

The Hawk and the Hen

A hawk flying about in the sky one day decided that he would like to marry a hen whom he often saw on earth. He flew down and searched until he found her, and then asked her to become his wife. She at once gave her consent on the condition that he would wait until she could grow wings like his, so that she might also fly high. The hawk agreed to this and flew away, after giving her a ring as an engagement present and telling her to take good care of it.

The hen was very proud of the ring and placed it around her neck. The next day, however, she met the cock who looked at her astonishment and said:

"Where did you get that ring? Do you not know that you promised to be my wife? You must not wear the ring of anybody else. Throw it away."

And the hen threw away the beautiful ring.

Not long after this the hawk came down bringing beautiful feathers to dress the hen. When she saw him coming she was frightened and ran to hide behind the door, but the hawk called to her to come and see the beautiful dress he had brought her.

The hen came out, and the hawk at once saw that the ring was gone.

"Where is the ring I gave you?" he asked. "Why do you not wear it?"

The hen was frightened and ashamed to tell the truth so she answered:

"Oh, sir, yesterday when I was walking in the garden, I met a large snake and he frightened me so that I ran as fast as I could to the house. Then I missed the ring and I searched everywhere but could not find it."

The hawk looked sharply at the hen, and he knew that she was deceiving him. The he said to her:

"I did not believe that you could behave so badly. When you have found the ring I will come down again and make you my wife. But as punishment for breaking your promise, you must always scratch the ground to look for the ring. And every chicken of yours that I find, I shall snatch away."

Then he flew away, and ever since all the hens throughout the world have been scratching to find the hawk's ring.

The Creation Story

When the world first began there was no land, but only the sea and the sky, and between them was a kite^[1]. One day the bird which had nowhere to light grew tired of flying about, so she stirred up the sea until it threw its waters against the sky. The sky, in order to restrain the sea, showered upon it many islands until it could no longer rise, but ran back and forth. Then the sky ordered the kite to light on one of the islands to build her nest, and to leave the sea and the sky in peace.

Now at this time the land breeze and the sea breeze were married, and they had a child which was a bamboo. One day when this bamboo was floating about on the water, it struck the feet of the kite which was on the beach. The bird, angry that anything should strike it, pecked at the bamboo, and out of one section came a man and from the other a woman.

Then the earthquake called on all the birds and fish to see what should be done with these two, and it was decided that they should marry. Many children were born to the couple, and from them came all the different races of people.

After a while the parents grew very tired of having so many idle and useless children around, and they wished to be rid of them, but they knew of no place to send them to. Time went on and the children became so numerous that the parents enjoyed no peace. One day, in desperation, the father seized a stick and began beating them on all sides.

This so frightened the children that they fled in different directions, seeking hidden rooms in the house - some concealed themselves in the walls, some ran outside, while others hid in the fireplace, and several fled to the sea.

Now it happened that those who went into the hidden rooms of the house later became the chiefs of the Islands; and those who concealed themselves in the walls became slaves. Those who ran outside were free men; and those who hid in the fireplace became negroes; while those who fled to the sea were gone many years, and when their children came back they were the white people.

[1] A bird something like a hawk.

Why Dogs Wag Their Tails^[1]

A rich man in a certain town once owned a dog and a cat, both of which were very useful to him. The dog had served his master for many years and had become so old that he had lost his teeth and was unable to fight any more, but he was a good guide and companion to the cat who was strong and cunning.

The master had a daughter who was attending school at a convent some distance from home, and very often he sent the dog and the cat with presents to the girl.

One day he called the faithful animals and bade them carry a magic ring to his daughter.

"You are strong and brave," he said to the cat. "You may carry the ring, but you must be careful not to drop it."

And to the dog he said: "You must accompany the cat to guide her and keep her from harm."

The promised to do their best, and started out. All went well until they came to a river. As there was neither bridge nor boat, there was a way to cross but to swim.

"Let me take the magic ring," said the dog as they were about to plunge into the water.

"Oh, no," replied the cat, "the master gave it to me to carry."

"But you cannot swim well," argued the dog. "I am strong and can take good care of it."

But the cat refused to give up the ring until finally the dog threatened to kill her, and then she reluctantly gave it to him.

The river was wide and the water so swift that they grew very tired, and just before they reached the opposite bank the dog dropped the ring. They searched carefully, but could not find it anywhere, and after a while they turned back to tell their master of the sad loss. Just before reaching the house, however, the dog was so overcome with fear that he turned and ran away and never was seen again.

The cat went on alone, and when the master saw her coming he called out to know why she had returned so soon and what had become of her companion. The poor cat was frightened, but as well as she could she explained how the ring had been lost and how the dog had run away.

On hearing her story the master was very angry, and commanded that all his people should search for the dog, and that it should be punished by having its tail cut off.

He also ordered that all the dogs in the world should join in the search, and ever since when one dog meets another he says: "Are you the old dog that lost the magic ring? If so, your tail must be cut off." Then immediately each shows his teeth and wags his tail to prove that he is not the guilty one.

Since then, too, cats have been afraid of water and will not swim across a river if they can avoid it.

Why The Sea Is Salty

Many years ago, the sea tasted like ordinary rainwater. It was bland and tasteless. Fortunately, the people living in the islands knew about a friendly giant who kept mounds of salt in his cave.

The people would cross the ocean on their boats to reach the gentle giant's island, and that is how they were able to bring salt back to their villages, in order to prepare tastier meals.

One time, however, the ocean was quite rough and they could not sail out to gather salt. They eventually ran out of salt and the villagers no longer enjoyed their tasteless meals. They wondered how they could get salt again, when a child suggested they ask the giant to stretch out his legs over the ocean so that they could walk to his island instead.

The kind giant agreed, and villagers with empty salt sacks walked along the giant's leg. Unfortunately, the giant's foot landed on an anthill, and the ferocious red ants started biting the enormous leg.

"Hurry!" pleaded the giant, who strained to keep his itchy legs still.

As soon as the people reached the giant's island, he immediately withdrew his foot and scratched the itchy bites. The villagers just smiled at how a giant could be bothered by tiny ants.

Anyway, the people got their salt and the giant again stretched his leg over the ocean. Immediately, the ants began biting his swollen foot. Once again, the giant asked the people to hurry up, but the heavy salt sacks slowed them down.

Besides, the people didn't believe that the tiny ants could really affect the giant, so they idly chatted away, and walked rather slowly.

Before the villagers could cross the ocean, the giant cried out and thrust his ant-bitten foot into the ocean. All the packed salt fell into the plain-water sea and melted.

The giant saved the people from drowning, but no one was able to recover the spilled salt. From that day onwards, the sea became salty.