

The King Learns to Ride a Horse

By Dr. Rohini Chintla

Once upon a time there lived a king who had won many battles and who had conquered great kingdoms. He had big palaces, huge chariots and lavish gardens. He was well loved and respected by his people.

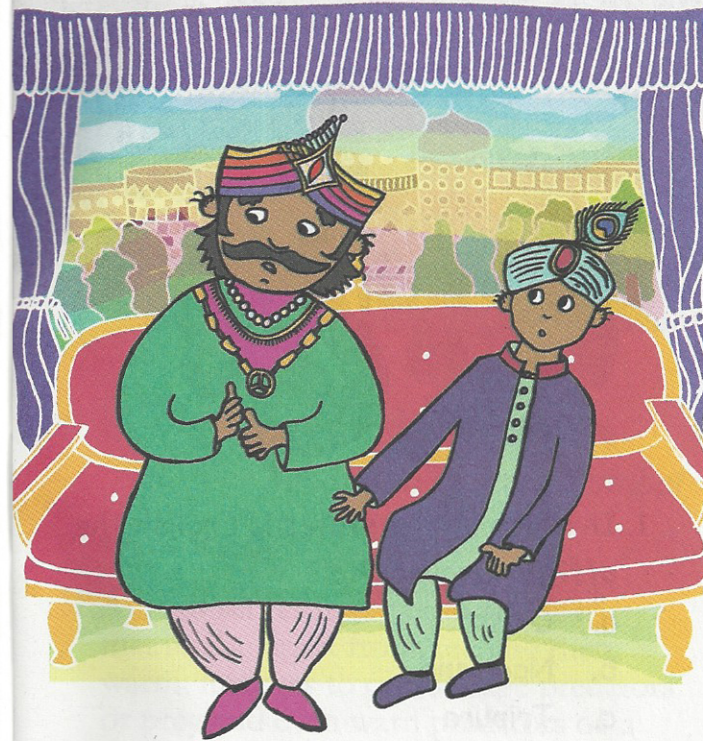
But the King had one secret. He could not ride a horse! He had fallen off a horse when he was small and had broken his hand. Since then he was frightened and could never bring himself to ride a horse again. This was embarrassing for

the king and he thought if people came to know about it, he would become the laughing stock of the kingdom. So he kept it a secret.

But now, his son, the Prince had just learnt to ride a horse and was anxious to impress his father. So every day he requested the King to come and ride with him. As the King was frightened of horse riding, he would somehow find an excuse.

One day, the Prince insisted that the King should come to see his practise session. The King could not refuse his son, so he went. The Prince rode the horse so well that the King was filled with pride for his son but felt sad for himself.

Immediately after the practise, the Prince invited the King for a ride along the river bank as he wanted to spend time with his father. The King was startled at first but then he quickly recovered and said he had



ride a horse, Father. You taught me never to give up and you can't give up now. I know you find it difficult but you must overcome this fear. It can be our little secret," said the Prince.

The King hesitated for a moment but then yielded. From then, every morning the Prince and the King went to the river bank before day break and practised till mid-morning. The King wanted to give up every now and then, but the Prince coaxed and encouraged the King and taught him the importance of never giving up.

important matters to discuss and left.

After that, on many such occasions, the Prince invited and the King refused till the Prince felt that the King did not love him or enjoy his company. When matters started to get worse between the father and son, the King finally decided that it was time to confess the truth to his son. So he called the Prince to his chamber and with great difficulty, blurted out the truth.

"I don't know how to ride a horse, son", said the King unhappily. "It is too late to learn it now," he concluded sadly.

The Prince was astonished at first, but he now understood the King's behaviour. He sat in deep thought for a while and then gently spoke to the King, "Please let me teach you how to

The King practised hard and soon mastered the art of horse riding. The King and his son enjoyed long rides together. The King lived more freely and happily now that he had no secrets to keep. And the father and son shared a long and happy relationship ever after.

