

THE GARDENER AND THE BEAR FROM THE PANCHATANTRA

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In the eastern part of Persia there lived at one time a Gardener whose one joy in life was his flowers and fruit trees. He had neither wife, nor children, nor friends; nothing except his garden. At length, however, the good man wearied of having no one to talk to. He decided to go out into the world and find a friend. Scarcely was he outside the garden before he came face to face with a Bear, who, like the Gardener, was looking for a companion. Immediately a great friendship sprang up between these two.

The Gardener invited the Bear to come into his garden, and fed him on quinces and melons. In return for this kindness, when the Gardener lay down to take his afternoon nap, the Bear stood by and drove off the flies.

One afternoon it happened that an unusually large fly alighted on the Gardener's nose. The Bear drove it off, but it only flew to the Gardener's chin. Again the Bear drove it away, but in a few moments it was back once more on the Gardener's nose. The Bear now was filled with rage. With no thought beyond that of punishing the fly, he seized a huge stone, and hurled it with such force at the Gardener's nose that he killed not only the fly, but the sleeping Gardener.

It is better to have a wise enemy than a foolish friend.

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