

# The Turtle Who Couldn't Stop Talking

Story Origin: India

Long, long ago, a turtle lived in a pond with two swans. The turtle loved to talk. She always had something to say and she liked to hear herself say it. After they lived on the pond happily for many years, a dry spell came. There was no rain for many weeks and the pond dried up completely. The swans realized they would have to leave their home and fly to another pond with water and they went to say good-bye to their friend.

But she begged them, "Don't leave me here. I, too, will have nothing to eat and no water to live on. I will surely die if I am left here."

"But you can't fly," said the swans. "How can we take you with us?"

The swans felt so sorry for their friend that at last they came up with a plan and said to the turtle. "We have thought of a way to take you with us. We will take hold of one end of a long stick. You must hold onto the middle of it with your beak and never let go. You must not talk as long as we are carrying you. If you open your mouth, you will fall to the ground."

The turtle promised not to say a word. Away the swans flew into the air carrying the turtle on the stick between them. As they rose above the treetops, the turtle wanted to say, "Goodness, look how high we are," but she remembered the warning.

Soon they passed over a small town, and a few people looked up and shouted, "Look at the swans carrying a turtle. What a silly sight."

The turtle thought, "Why don't they mind their own business?" but she remembered not to say anything out loud.

Soon more villagers came to see the sight. They cried. "How strange. A flying turtle. Look, everybody."

The turtle couldn't stand it any longer. She opened her mouth to call out, "Hush you foolish people." But as she did, she let go of the stick and fell to the ground. She landed on her back, and her shell cracked into a thousand pieces.

Turtle's shell has remained that way to this day. Her cracked shell reminds us of what can happen when we talk too much.