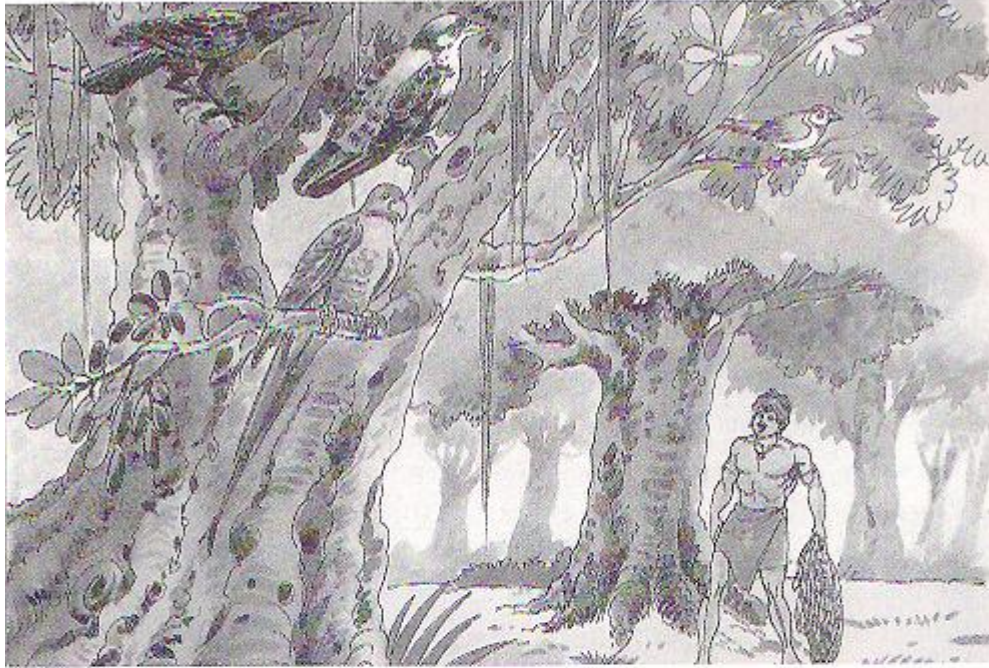

The Sensible Doves



There lived a group of doves on a large banyan tree. They lived their happy and care free lives in peace. Every morning they went out of their nests to look for food grains and had their fill when they found some. In the evening, they would return and share their day's experience with each other and then rest for the night.

An old crow, known for his wisdom, also lived there on the tree. Many birds and animals came to it for guidance. One day, a hunter came across the banyan tree and saw the doves there. He decided to lay his snare in the thick outgrowth at the foot of the tree and then capture some of the birds.

The hunter came at dusk and hid his snare at the foot of the tree. He covered the snare with leaves and dry earth. To entice the birds he dispersed some rice grains too.

It was by chance that on the same day the doves' flight in search of food had been in vain. They came back to their home tree-all exhausted and hungry. Just when they approached the tree, a young dove exclaimed, "Look, we have been foraging for food so far away while it is here, so near to us. See these pearly rice grains! They must be so good to taste." "You are right," said the leader of the doves. "Let us peck at these grains and appease our appetite."

After having their fill the doves stretched their wings to fly to their nests on the banyan tree. But alas! They could not move, for their feet were entrapped in the sharp and tight threads of the snare.

"Oh! What a fool I have been," cried the leader. "After years of being an alert leader, today I have led my brethren into a trap. I must seek uncle crow's advice to help us out of this snare."

So the leader called out to the wise crow that lived on another branch of the tree. Hearing the distressed call the crow flew down to the leader and addressed him: "Dear nephew, what have you got into? Surely your alertness must have kept you away from this snare."



