

Karuna Prayer



सत्वेषु मैत्री गुणिषु प्रमोदं,
क्लिष्टेषु जीवेषु कृपा परत्वं ।
माध्यस्थ भावं विपरीत वृत्तौ,
सदा ममात्मा विदधातु देव ॥



*Satveshu Maitri Gunishu Pramodam
Klishteshu Jeeveshu Kripa Paratvam
Madhyastha Bhavan Viparita Vritow
Sada Mamatma Vidadhatu Deva*

May my soul always find fulfilment
in friendship towards all beings,
In compassion towards all suffering creatures,
And in remaining neutral towards those hostile to me,
This is my prayer.

THE IMMORTAL SONG

Amity

May the sacred stream of amity
Flow forever in my heart
May the universe prosper,
Such is my cherished desire.

Appreciation

May my heart sing with ecstasy
At the sight of the virtuous.
And may my life be an offering
At their feet.

Compassion

May my heart bleed at the sight of
The wretched, the cruel, the poor.
And may tears of compassion
Flow from my eyes.

Equanimity

May I always be thee to show the path
To the pathless wanderers of life.
Yes, if they should not hearken to me
May I bide in patience.

May the spirit of goodwill
Enter all our hearts
May we all sing in chorus
The Immortal Song of human concord.

**-by Pujya Sri Chitrabhanuji
Founder, Jain International
Meditation Centre, New York**

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BOOK -IV**

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KARUNA INTERNATIONAL

- ★ We are a registered non-profit service Organisation promoting humane values like compassion, kindness, love and respect for ecology, environment and vegetarianism among student community since 1995.
- ★ We promote Karuna Clubs in schools and colleges and assist them by supplying literature and books for guidance.
- ★ We promote humane values, by conducting regular programmes and activities in schools and colleges, through Karuna clubs.
- ★ We establish Karuna Kendras in different States of India.
- ★ We publish a monthly Newsletter and an Annual Souvenir in which reports of Karuna Club activities, photos, and articles of students and teachers are published.
- ★ We are recognized by the Animal Welfare Board of India and get an Annual Grant regularly.
- ★ We organise Annual National conferences in which Awards and Prizes are given to the outstanding Karuna Clubs and to the students based on thier annual performance. We also organize, Seminars, Exhibitions and Rallies.
- ★ We conduct Training Programmes on Humane Education for Teachers, Activists and Students
- ★ We provide Exhibition materials, on "Animal Welfare" and on Karuna Values to schools on request.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We have pleasure in publishing Stories of Compassion, Book IV. Earlier we published Stories on Compassion, Volume I, II & III which earned high appreciation all over India. More than 50,000 copies of Volume I, Volume II & Volume III have been supplied to Schools and Colleges where Karuna Clubs are functioning.

The purpose of publication of this book is to inculcate reverence to all forms of life, love and compassion to all living creatures.

The saints of our country were exponents of the concept of "Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma" - the concept that the entire universe with all its creatures is nothing but the form of God the Almighty. The saints of God and even psychologists precisely say that much of the cruelty and callousness exhibited by man today have their origin in his cruelty to the dumb creatures of God. Compassion, mercy and kindness are the fundamentals of ethical life.

Animals, birds, insects and plants are closely linked with ecology. Their protection and preservation are therefore vital for the survival of the human race. Many exotic birds, animals, flowers and plants have found a place in the endangered list.

To protect animals and plead for their rights goes hand in hand with our protection of nature. Since animals cannot plead for themselves, it is our concern and duty to do so on their behalf.

The stories selected for this book are quite suitable for both adults and young children. The authors of the stories belong to

both eastern and western countries of the world. All the stories are extremely touching and are sure to make one's heart vibrate with compassion, love and mercy. Some of them also elicit the sense of humour.

We are certain that the lovely stories found in this book, will inspire thousands of students all over India. We firmly hope that they develop the qualities such as compassion, kindness, non-violence and peace and became good global citizens.

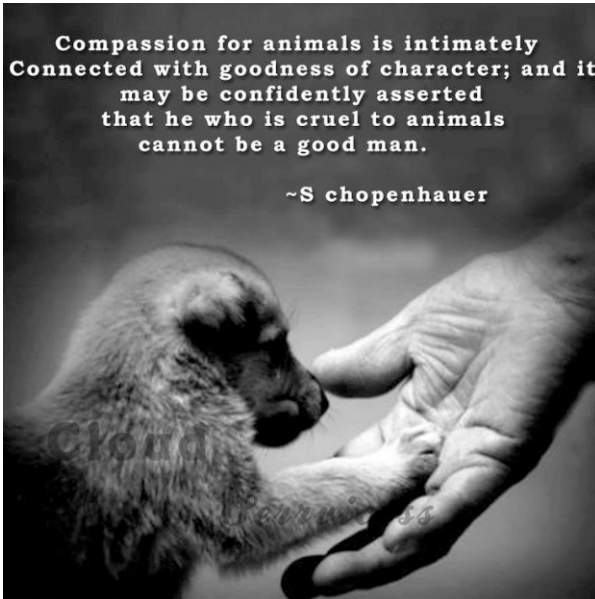
Dulichand Jain
Chairman

Kailashmull Dugar
President

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General Secretary

**Compassion for animals is intimately
Connected with goodness of character; and it
may be confidently asserted
that he who is cruel to animals
cannot be a good man.**

~S chopenhauer



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The Story of a Gorilla



John Daniel as a Baby

In the early 1920's I had the unusual and interesting experience of making friends with a gorilla. He was captured as a baby in the Congo by a Belgian officer and brought to London, where he was offered for sale in the pet department of a London store.

While in the store, he refused to eat or drink, and was fast approaching his end, when he was seen by the late Miss Alice Cunningham, a person endowed with both enterprise and courage. She decided to save the gorilla's life-or at least make an attempt to do so.

With the help of her nephew, she purchased the animal and installed him in a small flat. He was given the name John Daniel. He was at that time between two and three years old.

Alice was the owner of a hat shop, over which she lived, in Sloane Street. To manage her business and at the same time to care for and train a gorilla was, as may well be imagined, no light task. Advice was not lacking; it seldom is. Alice was told that she was mad, that John would not withstand the English climate, that special heating would have to be installed, that suitable food would not be available-and much else besides.

She took none of the advice and warnings. She decided to bring up John as she would a child. And this she set about doing.

John was given the freedom of the flat. In an amazingly short time, and of his own accord, he learnt how to be clean and hygienic. At first he slept in a caged corner of the work-room, but he was soon shifted to an ordinary bed with pillows and blankets, where he slept- for all the world-as though he was a human being

He had a bath every morning, which he loved, chiefly for the games he played with his sponge. He would suck the water out of it or squeeze a cascade over his head. He took his meals sitting at the dining table. He lived chiefly on fruit and vegetables, and drank rather more than the recommended liter of milk a day. His favorite foods were pineapples and rose petals - rather an expensive taste!

He was also very fond of picking the sugar out of coffee cups after lunch. He knew that he was not allowed to do this and so was careful always to hide the coffee cup behind his disengaged hand.



John at Home

Two of John's amusements were trying on hats in the shop and sitting in the window to watch passers-by. The latter occupation resulted in crowds collecting on the pavement, and the former in a loss of customers, for, to those who did not know him, John Daniel was rather a formidable figure. Eventually, Alice had to give up her shop and devote the whole of her time to looking after her unusual charge. It was indeed a challenging task.

John's energy was boundless. Very soon his strength became prodigious. One day, three men joined hands and had a tug-of-war with him. John won that contest with ease. Nevertheless, he was as gentle as kitten, especially when playing with a friend of his, a little girl aged two and a half, whom he would take in his arms and rock soothingly to and fro.

John and I became great friends. I would go to see him whenever I had time. When he heard me arriving, he would come to the door to meet me, take my hand, and lead me wherever he wished to go. And where he wished me to go, I went, for there was no resisting him. He usually took me to a chair and climbed onto my lap. He adored being cuddled and would sit quite still on my knee and, with his arm around my neck, gaze into my face.

Although, full of boisterous fun, John was yet extremely sensitive. He could not bear being scolded, and if Alice was sometimes cross with him, he would lie on the floor and cry like a child. One day, he developed a crack on the sole of one foot. Alice tried to rub in some grease, but John would not submit to the treatment and retired to a corner. But he knew that his mistress was cross with him. So he soon returned, held up his

foot, and remained quite still while it was being dressed and bandaged.

During the summer, Alice used to take John to her cottage in Gloucestershire, and there he would run wild in the garden and have tremendous games with the village children. He had a toy car in which he sat and pedaled himself around. He even had the honor of being photographed while enjoying a glass of drink with the older inhabitants.

It was in London that John performed his cleverest act. It was a warm day, and Alice had put on a light-coloured frock in which to go out. She sat down for a moment before going. John, in his usual way, tried to climb onto her lap, but she, not wanting her dress to be creased, turned him away. John sat on the floor and cried.

Then, getting up suddenly, he went to table where there were some newspapers. Selecting one, he returned to Alice and, spreading it on her lap, climbed up! After that, creases or no creases, she had not the heart to turn him off. He was so intelligent that one almost waited for him to speak.

One day, Alice was asked to lend John to the London Zoo for one afternoon every week so that the Public could see him. He was given a large cage, but as he could not bear to be left alone, the problem of how to keep him company arose. A girl of twelve, who was well acquainted with John, undertook the role of companion.

They were perfectly happy together. The day after their first

appearance, Alice received two letters. One was from a member of the NSPCC, saying it was cruel to shut up a little girl with a gorilla, and the other from a member of the RSPCA repeating the same thing.

During the three years that he spent in London, John grew larger and stronger every week. People who met him on the communal stairway of the flats were terrified and began to complain. He had become so heavy that when he jumped onto furniture, he broke it. John's future became an acute problem. He was then between five and six years old, four foot two in height, very broad and extremely strong.

One day, a wealthy American made an offer to buy him and take him back to Florida. John was to have a huge cage and a garden all to himself. Alice's nephew arranged the deal, no doubt feeling that this was the only saluting to a problem that was becoming more pressing every day. But it came as a great shock to Alice, whose devotion to John was scarcely less than his to her. She expected to be asked to accompany John to Florida and see him settled into his new home. But the American did not consider it necessary, as he had booked a luxury cabin on the ship for John's comfort.



John at the Zoo

I was with John when the American came to see him for the first time, with the object of making friends before taking him away. I think the gorilla must have had some forewarning of his future life, for he would not allow the American to approach. When the latter offered his hand, John scratched it and snatched the man's handkerchief.

The dreaded day arrived. John was taken away in a taxi to begin his long journey to New York and on to Florida. From the moment he left Alice, he began to pine continuously. Every kind of food was offered to him on board the ship, but John would have none of it. Nor would he either drink or sleep. Alice was cabled for and she caught the first available boat, for this was before the days when trans-Atlantic air services were in operation.

But she was too late. John Daniel died of a broken heart three days before his mistress reached him.



John - Sad & Lonely

Choose Your Friends Carefully



The Scorpion



The Tortoise

A Tortoise and a Scorpion lived as neighbors on the bank of a river. The tortoise was very kind hearted. It always talked sweetly and never harmed anyone. On the other hand, the scorpion had a different nature. He was in the habit of using bad language and quarreling without reason. The scorpion chased and stung everyone who came in his way or did not agree with him.

Because of its good nature, all neighbors liked the tortoise. Throughout the day, the tortoise moved around, talking to other animals and helping them in need. Because of its helping nature and sweet language, he had made many friends. Everyone avoided the scorpion because of its bad behavior.

Since no one wanted to talk to the scorpion, it felt very sad and lived all alone, hiding in dark corners under the stones. During the nights only, when everyone had gone to sleep, it would come out in search of food. In the mornings when everyone woke up and moved around, the scorpion again went hiding under the rocks.

Because the tortoise had many friends and the scorpion had none, the scorpion felt very jealous of the tortoise. The scorpion did not realize that the tortoise had made many friends because of its sweet tongue and helping nature.

Whenever the tortoise entered the river, for swimming all animals gathered on its bank to watch. Every one wanted to learn swimming from the tortoise. They knew that amongst all animals living on the bank of the river, only the tortoise was familiar with the places in land and river. They believed that because of this knowledge only the tortoise could teach them swimming at the right place.

The scorpion believed that everyone liked the tortoise because it knew how to swim. He thought until he also learnt swimming, he could not have friends like the tortoise. However, only the tortoise could teach him.

One day the scorpion went to the tortoise and said, "Dear friend! Please teach me how to swim in the river?" Since the tortoise was always helpful to others, it agreed to teach the scorpion swimming.

The tortoise said, "Very well. I will teach you swimming. However, first you have to learn to swim in shallow waters on the bank of the river. Only after learning to swim in the shallow water and developing strength, you should enter the deep waters".

The scorpion agreed to this suggestion. It began to practice under the guidance of the tortoise. After practicing for a few

days, the scorpion could easily swim in the shallow water on the bank of the river. However, even after learning to swim, the scorpion found that no one approached him to learn swimming under the guidance of the tortoise because of his sweet nature.

The scorpion was all the more jealous of the popularity of the tortoise. The scorpion thought, if he could somehow kill the tortoise, he would be left as the swimmer amongst the animals. Then other animals will have no other choice. They will have to come to him to learn swimming and become his friends.

He made a plan to kill the tortoise. One day the scorpion went to the tortoise and said. “You have taught me swimming in shallow water. I also want to learn to swim in the swift current in the middle of the river. Could you carry me on your back to the middle of the river and teach me there.”

As a matter of fact, the scorpion had no desire to swim in the middle of river. He wanted to take the tortoise to the middle of the river, where he could kill it with its poison. He thought that after being stung with his poison in the middle of the river, the tortoise would become unconscious. Then he will not be able to swim back to the bank and will be drowned in the river. After the death of the tortoise he would become the only swimmer and everyone will become his friend.



The Gentle & Friendly Tortoise

The tortoise did not suspect the evil motive of the scorpion and they swam together for some length in the river. When they had reached where the water was somewhat deeper and current was swift, the scorpion thought of killing the tortoise without any delay. However, they had gone quite far from the bank of the river. The tortoise was not certain whether he could swim back to the bank of the river on his own.

Only the teacher knows, how much the pupil has learnt. Without the help of his coach, the learner can never perform satisfactorily. For this very reason, in the scriptures, the status of the teacher has been considered equal to that of the God.

The scorpion thought, if his teacher, the tortoise, told him that he had learnt sufficiently well to swim long distances, he would sting the tortoise there itself and go back safely to the bank. He had to think of some way to know whether he had become an expert swimmer.

He told the tortoise, “I just remembered that I had asked a friend to meet me today at my house at the bank. If I am delayed my friend may go back without meeting me. I have to go back to ask my friend to wait till I return. Can I swim back to the bank on my own without your help now?”

The teacher always knows more than the pupil. A student can never befool the teacher by telling lies.

The tortoise became suspicious. He could understand what the scorpion had in mind. He thought, why should the scorpion think about going back alone without learning to swim?

The tortoise said, “Yes you can swim back to the bank on your own. However you will have to learn a few tricks of swimming in the fast following current. It is easy to swim, where the current is slow. The current here is too fast for you to swim. If you want, I can quickly teach you to swim in such swift current. After that you may go back on your own?” where the current is slow. The current here is too fast for you to swim. If you want, I can quickly teach you to swim in such swift current. After that you may go back on your own?”

The scorpion thought that he had befooled the tortoise. The tortoise had not suspected anything fishy. Now he could learn the method as well as kill the tortoise. After that the he could happily go back to the bank of the river.

The scorpion said, Okay! Please teach me the method!

The tortoise said, “The force of gravity pulls you down under water. In order to oppose this force, you have to produce an upward force opposite to the force of gravity. While swimming in the middle of the river you also have to face the forward, horizontal force of water, which is not there in the still water of a pool or at the bank of the river. For creating this force you will have to practice jumping up and down by pushing the water downwards. In course of practice, when you will fall down, I will support you on my back, till you learn to support yourself.”

The scorpion was convinced. As told by the tortoise, he held his breath, and jumped upwards with all his might. As soon as he jumped up in the air, the tortoise immediately dived into the river, leaving the scorpion without any support.

The scorpion sank deep down in the river and was drowned.

Chivalry among Animals

“Nature Red In Tooth And Claw” has been almost a catch-phrase, for a long, long time, perhaps especially by people who forget that man is a hundred times redder in gun and bomb! “Red in tooth and claw” implies and certainly seems to suggest that animals are always fighting and killing each other. Often, the phrase is used as a sort of justification for man's own far more destructive violence; and sometimes it is used to support the argument that the “superior” human race has long ago grown out of “jungle” morals and has advanced to higher codes of behaviors.

Those who hold on to this view of nature's world, and are blind to all other elements in it, would probably have been much startled and taken aback to encounter the heading, “No murder in the Animal Kingdom” at the top of an article published some time ago in the *Irish Press* by its scientific correspondent. The writer, however, hastened to preface his theme with the explanation that by murder he means the vindictive killing of fellow members of the same species.

Killing for food is a totally different matter, as there is no malice; no wish to hurt, as the carnivorous animal does not know that his victim is an animal with feelings like his own. To him his prey is simply self-moving food: and as a rule - there may be a few exceptions. Killing for food in the wilds is done so quickly that death is virtually instantaneous. This is especially so in the case of animals who stalk their prey unseen and

unheard, so that the victim is pounced upon and killed without becoming conscious of danger threatening. It is probable that death in the wilds; as inflicted by one animal on another to get its food, is far more humane than many so-called “natural deaths” suffered by humans.

The scientific correspondent, therefore, does not class the quick killing for food as murder. He is referring to combats between animals of the same species, and is setting forth some of the results of a close and prolonged study of combats between animals of the same species carried out by a German professor and his colleagues.

The writer goes on to give some very interesting examples of animal combats, different species being included, from snakes to wolves and birds, showing that each of the species cited seems to have an innate code of honour which inhibits the stronger - the victor, from taking vengeance on the weaker-the defeated one; provided that the weaker makes the recognized sign of surrender. Among the many examples given are the following. And it will be noted that these do not come only from the higher animals.



SNAKES: Snakes are particularly honorable fighters. The rattle-snakes, for instance, could kill each other with a bite. Instead, they fight with strict rules which forbid biting. One finally pins the other to the ground, then rises, and allows the defeated one to slide away.

LIZARDS: The grotesque and rather fearsome looking iguana marine lizard of Galapagos Island was discovered to be a real gentleman. The iguana fights only when provoked to defend his several mates and his home strip of lava rock. At no time are claws and fangs used. The combatants push and shove each other with their heads. When at last, one of them realizes that the other is the stronger and that he himself is defeated, he assumes the posture of surrender by crouching down. At once the victor backs away, allowing his defeated foe to beat and honorable and safe retreat.



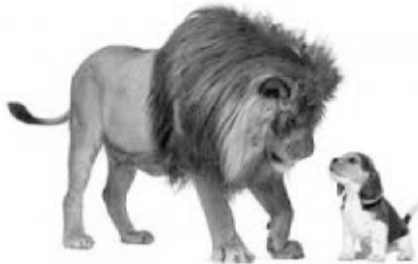
Iguanas in Combat

WOLVES: During a fight between wolves, when the weaker one realizes that defeat is at hand, it exposes its throat to the victor for the fatal bite; but the latter then withdraws and the defeated wolf goes away safely home.

The correspondent quotes Professor Enibl-Eibesfeldt, whose findings he is considering, as saying, “Fights between individuals of the same species almost never end in death, and rarely result in serious injury to either combatant”. He cites also dogs, sheep, goats, deer and other animals as having this innate code of honor.

In a later issue of the *Irish* press, there is related by another writer, Captain Mac, a true story told by the great Russian, **Leo Tolstoy**, which seems to suggest that this innate code of honor among animals is not all limited in its operation to members of the same species.

A little dog was thrown alive into a lion's cage to be eaten. Faced with the big strong lion, the dog knew it would have no chance in active self defense. So when the lion approached, he lay down in the canine attitude of surrender on his back with uplifted paws. The lion touched him, turned him over, and made a gesture of friendliness. When meat was thrown into the cage, the lion tore a piece and gave it to his adopted friend. For a whole year they lived there, eating, sleeping and playing together. Then the dog became ill and died. The lion was



inconsolable. Lying down, he took his little pal between his paws, and for days remained thus, refusing to eat and pining away. Then he himself died of grief.

Now leaving the matter of combats, there are no doubt many others kinds of action and non action which definitely imply the presence of chivalry and compassion in animals, including birds.

For instance, there are a number of recorded incidents telling of cats, dogs, rats and other animals spontaneously acting as intelligent and sympathetic guides to their blinded comrades.

Now long ago I read of a young elephant who faithfully acted as guide to his blind mother for many years, readily leaving his play with other young elephants to come to her assistance the moment he heard her bellowing for him.

There have been many instances of animals devotedly looking after friends in illness, an outstanding examples being given by George Westbeau in his remarkable book, **Little Tyke**, in which he relates the most fascinating and given by George Westbeau in his remarkable book, **Little Tyke**, in which he relates the most fascinating and amazing story of his vegetarian lioness. As a cub, little Tyke had badly burnt her paws. When she sometimes cried with pain, she was soothed and helped by the devoted attentions of her special friend, a six months old kitten named Pinky.

Among birds there are many examples of chivalry and

compassion. A cock robin adopted a nestful of presumably orphaned young thrushes, spending hours flying about to bring food to put into the ever open beaks of these youngsters. A thrush was observed carrying a sparrow on his back as he flew down to the meals provided for birds by a kindly housewife. The sparrow had an injured wing and could not fly. Many more such instances have been described.

From all these and unknown number of others, it seems that nature's world is not nearly so “red in tooth and claw” as some people imagine.

In his notable book, **Mutual Aid- A Factor in Evolution**, the well-known Russian scientist and politician, Price Kripotkin, devotes two whole chapters to a study of mutual aid among animals, stressing throughout the book that this urge to mutual helpfulness is a far more significant and influential factor in animals' life, throughout its evolution, than fighting and competition.

That the animals themselves do not realize that such actions and inhibitions are chivalrous does not in the least detract from the significance and importance of the presence within them of the spirit of chivalry and compassion. It is largely the presence of this spirit in both animals and humans (through the latter have often smothered it), that strengthen the very right emphasis on the kinship between human and sub human, also justifying and strengthening undaunted faith in, and work for the fulfillment of **Isaiah's** great vision of the time, when humans of all races, and

animals of all species, will dwell together in fellowship and peace.



**Defend the weak, Protect both young and old,
Never desert your friends.
Give justice to all, Be fearless in battle &
Always ready to defend the right.**

Brian Jacques

**Thoughtfulness For others, generosity, modesty and
self-respect are the qualities which make a real
gentleman or lady.**

*Thomas H. Huxley
(1825 - 1895)*

Worthington



Worthington was a friendly little cat with long, grey hair and a long, bushy tail. He had green eyes and extremely long whiskers. He lived in a little old cottage on the edge of a wood deep in the heart of the country with a young man and his wife who worked for a nearby farmer.

Worthington was a very happy cat, as the young man, Jim Fletcher, and his wife, Suzie, both adored animals. He was fed only the most expensive tinned cat food and was frequently given treats of liver and fish as well as tidbits from his owner's meals. He was brushed every single day and taken to the vet at the very first sign of anything being wrong with him. He really was the most pampered cat for miles around.

This suited Worthington very well and he led a contented life with very little happening to disturb the calm. After break-fast in the morning, he would lie stretched out on the window sill, sleeping and enjoying the heat from the sun as it streamed through the window. In the afternoons, when the sun moved

away from the house, he would go outside to sit and sleep in the long grass in the sunshine once more. The evenings he would spend curled up in front of the fire on top of Jim's or Suzie's knee and groom himself when he was being petted.

You may think he led a very lazy sort of life, just lying around all the time, but it was the sort of life Worthington liked. Besides, as he might have told you himself had he been able to speak, he was really storing his energy for the night time, which was when Worthington went hunting. That was what he liked doing best of all. He caught a lot, too, so all in all, he was very happy with his life.

Then one day, something happened that was to change everything completely.

The morning had started off as usual. Worthington had his breakfast at the same time as Jim and Suzie, and then settled down on the window sill for his morning snooze. It seemed he had just drifted away when a loud noise awoke him.

Worthington looked round him, puzzled. Suzie was in the room doing something- strange in itself, for like Jim, she was usually gone to work by this time. What was even more strange was what she was doing. She took out one of the cardboard boxes she had been collecting recently for some reason or other and was taking the ornaments from around the room, wrapping them up in newspaper and putting them into it.

To Worthington, this appeared extremely odd. He had never seen Suzie doing this before, and had no idea what she was up to,

but he was sure it wasn't good. As he sat on the window sill, he twitched his long, silky whiskers and swished his bushy tail from side to side angrily.

It was when she took out her suitcase and started filling it with clothes that he started to feel really worried. He had never seen Suzie seen Suzie putting things in cardboard boxes before, but he had seen her packing suitcases, and the memories he had of this were quite painful. He remembered the night; not very long ago - when Suzie and Jim had picked up these same suitcases and walked out of the cottage together. He had not seen them again for a week! He had not liked that very much as he was very fond of Jim and Suzie and did not like being on his own every day, and he was able to go in and out very easily through the cat flap on the back door, but even so he did not like it very much. Worthington was used to human company, to sitting on people's knees and being petted. This looked even more worrying.

After packing most of the clothes, Suzie went through to the kitchen and started packing dishes. Poor Worthington sensed that something dreadful was about to happen. Perhaps they were going away forever!

He went up to Suzie and rubbed himself against her legs. He mewed plaintively.

“Don't go without me, Suzie!” he seemed to say.

Suzie was surprised when she felt Worthington rubbing against her. When she looked down and saw him looking up pitifully at her, she laughed.

“Oh Worthington! You do look worried. Have you noticed me packing? Don't worry about it. You're coming, too.” And with that, she knelt down and tried to comfort him. Speaking kindly to him, she explained what was going on.

“Jim's been offered a better job on another farm. I know it means moving, but the pay's better and we think it will be worth it. You'll soon get used to living somewhere else. Don't worry”.

Poor Worthington, he didn't understand a word that Suzie was saying. He knew she was speaking kindly to him and that helped, but he wasn't any wiser at all as to what was going on.

All that day, as Suzie went about her packing, Worthington did not leave her side for a moment. He was determined never to lose sight of her, so that when she left, she would not be able to avoid taking him with her. When Jim came back from work that night, Suzie told him about the way Worthington had been behaving. Jim tried to comfort Worthington as well, but to no avail. That evening Suzie and Jim were very busy finishing the packing. Worthington watched them constantly.

He did not dare to leave them alone - he was so afraid of being left behind. Not even when they were both fast asleep did he dare to budge, even though he longed very much to go out hunting. It was a dark night, with the moon hidden behind clouds, and would have been a very good night for hunting, but he watched them doggedly. All night he resisted the temptation - even though it was so great - until the early morning, when it became just too much for him. Lying in his bed underneath the open window, he had been able to hear the sounds of mice and

shrews and all sorts of creatures going about their business all night long. In the end, it was just too much for a cat to miss.

If he was quick, he decided, he would be able to go out, catch a mouse, and be back before they were awake. As soon as he had made up his mind, he jumped out of bed and crept quietly out of the house.

As they were moving that day, Jim and Suzie were up bright and early. There was no sign of Worthington when they awoke. He had got caught up in his hunting and forgotten the time.

The farmer for whom Jim was going to be working, had arranged for one of his trucks to come and move all their furniture and possessions for them, and it arrived promptly at eight o' clock. By nine o'clock it was completely packed and Jim and Suzie were ready to leave. They looked everywhere for Worthington, calling for him all the time, but there was no sign of him anywhere. As they had to meet the truck at their new cottage, ready to help unpack it, they could wait no longer and had to leave without him.

When Worthington came back from his hunting expedition, triumphantly carrying a mouse, they had gone!

He first became aware of it when he jumped through the cat flap into the kitchen to find it quite empty and deserted. Imagine the feeling of a cat on such an occasion! He felt desolate. His owners, whom he loved and depended on for food and comfort, had gone and left him on his own. Frantically he went from room to room, looking for them, unable to believe that they had really gone.

“They wouldn't leave me,” he thought to himself. But they had. And they had taken all their belongings with them. The cottage was completely empty. It did not look as if they would ever be coming back. Worthington sat down in the middle of the kitchen and looked around him unhappily.

“What am I to do?” he wondered. And he could not think of anything at all.

As he sat there, he noticed the mouse he had caught lying on the floor where he had left it. Having nothing else to do, he solemnly ate it. After that, he went outside and sat on the grass to watch the road. Maybe they would come back -maybe. As they had taken all their things with them, it did not look as though they would. All morning he sat on the grass in the sunshine, brooding over his terrible fate. He supposed he would have to find somebody else to look after him. Meanwhile, he just sat there feeling sorry for himself.

Just as he was about to get up, as there didn't seem any point in sitting there any more, he heard a familiar sound. He looked down the driveway eagerly and could not believe his eyes. There, coming towards him was Jim's car!

They had come back for him!

When Jim stopped the car, Suzie got out went over to Worthington. “Ah, there you are, Worthington, you naughty boy! Where have you been? We've been so worried about you.”

Worthington looked up at her happily. He had thought he would never see her again. Suzie picked him up and took him to the car. Worthington struggled a bit. He liked Suzie, but he didn't like cars!

“Now stop you struggling!” Suzie commanded him.

She sat in the car with Worthington on her knee and turned to Jim with a happy smile on her face. “Thank goodness we found him,” she said.

As the car was driving off, Worthington looked unhappily around him at the inside of the car. He did so hate cars, he always felt sick in them. But at least he did have his people, so he supposed everything would be all right. Suzie stroked him kindly. “You will like your new home, Worthington,” She said. “Honestly you will”.



Suzie with Worthington

What Goes Around Comes Around



Bryan helps the Old Lady

One day, a man saw an old lady, stranded on the side of the road. Even in the dim light of day, he could see she needed help. So he pulled up in front of her Mercedes and got out. His Pontiac was still sputtering when he approached her.

Even with the smile on his face, she was worried. No one had stopped to help for the last hour or so. Was he going to hurt her? He didn't look safe; he looked poor and hungry. He could see that she was frightened, standing out there in the cold. He knew how she felt. It was those chills which only fear can put in you. He said, "I'm here to help you, ma'am. Why don't you wait in the car where it's warm? By the way, my name is Bryan Anderson."

Well, all she had was a flat tire, but for an old lady, that was bad enough. Bryan crawled under the car looking for a place to put the jack, skinning his knuckles a time or two. Soon he was able to change the tire. But he had to get dirty and his hands hurt.

As he was tightening up the lug nuts, she rolled down the window and began to talk to him. She told him that she was from St. Louis and was only just passing through. She couldn't thank him enough for coming to her aid.

Bryan just smiled as he closed her trunk. The lady asked how much she owed him. Any amount would have been all right with her. She already imagined all the awful things that could have happened had he not stopped. Bryan never thought twice about being paid. This was not a job to him. This was helping someone in need, and God knows there were plenty, who had given him a hand in the past. He had lived his whole life that way, and it never occurred to him to act any other way.

He told her that if she really wanted to pay him back, the next time she saw someone who needed help, she could give that person the assistance they needed, and Bryan added, "And think of me."

He waited until she started her car and drove off. It had been a cold and depressing day, but he felt good as he headed for home, disappearing into the twilight.

A few miles down the road the lady saw a small cafe. She went in to grab a bite to eat, and take the chill off before she made the last leg of her trip home. It was a dingy looking restaurant. Outside were two old gas pumps. The whole scene was unfamiliar to her. The waitress came over and brought a clean towel to wipe her wet hair. She had a sweet smile, one that even being on her feet for the whole day couldn't erase. The lady noticed the waitress was nearly eight months pregnant, but she never let the strain

and aches change her attitude. The old lady wondered how someone who had so little could be so giving to a stranger. Then she remembered Bryan.

After the lady finished her meal, she paid with a hundred dollar bill. The waitress quickly went to get change for her hundred dollar bill, but the old lady had slipped right out the door. She was gone by the time the waitress came back. The waitress wondered where the lady could be. Then she noticed something written on the napkin.

There were tears in her eyes when she read what the lady wrote: “You don't owe me anything. I have been there too. Somebody once helped me out, the way I'm helping you. If you really want to pay me back, here is what you do, do not let this chain of love end with you.” Under the napkin were four more \$100 bills.

Well, there were tables to clear, sugar bowls to fill, and people to serve, but the waitress made it through another day. That night when she got home from work and climbed into bed, she was thinking about the money and what the lady had written.

How could the lady have known how much she and her husband needed it? With the baby due next month, it was going to be hard... She knew how worried her husband was, and as he lay sleeping next to her, she gave him a soft kiss and whispered soft and low, “Everything's going to be all right. I love you, Bryan Anderson.

There is an old saying **“What goes around comes around.”**

Animal Mothers



A MOTHER raccoon strolls through the woods with four bright-eyed and eager babies, following single file behind her. It is the first time they have been at large in an exciting, unfamiliar world.

Suddenly, without warning, their mother halts abruptly. The babies' inexperienced noses cannot identify an odd scent, but their mother knows. It's a dog! Within a moment, she had shoed her surprised young ones up a tree. Had they hesitated even seconds, she would have clouted them sharply to teach them obedience!

Animal mothers take their responsibilities just as seriously as humans. From the day her babies are born, the animal mother's number one job is that of protecting her children. She works at it constantly, fights fiercely if necessary to protect her babies from harm. Even the most timid mothers stand up to enemies when they must.

The giraffe, always gentle, usually knows but one thing to do when in danger -- run. But when she has a helpless calf, she has been known to stand her ground even against a lion. A timid,

white-tailed deer will trample a rattlesnake, even a coyote, if they threaten her children. A walrus mother has been known to attack a boat if she thinks that it will harm her family. One observer saw a mother squirrel with a nest of half grown offspring hiss, chatter, rise up on her hind legs and actually box at a hawk who intruded and thought he had found his dinner.

Even the 'frightened rabbit' is courageous sometimes. Once, a rabbit gave a terrier the surprise of its life when the dog blundered into the nest of her young. Instead of running, the mother rabbit turned and piled into him, her hindlegs kicking like pistons. The terrier yipped in amazement and bolted!

The hippo mother has one of the oddest protecting jobs. Her babies are ugly, big-headed, fat, yet they are appealing, and their mother's proud devotion is both comical and touching. Her one hazardous job is to protect her baby from its father's immense bulk. A baby hippo can swim before he can walk, and sometimes, to escape crocodiles or his enormously clumsy father, he rides on top of his mother's broad back.



Animal mothers are in charge of what might be called a 'survival school'. Their children must be taught very early how to secure food, and how to protect themselves against enemies. All newborn animals must learn many lessons. How well he learns often determines how much he eats and how long he lives.

An English writer once saw a lioness carefully instructing her cubs in the use of claws for stripping a carcass and holding the meat. The cubs sat like school children watching a teacher - which, indeed, they were.

The leopard begins training her offspring to hunt as soon as they can waddle. She begins by teaching them to stalk her moving tail. As they attempt to attack the tip, she flips it out of their way, keeping them at it until they can finally catch it.

Swimming lessons sometimes cause animal mothers to resort to force. Baby otters are afraid to venture into the water. The mother tries wheedling first, then takes them on her back into the water. Finally, when they least expect it, she quickly slips out from under them! Spluttering and squeaking indignantly, they dog-paddle to shore and are very soon swimming on their own.

The mother fox has a rigid training period for her young. One naturalist wrote: "I watched a mother fox near my home drop a mouse before her babies, and she nearly took the hide off the little one that missed it!"

Many young animals must be taught to stand completely still - to "freeze"-at the first sign of danger. No animal knows this better than a deer.

In the forest, one observer saw a doe with a tiny fawn. At a sudden noise, the doe stood still like a statue, looking and listening. But the baby wanted to play and kept running around on unsteady legs. At last, the doe raised her forefoot and gently but firmly set it on the fawn's back, pressing her baby down into the grass, thus hiding him and keeping him still.

Nature took care of the Kangaroo mother. She has a custom-built cradle in the form of a pouch. A full grown, powerful kangaroo may stand five feet high, but at birth the baby is less than an inch long - about the size of a new-born mouse. The baby stays in his mother's pouch, completely sheltered and protected for several months after birth. One of nature's intriguing sights is to see a tall kangaroo, hopping along with a bright-eyed baby peering warily out of her pouch.

The mother possum has a similar arrangement. She may have fifteen to twenty babies in a litter, each no bigger than a housefly. As soon as it is born, each baby begins a mad scramble for its mother's pouch to nurse. In about nine weeks, the little ones venture out of the pouch and cling to the mother's back like strap hangers on a subway. They wrap their bare nails around their mother's tail to hang on.



Baby monkeys are born with the ability to cling and support their own weight. An infant chimpanzee clings to his mother's thigh while she swings through the trees by her hands; her tucked-up legs act a kind of safety net, should the baby lose its grip.

The gorilla builds for herself and her baby a nest of leafy boughs high up a tree. The polar bear mother tunnels out a nursery in the snow, and at the end of her tunnel. She scoops and shapes a comfortable cub room.

The sea otter floats on her back, holding her baby snugly against her breast with her forelegs. Cradled in its mother's arms, the baby otter nurses and sleeps, rocked by the motion of the waves.

When a muskrat family is flooded out of its home, each of the babies must be carried to safety in his mother's mouth, no matter how many trips it takes. A kangaroo rat mother—her burrow invaded—will hop away with her arms full of babies. If a mother otter must flee for her life, she clutches her pup to her breast, plunges deep into water, and comes up again only when the little one is out of breath.

The magnificent male lion, the king of the beasts, is endowed with a powerful body, unusual beauty and a roaring voice. But who has most of the responsibility for the family's everyday living and survival? It is the lioness. Faster and more lithe when searching for food, she is usually the scout who finds the prey, is often the executioner, while the lordly male lends his superior power only when needed! And when she has hunted and

eventually discovered food for herself and her cubs, who eats first? It is the male, of course. One observer saw a male lion eat his fill for an hour before permitting his family near the food.

Another resemblance to human motherhood occurs in the preparation that goes on before the birth of babies.

The elephant, in particular, makes arrangements almost the same as humans do. She gets a female friend –nicknamed “Auntie” by the Africans–to help her. This is usually an older and more experience animal. Together they choose a screened spot, clearing it off carefully. The herd waits far enough away for privacy, but near enough to help should danger approach. After the baby arrives, Auntie stands guard while mother cleans off the woolly three-foot tall body and gets him on his feet. Mother and Auntie remain with him for the next few weeks, keeping him between them during danger.

Most mothers of “herd” animals separate from the group a few days before the babies are due, and go to a sheltered place. Often several prospective mothers retire together in a sort of “maternity ward”.

As with human mothers, animals enjoy playing with their children. Sometimes, of course, they must discipline their youngsters; at other times they must make sacrifices for them.



Baby beavers are watched over by their mother for at least a year. One observer saw two baby beavers swimming around awkwardly, holding twigs in their tiny hands, tussling over them like playful children. Later, their mother cuddled one baby in her arms and rolled over and over in the water.

Monkey children are disciplined just like human children. They are always getting into scraps and, on being cuffed, howl at the top of their lungs. If a baby grabs a berry or leaf he is not supposed to eat, and puts it into his mouth, his mother does not hesitate to pry open the jaws and rake out the forbidden article!

All animal mothers are protective. They all work hard at securing food and homes for their young. For some it is much tougher than for others.

The mother gray seal of the North Atlantic is enormously fat before the birth of her pups. She comes ashore when it is time for them to be born, and then remains on shore without eating food of any kind until the pups are weaned - a period of about three weeks. The nursing seal mother may lose more than one third of her body-weight before her pups can fend for themselves. period of about three weeks. The nursing seal mother may lose more than one third of her body-weight before her pups can fend for themselves.

The mother polar bear is special, too - one of the most devoted mothers in the animal kingdom. In January, she digs a lair for the birth of one or two cubs. She stays in her den, frequently as late as April, feeding and keeping her babies warm. And she keeps

them with her for two years, not having any more babies during that time.

Mothers everywhere, whether they are human or animal, have many of the same traits, and must face many of the same problems. Animal mothers also feed, protect, groom, train and discipline their young ones just like a human mother would!



Forgiving - A Gift : Christmas Story



The Christmas of 1949, we didn't have a tree. My dad had as much pride as anybody, I suppose, so he wouldn't just say that we couldn't afford one. When I mentioned it, my mother said that we weren't going to have one this year, that we couldn't afford one, and even if we could – it was stupid to clutter up your house with a dead tree. I wanted a tree badly though, and I thought – in my naive way – that if we had one, everybody would feel better.

About three days before Christmas, I was out collecting for my paper route. It was fairly late – long after dark – it was snowing and very cold.

I went to the apartment building to try to catch a customer who hadn't paid me for nearly two months – she owed me seven dollars. Much to my surprise, she was home. She invited me in and not only did she pay me, she gave me a dollar tip! It was a windfall for me – I now had eight whole dollars.

What happened next was totally unplanned. On the way home, I walked past a Christmas tree lot and the idea hit me.

The selection wasn't very good because it was so close to the holiday, but there was this one real nice tree. It had been a very expensive tree and no one had bought it; now it was so close to Christmas that the man was afraid no one would.

He wanted ten dollars for it, but when I – in my gullible innocence – told him I only had eight, he said he might sell it for that innocence – told him I only had eight, he said he might sell it for that. I really didn't want to spend the whole eight dollars on the tree, but it was so pretty that I finally agreed.

I dragged it all the way home – about a mile, I think – and I tried hard not to damage it or break off any limbs. The snow helped to cushion it, and it was still in pretty good shape when I got home.

You can't imagine how proud and excited I was. I propped it up against the railing on our front porch and went in. My heart was bursting as I announced that I had a surprise.

I got Mom and Dad to come to the front door and then I switched on the porch light.

“Where did you get that tree?” my mother exclaimed.

But it wasn't the kind of exclamation that indicates pleasure.

“I bought it up on Main Street. Isn't it just the most perfect tree you ever saw?” I said, trying to maintain my enthusiasm.

“Where did you get the money?” Her tone was accusing and it began to dawn on me that this wasn't going to turn out as I had planned.

“From my paper route.” I explained about the customer who had paid me.

“And you spent the whole eight dollars on this tree?” she exclaimed.

She went into a tirade about how stupid it was to spend my money on a dumb tree that would be thrown out and burned in a few days. She told me how irresponsible I was and how I was just like my dad with all those foolish, romantic, noble notions about fairy tales and happy endings and that it was about time I grew up and learned some sense about the realities of life and how to take care of money and spend it on things that were needed and not on silly things.

She said that I was going to end up in the poorhouse because I believe in stupid things like Christmas trees, things that didn't amount to anything.

I just stood there. My mother had never talked to me like that before and I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I felt awful and I began to cry. Finally, she reached out and snapped off the porch light.



I dragged the Tree Home; It was a Sad Christmas

“Leave it there,” she said. “Leave that tree there till it rots, so every time we see it, we'll all be reminded of how stupid the men in this family are.”

Then she stormed up the stairs to her bedroom and we didn't see her until the next day.

Dad and I brought the tree in and we made a stand for it. He got out the box of ornaments and we decorated it as best as we could; but men aren't too good at things like that, and besides, it wasn't the same without mom. There were a few presents under it by Christmas day – although I can't remember a single one of them – but Mom wouldn't have anything to do with it.

It was the worst Christmas I ever had.

Fast forward to today, Judi and I married in August of 1963, and dad died on October 10 of that year. Over the next eight years, we lived in many places. Mom sort of divided up the year – either living with my sister Jary or with us.

In 1971 we were living in Wichita, Kansas – Lincoln was about seven, Brendan was three and Kristen was a baby. Mom was staying with us during the holidays. On Christmas Eve I stayed up very late. I was totally alone with my thoughts, alternating between joy and melancholy, and I got to thinking about my paper route, that tree, what my mother had said to me and how Dad had tried to make things better.

I heard a noise in the kitchen and discovered that it was mom. She couldn't sleep either and had gotten up to make herself a cup

of hot tea – which was her remedy for just about everything. As she waited for the water to boil, she walked into the living room and discovered me there. She saw my open Bible and asked me what I was reading. When I told her, she asked if I would read it to her and I did.

When the kettle began to whistle, she went and made her tea. I told her how happy I was that she was with us for Christmas and how I wished that Dad could have lived to see his grandchildren and to enjoy this time because he always loved Christmas so. It got very quiet for a moment and then she said, “Do you remember that time on Twelve Mile Road when you bought that tree with your paper route money?”

“Yes,” I said, “I’ve just been thinking about it you know.”

She hesitated for a long moment, as though she were on the verge of something that was bottled up so deeply inside her soul that it might take surgery to get it out. Finally, great tears started down her face and she cried, “Oh, son, please forgive me.”



Forgiving : A Gift

“That time and that Christmas have been a burden on my heart for twenty-five years. I wish your dad were here so I could tell him how sorry I am for what I said. Your dad was a good man and it hurts me to know that he went to his grave without ever hearing me say that I was sorry for that night. Nothing will ever make what I said right, but you need to know that your dad never did have any money sense (which was all too true).

We were fighting all the time – though not in front of you – we were two months behind in our house payments, we had no money for groceries, your dad was talking about going back to Arkansas and that tree was the last straw. I took it all out on you. It doesn't make what I did right, but I hoped that someday, when you were older, you would understand. I've wanted to say something for ever so long and I'm so glad it's finally out.”

Well, we both cried a little and held each other and I forgave her – it wasn't hard, you know.

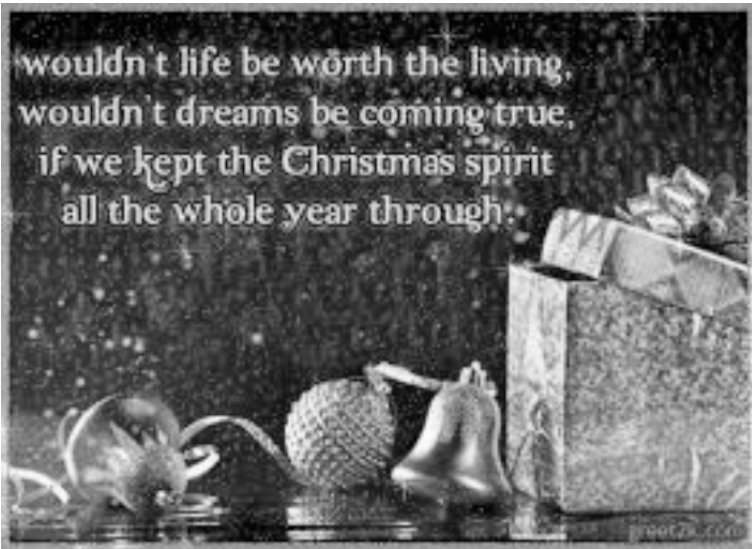
Then we talked for a long time, and I did understand; I saw what I had never seen and the bitterness and sadness that had gathered up in me for all those years gradually washed away.

It was marvelously simple.

The great gifts of this season – or any season – can't be put under the tree; you can't wear them or eat them or drive them or play with them. **We spend so much time on the lesser gifts – toys, sweaters, jewelry, the mint, anise and dill of Christmas – and so little on the great gifts – understanding, grace, peace and forgiveness.** It's no wonder that the holiday leaves us empty,

because when it's over, the only reminders we have are the dirty dishes and the January bills.

Christmas Story From "Hugs for the Holidays."



Christmas is not as much about
opening our present
as opening our hearts.

Janice Maeditere



The Song of the Elephants



This entire story centers in the life of an elephant herd –the great acacia pod feast. The feast is provided by the two old “nurse maids” of the herd, whose duty it is to look after the young ones, feed them and protect them from danger. The contentment generated after the feast as the great bellies rumble is, in fact, the elephant song.

The herd was spread out down both banks of a dry river that was gouged through a low line of flinty hills. The forest was greener and more luxuriant here in the drainage where the deep roots had found subterranean water. The acacia trees were in heavy pod. The pods looked like long brown biscuits, clustered at the tips of the branches sky feet above ground level.

Two elephant cows moved in on one of the heavily laden trees. They were the herd matriarchs, both of them over seventy years of age, gaunt old dowagers with tattered ears and rheumy eyes. The bond between them was over half a century strong. They were half-sisters, successive calves of the same mother. The

elder had been weaned at the birth of her sibling and had helped to nursemaid her as tenderly as would a human elder sister. They had shared a long life, and had drawn from it a wealth of experience and wisdom to add to the deep ancestral instinct with which they had been endowed at birth.

They had seen each other through drought and famine and sickness. They had shared the joy of good rains and abundant food. They knew all the secret hide-a-ways in the mountains and the water-holes in the desert places. They knew where the hunters lurked and the boundaries of the sanctuaries within which they and the herd were secure. They had played midwife to each other, later helping to rear each other's newborn calves to maturity.

Their own breeding days were long past, but the herd and its safety were still their duty and their main concern. Their pleasure and their responsibility were the younger cows and the new calves that carried their own blood-lines.

Perhaps it was fanciful to endow brute animals with such human emotions as love and respect, or to believe that they understand blood relationships or the continuity of their line, but no one who has seen the old cows quietness; the boisterous youngsters with raised ears and a sharp angry squeal, or watched the herd follow their lead with unquestioning obedience, could doubt their authority. No one who had seen them caress the younger calves with a gentle trunk or lift them over the steep and difficult places on the elephant roads could question their concern. When danger threatened they would push the young ones behind them

and rush forward to the defense with ears wide and trunks rolled ready to fling out and strike down an enemy.

The great bulls with towering frames and massive girth might overshadow them in size, but not in cunning and ferocity. The bulls' tusks were longer and thicker, sometimes weighing well over one hundred pounds. The two old cows had spindly misshapen ivory, worn and cracked and discolored with age, and the bones showed through the scarred grey skin, but they were constant in their duty to the herd. The bulls kept only a loose association with the breeding herd. However the old cows stayed with the herd. They formed the solid foundation on which the social structure of the herd was based. The tight-knit community of breeding cows and their calves relied heavily upon their wisdom and experience for its everyday needs and survival.

Now the two sisters move in perfect accord to the giant acacia laden with seed pods, and each took up their position on either side of the trunk. They laid their foreheads against the rough bark. The trunk was over four feet in diameter, unyielding as a column of marble. A hundred feet above the ground the high branches formed an intricate tracery and the pods and green leaves a dome against the sky.

The two old cows began to rock and forth in unison with the tree-trunk between their foreheads. At first the acacia was rigid, resisting even their great strength. They worked on, pushing and heaving, first one then the other throwing her weight in opposite directions, as the tiny shudders ran up the tree and, high above them, the top branches trembled as through a breeze had

passed. Still they worked rhythmically and the trunk began to move. A single ripe pod came loose from its twig and fell a hundred feet to crack against the skull of one of the cows. She closed her watery old eyes tightly but never broke the rhythm of her heaves. Between them the tree-trunk swayed and shuddered, ponderously at first and then more briskly. Another pod and then another plopped down as heavily as the first drops of a thunderstorm.

The younger animals of the herd realized what they were up to, flapped their ears with excitement and hurried forward. The acacia pods, rich in protein, were a favorite delicacy. They crowded gleefully around the two cows; snatching up the scattering of pods as they fell and stuffing them far down their throats with their trunks by the thrashing. The pods and loose twigs showered down thick as hail. Rattling and bouncing from the backs of the elephants crowded beneath.

The two cows, still braced like a pair of book-ends, kept at it until the shower of falling pods began to dry up. Only when the last one was shaken from the branches did they step back from the tree-trunk. Their backs were sprinkled with dead leaves and twigs, bits of dry bark and velvety pods, and they stood ankle-



**The two sisters
rock the acacia
tree trunk**

deep in the fallen debris. They reached down and delicately picked out the golden pods with the dexterous fleshy tips of their trunks and curled them up into their gaping mouths, their triangular bottom lips drooping open. The ooze from their facial glands wetting their cheeks like tears of pleasure, they began to feed..

The herd was pressed closely around them at the feast that they had laid. As their long serpentine trunks swung and curled, and the pods were shoveled into their throats, there was a soft sound that seemed to reverberate through each of their great grey frames. It was a gentle rumbling in many different keys, and the sound was interspersed with tiny creaking, gurgling squeaks, barely audible to the human ear. It was a strangely contented chorus, in which even the youngest beasts joined. It was a sound that seemed to express joy of life and to confirm the deep bond that linked all the members of the herd.

It was the age-old song of the elephant.



Feasting on the acacia pods

The Goose Thieves

It was Bina who first got wind of what was happening. She happened to be passing the school kitchen where they cooked meals for the nuns and boarders. George, the school-bus driver, was lounging around talking to the cooks inside. Bina, who was looking for some botanical specimens in the backyard, stopped suddenly in her tracks.

Waddling sedately towards her was a bevy of large, awkward looking geese.

"Oh hello, Christopher Columbus, hi Marco Polo, hi Captain Cook, hello Amundsen," she greeted them. The geese hurried towards her, their heads bobbing back and forth. The boarders had named the geese after famous explorers because they were constantly exploring the school grounds. Once they had wandered into Bina's classroom, during a very boring civics class and had scared the daylights out of Miss K. The class had roared with laughter as Miss K. tried to chase the intruders out by flapping a large, checked, board duster.

As Bina patted them, she heard one of the cooks giggle and threaten George. "If you keep demanding more food, we'll really fatten you up and have you for the Christmas feast like those geese outside."

Bina's heart sank. These sweet, lovable geese were actually being fattened for Christmas! It couldn't be! The schoolgirls were much too fond of them. But what could they do anyway? Bina sought her friends Vinita, Valerie and Nishi and told them what she had overheard. Nishi exploded. "Nonsense! Not our

MarcoPolo and Amundsen, our poor Captain Cook, and Columbus — no, no we won't let them be killed and eaten."

Valerie however was the thoughtful sort. "But how can we stop them? We have no right to make anybody do anything. After all, they aren't even *our* geese!"

Vinita was close to tears. "But we've seen them around for weeks. School won't be the same without those darlings waddling in and out of the classrooms. We can't let them be killed!"

Bina had been quiet all this time, working out a plan. "I think we *can* do something about it," she said finally. "In fact there *is* something we can do to stop the geese from turning up on the school dining table for Christmas."

Nishi muttered disbelievingly, "If you're going to suggest to Mother Superior that we should have a heart-to-heart talk about it, count me out. I quake in my boots when I see her coming." "Besides," said Valerie, "who are we for her to listen to?"

"Listen to me," Bina interrupted. "I have a real good idea. The more I think about it, the better it appears.

"Out with it, Beans," Vinita was impatient.



**Marco Polo,
Amundsen,
Captain Cook, and
Columbus**

“We'll kidnap them!” Bina exclaimed and sat back to watch her friends' reaction.

“What!” burst out Nishi, “kidnap!”

“You mean it'll work?” Vinita sounded doubtful.

“Why not?”

Only Valerie said slowly, “It's a possibility! We could keep them in my backyard. We have lots of space.”

The four sat together and thought. Gradually it struck the other three that Bina's idea was workable. If they could but grab the four geese and smuggle them somewhere far away from school there would be no geese for the cooks to fatten and slaughter for the Christmas dinner. The next few days, the four of them thought over and discussed plans in secret.

D-day drew nearer. It was mid-December and getting very cold. The girls came to school clad in heavy blazers. The day before the plan was put into action the four friends met on the lawn.

“All set?” Bina looked round and blew on her hands for warmth. “Everybody sure about their parts?”

“Hmmm.”

“Of course.”

“Everything's fine.”

“Good.”

The next morning Bina went to school, wearing a large sized blue overcoat. Mother Superior noticed her at once, even before morning assembly.

"What is this?" she asked Bina. "You know very well that you're not supposed to wear any coat except your blazer to school."

"Yes Mother," Bina said innocently, "but on my way here the upstairs lady threw out some water which fell on me. I couldn't come to school wearing a wet blazer."

Mother Superior nodded. "That's all right," she said. She was however dumbfounded when three other girls of the same class turned up wearing oversized coats. She shook her head in disbelief as they in turn made some excuse for turning up in their mothers coats.

"This is too much," she shouted. "Four of you! Is this some kind of a practical joke?"

Nishi looked nervous. Bina patted her arm and said aloud, "What a coincidence. Four of us turning up like this! It's funny, isn't it?"

There was a pause and then Mother Superior smiled, "Go on, go to your class. But I hope coincidences like this do not happen too often."

The girls fled to their classroom. The others stared at them in surprise. The moment classes were over for that day, the four friends charged out. Their Natural Science

teacher already tottering rather unsteadily on stilettos was thrown off balance and fell heavily against the tall human skeleton in the corner of the room, as the four ran past her. Their classmates squealed in sympathy.

Bina, Valerie, Nishi and Vinita had already disappeared down the corridor, past the library and assembly hall, across the courtyard and towards the kitchen. The kitchen was deserted and there was nobody in sight either.

Just then, as if on cue, the four explorers walked out from behind a bush.

"Grab," yelled Nishi forgetting to whisper and lunged at Christopher Columbus.

"Eee-yowa," howled Bina as she reached for Marco Polo and was left with a feather from his tail as he slipped away. Valerie ran after Amundsen, and Vinita after Captain Cook who was scurrying across the cabbage-patch. Bina caught her prey and tossed him inside her overcoat. But he was larger than she had thought and he stuck out conspicuously on her left side as he struggled to free himself.

Bina ignored him, and shouted instructions to the others, "Get him from over there, right there.... Oh no! he's gone behind the bench.... you go from this side.... got him. . .no? Oh there he is . . . quick! get him... .great!" Nishi gripped Amundsen tightly, Christopher Columbus having fled towards Valerie who was chasing him round and round a cactus bush.

"That's enough!" a sharp authoritarian voice lashed out. The girls looked up with instinctive dread. Mother Superior stood on

top of the kitchen steps, tall and unapproachable. The cook, Mary, peeped out from behind her.

There was pin-drop silence for a few seconds. Then, as Valerie and Vinita whirled round, their prey fled cackling loudly to safer pastures. Mother Superior looked sternly at them. "Now what's all this in aid of?" she asked in a quiet icy voice. "Is this your idea of fun?"

There was a deathly silence. From inside Bina's coat, Marco Polo gave an indignant squawk. Bina retrieved him and dumped him unceremoniously on the ground where he shook back his ruffled feathers and trundled off. Nishi put Amundsen down and he too waddled off.

Mother Superior was tight lipped. "Can I expect an explanation?"

The four of them exchanged glances. "We did not really mean it, Mother Superior. We just thought it was very cruel. . . .And we're so fond of them!" "It's not fair to eat them... we love them so much." "After all there are so many other things in the whole world. Why eat animals?"



**Mother Superior
with the girls**

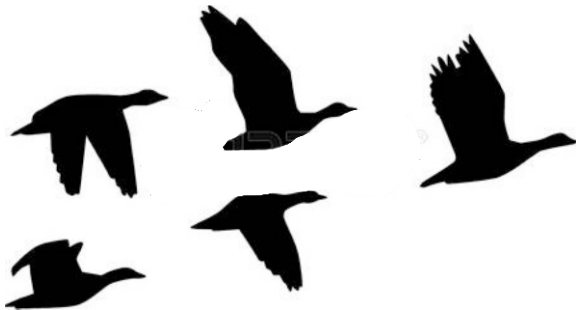
Mother Superior raised one hand to silence them, "One of you explain. Not all of you together... "

Bina explained. She had a soothing voice. By the time she finished, Mother Superior was quite relaxed and trying to hide a smile. "Kidnap them!" she exclaimed. "Kidnap?"

Mary, who had been quiet all this time, suddenly roared with laughter. "Oh! Its so funny," she burst out.

Finally Mother Superior said, patting the girls on their shoulders, "Whatever gave you girls the idea we were going to eat these fellow's? Certainly not. We're too fond of them. We won't kill them for the sake of one meal. They're yours girls! Yours to play with and look after."

"Thank you, Mother Superior," four voices sang in chorus. "It's wonderful to know you never intended killing them in the first place."



Pillars of the Earth



There was once a boy who always treated his mother horribly, shouting at her, insulting her. It didn't matter to him how sad he made her.

One day, without knowing how, he woke up in an immense and lonely place. He was sitting on a rock from which four huge pillars rose up into the sky, appearing to support the entire world.

He was all alone, but soon an enormous flock of crows with beaks made of steel landed on the rock, and set about violently chipping away at it. They chipped away for a long time....and then left.

After the crows left, a mysterious door in one of the pillars opened, and through it came a charming and pretty girl.

"Have you come to help us? That's great! We need all the people we can get." She said. The boy was puzzled, and spotting his confusion, the little girl explained.

"So you don't know where you are? This is the centre of the Earth. These pillars support the whole planet, and this rock keeps the pillars in place."

"And how can I help you? said the boy confused.

"Well, to help look after the rock, of course. Anyone can see by your face that you're the best person for the job," answered the girl.

"The birds you saw are only increasing in number, and if we don't look after this rock it will eventually crumble and everything will come crashing down."

"And what do you see in my face?!" exclaimed the boy, surprised. "I've never looked after a rock in my whole life!"

"But you'll learn how, even if you've never done it. Here, look in this mirror," said the girl, holding one in front of the boy's face.

The boy could clearly see; he now had the face of a bird, and his nose was gradually turning into steel. There he stood, shocked and worried, not a word passing his lips.



Anger and Disrespect make us Ugly

The boy still didn't quite understand all this. He looked closely at the pillars and could see that each one was made up of thousands and thousands of little figurines, representing the best virtues: compassion, love, sincerity, effort, friendship, honesty, generosity...

Closely inspecting the ground beneath him, he could see that the enormous rock was made up of little instances of children showing respect to their mothers, grandparents, brothers, sisters, and old people.

What the crows were trying to do was cover over these instances by carving out scenes of shouting and insults. Next to his feet, he could see his own little carving, representing the last time he shouted at his mother. That image, in such a strange place, made him realize that the only thing keeping the columns standing was love and respect. **Love and Respect was sustaining the world.**

The boy, filled with regret, stayed there and looked after the rock for many days. He carried out his task joyfully, going without sleep to repel every crow attack. He carried on until, exhausted by his efforts, he collapsed; completely spent.

When he woke up, he was back in his bed at home, and he didn't know whether it had all been a dream. However, what he was now sure of was that no crow would ever again get the chance to carve a picture of him shouting at his mother.

He would maintain the pillars of the world – **Love and Respect for all.**



“Respecting the opinions and beliefs of another, even if they differ from yours, is a genuine sign of love.”

Charles F. Glassman, Brain Drain The Breakthrough That Will Change Your Life

Lemonade Pals

Not that I didn't like my Uncle Varun. I was just a bit cross with him. *Varunkaka* that's what I call him, is my father's youngest cousin. He trained as a veterinary surgeon and went abroad for higher studies. On his return from America, *Varunkaka* accepted a post at the Veterinary Hospital in Jabalpore, where my parents, both Army doctors, were posted. *Varunkaka* intended staying with us, until he got a house of his own.

I remember the day he arrived. I wasn't expecting a Levi clad, long-haired 'Uncle.' But that didn't trouble me as much as his attitude. "I hope you're going to be a doctor, Vani," he said when he finally noticed me. "Because if you are, you ought to be a Vet, and with my help, I'm sure you'll turn out to be a good Vet".

Look, I am fond of animals. But the nearest I can get to doing anything for them professionally is to join the SPCA. "*Varunkaka*," I said firmly, "I'm going to study literature." First he just gaped, then turning to my mother he said, "*Bhabhi* is your daughter crazy? She's going to ruin the family tradition."

You see, for generations our family profession has been the practice of medicine. Our ancestors must have been *vaidyas* and witch-doctors.

I'm good at keeping quiet, so I didn't tell him he was a creep, but I instantly declared a cold war. While he stayed with us, I had to suffer him. He had his positive points, though. He was an absolute wizard with my Alsatian, Sultan.

Soon afterwards, Uncle got his accommodation. When we visited him the first time, we were quite shocked. The house was miles away from the city. An unkempt garden and untidy rooms swarming with dogs; Cats lay in sunny patches all over the garden. The last straw however, was the snake I found coiled on a cane chair in the verandah. "Before you squeal, Miss Prim and Proper, let me tell you he's my pet," Varun *kaka* said sarcastically.

To get even with him, I went and patted the snake gently. That obviously did the trick, for he became communicative. "Several monkeys too come here. Actually they stay on the *ber* trees, right at the back of the garden. But they come here occasionally to visit me." "Will you take me there and show me, *Varunkaka*?" I said, forgetting my hostility. "Sure, Vani I'll even show you the one I managed to fix up." "Is it some kind of toy or what?" I taunted him. "Look, kid," he said condescendingly, "I'll tell you all about it."

And sure enough he started. "Early one morning, when I was having a cup of tea, Bahadur brought a guy, who, he said was a *madari*. Bahadur had caught him in the back garden trying to catch baby monkeys. Till then I didn't even know I had monkeys in my garden. So I asked the *madari* to show me where they were. He took me to this tree which was practically loaded with monkeys. Then he started pleading with me. "*Saheb*, let me catch just one male monkey. Otherwise my show can't go on. I have a large family to support, *Saheb*. Please, *Saheb*."

I told him to catch one elsewhere. But he kept on pleading. He

said he had caught the female from this tree, and no one had objected at that time. So, I relented.

"All right. Catch one. But if you hurt any, I shall wring your neck." When I came home for lunch that afternoon, I found Bahadur trying to coax a baby monkey to drink water. There was a blood-stained bandage on the poor thing's hind leg. The *madari* was nowhere to be seen.

"Bahadur told me briefly how the little one fell from the tree when the *madari* threw a net round it to trap it. By now I had discovered that the baby had not merely hurt itself, it had fractured its leg. It was half-dead with fright, so it was easy to put the plaster cast on. Otherwise, monkeys can be very difficult patients."

I was pretty engrossed in the tale. So I was rather annoyed when *Varunkaka* abruptly went inside. He returned wearing a pair of gum-boots and carrying another pair.

"They're a bit big for you, but you'd better put them on," he said. "The grass there is taller than you and there are mosquitoes and snakes in the undergrowth"



Bobo and others on the Ber Tree

"But where are we going?" I asked, puzzled.

"To meet my pet Bobo and the rest of his family," he said briefly.

"But the story...?" I protested. "How did you fix the monkey? How did he climb the tree with a broken leg?"

"Look here. Will you let me tell the story or are you going to keep asking questions? I'll tell you the rest while we walk to the back of the compound." So, off we went and Varun *kaka* continued, "Where was I? Oh, yes! The plaster on Bobo's leg; You know he was such a sweet little thing, but he was very weak. I had, of course, decided to cure him, but not at the hospital.

Bobo was stubborn and refused to eat or drink. I managed to force some milk down his throat, but that was not enough. He really needed much more nourishment to recover. "To tempt him to eat, I used to put him on the dining table while I had my food. But it didn't work. I could see he was recovering, because he was more active, but the progress was extremely slow. Then, one day, the funniest thing happened. "I came back rather late for lunch. Bahadur had kept my food on the table and gone off somewhere.

I brought Bobo and left him on the table. As I was thirsty, I opened the fridge and took out a bottle of lemonade. I pressed the marble in and put the bottle to my lips. With every sip I took, the blue marble would bob up and down. Bobo was staring at me. Whenever I picked up the bottle, his eyes would dart to the marble in the bottle. I held the bottle out to him. But he didn't

take it. Instead, he turned his face away

I started eating. But he kept turning round to see if I had picked up the bottle. So, to amuse him, I took out another bottle of lemonade and drank it without offering him any."

"Actually," he continued, "Bobo by now had learned to hobble about, on his plaster cast. So, even if I left him on the table, he would manage to get down to the floor. After I finished eating, I hid behind the curtain to watch his movements. He dragged himself to the edge of the table, reached out and opened the fridge. Glancing round quickly, he picked up a lemonade bottle. Then he forced the marble in with a finger. How delighted he was to see the marble bobbing up and down. He took a sip and you should have seen his face! The fizz in the lemonade must have been too strong for him, for he grimaced. But he would not give up. He went on drinking the lemonade, just because he wanted to see the marble bob up and down! I let him enjoy himself."

"After that I stopped coaxing him to eat. I led him to the fridge and left the door open. To begin with, he took only the lemonade. But gradually he learnt to pick up an apple or some other fruit and nibble it. If I asked him for some, he'd hand me the seeds!"



Varun Kaka with Bobo

"He recovered in no time and became quite a nuisance around the house. Nothing in the fridge was safe from him. At times he kept opening and closing the door to see the light come on. He tweaked the dogs' ears and they went charging at him. But the little fellow would climb up a door and grin at them from there. He even tried his hand at shaving with my razor."

"That was more than enough for me. I started locking up the house and leaving him in the garden. One evening I didn't find him there. I knew then he had gone back to his clan. I let him be. Now he comes back occasionally for a lemonade!"

Varunkaka finished his story. Was he bluffing? I didn't know. We soon came to a cluster of *ber* trees and they were swarming with monkeys. Monkeys of all shapes and sizes; Monkeys eating '*ber*' monkeys chattering and monkeys fighting.

"Which one is Bobo?" I asked *Varun kaka*. Before he could answer, a little fellow with a black shoelace round his neck swung on to the lowest branch. Is that . . . ? " I turned to *Varun kaka* and gaped. His face looked a sight!

Varunkaka is crazy. He was miming for Bobo's benefit the opening of a lemonade bottle! "Glug, glug, glug. . .". He pretended to drink the imaginary stuff. Bobo watched him closely. He leapt down from the tree, went to *Varunkaka* and swung on to his shoulder. And there he sat until we got home. Once inside, he made a beeline for the fridge and helped himself to a lemonade.

So did *Varunkaka* and I. As I gulped down the sweet fizzy beverage, I thought *Varunkaka* wasn't a bad sort really. He was quite a pal in fact.

Wonders of Nature



Ants communicate with each other.

ANTS are small insects characterized by the presence of three pairs of joined legs. They are active creatures, moving about here and there in search of food. If a piece of a jaggery is placed on the floor and carefully watched, the intelligent behavior of the ants can be noticed.

When an ant observes a bit of food material, it behaves in a strange manner. In stead of beginning to eat it, it runs around the material, climbs up and down it, runs backwards and forwards, and exhibits peculiar movements. It appears as though it were trying to learn the exact measurements and location of the food.

After having a clear idea of the nature, quantity and location of the food, the ant then runs here and there to pass on the information quickly to the other ants of its nest.

It is a matter of common observation that when two ants meet on their way, they stop for some time and touch each other with their hair-like antennae. Perhaps by this act, the first ant passes on the entire information about the food to the second ant. Anyway, both of them run hither and thither, and when they

meet their friends, they stop and touch. In this way, and in other inexplicable ways, the information is made known to several ants. In a short while, hundreds of ants can be seen moving unerringly in a row towards the food.

After reaching it, the ants appear to exhibit a great division of labour. Some climb up the food material and appear to give the needed directions. Some push the material, while several others pull it. Thus, as a result of the combined effort of hundreds of ants, the piece of food material is carried triumphantly to their nest, just like a sports idol being hoisted by his happy friends!

Among ants the social organization resembles or even exceeds that of human society. There is a complete and perfect distribution of labour.

Ants live in colonies in nests or burrows of the soil. Within one colony, some ants are described as the kings and queens, and their function is only to reproduce.

Some other ants are called the workers, whose business is to perform the hard task of procuring food for the entire effective colony.

There are the soldier ants, who serve by defending the colony and making war when necessary. For this purpose they are provided with strong teeth, powerful muscles and effective poison (formic acid).



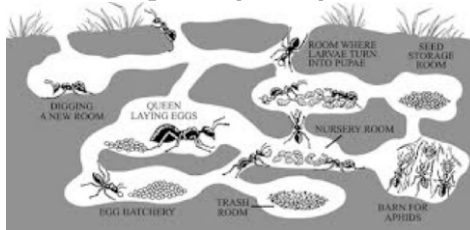
There are also several ants described as the slave ants, who really belong to some other ant colony, but serve here, being captured during a war. They take care of the kings and queens, and protect the eggs and the young.

Such a social life or animal association among members of the same species is found in several other insects, such as the honeybees and termites.

The general rule of an association appears to be "one for all, and all for one". We have to learn much from these tiny creatures. The food collected by one is shared by all. The difficulty to one member is felt by all. The decision of one member is followed by the rest. Even the quarrel initiated by one is accepted by the rest. Even the quarrel initiated by one is accepted by the entire colony.

Generally, ants avoid quarrels, but when war is unavoidable, they surely begin to see the end of the enemy colony.

When an ant colony decides upon making a war with some other colony for some reason or other, first some "peace-makers" are sent forth and a sort of truce is made in a gentleman's way. These peace-makers enter into the nest of the other ant colony and appear to explain to the fullest extent the salient reasons why they have decided upon beginning a war with them.



If the other colony is weak and timid, it accepts its defeat and so there is no war at all. Usually, this ant colony, which is also equally strong, simply arrests the peace-makers and makes the necessary preparations for war. So the war begins.

The soldier ants of both the colonies move out and meet somewhere between their colonies. They then discharge their formic acid in the air, and the strength of the poison appears to decide the winner of the battle. Actually they do not appear to fight and not even a single soldier is killed. The winner is the colony that produces comparatively stronger poison. As soon as one of the colonies admits defeat, the war is terminated. Thereupon, the workers of the victorious colony move into the defeated colony, capture all the ants found there, and carry away the food and other materials available. In this manner the defeated colony is completely emptied while the other is enriched.

When once defeat is accepted, the defeated ants became slaves and they serve their masters sincerely. They never deceive their masters or try to flee from captivity. They serve their masters in all possible ways, including that of making war with another colony. In course of time, the master ants became so dependent on these slave ants that they simply die without the help of the latter.

Praying mantis form excellent examples of animals that are ever ready for a fight! In fact, no two mantis meet without beginning a quarrel. In this, one mantis is surely killed and eaten by winner.

Among the communal animals, the termites and the honey-bees

form equally important examples as the ants. The termites are commonly called “White ants” and are our formidable enemies as they eat away all our costly furniture, books and so on. Even here there are workers, soldiers, kings and queens.

The worker termite is a tiny, wingless insect without any reproductive organ. The soldier termite is also wingless and infertile, but is fifteen times as large as the worker. The termite queen has an ugly shape, with a small head and a very large abdomen, which can accommodate thousand of eggs at a time. The abdomen of the queen is about twenty or thirty thousand times larger than that of the worker termite. The termite queen, in her majestic and incredible way, goes on producing eggs at the rate of one per second!

Honey-bees exhibit a similar social organization. If a honey-bee finds food material somewhere, it returns to its colony and dances in a peculiar and particular way. The movements occur at definite angles in the direction of the sun, and by this act, the bee appears to inform all other bees the distance and direction of the available food.

Among the gregarious animals, buffaloes are common examples. They prefer to move and feed in groups, although there is no direct advantages from such a gregarious habit. Of course, safety is always there from such an association.



Buffaloes are insensitive and slow animals. They remain undisturbed at a place, and if at all they move, they move all at once, like a cloud. Here the leader of the herd is the female buffalo, while among the horses it is the male that leads the herd.

Another curious instance of animal association is that of the “anting of birds”. Birds of several species disturb the ant nests and wait there till the ants climb onto them in large numbers. These ants attach themselves to the feathers and inject large amounts of formic acid in order to kill the bird. However, this act has a definite advantage for the bird, for which purpose alone it goes there. The formic acid of the ants acts as a sort of tonic for the smoothness and growth of the feathers.

Animals reproduce in order to maintain their race in the world. Because of reproduction, the population of each species increases in “geometrical ratio”. As the population increases, there is always a struggle for existence among the living organisms in order to get the essential requirements of life. In this struggle for existence, only the stronger and better adapted organisms are more fitted to live, and all the weaker organisms die. Thus, there is what is known as the “natural selection”.

As a result of natural selection, the required and the best qualities of the animals are retained and inherited by the offspring



**Bees in the
Bee Hive**

In the Guava Orchard



Safdar, Ajay and I dashed out of the classroom as the bell rang. It was the lunch break, and we had a whole hour to play. Safdar was the tallest, also the strongest amongst us. He was our leader. Ajay and I followed him meekly, like lambs!

We frisked about cheerfully over a path that led to a guava orchard. There was a mud wall round it. Safdar who was in high spirits leaped over it and bragged, "Look at the guavas! Come on, kids. Let's have a feast."

Ajay also leaped over the wall, saying, "What fun. How lovely!"

I smacked my lips at the sight of the luscious green guavas in the orchard. I was however, afraid that we might be caught by the watchman. But Safdar's presence emboldened me. I too jumped over the wall. There were trees and trees—all bursting with ripe and unripe guavas. We roamed freely. Safdar was greedily eating ripe guavas, while Ajay and I leaped like monkeys and devoured the unripe ones. I preferred raw guavas and I could never have enough. I stuffed my pockets. I wanted to carry them as a souvenir of our daring expedition to the orchard. Wouldn't my classmates gape at them, eyes bulging!

Suddenly, I heard Safdar's cry, "Ajay! Lokesh! Run, run! The watchman is coming." Perched on top of a branch, I saw the tall, sinister-looking figure of the watchman approaching. He was waving a staff in his hand. Safdar and Ajay were already on the ground, and had started running. The

already on the ground, and had started running. The watchman waved his staff and ran after them, shouting, "Thieves! Thieves! See that they don't escape."

I lost no time; I jumped down from the tree and took to my heels. Safdar and Ajay were far ahead and I ran faster. As I leapt over ditches and boulders in the orchard, the guavas began to fall out of my pockets.

The watchman chased us furiously. After what seemed ages, the mud wall came into view. Safdar, who was the first to reach it, took a flying leap over it. Ajay, close behind, managed to roll over. Safdar kept shouting, "Run, Lokesh, run! The fellow is closing in!" I put in every ounce of energy I had and ran like mad. The watchman came charging like a bull, bellowing curses. A host of street urchins had by then appeared from nowhere and joined the chase. "Now jump," cried Safdar.



Ajay & Lokesh enjoying Guavas

I took a mighty leap and landed on top of the wall. The last guava in my pocket rolled out. I felt miserably cheated. I didn't want to lose it at any cost. I jumped back into the orchard and stooped to pick it up. It was rather dark, but I managed to find the lost guava. Triumphantly I held it in my hand and leapt over the wall. Beyond it lay the school compound and my friends. I slipped and fell. The looming figure of the watchman drew closer.

Safdar and Ajay were screaming and urging me not to waste time. As I scrambled up, the watchman's steely fingers gripped me. I struggled to shake him off, but the burly man picked me up, flung me over his shoulder and walked briskly back into the orchard. Soon afterwards, he deposited me before a man seated on a cot.

"*Malik*", he addressed him, wiping perspiration off his forehead, "this fellow is the leader of a gang of school children. He regularly brings a number of them to steal our guavas. They destroy more than they eat." The '*malik*' looked calm but formidable. I felt he would thrash me. I was scared, also ashamed that I had been caught red-handed. He stared hard at me. I stood rooted to the ground, expecting a tight slap.



The boys run

He got up from the cot and stood before me. He looked tall as a palm tree!

"What's your name?" he asked me. "Where do you live?"

"I'm Lokesh. I study in the school over there. I'm the Principal's son.

"You like guavas?"

I nodded.

"Did you come alone?"

I pointed to Safdar and Ajay, who were still peeping over the mud wall.

The '*malik*' asked the watchman to get a basket of guavas. "He's not a thief," he told him. "He is a decent kid." He waved to my friends and signalled them to come in. Safdar and Ajay wouldn't budge an inch. They stayed where they were.

"Come on Lokesh, ask them to come in," he urged me. I was rather dazed and undecided. The man smiled. "Call them in, child. Don't be frightened." I was not afraid any more. "Come over, Safdar. Come over, Ajay," I shouted.



The Watchman

They soon joined me, looking sheepish and guilty. We could hardly believe our eyes when the watchman came back with a basket of guavas. "Go ahead and eat as many as you want," said the *malik*. We just stood looking at him. We had expected him to treat us like thieves.

"You're like my children," his gentle voice was soothing. This is your garden. You don't have to enter it like thieves. You go to the watchman. He'll help you." Gratefully, we accepted the guavas he offered. Thanking him profusely we took leave of him. There was a smile on his face as he bade us good-bye.

"Remember children, do not do anything that makes you feel guilty. You must always be proud of what you do."

We left the orchard. I was limping a bit but my pockets were bulging with guavas.

His words are still fresh in my mind . ***"..... do not do anything that makes you feel guilty. You must always be proud of what you do."***



The Birth of the Turtles



Amanda was really excited. They had waited many days, but finally, that night, the baby turtles would hatch out on the beach. And her Daddy was going to take her to see them! So, Amanda and her father got up when it was still dark, took their torches, and carefully made their way to the beach. Her father made her promise to respect the baby turtles, not to make any noise, and to do what he told her.

Well, Amanda was willing to do almost anything if it meant that she could go and see the turtles hatch. She didn't really know what it would be like, but her older brother had told her that the turtles are born on the beach just a few metres from the water's edge.

After hatching they quickly scuttle towards the sea. All that sounded very exciting to her.

Crouching quietly, by the light of only one of the torches on a low setting, Amanda and her Daddy waited. She looked all over, hoping to see Mother Turtle, and she almost missed the appearance of the first baby turtle.

It was so tiny!

It moved very clumsily, like most babies; and without waiting for either its brothers or sisters or mother, it started to scuttle towards the sea. Gradually, more and more baby turtles appeared, and all ran towards the water. Amanda and her Daddy stayed hidden and quiet, watching the wonderful spectacle of that crazy race to the sea.

But then something happened which, to Amanda, seemed horrible. Some seagulls and other birds arrived, and they started eating some of the little turtles. She kept looking everywhere to see whether Daddy Turtle would turn up to give those birds a good hiding. But he never came.

Amanda was watching all this with tears in her eyes, and when the first group of baby turtles finally reached the water and were safe from the birds, she gave out a little cry of happiness.

Even with the birds eating quite a few little turtles, in the end many more reached the sea, and Amanda was very pleased that they had managed to do so.



Mother turtle lays many eggs

On their way home, her father, who had noticed the tears in Amanda's eyes, explained to her that turtles were born that way. Mother Turtle lays many eggs, hides them in the sand, and off she goes. When the baby turtles hatch out, they have to try to reach the sea on their own. That's why so many are born, because lots of them get eaten by other animals, and not only on the sand, also in the water. He explained to her that the few turtles who manage to become adults live for many, many years.

Amanda was really glad to have learned so much about the turtles that night, but as they continued home all she could think of was how happy she was to have a family; happy that her parents and her brothers and sisters had helped her and cared for her so much right from the day she was born.



Eggs hatching



**Baby turtles
walk to the water**

Christmas Miracle – Real Story!

This is a real Christmas miracle story, happened in December 1997 in Wisconsin, USA.

A little girl named Sarah had leukemia and was not expected to live to see Christmas. Her brother and grandmother went to the mall to ask Mark Lenonard who was a professional Santa Claus to visit the hospital to give Sarah the gift of hope through encouragement and paryer.

A year later Sarah surprised Santa by showing up at the mall where he worked. Here goes the story.

A little boy and his grandmother came to see Santa at The Mayfair Mall in Wisconsin. The child climbed up on santa's lap, holding a picture of a little girl.

“Who is this?” – asked Santa, smiling. “Your friend? Your sister?”

“Yes, Santa.” – he replied.

“My sister, Sarah, who is very sick.” – he said sadly.

Santa glanced over at the grandmother who was waiting nearby and saw her dabbing her eyes with a tissue.

“She wanted to come with me to see you, oh, so very much, Santa!” – the child exclaimed.

“She misses you.” – he added softly.

Santa tried to be cheerful and encouraged a smile to the boy's face, asking him what he wanted Santa to bring him for Christmas.

When they finished their visit, the grandmother came over to help the child off his lap, and started to say something to Santa, but halted.

“What is it?” – Santa asked warmly.

“Well, I know it's really too much to ask you, Santa, but ..” – the old woman began, shooing her grandson over to one of Santa's elves to collect the little gift which Santa gave all his young visitors.

“The girl in the photograph... my granddaughter well, you see ... she has leukemia and isn't expected to make it even through the holidays.” – she said through tear-filled eyes.

“Is there anyway, Santa, any possible way that you could come see Sarah? That's all she's asked for, for Christmas, is to see Santa.”

Santa blinked and swallowed hard and told the woman to leave information with his elves as to where Sarah was, and he would see what he could do. Santa thought of little else the rest of that afternoon. He knew what he had to do.



Santa with Children

“What if it were MY child lying in that hospital bed, dying?” – he thought with a sinking heart, “This is the least I can do.”

When Santa finished visiting with all the boys and girls that evening, he retrieved from his helper the name of the hospital where Sarah was staying. He asked Rick, the assistant location manager how to get to Children's Hospital.

“Why?” – Rick asked, with a puzzled look on his face.

Santa relayed to him the conversation with Sarah's grandmother earlier that day.

“Common...I'll take you there.” – Rick said softly. Rick drove them to the hospital and came inside with Santa. They found out which room Sarah was in. A pale Rick said he would wait out in the hall.

Santa quietly peeked into the room through the half-closed door and saw little Sarah on the bed. The room was full of what appeared to be her family; there was the grandmother and the girl's brother he had met earlier that day. A woman whom he guessed was Sarah's mother stood by the bed, gently pushing Sarah's thin hair off her forehead.

And another woman who he discovered later was Sarah's aunt, sat in a chair near the bed with a weary, sad look on her face. They were talking quietly, and Santa could sense the warmth and closeness of the family, and their love and concern for Sarah.

Taking a deep breath, and forcing a smile on his face, Santa

entered the room, bellowing a hearty, “Ho, ho, ho!”

“Santa!” – shrieked little Sarah weakly, as she tried to escape her bed to run to him.

Santa rushed to her side and gave her a warm hug. A child the tender age of his own son — 9 years old — gazed up at him with wonder and excitement. Her skin was pale and her short tresses bore telltale bald patches from the effects of chemotherapy. But all he saw when he looked at her was a pair of huge, blue eyes. His heart melted, and he had to force himself to choke back tears.

Though his eyes were riveted upon Sarah's face, he could hear the gasps and quiet sobbing of the women in the room.

As he and Sarah began talking, the family crept quietly to the bedside one by one, squeezing Santa's shoulder or his hand gratefully, whispering “Thank you” as they gazed sincerely at him with shining eyes.

Santa and Sarah talked and talked, and she told him excitedly all the toys she wanted for Christmas, assuring him she'd been a very good girl that year. As their time together dwindled, Santa felt led in his spirit to pray for Sarah, and asked for permission from the girl's mother. She nodded in agreement and the entire family circled around Sarah's bed, holding hands.



Sarah is in the Hospital .

Santa looked intensely at Sarah and asked her if she believed in angels, “Oh, yes, Santa... I do!” – she exclaimed.

“Well, I'm going to ask that angels watch over you.” – he said.

Laying one hand on the child's head, Santa closed his eyes and prayed. He asked that God touch little Sarah, and heal her body from this disease.

He asked that angels minister to her, watch and keep her. And when he finished praying, still with eyes closed, he started singing, softly, “Silent Night, Holy Night.... all is calm, all is bright...”

The family joined in, still holding hands, smiling at Sarah, and crying tears of hope, tears of joy for this moment, as Sarah beamed at them all.

When the song ended, Santa sat on the side of the bed again and held Sarah's frail, small hands in his own.

“Now, Sarah,” – he said authoritatively, “you have a job to do, and that is to concentrate on getting well. I want you to have fun playing with your friends this summer, and I expect to see you at my house at Mayfair Mall this time next year!”

He knew it was risky proclaiming that to this little girl who had terminal cancer, but he 'had' to. He had to give her the greatest gift he could — not dolls or games or toys — but the gift of HOPE.

“Yes, Santa!” – Sarah exclaimed, her eyes bright. He leaned

down and kissed her on the forehead and left the room.

Out in the hall, the minute Santa's eyes met Rick's, a look passed between them and they wept unashamed.

Sarah's mother and grandmother slipped out of the room quickly and rushed to Santa's side to thank him.

“My only child is the same age as Sarah.” – he explained quietly.
“This is the least I could do.”

They nodded with understanding and hugged him.

One year later, Santa Mark was again back on the set in Milwaukee for his six-week, seasonal job which he so loves to do. Several weeks went by and then one day a child came up to sit on his lap.

“Hi, Santa! Remember me?!”

“Of course, I do.” – Santa proclaimed (as he always does), smiling down at her. After all, the secret to being a 'good' Santa is to always make each child feel as if they are the 'only' child in the world at that moment.

“You came to see me in the hospital last year!”

Santa's jaw dropped. Tears immediately sprang in his eyes, and he grabbed this little miracle and held her to his chest.

“Sarah!” – he exclaimed. He scarcely recognized her, for her hair was long and silky and her cheeks were rosy — much different from the little girl he had visited just a year before.

He looked over and saw Sarah's mother and grandmother in the sidelines smiling and waving and wiping their eyes.

That was the best Christmas ever for Santa Claus.

He had witnessed –and been blessed to be instrumental in bringing about — this miracle of hope. This precious little child was healed. Cancer-free. Alive and well. He silently looked up to Heaven and humbly whispered, “Thank you, Father. 'Tis a very, Merry Christmas!”

Santa's name: Mark Leonard or Santa Mark



Sarah is well again

*'Santa Claus is Anyone who loves Another
and Seeks to make them Happy'.*

Edwin Ogood Grover

Biswas



Anil with Biswas.

It was evening and Anil was sitting at the table, with a puzzled frown on his brow.

“Daddy”, how would you explain to me the word biswas in English?”

Dr Suri, just about to leave the house for his surgery, stopped at the front door and came back.

“What's that, son?”

“I've been given a lot of Hindi words to translate into English, and then make each one into a sentence to show that I know what they mean. I've done all the other words, but biswas is the only one left.”

Dr Suri considered.

“Well, I can't do your sentence for you.” He said. “But I would apply the word to the sort of person I should like to have for a friend - someone in whom I knew I could have complete faith and confidence”,

Anil's face brightened. "Yes, I see," he said. "Someone like Surinder," he murmured quietly to himself. And added as he started to write: "Biswas means faith and confidence. I have complete faith, trust and confidence in my friend Surinder Khanna."

For the past few months. Surinder Khanna, Captain of the lower house cricket team, and one year Anil's senior, had been the boys's hero and idol. To Anil he represented all that was good, wonderful and to be admired. Surinder, amused and vaguely flattered by Anil's worship, was quick to trade upon it and make him his willing slave.

Anil finished writing and pushed back his chair with a sigh of relief. If it was not too late, there might still be a chance of seeing Surinder practicing at the nets, and perhaps win a smile or a word of praise from his hero.

It was at this moment that the telephone rang. Turning quickly to answer it, Anil's foot caught in the corner of the carpet, and in the struggle to save himself he grabbed at the table, which turned over upsetting all his school books, and the pot ink with it. But by this time Anil had grasped the telephone.

"Hello," he gasped weakly, surveying the disaster around him.

"Hello!" It was Surinder's voice. Anil's heart gave a bound. "Is that you, Anil? Look, cricket is cancelled this evening, so I want your help for a bit of fun. Are you game?"

Surinder - the great surinder; wanted his help! Anil's voice was

shaking with pride and emotion as he replied, “Of course, Surinder. I'll come right away.”

“Okay. Meet me in twenty minutes at the bottom of the cricket field. Don't be late!” There was a click on the wires and he was gone.

“Twenty minutes! That doesn't give me much time.”

Anil was already on his knees shoveling up his inky school books. He surveyed the ink-stained carpet with dismay. Well, there was no time to do anything about it now if he had to meet Surinder in twenty minutes.

To disobey never occurred to him. Flinging the books into the cupboard in his room, he dashed down the stairs as fast as he could. Rushing out of the gate he fell over the big shaggy dog who habitually sat there. Anil landed on his knees scratching them both and, as he got up he aimed a vicious kick at the dog for upsetting him. The shaggy dog yelped in pain and ran a little way off, viewing Anil with a look of wounded feeling and apology in his eyes.



Surinder, Anil's Hero

But Anil was in mood for stopping to make it up with the dog. He ran off faster than ever, only limping slightly where one of his knees was hurting him owing to his fall. As a result of his effort, he arrived at the appointed meeting place in less than twenty minutes, to find himself there before Surinder.

Anil's hero was not long in arriving.

“It's like this,” explained the Great Man. “You know old Harbans Singh, the fruit-grower? Well, he outwitted my father in his last court case. My father lost it entirely on account of the lie this fellow uttered. Well, I have a wonderful idea for paying him out.”

“As you know, it's not the mango season yet, so mangoes are reaching a very high price at the moment. I've discovered a loose board in the fence around his biggest mango orchard. Unfortunately, it's a bit too small for me to squeeze through the gap, but you could do it easily. All you have to do is to get through with this sack, fill it up with the fruit and then hand it over to me. I'll see to all the rest”.

Anil looked at him in dismay.

“But Surinder, wouldn't that be stealing?”

The older boy surveyed him scornfully. “Of course not, stupid! Did I not tell you that he had done my father out of thousands of rupees? We would only be recovering a minute portion of what is our right and due. However, if you're afraid...”

“No, No, its's Not that!” the younger boy hastily interrupted. “It's quite all right to me if we're not doing anything dishonest.

Come on, show me the hole in the fence,” he added eagerly.

And so it happened that an hour later, in the gathering darkness, with a heavy weight of doubt in his heart, and an even heavier weight of mangoes on his back, Anil slowly approached the gap in the fence and whispered to Surinder for him to stand ready whilst he pushed over the bundle.

“Okay,” He heard Surinder's answering whisper. “Good lad! You must have got a nice big haul if it won't go easily through the gap.”

And it was at this moment that Anil was dazzled by the light of a torch in his eyes, and was dragged back from the fence by a heavy hand.

“Caught You”;

It was Ram Lal Singh, Harban's younger brother, who stood confronting him, with a grin of triumph on his face. “Well, we're not so far from your school, so we might as well go straight up there and find out what your Principal has to say about this. By the way, was there anyone else with you?”



**Anil with bag
of mangoes**

Anil made no reply, but his eyes traveled round to the gap in the fence. Where was Surinder? Surely he would come and stand by him, and not let him take all the blame alone? It wasn't possible that Surinder would desert him. The words he had been writing came into his mind: "I have complete faith and confidence in my friend, Surinder Khanna."

He comforted himself with the words the whole way up to school. No, no, he had complete biswas in surinder, who would stand by him to the end.

But when he stood in front of the Principal, Anil found himself still alone with his accusers. It was only the drawing master who, coming into see the principal, said that there was more than one boy involved.

"I saw him with Surinder Khanna earlier this evening , sir. Wouldn't it be as well to have that boy in to see if he knows anything about it?"

The Principal agreed, and a few minutes later Surinder stood beside him, bland and smiling.

"I'm sorry I can't help you, sir," he protested innocently enough.

"Yes, I certainly did see Surinder creeping along the outside of the wall when I went out to post a letter," said the drawing master, "but it didn't occur to me to ask him where he was going . I don't know him very well."

And so it was that Anil got the beating and was sent home in

disgrace with a letter to his father.

But there was a pain in his heart which hurt far, far more than the beating had done. Surinder-his hero and his idol-had failed him, and had allowed him to take the punishment, which, rightfully speaking, was due to him.

He was thankful that the darkness hid the tears which poured unheeded down his cheeks. How could he ever face his father? How could he explain to his mother about the ink on the carpet? Overwhelmed by his own grief, he sank down on the grass outside the hedge, and gave way to shaking sobs.

And it was at his moment that he felt a friendly body leaning up against him, a cold nose thrust enquiringly into his face, and a loving tongue licking the tears from his cheeks. Anil's arms involuntarily went round his furry comforter.

“Poor old chap! He said, hugging the dog lovingly to himself and burying his face in his fur. “ And to think that I kicked you! You love me still: you are the sort of friend to have, not frauds like Surinder, who pretend to be very brave but let you down at the last moment.

“Biswas-someone in whom one has complete faith and confidence. I thought that he had quality. No, old chap, you've got something that Surinder hasn't. So I am going to call you biswas, and you're going to be my trusted friend always.”

Wiping the remaining tears from his eyes, Anil struggled to his feet, and walked bravely up the path to his front door, with the

dog walking closely at his heels.

A little while later, tucked up in bed, Anil had reason to be grateful to his parents for their kind and sympathetic understanding.

“Your Daddy thinks that you have been punished enough,” his Mummy explained, as she prepared to bid him goodnight. “I'm sorry, son, that you have had such a bitter disillusionment. But something we all have to learn is not to trust other people too much, very often especially those who are most popular and successful.

“Anyway' you have found one good friend who will never let you down, and that is why your Daddy and I thought it will be a good thing to let you keep him. I'm glad you've called him Biswas-the name suits him!”

And underneath the bed Biswas put up his head and licked his new master's hand, while his tail thumped loudly on the floor.



Duck-Billed Platypus



The duck-billed platypus has often been called the “hoax which came true”, for the first skin to reach British scientists in 1797 was thought to be a hoax. In 1802 scientists were finally forced to concede that the platypus was actually a creature of nature and not the construction of some clever taxidermist.

But it violated all their rules. It had a bird-like beak with no teeth and laid eggs that were covered with fur and the eggs were not like those of birds but those of reptiles, as were some of the bones. Yet it looked like a mammal and probably gave milk, but it had no teats. By 1834 scientists decided it developed its young in egg shells inside the mother's body. It seems that they could not bring themselves to face the fact that a mammal was laying eggs like a bird and hatching them. But that is just what the platypus does.

The Platypus is shy and secretive and hard to raise in captivity or study in the wild. Now a good deal is known about the creature and at Healesville Sanctuary in Australia they can be seen by

visitors in display tanks amid surroundings so natural that the animals apparently cannot distinguish them from their natural habitat.

The Platypus and the echidna, being the two egg-laying mammals, make up a special order called monotremata. They are considered to be the most primitive mammals on earth. But the platypus, in contrast to the echidna, which has an aversion to water, is an expert swimmer and diver. Its fur is like that of an otter and its tail is flattened like that of a beaver. The feet are broadly webbed and the two front ones furnish the driving power in water.

The mother platypus lays generally two eggs about 20 mm in diameter in a special burrow dug by herself for the purpose. The eggs are laid about 15 days after mating, and she does not sit on them like a bird or carry them in a pouch like the echidna, but

- After a platypus egg hatches, the baby (called a puggle), drinks its mother's milk.
- They have a life span ranging from 10-17 years.
- They live in burrows and spend much of their time in freshwater ponds and streams.



clutches them to her breast and rolls up into a ball to keep them warm. Incubation lasts about 9 to 10 days, then the milk begins to exude from enlarged pores (a sort of modified sweat gland) onto the mother's fur, from which the babies lick it. It takes four months before the babies see the light of day, for development is remarkably slow. They are friendly little creatures, and play like puppies.



The beak of the platypus is really nothing like the bill of a duck, for it is soft and leathery with sensitive nerves, and when the platypus feeds under water, with eyes and ears closed, the beak is its tool for discovering the insects, larvae, crustaceans and mollusks on which it feeds.

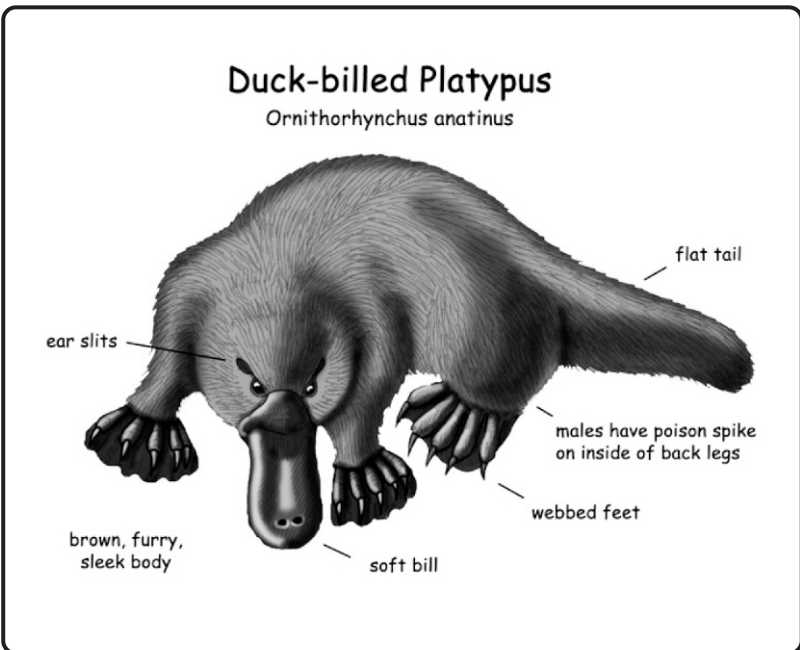
The male has a poison spur on the inside of his legs, connected with a posion gland, something like a snake's fang. It is the only means of defence and he uses it with skill. The poison is not sufficient to kill a man, but can kill a dog.

The fact that a platypus, like other animals, can develop full confidence in a human being, in spite of its extreme shyness, is demonstrated by a pet platypus named Teddy, which is displayed and handled by David Fleay every afternoon for the benefit of his interested visitors at his wildlife sanctuary in

Queensland.

Teddy is picked up, awakes in front of the visitors, swims and feeds in front of them and even puts on a mock fight with a mop sometimes. Anyone visiting Australia should not miss seeing its unique animals, especially the monotremes.

The platypus was hunted for its fur almost to the point of extinction; but it was protected just in the nick of time and saved for the edification of our own and future generations.



The Imitating Monkey

In a small village near a town, there lived some cowherds. Each one amongst them kept a cow. They were very poor and earned their livelihood by selling milk in the nearby town.

One of the milkmen amongst them was very greedy. He was not satisfied with his simple living. He desired to be richer and live luxuriously like the milk vendors of the town.

He thought if he had one more cow, he could have earned twice the money he was getting from the milk obtained from his one cow. The thought of earning more money troubled him day and night.

One who keeps on desiring more and more things than is necessary for simple living, seeks dishonest means for acquiring these things. The milkman thought that he could increase his earning twofold if he doubled the quality of his milk by adulterating it with an equal quantity of water.

He could not do so in his village. In the village everyone knew him as an honest person. Cheating by adulteration of milk openly would have spoiled his milk in the town where he sold the milk. In the town, there was a possibility of being caught in this dishonest act by someone known to his customers. Therefore, he thought he could add water to milk only on his way to the town.

While going to the town for delivering milk, the milkman had to cross a river. Every day on his way to the town, he took rest for a while in the shade of a tree on the banks of the river.

The milkman thought that the lonely place on the banks of the river was the right place for mixing water in the milk. When no one was around him he could secretly take water from the river and add it to his can of milk.

He did not know that God was present everywhere; watching every thought and action of everyone in the world. However secretly one carries out any dishonesty, it does not remain hidden from God. HE watches each and every action of man - day and night, and gives reward and punishment for the good and bad deeds.

We consider our gain or loss as our good or bad luck. However, there is nothing like good or bad luck in life. Each of our action has a reaction. What we call good luck is God's way of giving reward for goodness. On the other hand, a bad luck means punishment given by God for something bad done earlier. The punishment is to tell the person not to repeat the mistake.

God decided to teach the milkman this lesson.



The Greedy Milkman

At the end of month, the milkman went to the town to collect his dues from his customers. On his way back home, it began to rain heavily. He became worried about carrying his money safely. The paper currency was likely to get drenched and soiled on his long journey back to home. He requested his customers to pay him in coins, for the milk sold to them. He was worried, if he carried paper currency in his cloth bag, it was likely to get spoiled by rainwater. Keeping the coins in a cloth bag, he began his journey back home.

As was his routine, on reaching the bank of the river on his way, he lay down beneath a tree to take rest. He kept the bag of money beside him and fell asleep. A monkey on top of a tree besides the river saw the milkman and his bag. The monkey was very hungry. In search of something to eat, it came down and taking the bag of money swiftly climbed up the tree.

When the milkman woke up, he found his bag missing. He looked around, and saw the monkey sitting on top of the tree with his entire earnings of the month in the bag. He became worried about his money. He thought somehow he had to get his bag back from the monkey. He tempted the monkey by showing it a loaf of bread, but the monkey refused to throw the bag or climb down.



**Milkman rests
under a Tree**

Knowing that monkeys have a tendency to imitate actions of man, the milkman thought of a clever way. The milkman had an additional bag in which he carried his personal things. He emptied this bag and filled it with pebbles from the bank of the river. Then in full view of the monkey, he climbed up a nearby tree. From atop the tree, he began to take out pebbles one by one out of the bag, and threw them down to the ground beneath the tree.

The milkman knew that imitating him, the monkey would also take out the coins from the bag and would throw them down. Then he could easily pickup his money on the ground. As he had expected, the monkey imitated his action. The monkey too took out the coins from the bag one by one and began to throw these down.

However, the monkey did not throw all coins of the bag beneath the tree. One by one he took out the coins and he threw one coin on the ground, and the other into the river, alternatively.

The milkman began to cry upon his loss. Keeping his bread away he sadly began to collect the coins thrown down by the monkey. In the meantime, the monkey climbed down and took away the bread kept by the milkman. After collecting all coins, the milkman sat down to calculate his loss. He found, that the monkey had thrown half of his earnings into the river.

This way, he had got only half of his total earnings. The other half earned dishonestly by mixing water in the milk had gone into the river. He got back only what was his due from his honest

earning.

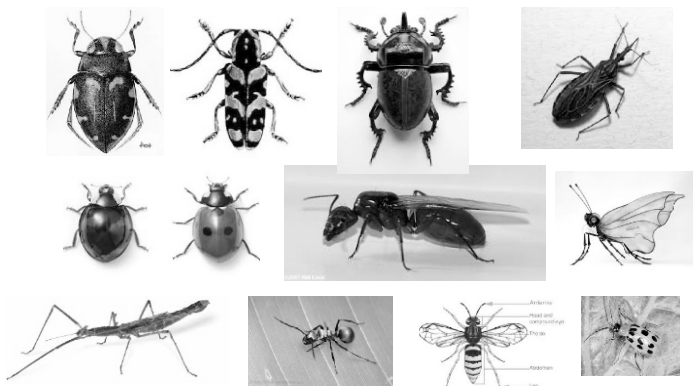
The milkman took a vow to be honest in future. It is impossible to know God's ways of working. He had simultaneously given punishment to the milkman for his dishonesty, provided food to a hungry monkey and saved the customers of the milkman in the town from adulterated milk.



The Imitating Monkey

Speak with Honesty
Think with Sincerity
Act with Integrity

Animal Quiz



1. What is the most versatile class of creatures on earth?

INSECTS: Insects are certainly the most versatile of any class of creatures. They have also been considered the most important, and are certainly the most numerous, since they total eighty-five percent of all living creatures.

They have not only adapted themselves to life on land, in water and in the air, but they also can and eat virtually everything. They reproduce in astonishing numbers and have developed a great variety of very efficient body shapes and types.

Although some insects are pests, and very few dangerous, other creatures could hardly live without their presence. They pollinate flowers and are thus responsible for our fruits, vegetables and flowers. They are important food for small animals, birds and fishes, which provide in their turn food for larger predators. They keep the world sanitary and productive

by returning dead animal land vegetable matter to the soil. And they are exploited, as other classes are, by man, who uses them for making silk, shellac, dyes and so on.

2. What is the strongest creature in the world today?

INSECTS: Relatively speaking, insects hold the records for various types of strength. For example, the drawing power of the normal man is sufficient to raise less than his own weight from the ground. But the honey-bee can pull three hundred times its own weight on wheels. A scarabid can lift eight hundred times its own weight! Probably the strongest insect in the world is the ten centimeter long Goliath beetle of West Africa.

There is no doubt, however, that the largest animal in the world is also the most powerful-the blue whale. It cruises along normally at about 12 Knots, but it can race at 27 Knots (48 K.p.h.) if pressed for speed.

One blue whale, when harpooned, towed a whaling vessel with its engines going full speed astern at a speed of 8 Knots for a period of seven hours. Its greatest pull, according to experts, is about 400 horsepower.



This giant mammal gets its energy from small fare in large quantities. A ton of plankton has been found in the stomach of a single blue whale. Normally, it might live as long as fifty years, but its average life with the extent of modern whaling is probably no more than twenty years.

3. What creature has the largest mouth on earth?

THE BOWHEAR WHALE: 20 to 25 metres long, this whale has an enormous head that is more than a third of its total length, and a mouth big enough to hold an ox or accommodate a man standing on its tongue. The mouth straight across from corner to corner is about 3 metres wide, but its ugly curves produce monstrous lips which are 6 metres long from the corner of the mouth to the front of the unpleasant face.

Yet, this gigantic mouth is for feeding on the smallest of sea creatures! The throat will not swallow anything larger than a herring! The bowhead cannot swim faster than 12 k.p.h. The giant mouth probably creates too much drag. How-ever, because man's greedy eyes see in him only 850 kilograms of whalebone and 90 barrels of oil, instead of a living creature, the bowhead is now almost extinct.



4. What is the longest-lived among wild mammals?

THE ASIATIC ELEPHANT: With records of over fifty years of age and estimates of up to seventy, the Asiatic elephant lives longer than any other wild mammal as far as we know. Wild mammal's life spans vary from those of the little field mice, which seldom last a year, up to those which may reach and exceed thirty years, as in the case of the elephant, baboon, giraffe, horse, donkey, lion, bear, rhinoveros, hippo, tapin and larger whales. But few wild animals die of mere old age. Even for the great creatures, who have relatively few natural enemies because of their size and strength, there is always their unnatural and worst enemy-man himself. He has been exterminating them rapidly for some time. Trying to discover the average life of animals in the wild state is not an easy matter.

Some other animals live longer than mammals, especially the tortoise. A Marion's tortoise was accidentally killed at the age of 152, and it was estimated that it might have lived a century more! There is even a reliable record of catfish living for sixty years, and some of the larger fish probably live much longer.



5. Which animals is closest in intelligence to the human being?

THE DOLPHIN: Man feels that he is the most intelligent being on earth-and in the universe for that matter. While this point is debatable, man has always been quite certain about it and has studied the intelligence of other mammals with a good deal of interest, trying to discover which comes next in degree of intelligence.

A good case might be made out for the elephant, as some of the stories of them have demonstrated, but there has not been much scientific work on the IQ of the elephant. We hope such studies will be undertaken.

The apes are regarded as closer to man in evolution and in intelligence than other animals, and the chimpanzees are the most intelligent of the apes. One star animal performer named Peter learned to do fifty-six separate acts in sequence for his performances. A professor of psychology who tested Peter's mentality stated that the chimpanzee knew what he was doing and enjoyed doing it. But such performances are a tremendous strain on the animal, and Peter did not service long. Even when there is little cruelty in training, there is much cruelty in demanding continuous performances.



One animal which is widely used in the United States for performances, and which cannot be trained with cruelty, is the dolphin. It will not respond to maltreatment.

Dolphins seem to thrive on performances. They enjoy co-operating with men and learn with ease. Furthermore, there is not a single case of a dolphin intentionally injuring a human being even when it had just cause.

Recent scientific research indicates that dolphins are more intelligent than any other animal so far investigated in the laboratory. They learn quickly. They co-operate intelligently with each other and with men. They have imitated human speech voluntarily. They have quite a complex set of meaningful sounds among themselves, and have a brain which seems to be about the same size and complexity as a human brain.



A Miracle for \$ 1.11- *Claimed to be a true story*



Tess' brother is sick

Tess was a precocious eight year old when she heard her Mom and Dad talking about her little brother, Andrew. All she knew was that he was very sick and they were completely out of money. They were moving to an apartment complex next month because Daddy didn't have the money for the doctor bills and our house.

Only a very costly surgery could save Andrew now and it was looking like there was no-one to loan them the money. She heard Daddy say to her tearful Mother with whispered desperation, "Only a miracle can save him now".

Tess went to her bedroom and pulled a glass jelly jar from its hiding place in the closet. She poured all the change out on the floor and counted it carefully. Three times, even. The total had to be exactly perfect. No chance here for mistakes.

Carefully placing the coins back in the jar and twisting on the cap, she slipped out the back door and made her way six blocks to Rexall's Drug Store with the big red Indian Chief sign above

the door. She waited patiently for the pharmacist to give her some attention; but he was too busy at this moment.

Tess twisted her feet to make a scuffing noise. Nothing. She cleared her throat with the most disgusting sound she could muster. No good. Finally she took a quarter from her jar and banged it on the glass counter. That did it.

“And what do you want?” the pharmacist asked in an annoyed tone of voice. “I’m talking to my brother from Chicago whom I haven’t seen in ages,” he said without waiting for a reply to his question.

“Well, I want to talk to you about my brother,” Tess answered back in the same annoyed tone. “He’s really, really sick... and I want to buy a miracle.” “His name is Andrew and he has something bad growing inside his head and my Daddy says only a miracle can save him now. So how much does a miracle cost?”

“I beg your pardon?” said the pharmacist.

“We don’t sell miracles here, little girl. I’m sorry but I can’t help you,” the pharmacist said, softening a little.



Tess at the Pharmacy

“Listen, I have the money to pay for it. If it isn't enough, I will get the rest. Just tell me how much it costs”.

The pharmacist's brother was a well dressed man. He stooped down and asked the little girl, “What kind of a miracle does your brother need?”

“I don't know,” Tess replied with her eyes welling up. “I just know he's really sick and Mommy says he needs an operation. But my Daddy can't pay for it, so I want to use my money.”

“How much do you have?” asked the man from Chicago.

“One dollar and eleven cents,” Tess answered barely audibly. “And it's all the money I have, but I can get some more if I need to”.

“Well, What a coincidence!” smiled the man. A dollar and eleven cents – the exact price of a miracle for little brothers.” He took her money in one hand and with the other hand he grasped her mitten and said, “Take me to where you live. I want to see your brother and meet your parents. Let's see if I have the kind of miracle you need.”

That well dressed man was Dr. Carlton Armstrong, a surgeon, specializing in neuro-surgery. The operation was completed without charge and it wasn't long until Andrew was home again and doing well. Mom and Dad were happily talking about the chain of events that had led them to this “That surgery,” her Mom whispered. “was a real miracle. I wonder how much it would have cost”.

Tess smiled. She knew exactly how much a miracle cost... one dollar and eleven cents ... plus the faith of a little child.



Dr Armstrong with Tess

“I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.”

Albert Schweitzer

Life Is A Gift



Today before you think of saying an unkind word—
think of someone who can't speak.

Before you complain about the taste of your food—
think of someone who has nothing to eat.

Before you complain about your husband or wife—
think of someone who is crying out to God for a companion.

Today before you complain about life—
think of someone who went too early to heaven.

Before you complain about your children—
think of someone who desires children but they're barren.

Before you argue about your dirty house, someone didn't
clean or sweep—

think of the people who are living in the streets.

Before whining about the distance you drive—
think of someone who walks the same distance with their feet.

And when you are tired and complain about your job—
think of the unemployed, the disabled and those who wished
they had your job.

But before you think of pointing the finger or condemning
another—
remember that not one of us are without sin and we all answer
to one maker.

And when depressing thoughts seem to get you down—
put a smile on your face and thank God you're alive and still
around.

Life is a gift—Live it, Enjoy it, Celebrate it, and Fulfill it.

Author Unknown



Learn to live in harmony with each other and nature. Living a
thoroughly loving joyous abundant life is your god given right.
Nature is abundant. Live according to the universal law, universal
principles such as Brother Sisterly Love, Universal Peace, Individual
Freedom and Prosperity for all.

(James Gilliland)

ixquotes.com

Suggested Questions

1. The Story of a Gorilla

1. Who was John Daniel? Where did he live?
2. What was John Daniel's daily routine?
3. Why did the zoo want him?
4. Where did the American take him?
5. Why did John's future become a problem?

2. Choose Your Friends Carefully

1. Why did all the animals like the Tortoise?
2. How was the Scorpion different from the Tortoise?
3. What was the Scorpion jealous of?
4. What did the Scorpion plan to do?
5. Who taught whom a lesson?

3. Chivalry in Animals

1. What does “red in tooth and claw” mean?
2. How do iguanas fight with chivalry?
3. What happened when the dog was in the lion's cage?
4. Who was Little Tyke? What was special about him?
5. What spirit brings harmony and peace in the world?

4. Worthington

1. Why was Worthington a happy cat?
2. What was Suzie doing? What puzzled Worthington?
3. What did Worthington realize when he came back after hunting mice?
4. What made him happy again?
5. What was Worthington's daily routine?

5 What Goes Around Comes Around

1. Why was the old woman worried?
2. How did Bryan Anderson help her?
3. What was so special about the waitress?
4. How did the old lady help the waitress?
5. Explain the saying, '**What Goes Around Comes Around**'.

6. Animal Mothers

1. Give an example of a timid gentle mother and describe how she protects her babies.
2. How does a Hippo mother take care of her baby?
3. What did the animal mothers teach in the Survival School?
4. What do Otters teach their babies? How?
5. What does a doe teach her babies? How?
6. What is special about the Kangaroo mother?
7. Describe the preparation before the birth of a baby elephant.

7. Forgiving – A Gift

1. Where did the money for the Christmas tree come from?
2. What did mother say when she saw the tree?
3. How was Christmas that year? Why?
4. What was the burden the mother carried for 25 years?
5. What are the actual gifts for the season?

8 The Song of the Elephants

1. What is the Elephant' s song?
2. What was the role of the two old elephant cows?
3. What did the sisters do to the tree?
4. What did they relish eating?
5. Who took care of the young ones and how?

9 The Goose Thieves

1. Who was Columbus, Marco Polo, Amundsen & Captain Cook?
2. Why were they named so?
3. Why did the girls plan to save the geese?
4. How did they plan to save the geese?
5. What did Mother Superior tell the girls?

10 The Pillars of the Earth

1. What are the pillars of the earth?
2. What is the lesson we learn from this story?
3. What did the girl tell him?
4. What did he see on the pillars?

11. Lemonade Pals

1. What is SPCA?
2. Why did Vani dislike Varunkaka?
3. What pet did Varunkaka have?
4. How did the baby monkey get hurt?
5. What did the baby monkey take from the fridge?

12 Wonders of Nature

1. What does the ant do when it finds food?
2. How do ants communicate with each other?
3. Describe the social organization in an ants colony.
4. Describe war in an ants colony.
5. What is Natural Selection?

13 In the Guava Orchard

1. Where did the boys go in the lunch break?
2. Why did the watchman chase the boys?
3. What did the boys expect the Malik to do?
4. What did the Malik give the boys?
5. What is the lesson from this story?

14. The Birth of the Turtles

1. Why was Amanda excited?
2. What did she have to promise?
3. What was the danger the baby turtles faced?
4. Why did the mother turtle lay so many eggs?

15. Christmas Miracle

1. Why did Sarah not come to see Santa?
2. Why did Santa go to the hospital?
3. What did Santa tell Sarah?
4. Why did the people thank Santa?
5. Why was it the best Christmas ever for Santa?

16 Biswas

1. What is the Hindi word, Anil asked his father about?
2. Why did Anil think Surinder was his hero?
3. What did Anil do to the dog as he ran out of his house?
4. What did Surinder ask Anil to do?
5. How does the name Biswas suit the dog?

17. Duck Billed Platypus

1. Why is the duck billed platypus called the hoax which came true?
2. What makes the platypus resemble a bird?
3. What makes the platypus resemble a mammal?
4. Where can you see a live platypus now?
5. What does the platypus have for defence?

18 The Imitating Monkey

1. What did the milkman desire to have?
2. Why did he want the money in coins?
3. What happened as he slept under the tree?
4. How did he learn a lesson?

20. A Miracle for \$ 1.11

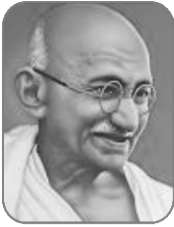
1. What did Tess hear her mother say to her father?
2. What did Tess do with her saved money?
3. Why was the man at the pharmacy irritated?
4. Who helped her? How?



**HOW TO BECOME A VEGETARIAN –
A 10 POINT PROGRAMME
by Sri Ratanlal C. Bafna
Pravartak, Jalagaon Kendra**

- The walls in villages, towns and cities can be painted and decorated with slogans.
- Begin a series of articles on 'Ill effects of Non vegetarianism', and 'Benefits of Vegetarianism' in local newspapers.
- In a common meeting place, arrange for talks on this topic, or screen films on this topic.
- Seek the help of government officials to stop the increased killing of animals.
- Explain to the public that vegetarianism is beneficial not only to personal health, but also to the environment, Non vegetarianism is harmful to both.
- People who practice vegetarianism can go to houses and explain the benefits to the inmates on a one to one basis.
- Organize for talks and lectures on this topic by doctors, eminent personalities and saints.
- Put up posters and stickers on the topic in offices, and social welfare organizations.
Be a Vegetarian! Be Healthy!
Live and Let Live! Be a Vegetarian!
- Try and convert non vegetarian restaurants to vegetarian ones.
- Try to change the occupation of butchers and others who involve themselves in killing animals.

Famous Personalities, Past & Present : ALL VEGETARIANS !



Mahatma Gandhi



Abraham Lincoln



Steve Jobs



Vincent Van Gogh



Sushil Kumar



Sri Kumar Mangalam Brila



Mukesh Ambani



G.M. Rao



Anil Agarwal



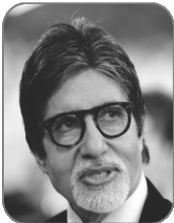
Gautam Adani



Anand Mahindra



Lakshmi Mittal



Amitabh Bachchan



Hema Malini



Anuradha Paudwal



Vidhya Balan