहिल्यै सुनेको थिइनँ । यो कस्तो देखिन्छ हुजुरबुवा?

हजुरबुवा: मैले पनि कहिल्यै देखेको छैन । तर अरू ञोठालाहरू भन्छन्, त्यसले हाम्रा जाईवस्तु खान्छ । मैले सामान्य चितुवा भने तीन पटक देखेको छु ।

तर जिज्ञासु सिद्धार्थले उनका कुरा खासै सुनेनन् किनकि उनी ध्वाँसे चितुवाबारे जान्न आषनै सोचमा हराइसकेका थिए । खानापछि जंगल परने र ध्वाँसे चितुवालाई हेर्न उनी मानसिक रूपमा तयार हुन्छन् । केही समयपछि सिद्धार्थ खाना खान्छन् र हजुरबालाई नसोधिकन चितुवा हेर्न धना जंगल परछन् । Siddhartha eats a little rice with vegetables and goes to bed. When he wakes up in the morning, he can not see his grandfather in the corral. He is a little surprised, but without getting afraid, he goes outside and finds his grandfather milking cows. Siddhartha smiles because he loves milk.

Siddhartha: Grandpa! How many cows and sheep do we have?

Grandfather: Oh, do not ask! We had many more before. Thanks to Clouded Leopard, not many remain now.

Siddhartha was shocked but at the same time curious about the strange-sounding animal.

Siddhartha: Clouded Leopard? What a fancy name. I have never heard it before. What does it look like grandpa?

Grandfather: I've never seen one but other herders say it feeds on our livestock. I have seen a Common Leopard three times though.

But Siddhartha doesn't hear as he is already lost in his own thoughts about the Clouded Leopard. He makes up his mind to visit the forest and search for it after lunch. After some time he eats, then without asking his grandfather he quietly enters the dense forest.

करिब १० मिनेटको हिँडाइपछि सिद्धार्थले आफूलाई केहीले घेरेको जस्तो महसूस जर्न थाल्छन् । वरपर रुखहरु हल्लिरहेका छन् । उनी लामो श्वास लिन्छन् र मनमनै "म डराएको छैन, म आतिएको छैन" भन्छन् । तर उनको अनुहारमा त्रास पृष्ट कित्कएको छ । उनी यसो पछाडि हेर्छन, त्यसपछि रूखहरूतर्फ हेर्छन् । उनले रुखको हाँगामा लङ्गर बाँदरहरू हल्ला रारिरहेको देरुछन् । अचानक एउटा बाँदरले सिद्धार्थलाई सोध्छ ।



लङ्गर: ओए केटा ! तिमी के खोज्दैक्षै ?

सिद्धार्थः (अप्ठ्यारो मान्दै)ः म, ध्वाँसे चितुवालाई खोजदै छु । तिम्लाई थाहा छ म उसलाई कहाँ भेट्न सक्छु ?

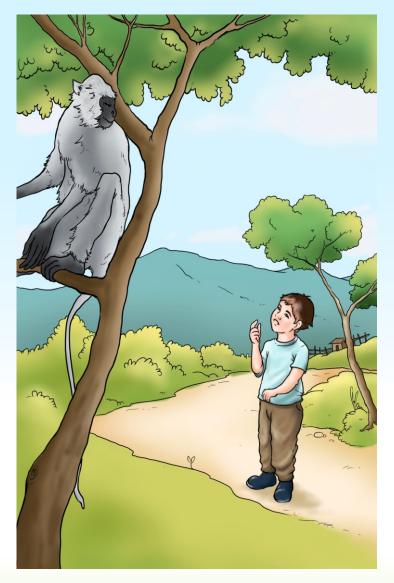
लङ्गरः ए । त्यो त रहस्यमयी छ । हामी पनि त्यसलाई विरलै देरुछौं । उसलाई भेट्न त कि तिम्रो खप्परमै लेखेको हुनुपर्छ कि धैर्य चाहिन्छ । कहिलेकाहीँ, उसले हामीलाई पीछा जर्छ । ओहो, उसको रूख चढुने सिप त हाम्रो जस्तै छ । त्यसैले हामी जहिल्यै पनी उ आउँछ कि अनेर चनारगे अएर बस्दछौं। त्यहीपनि उसले हाम्रा धेरै परिवारका सदस्यहरू मारेको छ ।

After walking for nearly 10 minutes Siddhartha starts feeling like he is surrounded by something. Around him the trees are shaking. The boy repeats under his breath "I'm not scared. I'm not scared," but his face shows his fear. He looks behind him, then up into the trees. He sees langur monkeys in the tree and hears them making noise. Suddenly one of them asks.

Langur: What are you looking for, kid?

Siddhartha (uneasily): I'm looking for Clouded Leopard. Do you know where can I find him?

Langur: Oh, he is not easy to find! We rarely see him. You need to be very lucky or patient. Sometimes, he chases after us. His climbing skills are as good as ours so we are always on the lookout for him. Still he has killed many of us.



सिद्धार्थ (उत्साहित हुँदै): साँच्चै ? ध्वाँसे चितुवा रूख पनि चढ्छ ?

লহ্নু২: मैले तिमीलाई भनें नि- ऊ पनि हामी जस्तै रूख चढ्न सक्छ । ऊ रूख चढ्न सिपालु हुन्छ ।

सिद्धार्थ: जानकारीका लागि धेरै धेरै धन्यवाद ! म त हिडँ ।

लङ्गुर: ठीक छ, रुखाल रारुनु है ।

आँखामा चमकका साथ सिद्धार्थ यात्रा पुनः शुरु जर्छन् । ध्वाँसे चितुवाबारे थप जानकारीले उनी खुसी छन् । डरलाउदो र भिरालो जोरेटोतर्फ लम्कँदै जर्दा उनले काडी हल्का चलेको देरुछन् । चनाखोका साथ सिद्धार्थ ध्वाँसे चितुवा भेटाउने आशामा बिस्तारै अघि बढ्छन्। तर उनले त रतुवा मृज भेद्छन् ।

रातो रंग अनी तिखो सिंगमा सजिएको भाले रतुवा मृग अत्यन्तै सुन्दर देखिएको छ ।

सिद्धार्थलाई देखेपछि हिडिरहेको रतुवा मृरा एक्कासी रोकिन्छ र ध्यानपुर्वक उनलाई हेर्छ । सिद्धार्थ अलि अलि डराए पनि, रतुवालाई ढुक्क अएर सोध्छन् ।

सिद्धार्थ: के तिमीले ध्वाँसे चितुवा देखेका क्षे ?

रतुवा मृग : तिमीलाई किन चाहियो ?

सिद्धार्थ: उसले मेरो हजुरबुवाको भेडा र जाई मारिरहेको छ । म उसलाई ठीक पार्न आएको हुँ ।

रतुवा मृंग : पक्का ? मलाई लाउछ उसलाई त बाँदर, रतुवा मृंग र अरु जंगली जनावरहरू मात्रै खान मन पर्छ ।

सिद्धार्थ: मैले सुनेको छु ऊ त रूख पनि चढ्न सकछ रे । के त्यो सत्य हो ?

Siddhartha (Excitedly): Really? Clouded Leopard climbs trees?

Langur: I told you—he can climb as well as us. He's an expert climber!

Siddhartha: Thank you very much for the information! I have to keep going.

Langur: Alright, take care!

Siddhartha starts walking again, with a glint in his eyes. He's happy to have learned more about Clouded Leopard. Walking along a dangerous, cliff-side trail, he notices slight movement in the shrubs ahead. Alert, Siddhartha moves slowly hoping to find Clouded Leopard but it is a Barking Deer. With reddish coloured fur and pointed antlers (horns) the male deer looks very handsome. The deer suddenly stops and carefully looks towards Siddhartha. A little worried, Siddhartha confidently asks to Barking Deer.

Siddhartha: Have you seen Clouded Leopard?

Barking Deer: Why do you ask?

Siddhartha: He has been killing my grandfather's sheep and cows. I have come to teach him a lesson.

Barking Deer: Are you sure? I think he likes eating only monkeys and deer.

Siddhartha: I have heard he can climb trees. Is that true?



रतुवा मृंग : उसको लागि, रूख चढ्नु त रमाइलो गर्नुजस्तै हो । उसको सुन्ने शक्ति ाज्जबको छ र आषनो शिकारलाई पछ्याउने अद्भुत क्षमता पनि छ । ऊ तिमीभन्दा कति टाढा छ भन्ने तिमीलाई थाहा हुँदैन । हामी अत्यन्तै होसियार हुनुपर्दछ, किनकि उसले हामीमाथि अचानक हमला गर्न सक्छ ।

सिद्धार्थः वाह, राजब छ ! तिमी कसरी जोगिन्छौ त ?

रतुवा मृंगः हामी सधैं सतर्कताका साथ हेरिरहन्छौँ । हामी चरिरहँदा पटक पटक आषनो क्षेत्र वरिपरि हेछौँ । हामी उसको जन्ध सुँधि बस्छौँ - यदि हावा सही दिशाबाट चलिरहेको छ भने, ऊ भए नभएको हामी थाहा पाइहाल्छौँ ।

सिद्धार्थः यो जान्न पाउनु धेरै राम्रो हो । धन्यवाद र अहिलेलाई विदा । म त अधि बढ्नु छ ।

सोचमा हराउँदै सिद्धार्थ फेरी हिइन थाल्छन् । उनको मनमस्तिष्क अब पूर्णतया हजुरबुवाले घृणा जर्ने प्राणीमा केन्द्रित छ । तर अहिले त्यो प्राणीको प्रशस्त प्रशंसनीय जुणहरू देखिन थालेका छन् । ध्वाँसे चितुवाको रूख चढ्ने कला, फूर्ति र तिव्रताले सिद्धार्थको कल्पनालाई कब्जा जरेको छ ।

पातहरूका आवाजले उनको ध्यान खिच्नु अधिसम्म ऊ केही बेर हिँडिरहन्छ । सिद्धार्थले बाक्लो भाडी पर्खाडि लुकेर वरपर नजर डुलाउँछ। करिब २० मिटर पर एक लामो र बाक्लो पुच्छर भएको ठूलो बिरालो जस्तो प्राणी ठूलो खस्रुको रूखतर्फ अचम्मको जातिमा हिँडिरहेको देरुछ । एकैछिनमा त्यो रूखको फेदमा पुज्छ, रूखको तलको हाँजा समाउँछ र चढ्न थाल्छ । सिद्धार्थ तीन छक पर्छ । अब के जर्ने ? उसलाई के जर्ने थाहा हुँदैन। त्यो जनावर जमिनदेखि नजिकको हाँजामा बसिरहेको छ ।

સিद्धार्थ एकछिन जन्छ र त्यो प्राणीको सामना जर्ने निधो जर्छ । ऊ काडीबाट निस्कन्छ र रूसतिर लम्कन्छ । जित्तासु तर शान्त बिरालोले केटोलाई हेर्छ । सिद्धार्थ अलमल्ल पर्छ - ऊ पछि हट्न चाहँदैन । तर अजाडि जान पनि डराउँछ । उसले बोल्ने हिम्मत जुटाउँछ, र अड्किदै बोल्छ:

सिद्धार्थ: को हो... तिमी को हौ ?

ध्वाँ से चितुवा: मध्वाँ से चितुवा हुँ ।

Barking Deer: For him, climbing trees is fun. He also has very good hearing ability and he is very fast in chasing his prey. You will not know if he is far away or just behind you. We need to be very careful because he can suddenly attack us.

Siddhartha: Wow, that is amazing! How do you stay safe?

Barking Deer: We are always very careful. No matter what we are doing, every few seconds we glance around the area. We also test the air for his scent—if the wind is blowing from the right direction, we'll know he's there.

Siddhartha: That is very good to know. Thanks and goodbye. I have to keep moving.

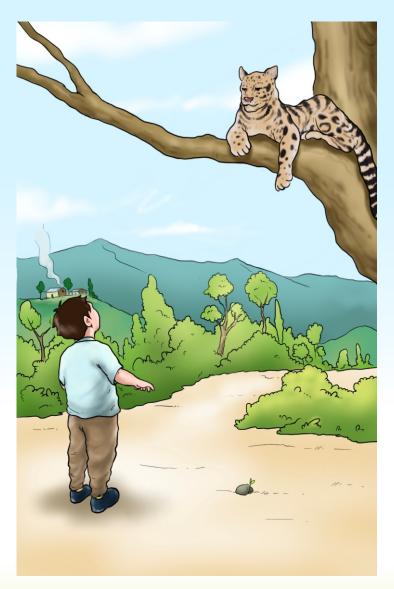
Lost in thought, Siddhartha starts walking again. His mind now is totally focused on the creature his grandfather hates, but which now seems to have many admirable traits. The climbing skill, quietness and quickness of Clouded Leopard have captured Siddhartha's imagination.

He walks for sometime before a rustling of leaves catches his attention. Siddhartha hides behind a thick bush and scans the area. About 20 meters away is a stocky, cat-like creature with a long, thick tail moving towards a big oak tree with amazing swiftness. It reaches the base of the tree in a flash, springs onto the trunk, and starts climbing. Siddhartha is amazed. He is not sure what to do. The animal is now sitting on the first branch from the ground.

After considering, Siddhartha decides to confront the creature. He emerges from the bush and walks towards the tree. Curious yet unfazed, the cat looks at the boy. Siddhartha is confused—he doesn't want to return back but is scared to go further. He gathers the courage to speak, and stammers:

Siddhartha: Who... Who are you?

Clouded Leopard: I am Clouded Leopard.



सिद्धार्थ (उत्साहित हुँदै) : साँच्चै ?

ध्वाँसे चितुवाः कुनै शंका ?

सिद्धार्थ (अलमल्ल पर्दै): होइन ।

ध्वाँसे चितुवाः तिमी को हौ? अनि तिमी किन यहाँ ?

सिद्धार्थः म तिमीलाई खोज्दै थिएँ । घरपालुवा जनावरहरूलाई मारेकोमा मेरो हजुरबुवा लगायत यो जङ्गल प्रयोग गर्ने गोठालाहरूले तिमी र चितुवालाई दोष लगाइरहेका छन् । के यो साँचो हो?

ध्वाँसे चितुवा: ञोठालाहरू सही छन् । तर त्यहाँ धेरै कारणहरू छन् जसले हामीलाई मानव वस्ती र ञोठतर्फ जान बाध्य बनाउँछ ।

सिद्धार्थ: के भन्न खोजेको ?

ध्वाँसे चितुवा: हामी जानाजानी मानव वस्तीबाट पर हुन चाहन्छौं - तिनीहरू हामा निम्ति खतरनाक हुन सक्छन् । तर, हालैका वर्षहरूमा मान्छेहरू धेरै बढे, बस्ती र खेतबारीका लागि धेरै वनक्षेत्र नाश गरे ।

सिद्धार्थ : साँच्चै ? मलाई त्यो थाहा थिएन ।

ध्वाँसे चितुवाः हेर, मानिसहरू जाई, भेडा, बाखा, सुँजुर र कुखुरा जस्ता जनावरहरू पाल्ने भएता पनि तिनीहरूले मासुको लाजि मृजजस्ता जङ्गली जनावरहरूको शिकार जर्छन्, जुन हाम्रा निम्ति निकै ठूलो समस्या हो । जंजलमा मैले शिकार जर्ने थोरै जनावरहरू मात्र भएपछि हामी बाँच्नका लाजि घरपालुवा पशु मारिखानु बाहेक अरु कुनै विकल्प नै छैन ।

सिद्धार्थ: मान्छेहरू ती सुन्दर मृंगहरू मार्छन् ? मलाई यो कहिल्यै थाहा थिएन । म त यो कुरो मेरो परिवारलाई भन्छु । Siddhartha (excited): Really?

Clouded Leopard: Do you doubt it?

Siddhartha (confused): No.

Clouded Leopard: Who are you? And why are you here?

Siddhartha: I have been looking for you. A lot of herders who use this forest blame you and Common Leopard for killing their animals, including my grandfather. Is it true?

Clouded Leopard: The herders are correct but there are many factors that push us towards human settlements and livestock corrals.

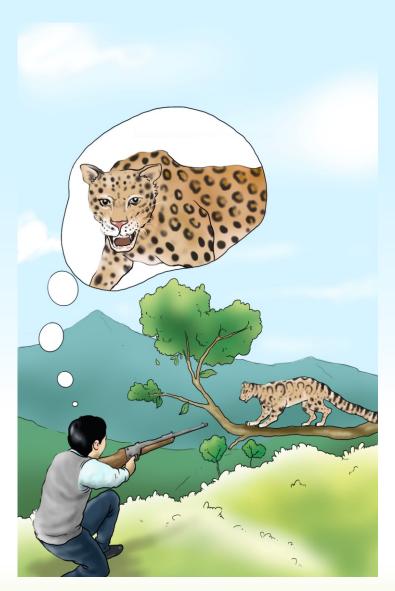
Siddhartha: What do you mean?

Clouded Leopard: We mostly avoid human settlements—they can be dangerous for us. But as the human population has grown a lot in recent years, much forest area has been cut down to make way for villages and farm fields.

Siddhartha: Really? I did not know that.

Clouded Leopard: Also, although humans raise animals like cows, sheep, goats, pigs and chickens, they still hunt wild animals like deer for meat, which is really a big problem for us—when there are few animals here in the forest we have no option but to kill livestock.

Siddhartha: Humans kill those beautiful deer. I never knew this. I will tell my family.



ध्वाँसे चितुवाः सुन बाबु, कुराहरु धेरै छन् । हाम्रा शरीरका अंग बेच्न मानिसहरु हामीलाई मार्छन् । तिनीहरू अक्सर हामीले गाइवस्तु मार्ने भएकाले यस्तो गरिएको बताउछन् । तर, यो सत्य होइन । आजभोलि त अम्छ ठूला समस्याहरु आईला जेका छन् । हाम्रो वासस्थानमा उनीहरु बाँध र सडक निर्माण गर्छन् जसले वातावरण बिगार्न सक्छ, उनीहरु यो कुरा राम्ररी बुमदैनन् ।

सिद्धार्थः यो त अति भयो !

ध्वाँसे चितुवा: हो, त्यसो त संसारमा असल मान्छेहरू पनि छन् । जत सालको कुरो हो, वन छेउमा एक बाखा पछ्याइरहँदा म आफै फसें । मेरो ज्यान बचाउन एक बाबुले पशुमालिकलाई सम्भायो अनि म त्यहाँबाट फुत्कन सकें, त्यो बाबु नभएको भए, म अहिले तिमीसँज यसरी कुरा जरिरहेको हुने थिइनँ ।

सिद्धार्थः कुनै जंञली जनावर पासोमा भेटें भने म पनि त्यसै जर्छ । म मेरा साथीहरू र परिवारलाई पनि कसरी हाम्रो कारणले जंजली जनावरहरू र तिनका वासस्थानलाई क्षती पुजेको छ भन्ने कुरा सम्भाउँछु । सबै पैसाका पछि मात्र लाज्दैनन् । धेरै मानिसहरू यस्ता पनि छन् जो साँच्चै जंजली जनावरहरूका निम्ति लडिरहेका छन् ।

ध्वाँसे चितुवा: यो कुरो थाहा पाएर राम्रो लाञ्यो बाबू । धेरै धेरै धन्यवाद । अब म जानुपर्छ, शिकार ञर्न मलाई ढिला भइसक्यो । तिम्रो जंञल बसाइ शुभ रहोस् ।

सिद्धार्थ: धेरै धेरै धन्यवाद !

आफ्नो लक्ष्य पूरा रारेपछि सिद्धार्थ आफ्नो हजुरबुवाको रोठतर्फ फर्कीए । अनौठो चितुवासँराको त्यो अविष्मरणीय भेट सिद्धार्थले अम्है विश्वास रार्न सकिरहेको छैन । त्यो भेटपछि सिद्धार्थले सुन्दर वन र वन्यजन्तु बचाउन केही न केही रार्ने अठोट लिएका छन् । Clouded Leopard: Listen boy, there is more. People also kill us to sell our body parts. And often they say it is because we kill their livestock, but it is not always true. There is an even bigger problem these days—people building dams and roads in our habitat without properly understanding how that can degrade the environment.

Siddhartha: That is very bad!

Clouded Leopard: Yes but there are some good people in this world. Last year, I was trapped while chasing a goat near a corral at the edge of this forest. A guy talked with the owner of that corral and requested him to let me go. I would not be here talking to you now if he had not been there.

Siddhartha: I'll do that too if I find any trapped wildlife. I will also tell my friends and family about how our actions are disturbing wild animals and their habitat. Not everyone cares only about money—there are also lots of people who are genuinely fighting for you all.

Clouded Leopard: That's good to know kid. Thank you so much! I have to go, I'm getting late for my hunt. Have a nice time in the jungle!

Siddhartha: Thank you so much!

His mission accomplished, Siddhartha starts walking back to his grandfather's corral, hardly believing he has met the strange Clouded Leopard, and determined to do something to protect the forest and its animals.

