



One day, a young man set off on his travels to make his fortune. He came across a village where he saw an old man standing in a mango grove. It was winter time and the mango trees were bare. The man appeared to be muttering to himself and sprinkling water onto the trunk of one of the mango trees. The young man drew closer and to his amazement the mango tree was suddenly covered with ripe juicy mangoes.

Normally, such a clever well educated young man would feel ashamed talking to a poor old man. But this man seemed to be magic and the young man wanted to learn his secrets. If he could magic mangoes out of thin air, even in the winter then he would indeed be rich!

The young man decided to ask the man if he could work for him and become his assistant. The man was suspicious. Why would a man such as him want to work for a poor illiterate man? The old man asked his wife what she thought. She was willing to give the young man a job and let him earn their trust.

For more than a year, the young man worked hard and never complained. The man and his wife decided it was time to share their secret with the young man. The young man was delighted and couldn't wait to rush off and try out his new found knowledge. But, there was one condition. The man told him that if anyone asked where he had learned the magic spell, he was to tell the truth; that he had learnt the magic from a poor illiterate villager. The young man agreed.

The young man did indeed become very wealthy, selling mangoes all through the year. The King got to hear of this and sent for the young man. 'Tell me', said the King, 'where did you learn such a spell?' The young man remembered what the old man had told him but felt ashamed that he had been mixing with such a man and so lied to the King. 'I learned it from a very rich clever man', he said. The king asked him to magic him some mangoes.

The next day, the young man sprinkled some water onto a mango tree and uttered the magic words but nothing happened. When the King came for his mangoes, he was very angry. The young man was forced to explain how he had lied about his teacher and he held his head down in shame. The King said 'This is an important lesson for you, young man! It matters not if a person is rich or clever, poor or illiterate. What is important is if he is wise and good. You should not feel ashamed of the old man but of yourself!' The King ordered the young man to leave his Kingdom and he was never seen again.





Read and answer the questions about the story.

1. Why do you think the young man left home?

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2. Where was the old man standing when the young man first saw him?

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3. Why do you think that the young man did not want to be seen with the old man?

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4. What was special about the old man?

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5. Why was the old man suspicious of the young man at first?

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6. How long did the young man work for the old man before learning the spell?

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7. What was the condition on which the old man gave the young man the magic spell?

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8. How did the young man go on to become wealthy?

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9. Who sent for the young man?

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10. What lie did the young man tell the King?

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11. What important lesson did the young man learn from his behaviour?

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12. What do you think happened to the young man once he left the King's Kingdom?

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