

# The Baby Camel

(a folktale of Central Asia)

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1 A silly baby camel ran away into the grasslands. He ran about in the sunshine, crying happily, "Krkhhhmmmmmmms! Khh!"

2 But then the sun went down. The

baby camel got hungry and scared. Wolves howled in the shrubs, "Ooooooo!" The baby camel was frightened. He ran about in the dark. His tears splashed to the ground. He

was afraid to cry out, for fear the wolves would hear him and eat him up.

3 But the wolves caught the scent of the baby camel on the wind. They howled to each other at the top of their voices:

4 "Tender meat! A baby camel!"

5 All night long, the baby camel ran from the wolves. It seemed to him the worst night of his young life.

6 At last morning came. The wolves ran away to hide. The baby camel was glad to see the sun. Soon his cry was heard by two passing men. The baby camel ran up to one. Then he leaped into the arms of the other—he was so happy.

7 "This is my baby camel!" said the second man.

8 "No, it is mine. You saw how he came running to me," cried the first.

9 The two men stood arguing over the silly baby camel. At last they de-

ecided to go to the wise judge Edige. The judge heard their quarrel. He said, "Bring me all your camels."

10 The men came with their camels. Edige hid behind a pile of wood and howled like a wolf. The camels raised their heads, and the little camel began to cry. At the sound of the baby camel's voice, a mother camel ran out of the flock and began to lick him. The other camels did not move. The baby camel began to drink his mother's milk.

11 Edige called the man who owned the mother camel. He said, "The baby camel belongs to his mother. Since you own her, you also own the baby. Now drive your camels home."

12 Then Edige said to the other man, "You are bad. Whose milk would that baby camel have drunk if you had taken him? Go home, and remember that greed is the root of all evil."



## How Well Did You Understand?

- A** Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.
- The wise judge in this story used
    - a book to help him
    - a trick to help him
    - some wolves to help him
  - The baby camel leaped into the man's arms because
    - he wanted to be carried
    - he was glad to be safe
    - he thought he heard wolves
  - The two men argued so much over the baby camel because they both
    - raised the camel
    - wanted the camel
    - owned the camel
  - The men needed a judge to
    - join in their quarrel
    - find the baby camel's mother
    - decide who owned the baby camel
  - "Greed is the root of all evil" means that
    - bad plants grow in greedy people's gardens
    - greed is something you find underground
    - being greedy leads to other bad things

## Learn about Words

- B** Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

*Directions:* Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- gave a long, loud cry (2)
  - low plants; bushes (2)
  - smell (3)
  - pleased; happy (6)
  - jumped (6)
  - made up their minds (9)
  - listened to (9)
  - heap; mound; stack (10)
- C** A word may have more than one meaning. Its meaning will depend on how it is used.
- My dad is a football fan.*  
*He keeps cool with an electric fan.*
- Directions:* Look at each word in **heavy type**. Note the paragraph number. Look back at the paragraph. Which meaning does the word have there? Write *a* or *b*.
- drive** (11)
    - make animals move
    - go in a car
  - root** (12)
    - cause; start; reason for

## Think about It

**D** Most words add an *s* to mean more than one.

camel → camels

But sometimes words change their spelling to mean more than one.

one wolf → two wolves

one man → two men

*Directions:* Read each sentence. Which of the two words in ( ) fits the sentence? Write the word.

- 1 The silly camel heard many (wolf, wolves).
- 2 A (wolf, wolves) can howl loudly.
- 3 The two (man, men) argued.
- 4 The mother (camel, camels) found her baby.
- 5 The judge told one (man, men) that he was greedy.

**E**    ~~bake~~ + er = baker  
      ~~taste~~ + ed = tasted  
      ~~come~~ + ing = coming

When a word ends with *e*, you drop that *e* before adding the endings *er*, *ed*, and *ing*.

*Directions:* Each word below ends with *er*, *ed*, or *ing*. Write the word as it would be without the ending. For example, if you read *racing*, you would write *race*.

- 6 tamed
- 7 tuning
- 8 joker
- 9 smiling
- 10 tasted

## What Do You Think?

Think about the saying, "Greed is the root of all evil." Have you ever felt greedy? How does greed make you act? Why should you try *not* to be greedy? Talk about this with a friend.