

The Hawks and Their Friends



This is another interesting story from the album of Jataka Tales

Once upon a time, there lived a family of Hawks in a lake near a forest. The family included Female-Hawk, Male-Hawk and their Kid-Hawks. All of them were passing their days happily. There also lived a Lion, a Kingfisher and a Turtle on the northern, the eastern and the southern shore of this lake respectively. One day, the Female-Hawk asked her husband, "Sweetheart, how many friends do you have near here?"

The Male-Hawk replied, "I do have friends, but not one in this part of the forest". The Female-Hawk advised, "Dear, you must find some friends. At least, we should have someone who can help us, if ever we are in trouble or danger". The Male-Hawk asked, "With whom shall I make friends?" The Female-Hawk suggested, "You can make friends with the Kingfisher, the Lion and the Turtle, who live on the eastern, the northern and the southern shore of this lake".

The Male-Hawk liked the idea and went to the Lion, the Kingfisher and the Turtle and one by one made friends with them. Everyone was happy to make a new friend. Everything was going smoothly in their life. Suddenly one day, some men came to the forest for hunting. They hunted in the forest from morning till night, but found nothing. They didn't want to go home empty-handed, so they went to the lake in order to see what they could find there.

After the whole day, they were tired. When they couldn't locate anything even on the lake, one of them said, "let us stay here tonight and see what we can find in the morning". All of them agreed to the proposal. They made beds of leaves for themselves and lay down to sleep. They made beds under the tree in which the Hawk family had its nest. However, the hunters could not sleep because they were disturbed by the flies and the mosquitoes.

Ultimately, they got up and built a fire on the shore of the lake, so that the fumes would drive away the flies and mosquitoes. The fumes awoke the Hawks and the Kid-Hawks cried out. Hearing the cries of the Kid-Hawks, one of the hunters said to the other, "Did you hear that? That was the cry of the birds. They will be nice for our breakfast. There are young ones in that nest" pointing towards the nest. The hunters put more wood on the fire and made it blaze up.

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The Hawks listened to the conversation of the hunters. The Female-hawk got frightened and said to her husband, "These men are planning to eat our young ones. We have to ask our friends to save us. Ask the Kingfisher to help us, as we are in danger". The Male-Hawk flew speedily to the Kingfisher's nest and made him awake with his cry. The Kingfisher asked the Hawk, "Why have you come at this late hour of night?" The Male-Hawk narrated the whole story to the Kingfisher.

The Kingfisher consoled the Hawk and said, "Don't worry my friend. I will help you. Go back and comfort your mate. I am just coming". The Male-Hawk flew back to his nest quickly and the Kingfisher also came at the location. On arriving, the Kingfisher saw the burning fire and instantly, beating the water with his wings sprinkled water on the fire and put it out. The Hunters made another fire and one of them, tried to climb the tree. The Kingfisher put out the fire once again.

As often as the fire was made, the Kingfisher put it out. By the Midnight, the Kingfisher got very tired. The Female-Hawk noticed the condition of the Kingfisher and said to her husband, "The Kingfisher is tired. Go and ask the Turtle to come and help us. In the meantime, the Kingfisher can take some rest". The Male-Hawk quickly flew down and told the Kingfisher, "Rest a while friend. I am going to get the Turtle".

Subsequently, the Male-Hawk flew towards the southern shore of the lake and awakened the Turtle. The Turtle asked the Hawk, "What happened friend? Why have you come?" The Male-Hawk replied, "A danger has come to us" and told the whole story about the hunters. He also said, "The Kingfisher has been working for hours and he is tired by now. That is why I have come to you". At once the Turtle said, "I will help you".

After this the Turtle went to the place where the Hawks lived. He dived into the water, collected some mud and put the fire out with it. On seeing the Turtle the hunters cried, "Why to bother for the young hawks? Let us kill this Turtle. It will make a nice breakfast for us. We have to be careful otherwise it will bite us. Let us throw a net over it and turn it over". But they didn't have nets with them, so they took some vines and tore their clothes to make a net.

When they tried to put the net over the Turtle, they could not roll him over. Instead, the Turtle suddenly dived down into the deep water making their efforts vain. The hunters got so impatient to get the turtle that they went down into the deep water. When they came out of the water, they said, "Half of the night, a Kingfisher kept putting out our fires. Now, we have torn our clothes and got wet while trying to get this turtle. We will make another fire and eat those young hawks at sunrise". With this, they started making another fire.

The Female-Hawk was hearing the conversation of the hunters. She said to her partner, "I am afraid, sooner or later these men will get our young ones. Go and ask our friend, the Lion to help us". The Male-Hawk flew to the Lion at once. The Lion asked the Hawk, "Why have you come at this late hour of night?" The Hawk narrated to him the whole story. The Lion said, "Don't worry friend. I am just coming. You go back and comfort your mate and the young ones".

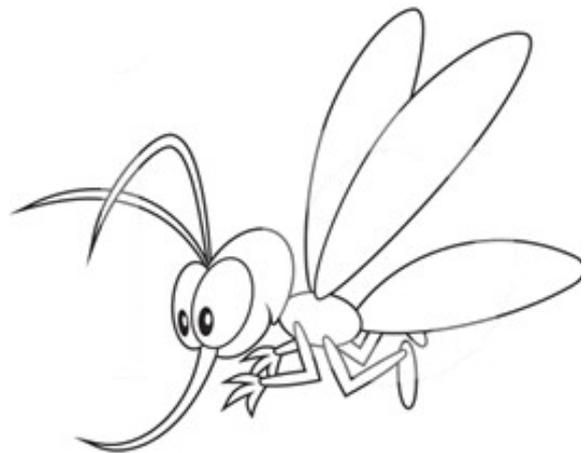
Soon, the Lion came roaring at the place. On hearing the Lion's roar, the hunters cried,

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“Now, all of us will be killed”. They ran away from the scene as fast as they could run. When the Lion approached the tree, not even a single hunter was visible. At that time, the Kingfisher and the Turtle also came on the scene. The Hawks were happy to find the hunters were gone. They appreciated the efforts made by all of their friends and lived happily thereafter.

Moral: Friends in need are friends indeed

Here are some drawings for you to colour



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