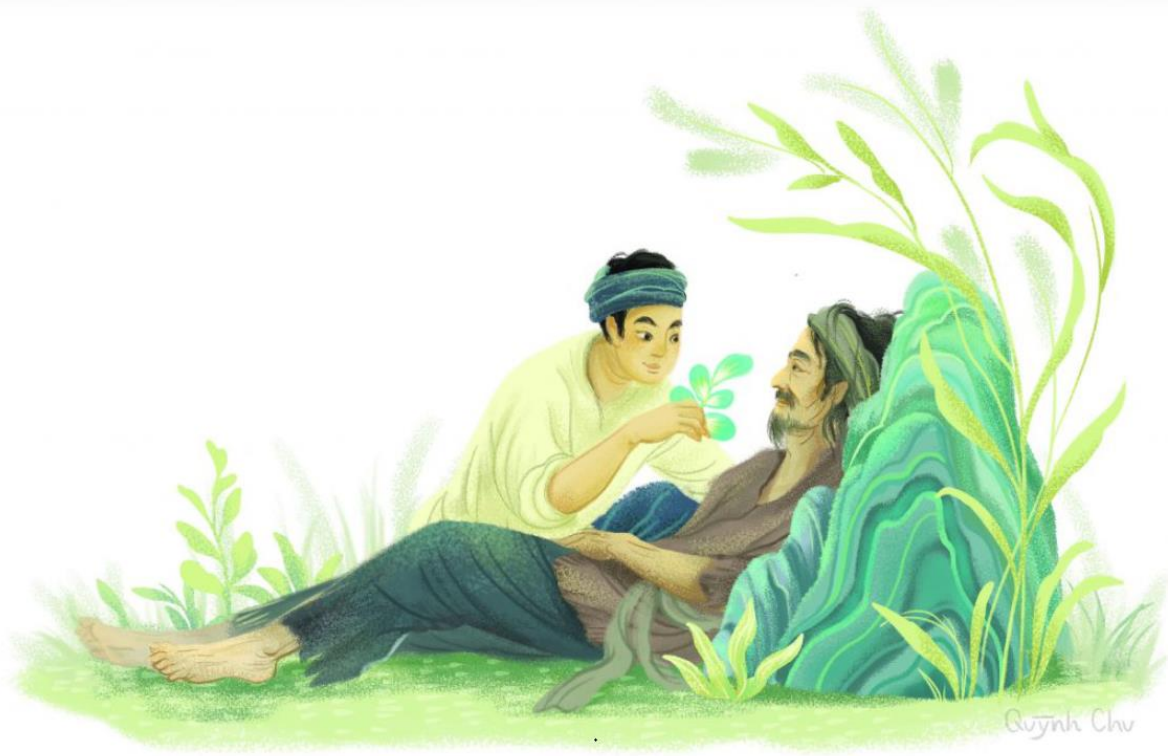


Cuoi and The Banyan Tree



Once upon a time, far away, there lived a woodsman named Cuoi. Just as he did every day, Cuoi took his axe deep into the forest to cut trees. Walking near a small stream, Cuoi was surprised to see a cave containing four baby tigers.

After a while, the mother tiger approached a small banyan tree near Cuoi's hiding place and tore off some leaves. She chewed the leaves into a pulp and placed it in her dead babies' mouths. Cuoi watched in astonishment as the cubs began to stir and came back to life.



He waited until the mother tiger carried her offspring away, then crept to the strange tree, dug it up and carried it homeward. On the way home he found a dead beggar. He took some leaves, chewed them up and placed them in the old man's mouth. Instantly, the man blinked and sat up.

"What happened?" he asked, seeing the magical tree. Cuoi told him the full story.

"This magic tree can revive the dead!" cried the old man. "God gave it to you for good reasons! You must take good care of this tree. Be careful never to water it with dirty water, or else it will fly off into the sky!"



Leaning on his cane, the old man walked away. Cuoi took the tree home and planted it in the eastern corner of his garden. He always remembered the old man's words and watered the banyan with pure well water.

Cuoi used his tree's medicinal leaves to revive many people. If anyone in the area passed away, he used the leaves to help them. Word of Cuoi and his magical tree spread far and wide. One day, Cuoi waded across a river and saw a drowned dog. He salvaged it and brought the dog back to life. The clever dog became Cuoi's loyal companion. Another day, a wealthy man from the neighboring village rushed to Cuoi and begged him to revive his daughter, who had drowned. Cuoi willingly followed the man home and revived the girl. In the blink of an eye, the pale maiden was brought back to life. Seeing Cuoi as her savior, she offered to marry him. The wealthy father happily helped Cuoi to win her hand in marriage. The couple lived peacefully and happily.

One day, when Cuoi was away from home, bandits invaded his village. Knowing that Cuoi could bring the dead back to life, the bandits devised an evil plot. They murdered his wife, disemboweled her and threw her entrails into the river. Upon finding her body, Cuoi tried to revive her, but she could not live without internal organs. Seeing his master's grief, Cuoi's dog offered to sacrifice its intestines so that Cuoi could use them to replace his wife's. While Cuoi had never performed such magic, in the depths of despair, he decided to try. Incredibly, his wife was revived, and as lovely and vibrant as ever.

While Cuoi was overjoyed by his wife's recovery, he was sad about his faithful dog, and managed to fashion new entrails from clay. Amazingly, they worked, and the dog was revived too. Cuoi, his wife and the dog were closer and happier than ever.



Unfortunately, Cuoi's wife experienced strange mental changes. She became forgetful, which irked her husband. Cuoi constantly reminded her to relieve herself in the western corner of their yard, lest the banyan tree soar into the sky, but she often forgot. One afternoon when Cuoi was out collecting firewood, his absentminded wife went into the backyard and urinated near the precious medicinal tree.

Suddenly, the ground shook. Nearing home, Cuoi saw the tree's branches flail and heard the wind roar. He watched in astonishment as the banyan tree rose slowly into the sky. He dropped his firewood and raced after it. But the banyan tree was already overhead. Cuoi managed to hook his axe to a root in an attempt to pull the tree back but nothing could hold it back. The banyan tree flew higher and higher, pulling Cuoi into the sky. It landed on the moon and took root.

Since then Cuoi remained on the moon with his banyan tree. Look at the moon and you will see the sharp black silhouette of a tree with a man sitting beneath it. This is Cuoi sitting beneath his banyan. 🌳