

32. The Noble Stag



As we all know, King Brahmadata of Benaras was extremely fond of hunting. Luckily for him, on the outskirts of the city was a huge forest filled with deer. Among them, there was a mighty stag.

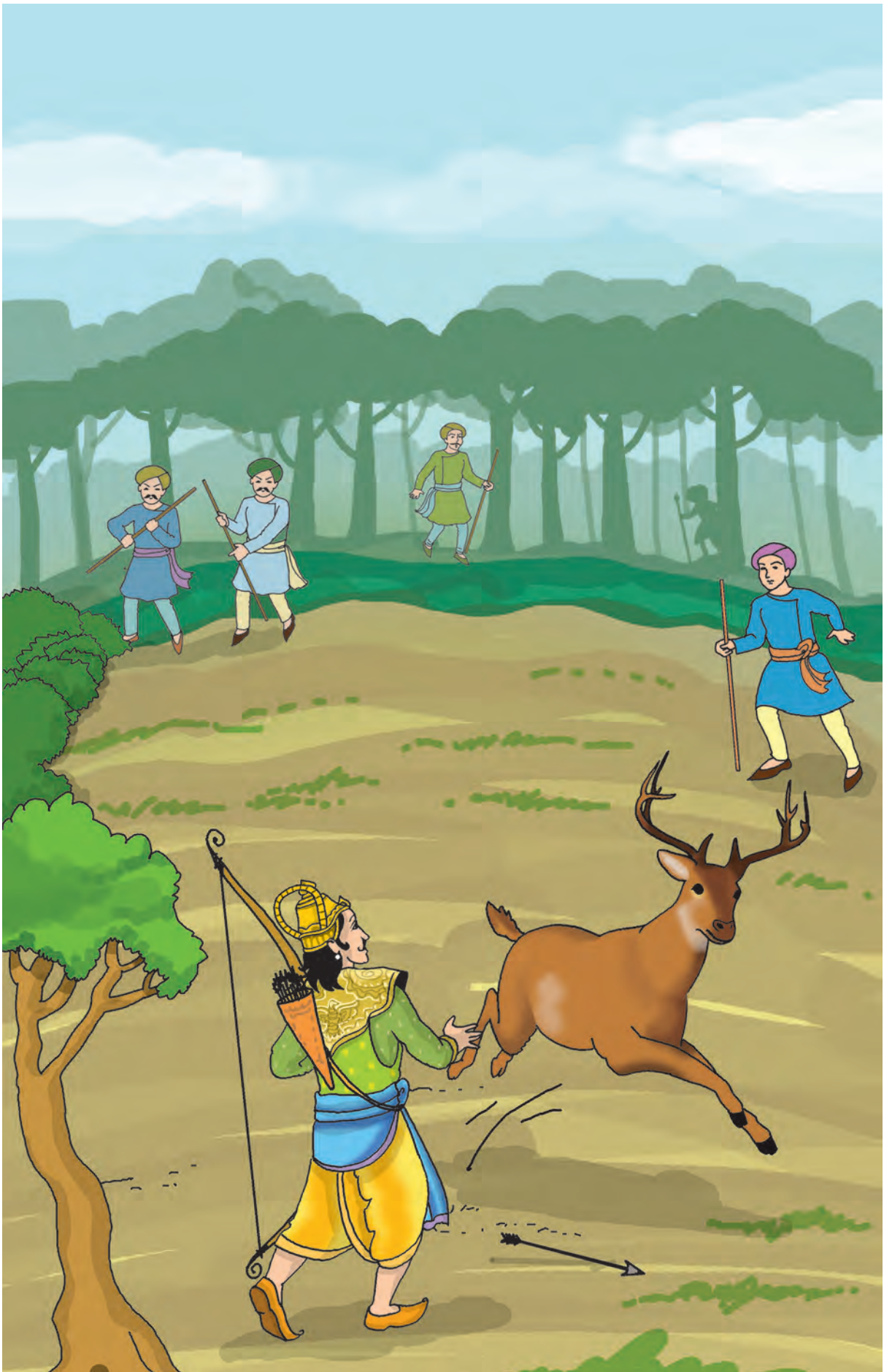
One fine day, the King had gone hunting with his courtiers. He told his courtiers, “If you allow even a single deer to escape, I will punish you severely.” So, the courtiers formed a tight circle from which no deer could escape. Then they began to beat their sticks on the ground to frighten the deer hiding in the bushes and to make them run. The only way out of their circle was through a small clearing, where the King stood ready with his bow and arrows. The courtiers were beating their sticks on the ground and shouting when suddenly, a stag leapt out of a thicket.

The stag saw that the King was standing in the way. So he looked the King straight in the eye and made a dash towards him. The King was taken aback and shot an arrow towards the stag hurriedly. Of course it missed the mark. But the stag rolled over.

Now there is one thing that you must know about the stag. It has excellent instincts and is extremely good at dodging arrows, whether shot at from the back, front or even the top. If an arrow is aimed at its belly, it pretends to roll over and then jumps up and runs once the danger has passed.

So when this stag rolled over, the King thought that his arrow had found its mark. He lowered his bow and began to walk towards the stag. But the stag suddenly jumped up and shot past the men. When the courtiers realised that the King had been mistaken, they started to laugh.

Now the King thought himself to be an excellent marksman and could not bear the taunts of his men. He grabbed his sword and set off into the forest in order to catch the stag. He chased the stag for quite a while and covered a long distance.



The stag came upon a hole in the ground that was covered by a rotting tree and filled with slime. From a distance it could smell the dirty water and so was careful not to run over it. But the King could not sense the pit and fell right into it.

After a while, the stag realised that he was not being followed any longer. He understood that the King had perhaps fallen into the pit.

So the stag went back to the pit and saw the King struggling for his life. The stag felt very sorry for the King. He decided to save the King's life even though the King was following him with the intention to kill him.

The stag told the King not to worry and to be brave for a while longer. He then caught a huge rock with his hind legs and lowered himself into the pit. The King caught hold of his neck and the stag climbed out onto the level ground and carried the King to safety.

The King thanked the noble stag again and again and asked him to return with him to Benaras, where he could have anything and everything he wanted. But the stag did not want anything in return for his help. He just requested the King to rule wisely and well and be kind to animals. Then the noble stag disappeared into the forest. King Brahmadatta then vowed not to hunt or hurt any animal.

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- **outskirts** : the outer parts of a city or town. ● **courtiers** : persons at the court of a king. ● **thicket** : thick growth of shrubs, plants.
 - **instincts** : inborn ways of behaviour or thinking. ● **dodging** : moving aside quickly to avoid an arrow, blow, etc. ● **marksman** : a person skilled in shooting, in hitting a target. ● **taunts** : teasing or insulting remarks.

Things to do :

1. Answer the following questions :
 - (a) What did the King tell his courtiers ?
 - (b) Was the stag hurt by the King's arrow ?
 - (c) How did the stag escape ?
 - (d) Why did the King set off into the forest ?
 - (e) Why did the stag return ?

- (f) How did the stag save the King's life ?
- (g) What did the stag tell the King ?
- (h) Why is the stag called 'The Noble Stag' ?

2. Read each of the following sentences. Use some other suitable word in place of the word given in a box. (You need not use words from this story but you have to make meaningful sentences.)

- * The King was extremely fond of hunting .
- * The huge forest was filled with deer .
- * The stag came upon a hole .
- * He told the King not to worry .
- * The noble stag disappeared into the forest.



Now, try to replace other words in each sentence in the same way to make many more sentences.

3. Note the following :

- * One king – many kings * One bush – many bushes * One city – many cities
- * One horse – many horses * One arrow – many arrows * One leaf – many leaves
- * One child – many children * One foot – many feet

BUT

- * One deer - many deer * One sheep - many sheep

Make a collection of other such 'one-many' pairs.

