Manute the Brave

Educational Value

Bravery

Moral of the story

Bravery is a lot different to recklessness. Bravery is not searching out fear or danger, but being able to control fear when it most matters

Story

"The best man in the whole tribe is Manute the brave", everyone would say. You could see for yourself, at any time of the day, just how brave he was. He would jump to the ground from amazing heights, he would fight poisonous snakes, he would catch scorpions with his bare hands, and could cut the palm of his own hand with a knife - without even a flinch. They said the exact opposite about Pontoma. No one had seen him catch even a monkey.

One day, they happened upon each other in the forest, and Manute was showing Pontoma a coral snake he had just caught, when there began a downpour, the likes of which no one had ever seen. They both ran to shelter themselves under some thick foliage, and there they stayed until the rain had stopped.

However, when they were about to leave the shelter, they heard the roar of a tiger, at a distance of only a couple of metres. The foliage was very thick and dense, and the tiger wouldn't be able to get through it to attack them. However, the tiger was almost at the entrance hole. If it happened to come in and find the two tribesmen there, they certainly wouldn't get out alive. Manute was getting restless. He wanted to get out of that tight hole, and confront the tiger in open space, where he could fully use his great hunting skills. Pontoma was gesturing at him to keep still and be quiet, but Manute, tired of being stuck with a coward, leapt out of the thicket, surprising the tiger.

The tiger suffered a couple of deep wounds, but soon recovered, and hurt Manute with two swipes of its paw, throwing him to the ground. The tiger took the initiative, and leapt upon Manute, but Manute's spear, in the hands of Pontoma, interrupted the tiger's attack. The tiger turned away, wounded, but the spear moved as fast as a beam of light, and with incredible precision, hurting the animal again and again, until it fell to the ground, lifeless.

Manute, shocked, and bleeding freely from his injuries, witnessed all this while lying flat on his back on the ground. Never before had he seen anyone take on a tiger, and use the spear with such calmness and strength, as he had seen Pontoma do just now.

Neither of them said a thing. Manute's grateful expression needed no words to be understood. Nor did they need words to know about Pontoma's wounded hand, or the fact that they were leaving a tiger skin there in the forest.

From that day on, people gradually remarked less on Manute's braveness. They thought maybe he was less courageous than before. The strangest thing was that they now noticed that Manute's old spear was among Pontoma's things.

But Manute just smiled, and remembered the day he learned that true bravery lay not in seeking out danger, but in controlling one's fear when danger crosses your path.

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