

ENCHANTED FEATHERS

OWLS STORIES FROM NEPAL



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Enchanted Feathers

Owls Stories from Nepal

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In 2008, the Himalayan region of Nepal had limited access to modern amenities such as the internet and television. When I visited the remote districts of Manang and Mustang, I was captivated by fascinating stories shared by the local residents. These stories centered around crows and owls, had been passed down through generations.

Surprisingly, I encountered similar stories being shared on the internet-based platforms. The peculiarity of correlations further sparked my curiosity. It appeared that these narratives had apparently traveled independently, reaching people of different parts of the planet, who had no or less prior interaction.

Reviewing religious literature unveiled the presence of some of these stories in various ancient texts. Nevertheless, unique narratives that were completely unknown to me were also encountered. Following the collection of stories from different parts of Nepal, I subsequently surfed the internet and gathered a few more stories that are common in the Indian subcontinent.

This book aimed at catering children and individuals with a passion in learning about owls and their folklore. I deem that sharing these stories could contribute to the conservation of owl species in the future.

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Raju Acharya



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STORY ONE

THE JEALOUS FRIENDSHIP: THE CROW AND THE OWL

Once upon a time, a crow and an owl were the best of friends. Strangely enough! They were both unhappy with their body color. They discussed about changing the color of their feathers and started searching for colors from the very next day. They flew together the next day and, after flying for many days, they finally found a hill of colors. They decided that the crow should color the owl first.

Following their mutual talk, the crow skillfully blended a variety of hues to create a colorful palette for her friend, owl.

The owl was elated to have become so colorful. The owl thought, “Right now, I am the one adorned with beauty, but the crow too will be beautiful after it gets colored. What if the crow looks even more exquisite than me, and everyone begins to praise the crow only?”

The owl’s mind was filled with wicked thoughts. The owl instructed the crow to close its eyes and painted its’ entire body with only the black color. The crow then went to the river to see its reflection. It could not believe that its’ closest companion could ever do this. The crow felt deeply saddened to have been colored with just a single color while it had dreamt of becoming very colorful.

Filled with rage, the crow threatened the owl, “I am not going to leave you in peace. I will keep troubling you wherever you go and will not hesitate to kill you as well !” The owl came up with an idea to escape the crow. From that day, the owl decided to travel only in the early mornings or late nights and not during the day time to avoid the crow.

According to a myth, because of this rivalry relation, the owl troubles the crow during the night and in turn, the crow troubles the owl during the day.



STORY TWO

THE CLEVER OWL'S BARGAIN

In ancient times, an owl and an elephant enjoyed a remarkable bond of friendship. They lived in a perfect harmony and peace, offering mutual support in need. The owl served as a vigilant watchman, alerting the elephant to the presence of any enemies around them and serving desired fruits to the elephant.

In return, the elephant provided a safe shelter to the owl on its back, protecting it from enemies. They wandered together in the forest and river banks, and their friendship was well known in the forest.

Their habitat, the forest was ruled by a dictator, infamous for his evil deeds and cruelty. One day, the king wished to feast on the elephant's meat and ordered his soldiers to capture the elephant and bring it to him. When the soldiers informed the elephant about this, both the owl and the elephant wept bitterly.

As the elephant was about to leave, the owl insisted on going with him and promised to be the elephant's spokesperson with the king. On reaching the palace, the king asked if the elephant had any last wish, as agreed earlier, told the owl would speak on his behalf. The king agreed.

The owl then asked the king, "Your Highness, I will ask only if you promise to fulfill what I ask for." The king agreed. The clever owl said, "I have attained a marriageable age now, and your daughter is young and beautiful. I ask you to marry your daughter to me."

The king became furious upon hearing this. "What is this nonsense you are talking about? It is not possible. How could you think that I would marry my beautiful daughter to an ugly bird like you?" he retorted. The owl calmly replied, "Pardon me your Highness, but it is you who started this. If you wish, you can feast on chickens and goats, why then do you want to feast on an elephant?"

Realizing that he could not win an argument against the smart owl, the King decided to release the elephant. The owl and the elephant then happily returned back home. It was the owl's intelligence that saved the elephant's life, and so the people also call the owl a 'clever owl'.







STORY THREE

REVENGE OF THE OWL GHOST

Ramprasad Lamichhane lived alone in a far-flung village in western Nepal. He made a living by cutting trees and selling them in the nearby market. Despite of people advising him not to hunt, he refused them and continued hunting.

One fateful day, he took lives of two young owls while they were in their nest. Disregarding villagers' suggestion and warning about committing such a sin, he roasted the young owls and dined.

Exhausted from the day's work, he soon fell asleep. During the night, he heard of a strange voice echoing outside his house. It said, "Hey Ramprasad! Open the door." Startled, he heard another voice, "Are you asleep? Why don't you roast me too?!"

Curious and enticed by the possibility of a feast, he opened the door, but to his surprise, there was no one outside. The strange sounds continued for nights, causing fear and anxiety to grow within Ramprasad.

As the eerie occurrences continued, Ramprasad grew increasingly restless, lost his appetite, and started to lose weight rapidly. One night, he refused to open the door, despite the noises. Days passed by with his door remaining shut. When the villagers finally broke down the door, they found him dead. The villagers attributed his death to the revenge taken by the ghosts of young owls he had eaten several days ago. Following that incident, the villagers not only stopped owl hunting, but also treated them with respect and care in order to avoid any trouble with the wise birds.



STORY FOUR

THE AGE OF THE OWL

In the past, owls were known for having the longest lifespan amongst other species. While others flew throughout the day, owls would go to a secluded place, staring into nothingness alone, and only return at night. It soon got weary of its century-long life, feeling that a century was like a millennium.

In search of solace from its boredom, the owl went to meet God. After listening to the owl's request, God said, "It is only you who can see in the night. Isn't that a valuable boon I have given to you?" However, the owl remained unsatisfied.

God then said, "I cannot shorten your age, but if you wish you can share it with other beings." Delighted to have received this right, the owl decided to give ten years each to other beings. Since humans also received 90 to 100 years of life span, it is said that humans too start contemplating about life and slowdown in their old age.

After giving away ten years each to other beings, the owl kept only ten years of life for itself. This is why owls only live for ten years in an average today.







STORY FIVE

SOLVING A DESERT DISPUTE

Once upon a time, there was a barren and desolate desert where an owl made its home. The desert lay in the way of a pilgrimage route. Once, a duck couple were on their way to the pilgrimage, but as it got too late, they decided to stay in the desert for the night.

However, their sleep got disturbed when an owl shouted in the middle of the night. The drake was furious about their decision to spend the night there and told the hen, “We will have to leave early morning tomorrow; let’s adjust here for now. Who would want to stay in a place where you are disturbed in the middle of the night? Maybe the reason for this desert being so isolated and desolate is this very owl. How could the owl be so unpleasant?”

The owl happened overhear the ducks’ conversation. When the ducks were about to leave, the owl apologized and started weeping loudly. It also asked for help, informing that the hen, the owl’s wife, was abducted.

Shocked and enraged, the drake could not believe someone else was claiming his wife as being theirs. The plea for help attracted other people and village council members, who gathered there to listen to both sides. It did not take them a long time to figure out the truth. However, they considered the importance of the owl and decided in favor of the owl, asking the drake to leave the place immediately.

This broke the drake’s heart, and with a heavy heart, it was about to leave the place. At the very moment, the owl stopped the drake and said, “Indeed, she is your wife today, tomorrow, and forever. You previously remarked this place was deserted because of me, but it is not because of me, but because of those phony village council members who despite knowing the truth, gave a decision in my favor. I only wanted you to be aware of this. Please take your wife with you and have a safe journey.”



STORY SIX

THE OWL'S HELPFUL ADVICE FOR LORD RAM

Following Laxman's arrow hit injury, Lord Ram sent Lord Hanuman to the Himalayas in search of the Sanjivani Buti, a medicinal plant. Lord Hanuman went into a dilemma after searching the whole Himalaya without finding the plant. He thought that he should now carry the whole hill with him.

Upon Lord Hanuman's return, Lord Ram was also unsure which was the actual Sanjivani buti, and even after recognizing it, he was unaware how to use it. At the very moment, a bird nearby shouted "Kachyak Kuchuk!" (Smash it!).

In accordance to the sound, Lord Ram smashed the herb and fed it to his brother Laxman, after which, he regained consciousness. The bird that made the sound was none other than the owl. Filled with gratitude, Lord Ram pointed towards the tree where the owl was and proclaimed, "May no one be able to defeat you, and may you become the King of the birds."

However, by that time, the owl had already flown away, and a drongo had sat in the place where the owl was sitting before. This led to the drongo receiving the boon that was meant for the owl, which is why no other bird can defeat a drongo. The drongo can chase away any bird that trespasses its area. On the other hand, the owl comes out only during the night and cannot roam during the daytime. The owl, therefore, helps without expecting anything in return.







STORY SEVEN

THE KING OF THE NIGHT

At one time, the bird's community was worried by the absence of a king, as they were in dire need of their leadership. They decided to choose a king through a mutual meeting. The clever crow heard the news and came up with an idea to take the position of the king. He invited all the birds early, but invited the owl a little later.

As soon as the meeting started, the crow announced, "I am able to shout and also chase others. You cannot be protected by anyone else but me." Other birds were convinced by the crow's arguments, and they decided to crown him as their King.

However, at that moment, the owl arrived at the meeting. He immediately understood the crow's cleverness and presented his case, "I agree that the crow might protect you during the day time, but how will he protect you at the night time? The crow cannot see in the dark, but I can. Therefore, I should be the King."

As the debate grew, a decision was finally reached. The crow was announced as the King during the day time, and the owl was declared the King during the night time. The birds instructed them both to remain active only during their respective times. They also said, "If you find the other during your time, try to kill him if you can."

From that day onwards, a widely held belief emerged that owls attack crows at night, while crows retaliate against owls during the day.



STORY EIGHT

WISE OWL WINS OVER HIS FRIEND'S NEST

In the past, there existed a forest close to a tiny village, and right between the forest and the village, a giant tree proudly stood. A crow and an owl shared the tree and lived together as close buddies in it.

The crow spent the entire day scavenging for food across the village and later shared everything he saw throughout the day with the owl. Upon hearing the crow's account, the owl would go out in search of food and return to the roost sometimes at night and sometimes in the morning to tell everything to the crow as well.

Both friends were enjoying their time together until a hawk arrived one day and chose to make its home in the same tree. The hawk liked the tree because its branches were thick and beautiful, and it decided to stay in the crow's nest from then on.

When the crow returned to its nest in the evening, it asked the hawk to leave, but the stronger hawk refused and asserted his dominance. Frustrated, the crow sought help from its friend, the owl. Even though the owl was sleeping during the day, the crow told everything to the owl, who then woke up and flew to the crow's nest in the tree to figure out how to drive away the hawk.

The owl went and sat near the crow's nest in the tree and looked at the hawk, laughing "Ha Ha Ha." Alarmed, the hawk woke up from its sleep upon hearing the laughter. The owl continued laughing, and the hawk asked, "Why are you laughing like this?" The owl replied, "How strange and funny you look sitting in such a small nest in such a big tree. Why did you choose such a small nest for yourself? You should have preferred a larger nest; this nest does not suit you at all."

The owl had already taught one of its friends, the cuckoo, to tell the hawk about the unsuitability of the nest. The owl turned to its friend and said, "If you do not believe me, then ask him." The cuckoo also conveyed the same message. The hawk no longer liked the nest, feeling it was too uneasy and small for him. As a result, it left the nest and flew away. With the help of the owl, the crow regained its nest, and both friends happily lived on the tree once again.







STORY NINE

THE OWL'S STRATEGY

Once upon a time, in a dense and lush forest, there stood a large and ancient tree inhabited by an old and wise owl. He had built his nest in the hollow of the tree and had lived there for many years watching over the forest and the creatures that resided within it. The owl was renowned for his wisdom and his exceptional ability to hunt at night when most of the other animals were asleep. He would venture out after sunset to hunt for prey and always returned to his tree with a meal. The other birds of the forest were amazed by the owl's hunting skills and often wondered how he managed to catch his prey so effortlessly.



One day, all the birds of the forest gathered together to discuss the owl's hunting abilities. They had been observing him for a long time and were curious to know his secret talent. After a long discussion, they decided to go and ask the owl directly.

When they arrived at the old tree, the birds hesitated to speak. They looked up at the owl's nest, and they could see the wise old bird peering down at them. Finally, one brave bird stepped forward and asked the owl, "How do you manage to catch your prey so easily? We have been observing you for a long time, and we have never seen anyone else hunt so efficiently like you do."

The owl gazed down at the birds and smiled. He knew that he had a secret that he could share with them. In response, he replied, "One day, while flying over the forest, I saw an old tree that had been cut into half. The tree was full of insects and rats, and I was delighted to see so much food in one spot. I decided to stay there and catch some of the rats for dinner. However, when I made my move to catch one, all the rats scattered so swiftly that I could not manage to catch a single one. I must admit, it left me feeling quite disheartened."

The other birds listened carefully, intrigued by the owl's story. The owl continued, "Then I thought of an idea. I started to bring food to the rats every day. I would search the forest for wheat and other grains and bring them to the rats. The rats started to get used to seeing me, and they began to rely on me for their food. They became my friends, and they would wait for me every day."

The owl smiled down at the birds and concluded, "And that is how I catch my prey so easily. The rats have become so accustomed to me that they do not run away anymore. They wait for me to bring them food, and I can catch them effortlessly. It just goes to show that sometimes, the best way to succeed is through kindness and friendship."



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**THE OWL'S TRANSFORMATION:
A TALE OF IMPATIENCE**

A long time ago, when God created the Earth, he also brought forth all the living creatures, including insects and birds. It was an important but very stressful job, and he was deeply involved in this work. First, God fashioned the bodies of each creature using skin, fur, or feathers. He then carefully shaped each creature to complete their bodies, including ears, legs, tails, and so on. God was very busy with this work.

One day, while God was working on the rabbit, an owl sat on a nearby tree, eagerly waiting for its turn. The owl started making noise, which disturbed God who was engrossed in his task. He said, "Shut up, it's your turn after this. For now, turn around and close your eyes. No one should see me working on the other animals." The owl eagerly jumped up and down on the branch and closed its eyes.

God returned to shaping the rabbit's hind legs. At the same time, the rabbit politely asked, "Will you give me long legs and ears like a deer?" God replied, "Of course, I always try my best to design the animals how they want." He then lengthened the rabbit's hind legs, and the rabbit rejoiced and thanked God for it. With a sweet voice, the rabbit continued, "Will you give me claws like a leopard? Some other animals may try to hurt me." God said, "Sure, first I will work on your ears and your front legs."

The owl waiting on the tree branch got impatient. It started shouting, "I want a long neck like a swan, beautiful red feathers, and a long beak like a kingfisher bird." "Calm down, owl. I will let the rabbit finish first, then it is your turn. Turn around and sit with your eyes closed," said God in a fuming voice. The owl screamed again and said, "I want a crown as beautiful as a heron's."

God became very angry and left the front foot of the rabbit to grab the owl from the tree branch and shake it violently. The owl was confused for a while, unable to understand what had happened. Its eyes widened in fear. Then God pressed its head up to its shoulders and pulled its ears from both sides of the head. "Now you have large ears



so that you can hear clearly if anyone says anything to you. You have a short neck that does not allow you to move your head to see things you should not. Your eyes are so big that you can only see at night when I am not working” declared God. “One more thing,” he added. He picked up a handful of clay and rubbed it on the owl’s feathers. “You are so rude and disobedient that you do not deserve red feathers. You will have gray feathers like clay.” The owl was speechless and it flew away, realizing the consequences of its actions.

After that, God went back to making the front foot of the rabbit, but the rabbit was not there. It had become so frightened by hearing God and the owl shouting at each other that it ran away with uneven legs. That is why the rabbit still walks around with uneven legs and is afraid of everyone because it never got claws like a leopard. As for the owl, it still looks the way God made it. Now that it has ears on both sides of its head, it hears a lot more, which has made it a more intelligent being with large eyes.





STORY ELEVEN

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THE QUEST FOR THE PERFECT NEST:
AN OWL'S JOURNEY

Once, a group of owls were searching for a better place to migrate. They had been flying around all night, exploring many locations, but were unable to find any suitable places large enough for their entire group.

As the Sun was about to rise and darkness was gradually disappearing, the owls grew tired. One of them suggested that he would continue searching for a while longer, and if he did not find a good place, he would rest during the day and resume the search when the sun goes down. Everyone agreed with him, and they flew for some more time.

Eventually, they reached a beautiful and vast forest. The forest was green and lively, adorned with new and budding trees. Since there were many trees in this large forest, all the owls in the group could choose their favorite trees to build their nests in. The young owls quickly picked the greenest trees, eagerly building their new homes. However, there was an old owl among them who had to settle for an old, withered pine tree. With limited choices, the old owl built his nest on the tree.

As time passed, the young owls began to boast about their beautiful nests. They teased the old owl, saying, “Hey, oldie, you could not even find a single good tree for your nest.” The young ones continued to taunt the old owl boasting, “We are very lucky, our nests are beautiful because they have green leaves, but yours is dry and unappealing.”

With age comes wisdom, and this old owl was indeed wise. Upon hearing the young owls’ words, he smiled and said, “Why rush to judge who is the luckiest among us?” The young owls could not grasp the meaning of his words, but the old owl remained calm, always smiling and saying nothing in return to their mockery.

One day, a group of woodcutters entered in the forest. “Ah, look at these trees,” said one of them. “Let’s cut them down and take them away. We can make good money by selling these trees,” added another. They took out their axes, and started cutting down the trees in the forest, beginning with the green ones.

They cut down all the trees in the forest, leaving only the old and dried pine trees. The young owls, filled with dread, observed their nests being destroyed right in front of them. No matter how much they cried and protested, the woodcutters heartlessly demolished their homes and loaded them onto the truck. “This tree is too old, it is of no use,” remarked the woodcutters, sparing only the old trees in the forest. Devastated by losing their homes, the young owls wept in grief. Seeing them cry, the old owl came and sat with them, saying, “You see, sometimes a blessing is disguised as a curse. Now that there are no trees here, stop crying. The Sun is about to set, and we will search again to find a new place for ourselves.” He consoled everyone, and only after losing their homes did the young owls understand the wisdom of the old owl and they realized their mistake. In the evening, all the owls flew off to find a new place for their nests.



STORY TWELVE

OWL, TURTLE AND TIGER

Once upon a time, on the edge of a forest, there lay a small pond inhabited by many colorful creatures. Among them, a turtle found a friend, an owl residing in a tree overlooking the pond. Together, they spent their days talking, laughing, and playing joyfully.

One day, while they were engaged in their conversation, a tiger suddenly emerged from the other side of the pond. The owl spotted the tiger first and immediately alarmed his friend, "Tiger! Tiger! Run away!" The turtle, upon hearing the warning, attempted to flee but due to its slow speed, could not reach the pond in time. The swift tiger caught up with the turtle, snatched it up with its paws, and attempted to break its hard shell to eat the delicious meat inside.

The tiger exerted all its strength to crack the turtle's shell, but it was unsuccessful in doing so. From his vantage point in the tree, the owl observed the situation and, after a while, called out to the tiger.

Intrigued, the tiger asked the owl what he wanted. The owl suggested that the tiger should leave the turtle in the water for some time so that its shell would soften and become easier to break.

Not wanting to appear uninformed, the tiger acted as if he already knew this technique and obediently returned the turtle to the water. The turtle swam away, safely evading the harm, while the tiger sat on the pond's bank, feeling disappointed and contemplating what could be done.







STORY THIRTEEN

WISDOM OF THE OWL UNCLE

In the middle of a beautiful village, there were some big trees. Among these trees, high up on a branch, a pair of female and male bird made their home. The female bird was innocent and hardworking, but the male bird was smart yet lazy, he had the habit of sleeping all day.

One morning, they flew to look for food as usual. After flying for a long time, they did not find a single grain of food. They had traveled far in search of food. While flying, they entered a house in a distant village. In that house, dal (cereals) and rice were kept in different pots. After seeing the dal and rice, the male bird said to the female, “Why don’t you cook food (mixed grains) today? I really like the food you cook.” “Okay, we have no other option,” said the female bird. They returned to their nest with both dal and rice carried in their beaks. The female bird cooked food which looked very delicious. The male bird thought of saving the food all for himself, “If we eat half of this, it will not be enough for me. I will still be hungry.” He thought of a clever trick.

After the food was cooked, the female told to eat it, but the male bird stopped her and said, “Wait ! The food is hot, if we eat it now, our mouths will burn. We can eat it once it becomes cold.” “Oh, it’s really hot,” said the female, snapping a finger at the food. “It may take a long time for the food to cool down, let us take a bath until then,” the male said to the female. “Yes, it was very hot and sweaty day, and the food has been brought from far away,” said the female bird. “Oh, look, the smell of this food has flown far and wide. If we go to take a bath,

someone can come and eat,” the male bird said as he remembered. “Let’s do this first, I’ll go and take a bath and return, then you go take a bath.”

Saying this, the male bird went to bath, and he returned quickly. Then the female bird went to bath. At the time when the female was not there, the male ate all the food and happily went to sleep in the nest. When the female bird came back, she saw empty pots of food, and the male bird was sleeping. She understood what had happened. The female bird shouted to the male, “Get up! You have eaten all the food. Are you not ashamed? I am hungry since morning.”

Hearing the voice of the female, the male bird got up and started defending himself, “Look, I have not eaten the food. I took a shower and fell asleep, waiting for you to eat.” “Oh, who ate our food?” He asked nonchalantly. “I think some other animal came and ate it.” “You are lying,” said the female bird. The male lied again, “No, I have not eaten.” “Then let’s go to Owl Uncle,” said the female bird.

They both went to the owl’s place. The owl said, “Why have you come here, birds?” “Look, Uncle Owl, he has eaten all the food, and now he is lying about it,” the female said in frustration. Then the male bird said, “Owl uncle, I have not eaten it. She is blaming me for no reason.” After listening to this fight of the birds and thinking for a while, the owl uncle said, “Leave the matter of the food. Both of you are hungry since the morning. I have some food for both of you to eat.” “Yes, owl uncle, I am very hungry,” said the female bird as she was very hungry. The owl brought the food and gave it to the male and female birds. The female bird ate the food quickly. The male’s stomach was full, and he could not eat any more food after one bite. Owl asked the male bird, “Why don’t you eat the food?” The rooster mumbled and said in a small voice, “My stomach is hurting.” Hearing this, uncle owl and female owl laughed, ha ha ha. “Then I must call the doctor,” said the uncle owl teasingly. “No,” the male bird got ashamed and admitted that he had eaten all the food by himself.

“A lie never hides for long” owl uncle reminded the male owl. Having satisfied her hunger, the female bird forgave the male and both of them went to their nest with a promise to never lie to each other again.





STORY FOURTEEN

THE HIDING OF THE OWL

One day, a long time ago, an owl was sleeping in its nest during the rainy season. The water under the trees had become muddy, and small children were playing, splashing each other with the muddy water.

At the same time, a little boy took a chunk of mud and threw it at his friend, but it went up and hit the owl sitting on the branch of the tree. The sleeping owl shuddered and cried out in pain. The muddy soil dried on his body, which elevated his suffering. He tried to remove the mud with his wings, but even after trying to do so very hard, he could not remove the mud from his body.

His knowledge of medical science also failed, and he did not know how to stop the pain or how to remove the dirt from his body. After some time, the owl saw a crow flying nearby, he immediately cried for help. "Crow, my friend. Someone threw mud at me. Please help me." Hearing this, the crow immediately landed to help him. The owl

further asked, “Do you know how to fix this?” “I do not know anything about it,” the crow gave an honest response. “Our friend, the cuckoo, is a doctor. I think he surely knows how to help you. Let’s go see him now,” said the crow. So they both flew to meet the cuckoo, who knew exactly what to do.

After reaching the cuckoo’s place, the owl told him everything. After listening to the owl, the cuckoo said, “I have a cure, but I need my payment first.” The owl did not have anything at that time, so he promised to pay the cuckoo later.

After the crow assured that the owl would pay, the cuckoo instructed the owl to stay in the river for six hours. After listening to the cuckoo’s recommendation, the crow and the owl hurried towards the river. The owl stayed there for six hours. Slowly, the mud began to melt and wash away, easing the owl’s pain.

After the owl’s recovery, the two friends returned home. The next morning, the cuckoo came to see the owl. “How is my patient doing today?” he asked the owl. The owl replied, saying “Okay.” Then, the cuckoo asked for his money, the owl refused to pay. “I just sat in the water; it has nothing to do with you. You knew I was going to shower anyway. I won’t pay for something you do not know about. Please go away and let me rest,” said the owl.

The cuckoo angrily went to the crow and narrated the incident. “You must have made a mistake; the owl is not like that. Surely he must be joking.” Both the crow and the cuckoo went back to the owl’s nest to find out, but the owl was nowhere to be found, as he was hiding inside the hollow of a tree.

“We have to go to the judge,” cuckoo said sadly. The fox was the judge, and he gave a decision in favor of the cuckoo. The judge ruled that the cuckoo should be paid for his services, which was the law. The crow had to make the payment on behalf of the owl because he had promised that the owl would pay. Since that day, the crow has been taking care of the cuckoo’s eggs. To avoid being seen by crows and cuckoos and to live a life away from them, owls work only at night.





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OWL'S REGRET

Once upon a time, near a village, there stood a big tree that served as a home for many birds with nests on its various branches. Among them, an owl resided on one of the branches. At first, the owl was known for being honest, and friendly. It kept a watchful eye during the day, while other birds searched for food. They were living harmoniously and peacefully together in the tree.

As time passed, the birds continued their routine of searching for food at different intervals. One day, the owl set off in search of food, but luck was not on its side as it could not find anything. Hungry and desperate, the owl returned to its tree, hoping for some relief. At the same time, another bird from the tree asked for a favor. She had to find food and requested the owl to watch over her eggs in her absence. Trusting the owl, the bird left her eggs in its care.

The owl struggled with hunger, trying its best to resist the temptation of eating the eggs. However, unable to control its hunger any longer, it succumbed to its instincts and devoured the bird's eggs. The guilt and regret haunted the owl as it pondered how to respond to the bird upon her return. When the bird came back to her nest, she could not find her precious eggs. Seeking help, she asked all the birds and owls around, but no one seemed to know anything.

In a feeble attempt to cover up its wrong doing by acting like it didn't know anything, saying it saw someone else take the eggs. The bird sensed something wrong and observed the owl's unusual behavior, as it was vomiting while speaking. The truth unraveled when the owl accidentally revealed its guilt. The bird was heartbroken and furious at her friend's betrayal. She cursed the owl, wishing that it would never again see the light of day so it could not harm anyone else's eggs or babies.

Since that day, the owl has been cursed to stay hidden in the darkness of the night, ashamed to face the day. The curse also prevents owls from harming eggs, forever reminding them of the consequences of their past actions.





STORY SIXTEEN

THE FATE OF THE LAZY OWL

Once upon a time, there was a majestic tree in the forest that served as a home to many birds. Every morning and evening, the birds would make a lively sound that filled the atmosphere. They would fly far and wide in search of food during the day and return to their nests at night. Among the inhabitants of the tree, there was a very lazy bird. The owl would sleep all day while the other birds worked, only waking up at night to enjoy flying around. One day, while the owl was in a deep sleep, a loud rattling sound disturbed his slumber. In a sleepy voice, the owl asked, “Whose loud voice disturbing my rest? Can’t you see me sleeping?” Nevertheless, the disturbance persisted, fueling the owl’s anger, he angrily shouted again, “Shut up!”

Then, a voice came from below, “Owl brother, why are you shouting at me? I am a woodpecker. The monsoon season is about to arrive, so I am building a house in this tree. You should also start building your house so that you can sleep during the rain and not get wet.”

The owl replied lazily, “There is plenty of time left for the rains. Let me enjoy the summer now. I will do something before the monsoon.” He then fell asleep again, but the constant noise produced below did not let him rest. Overwhelmed with frustration, he flew away to another tree, hoping that no one will disturb his sleep.

After a while, the birds started chirping and woke the owl up again. He tried to sleep, but could not. So he asked the birds, “Why do you make such noises? Can’t you see me sleeping?” Hearing this, the birds laughed and said, “Who sleeps during the day? We are now busy in building our nests. If we do not build it now, our children will get wet. We also have to collect our food. Why don’t you build your own nest too?”

The owl laughed and replied, “Why are you in such a hurry, girls? I will not waste my time on this nonsense like yours. I want to spend my life in peace.” Saying this, he flew away from there as well.

As he was flying, he saw a farmer plowing his field in the hot sun. He did not understand anything and stared at him for a while. Then he asked the farmer, “Farmer brother, why are you plowing your field in such heat when most of the people are sleeping?” The farmer smiled and replied, “Even if others do not, I do my job. If I plow the field now, I can irrigate the field well when it rains.”

The owl muttered, “The same talk of rain again,” and flew away from there too. He reached a beautiful garden where he slept deeply for some time. But after a while, the sound of bees buzzing around the flowers woke him up. Annoyed, he said to the bees, “What are you doing here? Go back to your hive and find your own rest and let me rest too.” The bees replied, “We are not resting. Throughout the day we collect nectar from these flowers and keep them in our hive. We go home only after sunset.” Surprised, the owl asked again, “Why do you have to work so hard? Rest is also important.”

The bees laughed and said, “The rain is coming soon. At that time, we cannot collect nectar, and this collected nectar will be useful. Do something for yourself too. Do not waste your time sleeping.” The owl did not like the advice of the bees, so he turned to the other direction and fell into a deep sleep yet again. Despite hearing all the explanations and advice, the owl remained stubbornly lazy and did not build a house for himself. He continued to sleep all day and fly around at night, never preparing for the coming rain or doing anything productive. In the end, his laziness meant that he never had a home of his own, and he was forced to wander from one tree to the other in order to find a place to sleep.



STORY SEVENTEEN

WHEN A MAN TRANSFORMED INTO AN OWL

Once, there lived a Brahmin man with his wife in a forest. One fateful day, while collecting firewood, the Brahmin man accidentally stepped on a snake. The infuriated snake bit him. The Brahmin fell unconscious, and when he woke up, he found himself transformed into an owl.

The sudden and unexpected transformation made the Owl-Brahmin very sad and lonely, for he could no longer speak the human language. However, over time, he forged a friendship with a jackal, who was also an 'untouchable'. Together, the Owl-Brahmin and the jackal would wander in the forest, and the Owl-Brahmin would hunt for food, while the jackal would search for water.

One day, while the owl-Brahmin was out hunting, he caught a rabbit and brought it back to share with the jackal. However, the jackal refused to eat, saying that it smelled bad. The Owl-Brahmin became angry and said that he would never share his food with the jackal again.

Later, while the owl-Brahmin was asleep, a hunter came along and captured him in a net. Despite the jackal's attempt to rescue his friend, he was unable to break the net. The Owl-Brahmin got furious and told the jackal that he was useless and had betrayed him.

In due course, the God Brahma took pity on the Owl-Brahmin and released him from the curse of the net. The Owl-Brahmin was transformed back into a human and reunited with his wife. He realized that his anger had caused him to lose his friend and had led to his downfall.

The story of the Owl-Brahmin is often cited as a cautionary tale about the dangers of anger and the importance of friendship.





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