

The Blossom Tree



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In the palatial gardens of a great king thrived a blossom tree. Whether the season was summer, fall, winter or spring, the tree was always in full bloom and was the key attraction of the king's garden.

The king had grown up loving the blossom tree. When he was just a little kid, he would play in its shade, and now, as an adult, he spent his evenings under it. The scent of the tree's flowers wafted through the air and melted his senses, while the wind blowing through its limbs played a delightful tune in his ears. He forgot all his worries and felt one with the universe when he relaxed under his special, magical tree.





One day, as the king was holding court with his ministers, he heard a loud crack, followed by a rumble in the roof. Quickly, he was escorted out of the court by his soldiers.

And an instant later, the roof came crumbling down.

The king immediately asked his masons to inspect the damage. "Find out what went wrong!" he ordered.

The masons returned and reported, "Lord, the wooden structures were rotten and infested with termites. We must find fresh, strong wood to rebuild the roof of the court."

"Alright then, find the best wood in the city and start your work immediately," the king instructed.

The masons searched far and wide for the best wood but returned empty-handed.

When they told the king of their plight, the king was enraged. "Find the best wood you can, leave no tree unchecked," he said curtly and ordered the masons be provided with all the resources they needed.

The masons once again looked far and wide with no luck. Tired from their long search and hesitant to give the king bad news again, they started back toward the palace. Their steps grew shorter and shorter as they approached the royal residence. Passing through the palatial gardens, they decided to rest under the blossom tree to regain strength and courage.

Suddenly, one of the masons noticed how magnificent the tree was and suggested, "Look! This tree is what we have been looking for. It was right under our nose all along, and we didn't even think of it. Duh!"

A second mason added excitedly, "Yes. The trunk is strong enough to support a hundred roofs. This is it!"

To this, a third mason replied calmly, "Are you both suggesting that we cut down this tree? Do you know what you are talking about? Do you want to earn the king's wrath a second time and get a beating? The king loves this tree like a brother. He will not be pleased with this suggestion."

After arguing for a while without reaching a solution, the masons proceeded to the palace to tell the king of their futile search.



“What, there is no tree in this entire city to build a roof?” the king bellowed.

“None my lord, none as strong as the...” the first mason’s voice trailed off warily.

“As strong as what?” the king asked, his tone sharp.

Hesitantly, the second mason replied, “The blossom tree, my lord.”

The furious king thundered, “Go away before I throw you in the dungeon.”

The scared masons scurried away, afraid of the king’s wrath.



Later that evening, the king and his wife talked under the tree.

The king told the queen what the masons had said.

The queen, filled with sorrow, told the king, "The masons might be right, my lord. There is no tree as strong as this blossom tree in the entire city. It's probably the only tree that could rebuild the temple of justice."

The king thought for a long while and finally agreed. His eyes welled with tears as he and his queen bid farewell to their beloved tree.



The blossom tree was upset by what it had heard. Worried she would be felled the following day, her leaves drooped, and she began to shed her flowers.

Melancholy filled the air.

A creeping vine that grew on the blossom tree saw its downcast host and spoke, "Don't worry my friend. I was listening to the king too. Do you want my help?"

The not-so-hopeful blossom tree responded, "Of course, my friend. I don't know what could possibly change the king's mind, but I appreciate your concern."



The next morning, the woodcutters arrived with the masons and inspected the tree. They found numerous motley green, rotting spots on the tree and were flabbergasted.

“That’s strange! We didn’t see this decay yesterday,” the masons said. “This tree won’t be any use to us now,” they declared and instructed the woodcutters to leave the tree alone.



Worried of the king's temper, the masons reluctantly gave him the news. To their surprise and relief, the king was not angered; in fact, he was quite the opposite, as a few minutes before their arrival, a merchant had returned from his travels with excellent wood that would neatly serve the king's purpose.

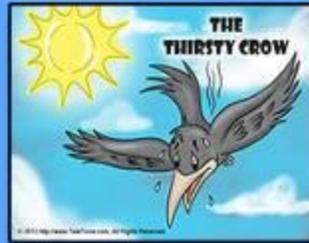
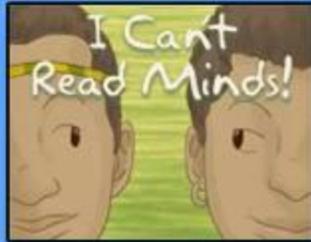
The blossom tree, overjoyed at the outcome of events, questioned the creeping vine, "How did you manage to trick the king's men? I'm not really rotting, am I?"

The creeper answered, "No my friend, you are as healthy as can be. I asked my friends the chameleons to camouflage themselves on your bark and trunk. When the men touched the chameleons, they thought their soft skin was rotten wood."

The blossom tree, overjoyed, thanked the creeper for saving its life.



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