



## **The Loyal Mongoose**

Once there was a farmer who lived with his wife at the far end of a village. They had a little son and they loved him very much. One evening when the farmer returned home from work, he brought with him a tiny little mongoose. He told his wife that this little mongoose would grow up and be a pet for their son.

The baby and the mongoose both grew quickly. In five or six months the mongoose was fully grown, while the farmer's son was still a baby. The mongoose became a lovely animal. He had two shining black eyes and a long bushy tail.

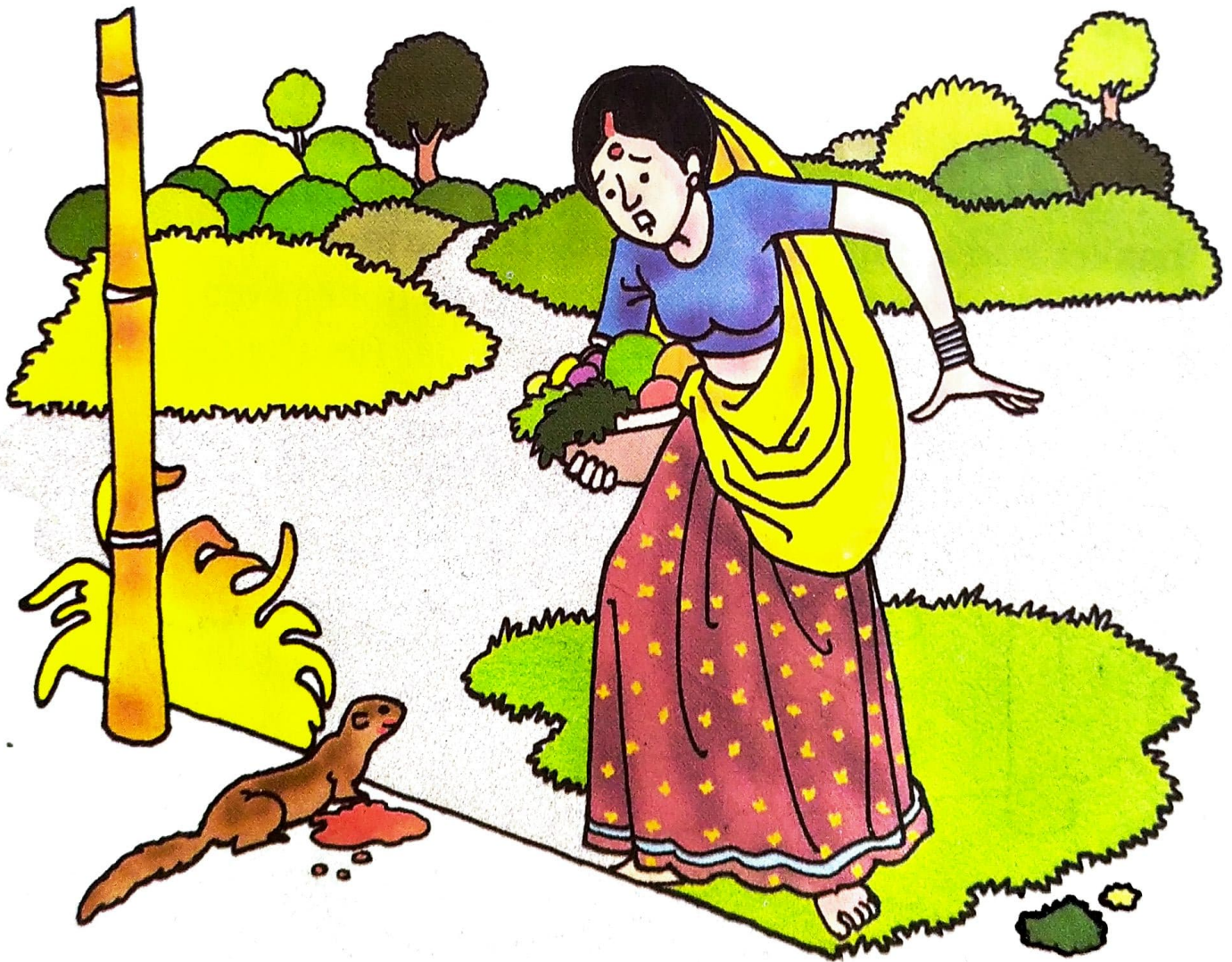
One day, the farmer's wife wanted to go to the market. She fed her son and put him to sleep in his little cradle. Then she took her basket and was ready to go.

Before leaving, she told her husband, "I am going to the market. The baby is asleep. You must keep an eye on him. I do not like leaving the child alone with the mongoose."

“Please don’t be afraid,” said the farmer. “Our pet is as sweet and loving as our baby.”

The farmer’s wife went to the market. The farmer having nothing to do, went out for a walk. He met some friends on the way and so did not return home for some time.

His wife came back with a basketful of groceries. She found the mongoose sitting outside as if waiting for her. As soon as he saw her, he ran to welcome her. The farmer’s





wife took one look at the mongoose and screamed.

"Blood!" she cried.

Indeed, the face and paws of the mongoose were red with blood.

"You have killed my son!" cried the woman.

And with all her strength she struck the mongoose with her heavy basket. She ran straight to the child's cradle. She found the baby still fast asleep. On the floor, below the cradle, lay a black snake, torn and bleeding.

The farmer's wife realized what had happened. She ran out looking for the mongoose.

"You killed the snake!" she cried. "You saved my child."

The mongoose lay still. He could not hear her. The basket had hit him on the head. The farmer's wife was sad she had acted so hastily. With tears in her eyes, she bent down and looked at the mongoose. He was dead.



Colour the picture of the crooked woman below who has a crooked bird and some poisonous apples.

