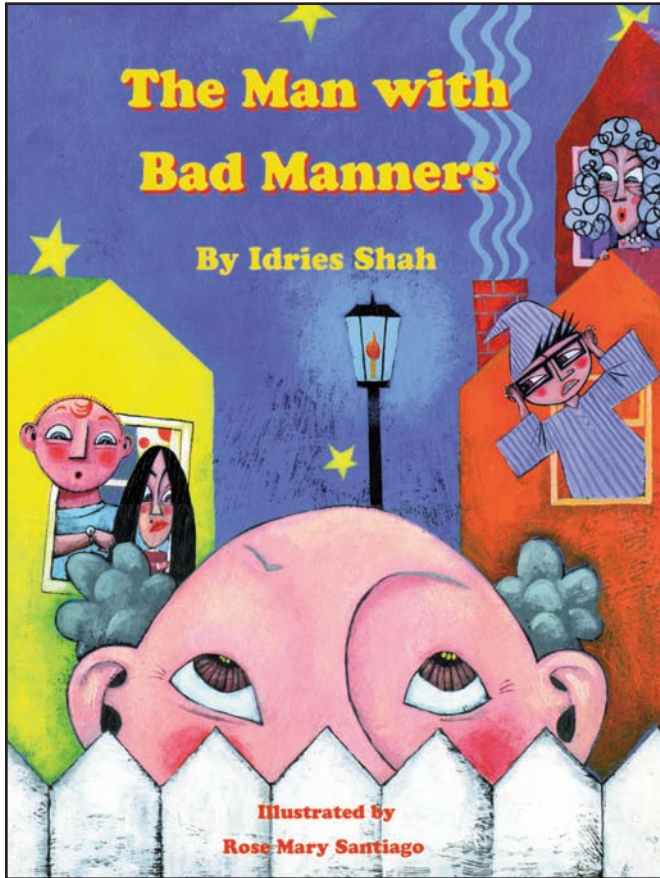




HOOPOE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN  
MANUAL FOR PARENTS & CARETAKERS



to accompany

## The Man with Bad Manners

written by  
**Idries Shah**

**“These teaching stories can be experienced on many levels. A child may simply enjoy hearing them; an adult may analyze them in a more sophisticated way. Both may eventually benefit from the lessons within.”**

*Lynn Neary “All Things Considered,”  
NPR News, Washington*

This manual accompanies one title in our series of illustrated tales from the rich storytelling tradition of Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Middle East. These stories have been told to countless children for more than a thousand years. Parents and teachers can use these ancient, universal tales not only to delight and entertain, but also to develop language and thinking abilities in the young. At the same time, these stories will encourage in children a love of good literature that can affect them positively throughout their lives.

In this ancient tradition, stories are told to young and old alike. A story can help children deal with difficult situations and give them something to hold onto. It can, at the same time, stimulate a deeper understanding in adults. While reading and discussing these tales with your children, you, too, may find yourself thinking and perceiving in new ways. A wealth of learning awaits us all in these old tales.

We hope you and your children enjoy them!

## ABOUT HOOPOE TALES

**These stories show us what we share with these cultures and what we can learn from each other.**

### CULTURAL CONTEXT

Hoopoe tales come from a rich tradition of storytelling in Afghanistan, Central Asia, and the Middle East. For more than a thousand years, by campfire and candlelight, people have told these stories to their children, not only to entertain them, but also to help young people understand their world. Schools for young children were rare, but storytelling was not. Education came from stories.

Idries Shah, the author, was an Afghan who spent 30 years of his life collecting, translating, and selecting these stories for a Western audience. They show us what we share and what we can learn from each other. They help children understand human nature. They encourage qualities such as self-reliance, the ability to overcome

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**“Shah’s versatile and multilayered tales provoke fresh insight and more flexible thought in children.”**

*Bookbird: A Journal of International Children’s Literature*

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fears caused by things children do not as yet understand, peaceful negotiation rather than violent confrontation, and much else.

This story is the first in the Hoopoe series to be set in the West.

### MORE THAN ENTERTAINING

According to their stage of cognitive development, children take what they can from each tale. At first, they may respond only to one character or one event in a story, or they may understand only the most obvious meaning, but they will grasp a little more each time they hear a story. Bit by bit, they will find more meanings, concepts and insights in these stories.

Through repeated exposure to these tales, children learn to understand their lives and reflect on how people think and act in various situations.

These tales help children learn to distinguish effective from ineffective patterns of thought and action.

In many ways these tales serve as mirrors. Identifying with characters in a story, we and our children become spectators of our own thinking and behaving.

### WHY READ TO OUR CHILDREN?

“Reading aloud” involves sitting with our children so that they can see the words and pictures as the adult reads from the book. When we read to children, we help them develop important communication and cognitive skills.

These stories captivate children and help develop their attention capacity. They also build linguistic fluency and competence, especially when children know the stories so well that they join in telling them. Because the language of stories is somewhat different from everyday language, a child’s language is refined and enriched by listening to stories. With stories as models, children learn to order their thoughts and to express themselves in meaningful and engaging ways.

When listening and speaking abilities are nurtured with stories early on, almost all children learn to read easily and naturally. They readily absorb the vocabulary, syntax, concepts, narrative structures, patterns of events, and images together with the emotional overtones of the language used in the tales.

When they are read to, children not only hear the story, they also observe the act of reading. The adult can help the child understand where the text begins on each page, can point to individual words, and can invite the child to read along when the child seems ready. In this way, children gradually learn that the written word reflects spoken language, and that a book has unique meaning and impact. They also pick up positive attitudes of the adult reader who enjoys books and loves reading.

As they begin to read independently, children’s oral language strengths help them decode text, predict events, and acquire a sense of story — an intuitive sense of what a story is and what to expect of various kinds of stories.

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These skills, developed and honed with many stories throughout the childhood years, allow children to make an easy transition to understanding and appreciating the world of adult literature—the novels, short stories, biographies, and other works that enrich our lives.

## TIPS FOR PRESENTING STORIES

Here are some tips for making the experience enjoyable and memorable for children:

- Make sure you are well rested and looking forward to story time. Do your best to put aside the many distractions of daily life so as to give the child and the story your full attention.
- Sit in a comfortable place with the child near you, allowing you to have good eye contact. Your physical presence is an important part of the whole experience for the child. The more comfortable and cozy the child feels with you, the more impact the story is likely to have.
- Read or tell the story at a relaxed, deliberate pace. Remember that children can’t process information as rapidly as adults. When you slow down a bit, you’ll help the child follow and comprehend the story more easily.
- Remember that children very much enjoy hearing the same story more than once. Repetition allows a child to become familiar with a story, to understand it more fully, to reflect on it long after story time is over, and to internalize many aspects of the story.

Some children like to hear the same story day after day for weeks, and this amount of repetition can be very beneficial. Other children like to hear the same story once or twice on one occasion, then again after several weeks or months.

- When a story is very familiar, invite the child to join in the telling, saying favorite lines with you. This practice enhances children’s language development and their sense of confidence in using language.
- Make the book easily available for older children to read independently.

## LEARNING STRATEGIES

First, it’s important to recognize that children who simply listen to a story repeatedly absorb language and concepts naturally, and, in the case of stories such as these, they also develop cognitive skills.

The strategies suggested in this manual can further strengthen children’s natural learning process. We offer different ways to interact with and reflect on the stories and suggest activities that maintain children’s contact with each tale in enjoyable ways. This gives them more time to develop their understanding and to find further meaning and value in the stories.

There are a number of enjoyable activities to do with children after the reading of a story. Here are some of the more typical and useful follow-up activities:

**Discuss.** Perhaps the simplest activity you can do with a child after finishing a story is to invite his or her reactions and comments and to share your own. Discussion will allow the child to express whatever thoughts may have arisen while listening and to ask questions about the characters and events.

If a child doesn’t talk spontaneously about the story, questions like these may help get a discussion going:

*What was the most important part of the story to you?*

*Why was that part especially meaningful to you?*

*Which character did you like the most? The least? Why?*

*Do you think the ending was a good one? Why?*

**Draw.** Have children tell what parts of the story they most liked and describe how they visualized the characters and events. Then have them draw, with crayon or paint, what they visualized. They will enjoy talking about their pictures and comparing them with the book's illustrations.

**Dramatize.** Invite children to act out a scene or two from the story. A child may take on the persona of different characters with each playacting. If several children have heard the story together, they may want to use simple props and scenery and put on short plays.

**Dictate or Write.** In a special story notebook, have children dictate or write a brief summary of the story and perhaps a comment about it. Pictures can be drawn to go with the summaries if the child enjoys drawing. A story notebook can serve as a reading journal that you and the child review, just for fun, from time to time.

**Retell.** If children enjoy the story, read it several times over the course of a week or more until they are very familiar with the sequence of events and can retell the story to family or friends. You can provide opportunities for them to retell it to other classrooms or in their community. You can also discuss ways to make their telling interesting and effective.

## STORY PLANS

These plans will give you ideas of how you may use the books with one or more children, either at home or in a classroom. The activities are based on teachers' and parents' experience in sharing good literature with children.

The intent is to give children an enjoyable experience with the stories and help them realize that this literature can help them understand themselves and others.

Most children will be entertained the first time they hear a story and will develop a deeper understanding only after the story has a chance to "sink in." For that reason, we recommend reading a story several times over the course of weeks or months, each time giving the child a chance to respond to the story and to discuss different meanings he or she may find in it.

Each time you read the story, you may wish to ask different questions and do different activities, so a variety is provided here from which you may select. Of course you may have other questions or activities and we encourage you to use these, too.

**Next are some activities you can use while reading this Teaching-Story by Idries Shah with your children.**





## STORY:

# The Man with Bad Manners

## STORY SUMMARY

This is an amusing teaching-story about a badly behaved man. A young boy initiates a plan to change his behavior and, with the help of all of the villagers, succeeds. The story will bring laughter to young children and, at the same time, teach them the valuable lessons about conflict resolution, initiative, and cooperation.

## BEFORE READING

This story lends itself to speculating at turning-points, an activity that improves children's thinking and comprehension of the story. To orient children to predicting outcomes, read the title and ask:

*What do you think will happen in this tale?*

Accept and discuss any ideas offered, then say:

*Let's read and find out more about the man with bad manners and what happens to him.*

## DURING READING

Invite additional speculation during the story by asking for additional predictions at turning points. It's not important for children to guess correctly what actually happens. Predicting outcomes helps children think more carefully about the characters and events of the story even when the predictions turn out to be incorrect. Help children enjoy making predictions by accepting all responses and encouraging the children to give their reasons for thinking as they do. Here are some suggestions for places to stop and invite predictions:

The story begins: "Once upon a time, many, many years ago, when birds flew upside-down...."

*What kind of a time is this? Is this like our time? Is this world like our world? Why do you think so?*

All of the people, except for one man, are courteous and well-behaved. ("Now, all the people who lived in the village were very courteous and well-behaved, except for one man who had very bad manners.")

*What do you think he does to make the people say he has bad manners?*

The people wake up at night because the man with bad manners beat tin cans and made horrible noises. ("BANG, BANG, BANG! This would wake people up, and they would lean out of their windows and say, 'Why are you making such a racket?'" ):

*What do you think the man with bad manners will do or say?*

*Why do you think that?*

The people are glad that the man with bad manners is going away and watch him go out of town. A clever boy is also watching. ("Among those watching was a clever boy."):

*What do you think the clever boy will say?*

*Why do you think so?*

The people change the badly behaved man's house and furniture. ("They painted the walls inside his house. They painted all the furniture. And they rearranged everything so that it all looked quite different."):

*Why do you think they did this?*

*What do you think will happen?*

*Why do you think so?*

The man with bad manners returns and sees that everything is different. ("The man looked carefully at his house and said, 'Good heavens! That house is green.' And then he ran over to the window and looked inside and saw that everything was quite unfamiliar."):

*What do you think will happen next?*

*Why do you think so?*

## AFTER READING

### Questions for reflection:

Invite reflection by discussing one or more of the questions below, which explore some of the different elements of the story and what we can learn and understand from them:

*What was the most important part of this story to you?*

*Why was that part especially important?*

*Does this story make you think about anything in your own life? What might that be?*

*What questions do you have about this story?*

*Why do you suppose the man has bad manners?*

*Why do you think that the man with bad manners said, “blah, blah, blah” and “blee, blee, blee”?*

*Have you ever had bad manners? If so, what did you do? How did you feel about it?*

*Did you know you were behaving like this? Why did you behave this way? Did you change? Why or why not?*

*Why do you think it’s a good idea to have good manners?*

*How did you learn good manners? Where did you learn them?*

*The man with bad manners visits friends in another village. What do you think his friends are like? Do you think the clever boy and the people in his own village would like them? Why or why not?*

*Do we behave the same way everywhere we go? Why or why not?*

*Do you know people who have different manners than you? How do you behave when you are with them and their family? Why? How do they behave when they are with you? Why?*

*Do we behave the same way with everyone? Why?*

*Are manners the same everywhere here in North America? Are they the same everywhere in the world?*

*If you went to another country and you saw that people had no knives and forks, but ate with their fingers, what would you do? Why?*

*Are manners important at all times? Why or why not?*

*Can a person have bad manners and still be happy? Why so?*

*Could the villagers have solved the problem without the boy? Could the boy have solved*

*the problem without the villagers? Why do you think so?*

*Is it a good idea to discuss problems with others? Why do you think so?*

*Can you think of other words that mean the same thing as “clever”?*

*Do you think the boy is really clever? Why or why not? Do you think he is clever all the time? Why do you think so?*

*Do you ever get clever ideas? How do you know when an idea is clever? Is there anything you can do that helps you get clever ideas?*

*Can a person younger than you have a clever idea?*

*Can someone you dislike have a clever idea?*

*Why did the clever boy’s solution make the man with bad manners change his behavior? Do you like his plan? Why or why not?*

*If the villagers had asked the man to be polite, what do you think would have happened? Why do you think so?*

*Apart from telling someone directly, can you think of other ways you could help somebody realize that they are being selfish or behaving badly?*

*Can you think of ways to help people without making them feel bad?*

*How important is one person?*

*Can you think of anything we have missed in thinking about this tale?*

**Invite reflection by discussing some of these questions**

## **MANNERS IN OTHER COUNTRIES**

If possible, visit the house of a classmate or neighbor with a different cultural background. Ask them to help you learn about the manners that they consider important.

Go to a restaurant that serves food from a culture very different from yours. Ask the waiter about their traditional dishes and the proper way to eat them.

Manners vary from one culture to another. People in different cultures have different routines they follow when they greet one another, have conver-

sations, eat together, or socialize together in various ways. See what kinds of differences you can discover by reading about different cultures or by talking to people who come from a different cultural background from your own.

While not all people in different cultures adhere to the traditional practices of that culture, there are some cultural differences among groups that are still practiced. Here are a few of examples:

### **Table Manners in India**

The people of India eat with their hands because they say their food tastes better this way. They tear their breads (rotis, parathas, nans, bhakris) and wrap the pieces around rice mixed with richly spiced stews (curries). Each mouthful is a sensual explosion. The joy of delicately licking fingers after a spicy meal cannot be matched.

Indians eat only with their right hand. Their left hand rests on the table or in their lap. Many left-handed people also eat with their right hand. Those who can't inform their dinner companions that they must eat with their left. It is acceptable to hold down the bread with the left hand and tear off pieces with the right. It is better to use only the right hand, pinning it with the little finger and tearing with the thumb and forefinger.

Good manners vary throughout India. In the North, where they eat mostly rotis and drier curries, it is impolite to dirty more than the first two segments of the fingers. In the South, where they enjoy more rice and very wet curries, it is permitted to use the whole hand.

### **How to Eat Gracefully With Your Fingers**

On your plate, make a small pile of rice and curry. Keeping your thumb free, scoop up the rice with the other four fingers. Twist your wrist and keep the food level. Touch or almost touch your fingertips to your lower lip, but don't put your fingers in your mouth. Now use your thumb to pop the food inside.

### **Manners in Afghanistan**

Afghans are notoriously hospitable and treat strangers like guests. In fact, their most common name for "stranger" is "guest" ("mehman" in Farsi

and "melma" in Pashto). Some Afghans even look for strangers to bring into their homes to dine with! According to the Afghan code of honor, it is their duty to offer food and shelter to strangers even if they are enemies or come from different religions or tribes. Afghans go out of their way to please their guests. They cook the best food they can afford while humbly apologizing for its poor quality or preparation.

Before eating, Afghans wash their hands, preferably with soap, and dry them with a towel or napkin. A cloth (Dastar Khwan) is spread on the floor and food is placed upon it. As many as six people sit on the ground around a platter of spiced fried rice (Pilau), cooked meat in a curry-like sauce (Qorma) and a salad of chopped tomatoes, onions, and cilantro (Gashneez).

It is polite to eat together with the group and to share the same dish or platter. Afghans eat a flatbread called "naan," and tear pieces of it to scoop up meat and aromatic rice (Pilau).

As in India, it is good manners to eat with the right hand in Afghanistan. But Afghans may eat with the fingers of their whole hand. Left-handed people are unusual, but a good Afghan host tries to find out if a guest is left-handed, and makes sure he is comfortable without having to talk about it, which would be impolite.

Licking fingers while eating is not considered to be bad manners. People try not to eat too fast, and it is polite to stop eating before all the food is gone. A well-mannered guest appears reluctant to eat or tries to eat less, and it is the duty of the host to insist that the guest eat more. As soon as the first guest stops eating everyone else does too. At the end of dinner, everyone washes and dries their hands.

After-dinner discussion is a part of good manners in Afghanistan. Host and guests must talk after dinner and the host usually begins the conversation. They may discuss provocative or controversial subjects only after dinner. Afghans never raise their voices or insult unruly dinner guests.

Since ancient times, tea has contributed to the health of the Afghan people. Perhaps there's something beneficial in the tea itself or perhaps the boil

ing water kills harmful bacteria. This may explain why Afghans drink black or green tea with their meals instead of water, or why they drink another three pots throughout the day. It is certainly an important part of Afghan culture. There are tea-houses throughout the country. Tea is always served to guests and often drunk as a token of friendship.

### **Manners in China**

China is a country of etiquette and ceremony. For 2,000 years the Chinese cupped one hand in the other before the chest as a greeting. Nowadays they shake hands, although people still bow out of respect to elders, teachers and others of higher social class.

When Chinese people talk to strangers, it is good manners to begin by discussing food, hobbies or the weather. They give gifts as a way to show courtesy at birthdays, weddings, festivals, and when visiting the ill. For family parties, they bring small gifts like tea, candies, fruit, pastries or flowers. The Chinese have many traditional sayings and stories about good manners. Here are a few:

*Politeness costs nothing.*

*Courtesy invites courtesy. (If you are polite to others, they must be polite to you.)*

*There was once a man who made a long journey just to give his friend a swan. Along the way, the bird escaped, leaving only a feather behind. But the man travelled on and gave the feather to his friend. Deeply moved by the man's story and by his sincerity, he told it to his neighbors. The story spread throughout China and later gave rise to a popular saying. "The gift is a trifle. The thought is a treasure." (It's the thought that counts.)*

Of course, the Chinese do not eat with a knife or fork. They eat with chopsticks.

### **Manners in Japan**

The Japanese also use chopsticks. There's a whole etiquette surrounding them. Unlike the Chinese, the Japanese consider it bad manners to leave them sticking out of their bowl of rice. They never use their chopsticks to take food from another person's

chopsticks. They put their chopsticks down when talking. Japanese people do not make noise when eating. But it is acceptable to slurp noodles and tea.

Because the Japanese live, eat and sleep on the floors of their homes, they never wear shoes in the house.

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**As you can see, what are considered good manners in one culture may be very different in another.**

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### **ACTIVITIES**

Do one or more of these activities to enhance the experience of the story and give children a chance to express themselves.

#### **Reflective Writing**

Have children write their thoughts on this tale in a reflection journal or a reading log. They might also write summaries of the story and take notes on what they like about the tale. Each time they read or hear this story, they may wish to add any new understanding about the story, illustrations, themselves or others.

#### **Retell the Tale**

Have children retell the story. If they enjoy drawing, have them draw their own pictures of their favorite scenes and use them as a "storyboard" as they retell the story. They could also put captions on their pictures and bind them together as a booklet.

#### **Other Perspectives**

- Rewrite or retell this story from the point of view of the man with bad manners.
- Pretend you are the man with bad manners. Draw a picture of yourself at the beginning of the story. Draw a picture of when you returned to the village and did not recognize yourself. Draw a picture of yourself at the end of the story.
- Now pretend you are the clever boy and draw the same sequence of stories.
- Compare these pictures with those drawn by "the man with bad manners." Here are some questions you can ask or comments you can make about these pictures:



*How does the man with bad manners see himself?*

*How does the clever boy see the man with bad manners?*

Discuss similarities and differences between pictures.

*Which pictures are most true? Why do you think so?*

- Draw a picture of yourself and ask a partner to draw his or her own portrait. Invite him/her to draw a picture of you and you draw his/hers. Compare pictures. Which picture is most true? Why do you think so?
- Create a portrait gallery using the portraits above. Invite others to the opening. Serve grape juice and cheese. Read or tell the story as part of the event. You may want discuss the portraits or ask questions about them as you did above.

### Other Genres

- Draw this story as a cartoon.
- Create a newspaper ad for a movie called “The Man with Bad Manners.”

- Design a cover for this book. Compare your cover with others in the class. You may wish to discuss similarities, differences, what you included, what you left out and why you did so.

### OTHER IDEAS

- Have children draw their favorite part of this story.
- Have children draw a man with good manners and a man with bad manners. Invite them to compare and contrast them.
- If children like this story, have them learn to tell it and perform it for students in other classes or for parents.
- Have children write a play, or create a puppet-play, from this story and perform it.
- Have children find some music that they like and create a dance or interpretational version of the story.

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**NOTES:** Use this area to keep notes about the children's reaction to the story or notes to yourself about reading or telling the story.

### THE BOY WITHOUT A NAME

A boy is born and, just as his parents are about to name him, a wise man appears. He tells them that their son is very, very important and that one day he will give the boy something marvelous. Until then they must be very careful not to name him. As the boy grows up, “Nameless” wants more and more to have a name of his own. He asks his friend to help him, and together the boys find the wise man. The wise man gives Nameless his very own name and lets each of the boys pick their very own dream. Among the many insights which this story introduces is the idea that it takes patience and resolve to achieve one’s goals in life.

### THE CLEVER BOY AND THE TERRIBLE, DANGEROUS ANIMAL

Townpeople are terrified of something unfamiliar that they have concluded is a terrible, dangerous animal. A boy, visiting from a neighboring village, helps them overcome their fears by teaching them what the object really is — a melon. In an amusing way, this story illustrates how irrational fears based on ignorance can grow. Becoming familiar with this idea can help children deal more easily with similar fears of their own.

### THE FARMER’S WIFE

A farmer’s wife is picking apples. When one falls into a hole in the ground, she tries to retrieve it in a way that becomes ever more complicated and hilarious and, in the end, turns out to be completely unnecessary. Or was it? For some this story mirrors the very common human tendencies of looking for solutions to problems in all the wrong places and of exerting efforts that, though great, are essentially useless. To others this story shows how the world is interconnected, and how it is often necessary both to work hard to find a solution and to understand that the best solution may not be the direct one.

### FATIMA THE SPINNER AND THE TENT

Fatima’s life is beset with what seem to be disasters. Her journey leads her from Morocco to the Mediterranean, Egypt, Turkey and, finally, to China. It is in China that she realizes that what seemed at the time to be really unfortunate events were an integral part of her eventual fulfillment. This Teaching-Story is well known in Greek folklore, but this version is attributed to the Sheikh Mohamad Jamaludin of Adrianople (modern-day Edirne) in Turkey, who died in 1750.

### THE LION WHO SAW HIMSELF IN THE WATER

A lion makes the other animals afraid because of the way he talks. He doesn’t understand their reaction to him but is himself afraid when he goes to a watering hole for a drink. He sees his own reflection in the water and thinks that there is another lion in the pond. When he, at last, understands that the other lion is only his own reflection, he is no longer afraid. For children, this story gently explores how fears can arise in the mind and how they can be overcome with more information and experience.

### THE MAGIC HORSE

This is the story of two princes. Prince Hoshyar gains rank and fortune by supervising the construction of huge metallic fishes that perform wondrous tasks and bring riches to the people of his land. His brother, Prince Tambal, is interested only in a wooden horse that he obtains from a humble carpenter. The horse is a magical one, and it carries the rider, if he is sincere, to his heart’s desire.

### THE MAN AND THE FOX

A man tricks a young fox into believing that he will give him a chicken. The fox gets trapped, but through ingenuity and perseverance he manages to escape. This story of the young fox can inspire children to face challenges, to overcome and, sometimes, to make use of obstacles in their path to solve problems.

### NEEM THE HALF-BOY

To help the queen, who longs for a son, the fairies consult a wise man, who gives specific instructions. Because the queen follows them only halfway, she gives birth to a half-boy, whom she names Neem. To help Neem become whole, the fairies again consult the wise man, who says that Neem must obtain a special medicine from a dragon’s cave. Neem overcomes his fears and obtains the medicine by making a bargain with the dragon that, besides helping himself, also helps the dragon and the people who have been frightened by the dragon. This unusual and memorable tale about an incomplete boy will fascinate young readers and will encourage them to think about what it means to be a “complete person.” That Neem is able to make himself complete by an act of cleverness, negotiation and compromise teaches children more than the expected, usual lesson of bravery.

### THE OLD WOMAN AND THE EAGLE

Superbly illustrated by Natasha Delmar, daughter of the celebrated classic Chinese painter Ng Yi-Ching, this story tells with gentle humor what happens when an old woman encounters an eagle for the first time. Perplexed by its unfamiliar appearance, she decides to change it to suit her own ideas of what a bird should look like. Her efforts — which, much to the poor eagle’s chagrin, include straightening its beak, trimming its claws and smoothing its feathers — mirror a common pattern of human thought: altering the unfamiliar to make it acceptable.

### THE SILLY CHICKEN

A chicken, having learned to speak, proclaims that a disaster is about to happen. Highly anxious, the townspeople run frantically to escape. When nothing happens, they find out that the chicken didn’t know what it was talking about. At first they are angry, then amused at how easily they were fooled. In the end they laugh at the chicken because, as they now assume, this chicken — and all other chickens — are simply silly. In an entertaining way, this story illustrates what can happen when people do not think critically about what they hear.