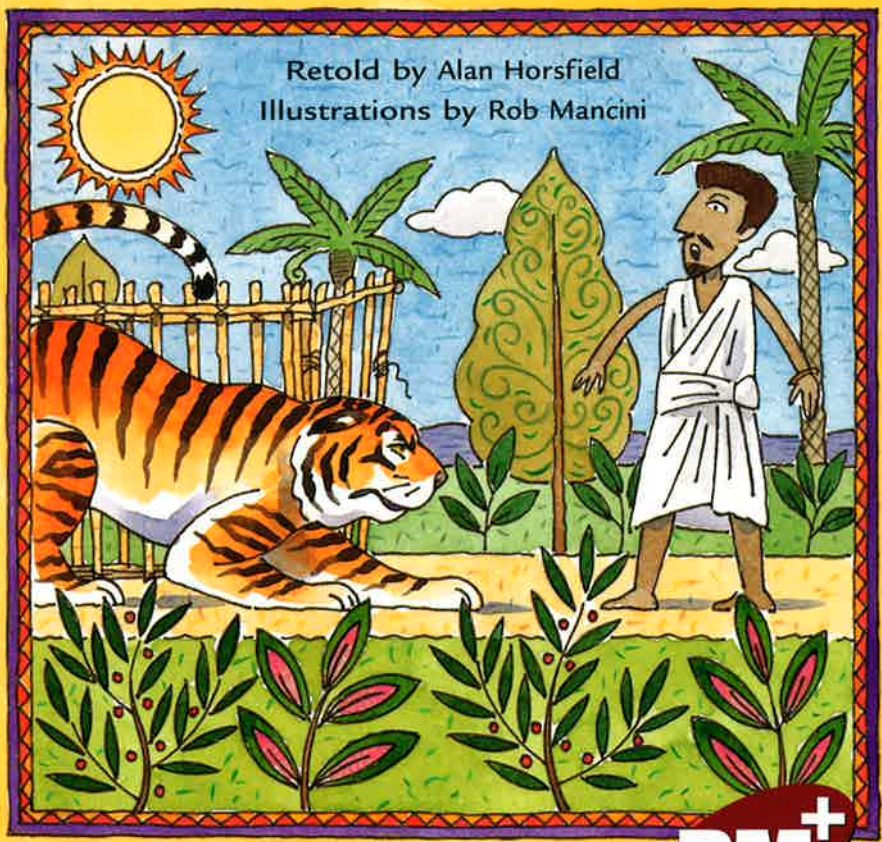
The Brahmin and the Ungrateful Tiger

Retold by Alan Horsfield
Illustrations by Rob Mancini

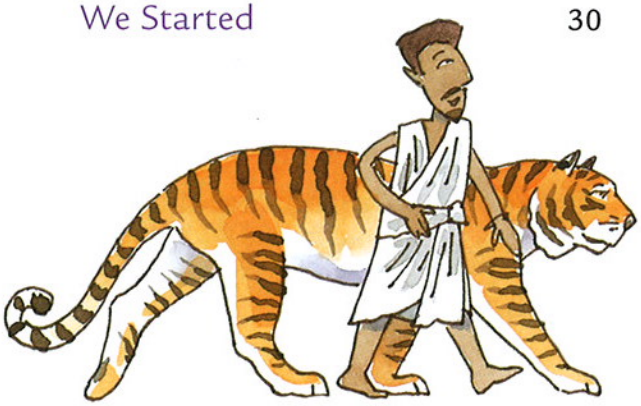


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CHAPTER ONE

A Broken Promise



Many years ago, in India, tigers roamed the countryside. They were feared by villagers and by farmers, because they attacked animals and were a constant danger to people. Whenever they could, the people would capture tigers and put them in cages.

One day, a brahmin priest was walking barefoot along a hot, dusty road, when he came across a big tiger who was trapped in a bamboo cage.

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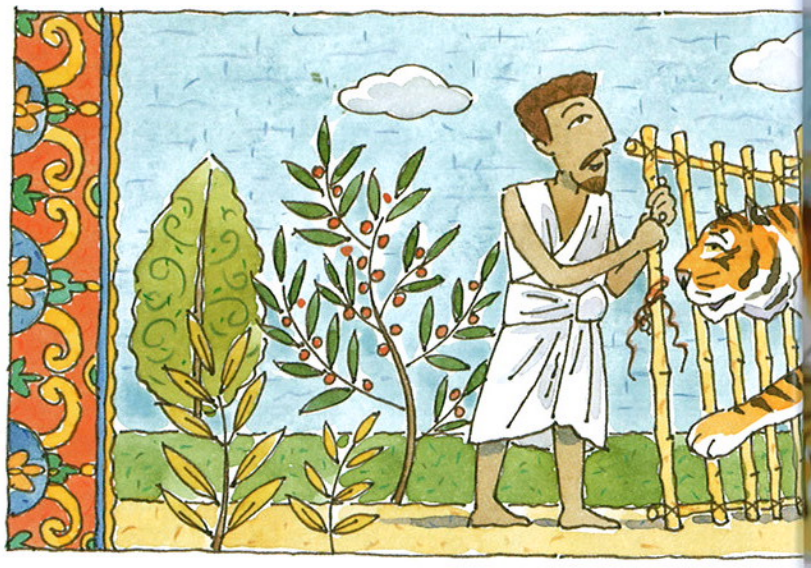
The tiger knew that brahmins were kind, gentle people. He called to the holy man, "Brother brahmin, do not look away. Have pity on me and release me from this miserable cage."

The brahmin saw that the tiger was sweltering in his cramped cage.

The tiger pleaded with the brahmin. "It is hot in the sun and I have been locked up since sunrise," he said. "I am very thirsty. Please let me out."

The brahmin walked around the cage and looked pityingly at the unhappy tiger. He shook his head and said, "I cannot let you out of the cage. If I did, you would certainly eat me."





The brahmin was about to continue on his way when the tiger protested. "That cannot be true," he said. "How could a man such as you think so badly of me? Do you think that I would be so ungrateful?"

The kind-hearted brahmin hesitated. It was his duty to help all creatures. But he could not help feeling afraid of the tiger.

"Let me out for just a moment, please," begged the tiger. "The day is hot. Once I have had a drink from the river, I will return immediately to my cage."

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The worried brahmin considered the tiger in his hot, cramped cage. He took pity on the poor beast. "I see that you are suffering," he said. "I will let you out of the cage – but first you must promise not to harm me."

The tiger hid a smile and said, "I will not harm you. I promise."

The brahmin, trusting the tiger's words, untied the twine knot that held the cage door securely shut. Then he pulled the door open.

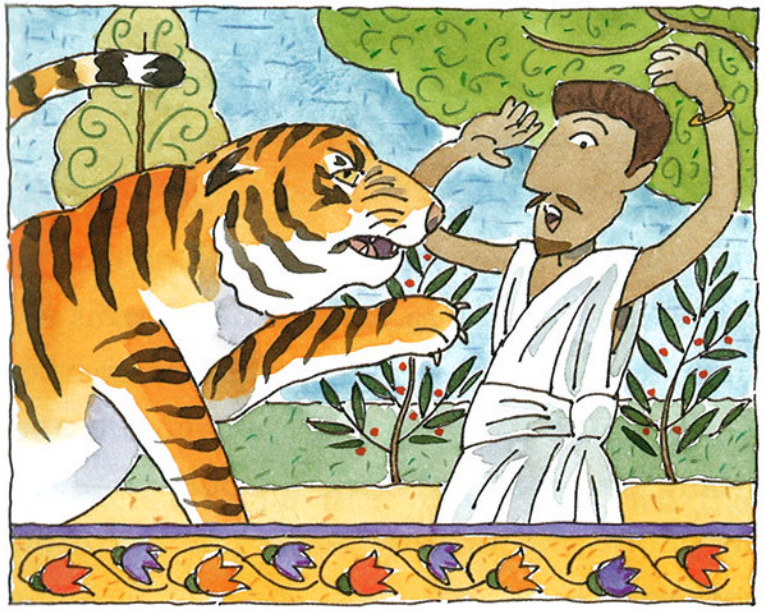
No sooner was the door opened than the tiger eased himself from the cage. He stood slowly and stretched his aching limbs. Then he turned to the brahmin. "I am hungry as well as thirsty," he growled meanly. "I will *eat* before I drink."

The tiger stalked menacingly towards the brahmin. He crouched, ready to spring ...



CHAPTER TWO

A Dangerous Agreement



The frightened brahmin held up his hands in alarm and stepped back. "My friend, you promised not to harm me," he stammered. "I trusted your word, but you have tricked me. I set you free from your horrible little cage, and now you threaten to eat me."

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