



CHAPTER-THE WARMTH OF A CANDLE

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THE WARMTH OF A CANDLE

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Mulla Nasruddin was a wise man who lived long ago in Turkey . He was famous for his intelligence and quick mind . The townspeople got jealous of Nasruddin and decided to teach him a lesson. Let us see if Nasruddin was smarter than they were . Looking out of the window of the coffee house on a winter evening, Mulla Nasruddin remarked, 'How beautiful the snowy winter landscape looks in the light of the setting sun ! 'The townspeople, who had gathered around a fire to keep warm, shook their heads in disagreement . 'What's so beautiful about the evening?' Nasruddin's neighbour Ali retorted¹. 'It is freezing cold, and if it continues like this, all the crops will die and we will have no food left . 'Nasruddin turned to the townspeople and said, 'There is nothing wrong with the weather. It's all in your mind. You don't have to jump into the fire to save yourself from the cold. All you have to do is dress warmly and stay active . ' 'You mean you don't feel cold like the rest of us?' quipped Hussain, as he prodded³ the fire with a stick . 'No . In fact I like winters as they keep me agile, replied Nasruddin. 'If that is

the case, I'm sure it wouldn't be hard for you to remain outdoors for one night in this weather,' said Hussain challengingly. Nasruddin could see where this conversation was going. He replied thoughtfully, 'I have no qualms about staying out on a cold night as long as there is a reason to do it.' The townspeople exchanged glances at this remark. Finally, Ali said, 'We challenge you to spend one night outdoors without wearing any extra clothing or lighting a fire. Your wife cannot bring you anything to eat or drink. If you are successful at this, we will provide you food for the whole winter. If not, you'll have to host a feast for all of us.' Nasruddin thought about it briefly and agreed. 'Just to make sure that you don't cheat us, we'll watch you from our windows at night,' Ali added, as an afterthought. They all walked to the town square where Nasruddin was to spend the rest of the night by himself. Soon, everyone withdrew to the warmth of their houses, leaving Nasruddin alone in the cold. Nasruddin had seen many hardships in life and knew he could survive the night without much difficulty. He paced up and down and went around in circles to keep his body warm. Soon, dawn broke and darkness gave way to sunlight. Nasruddin went to the coffee house and waited for the others. As they came in, Nasruddin said, 'So now you believe I wasn't boasting!' 'It was brave of you to take up the challenge. But you tricked us!' said Ali. 'I don't understand you. Did I light a fire to warm myself?' asked Nasruddin. 'No,' replied Ali. 'Did my wife bring me food and drink? Or did I not stay till day broke?'



'No, but you tried to trick us. We noticed you went round in circles, but you stopped longer than usual by a window where a candle was kept.' 'But that house was at least five hundred feet away from where I was standing! How can I get warmth from a candle kept so far away?' 'So you know which house we are talking about. This only proves that you tried to trick us by warming yourself by the candle.' As everyone shouted in agreement with this verdict, Nasruddin said, 'I accept my defeat and invite you to my house next Friday for a feast.' Pleased at having outwitted Nasruddin, the townspeople heartily agreed to attend the feast. The next Friday, the guests arrived in high spirits. Nasruddin welcomed them and they all joked and laughed for an hour or so. After a while they all started feeling hungry and gradually fell silent. When they couldn't bear it any more, they asked Nasruddin how long they would have to wait for the food. Nasruddin said, 'It's cooking and shouldn't take long.' As more time passed, some of the guests sneaked into the kitchen. They saw a huge cauldron^{1 1} filled with sweet smelling spices. It was hanging from the ceiling. There was no steam coming from the pot, so Hussain asked Nasruddin, 'Why is it taking so long to cook?' 'It's been cooking for three hours, so it should be ready soon,' Nasruddin replied.



Hussain noticed the pot was not even warm. He looked closely and saw that instead of a fire, there was a candle flickering below the pot. He was furious¹".

'How do you expect a tiny candle to cook such a large meal?' he shouted at Nasruddin . 'In the same way that you expected a candle flickering five hundred feet away to warm me on a cold night,' Nasruddin replied calmly. The guests hung their heads in shame and walked quietly away.

THANK

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