



Great Hunter

(A story from Iran)

Many, many years ago, there was a king in Iran who was a great hunter. He was so skilled with his bow that he could shoot a running deer through all four legs with just one arrow.

One day, having just performed this feat, he said to his wife, 'Isn't this a wonderful skill?'

To his surprise, his wife replied, 'No, I don't think so.'

'Why?' he demanded.


'Because you practise all the time,' his wife said, 'so it is not difficult for you.'


The king was so angry at this that he called for his servant and ordered that his wife should be taken away and put to death. The servant said he would do so and he had the king's wife arrested.

But after a while he thought to himself, 'I can't do this. She is a queen. The king was very angry when he gave the order.' So, instead of killing the king's wife, the servant took her to a village some distance away and left her in the care of the villagers. When the king asked him if he had carried out his order, he replied that he had.

For many years, the queen lived in this village, and she became friendly with the villagers. One day, they gave her a calf for herself and from that day, she carried it everywhere on her shoulder. She walked to the castle every day, up and down many stairs, with the calf on her shoulder. Time passed and the calf grew bigger and bigger, until it was a full-grown cow and still, every day the king's wife carried it with her up and down all those stairs.

In time, the king got to hear of this woman who could carry a full-grown cow everywhere on her shoulder. He was very interested in this information. 'Bring this woman to me,' he said, 'I want to see her.'





So she was brought to the king, and she came in carrying the cow on her shoulder. 'This is amazing,' said the king. 'How can you do it?'

'It is not difficult,' said the queen. 'Every day, since it was a young calf, I have been carrying this cow with me up and down, everywhere. It is just a matter of practice, not difficult at all. I am your wife, and I told you this many years ago.'

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