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Written by

Beverley Naidoo

Illustrated by

Piet Grobler

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The Eagle and the Tortoise

Tortoise was fed up with his life. He was bored with being a tortoise.

"I'm tired of crawling on the ground all the time," he grumbled to Eagle, who had stopped to rest above him on the branch of a camel-thorn tree. "I want to soar through the air like you!"

"You're not built for flying," warned Eagle.

"I've watched how you birds do it," said Tortoise. "I can wave my flippers in the air. Just get me up there and I'll show you. If you do that for me, I'll bring you buried treasure."

Treasure! That did it. Grasping the tortoise with his sharp talons, Eagle carried him up into the sky. He flew higher and higher.

Aaaiiieee! Far below, the waterhole became a tiny puddle and a herd of elephants turned into ants! Tortoise didn't know whether to keep his eyes open or shut.

"Now then, let's see you fly!" cried Eagle and he loosened his grip. But the moment Tortoise was by himself, he fell like a stone, and when he struck the ground he was smashed into a thousand little pieces.

~ Just wishing for something doesn't make it happen. ~



The Mosquito and the Lion

It was a very hot afternoon and Lion, King of the Bushveld, had finished eating a large meal. With a deep purr he stretched himself out to sleep under the shade of a bushy sweet-thorn tree. This was the life!

However, a tiny mosquito began buzzing around his head. When Lion opened one eye and swiped at it with his great paw, the little creature simply danced aside.

"What a fine, strong king you are!" Mosquito jeered. "Ha! Show me your claws and teeth! You can't even catch me!"

Lion was furious and tried harder to strike Mosquito. Yet every time he attempted to whack the tiny beast, it zigzagged past him.

"See, I'm stronger than you," Mosquito boasted. "Watch me!"



With that, he dived down and bit Lion on his nose. Letting out a mighty roar, Lion thrust out his claws further. But instead of catching the little fellow, he scratched the skin from his own nose. As he bled, the stinging was much worse than Mosquito's bite.

Mosquito shrieked with laughter. "What did I tell you? Wait until everyone hears about this!"

However, the little fellow did not get very far. Hurrying to boast of his victory, he flew into a spider's web and the spider stretched out to swallow him.

"Eishh, but I'm stupid!" cried Mosquito with his last breath. "I conquered the King himself but I am defeated by a mere spider."

~ Pride comes before a fall. ~



Eishh! – a bit like 'Oh dear!'

The Rinkhals and the Snake-Eagle

A snake-eagle was hovering high above a hill when his old yellow eyes spied a young rinkhals slither on to a rock to sun itself. In less than a second, the snake-eagle swooped down and seized the spitting cobra in its powerful claws. With his razor-sharp beak, the eagle tried to tear open the back of the snake's neck. But the rinkhals coiled and lashed out fiercely, striving to spit its poison into the eagle's black breast. It was a life or death struggle up in the air.

As the young rinkhals kept trying to strike, the old snake-eagle began to regret his action and wanted to let go of its prey. But the two of them were now interlocked. Perhaps they would both hurtle onto the rocks below and be smashed together.

Now, a young man was watching their struggle from below. He was on a long journey and had sat down to rest and drink. He placed his gourd on the rock where the rinkhals had been going to sunbathe.



"If that snake-eagle hadn't snatched the snake, it might have killed me!" thought the young man. He wanted to help the eagle and pulled out his sling. He waited for the fighting pair to come lower. Then, using the smoothest of pebbles, he took aim.

The blow struck the rinkhals right between its eyes. Blinded for a moment, it gave up fighting. The exhausted eagle let it go and the rinkhals fell to the earth. Sjoe, it was still alive! As the young man turned to pick up his stick to beat it, the snake spat its poison into the man's water gourd before slithering away. By the time the young man looked up, the rinkhals was gone.

"Well, at least I saved that old snake-eagle," said the young man and picked up his gourd to drink his water. But as he lifted his hand, the great bird flew at him, almost knocking him over and spilling the poisoned water on the ground.

"Ha! Don't you know that I saved your life?" the young man called out indignantly as the snake-eagle flew away. He did not know that the old snake-eagle had saved his life as well.

~ One good turn deserves another. ~

rinkhals – a ring-necked spitting cobra

