



THE VANISHING POND

Once upon a time there was a small valley and in the middle of that small valley there was a small pond. All the animals in the valley would gather by the pond every day to quench their thirst and take a swim. One day, however, as the animals splashed around in the refreshing water, one of the hares noticed that there was less water in the pond than before.

“Do my eyes deceive me, my friends?” He asked his fellow animals. “Am I dreaming? Doesn’t the pond appear to be smaller now than it was before?” He must be imagining it, he thought, and so he took a dive into the water, thinking that perhaps he was just tired.

“You know, I believe you’re right,” said the wise old turtle, who was sitting on the shore of the pond. “But no wonder, it hasn’t rained for several weeks now. The dry season is upon us, I fear. The longer it goes on, the less water there is in the pond.”

“That’s terrible!” the hare exclaimed, swimming toward the turtle. “Where will we play if the pond goes dry? And what will we drink?”

“I’m afraid we have no power over the weather, my friend. The dry season is arriving, and so, little by little, our pond will dry up in the hot sun.” The other animals gathered around him, afraid and confused by this news. “You see,” he continued, “What happens when it is very hot is that tiny invisible droplets

THE VANISHING POND

of water will rise from the pond to the sky, and those will change into tiny little clouds of vapour and disappear. And I'm sorry to say that there's nothing we can do to stop it."

Soon sadness fell over the valley. The rain still hadn't come and before long the pond completely dried up. Thirst and drought came upon the animals. The sun burnt hot and dried out the whole valley. Every day the animals came to the pond, hoping something had changed and the water would be there so they could refresh themselves, but it was pointless. The water was gone.

One day, the hare was so desperate that he looked up at the sky and shouted at the sun,

"You drank all our water, you monster! Give it back right now! We don't have anything left to drink and I can't even wet my paws to ease the heat!"

The other animals, seeing the hare's outburst, also turned to the sun. They snarled and barked and shouted and cried,

"Give us back our water! Give us back our pond!"

But the sun didn't even blink in the face of their pleas, and the animals had no choice but to curl up in the shade and wait for the rain to finally come.

Day after day, they gathered by the pond to check if it had perhaps filled overnight. But it was still completely empty. They were out of luck.

That is, until one day, when a strong wind suddenly rose up. Tree branches bent and swayed and creaked. Clouds covered the burning sun and banded together into one huge, dark cloud. Thunder clapped and lightning struck, and suddenly, just like that, a tiny raindrop fell and landed right on the hare's nose.

"The rain has finally come!" he shouted to his friends, jumping around joyfully. And, sure enough, it started to pour rain. Everyone scurried out of their holes and danced in the rain for hours and hours.

It rained for days, and the hare couldn't wait to finally be able to plunge into his beloved pond. Finally, as the rain began to let up and turned into a light drizzle, he decided he would go to the pond just to see how much it had filled up. It was completely full! There was a light mist coming off of it, and the hare's friend, the wise old turtle, was already sitting on the bank and admiring the most beautiful

THE VANISHING POND

view. Together they sat and watched the calm drizzle coming down, and soon the clouds began to part and the sun broke through the clouds. Suddenly, the hare noticed something he had never seen before. There was a marvellous arc in the sky, full of colours.

“That’s a rainbow,” said the turtle, as if reading the hare’s mind. “When the sun shines through raindrops, the light splits into colours.” The hare thought he had never seen anything so beautiful.

After some time, the rain slowed, then stopped. The pond was once again full to the brim and everything around it was the most marvellous green! The rest of the animals came out of their burrows, and the hare and his friends jumped into the pond and played happily once again.