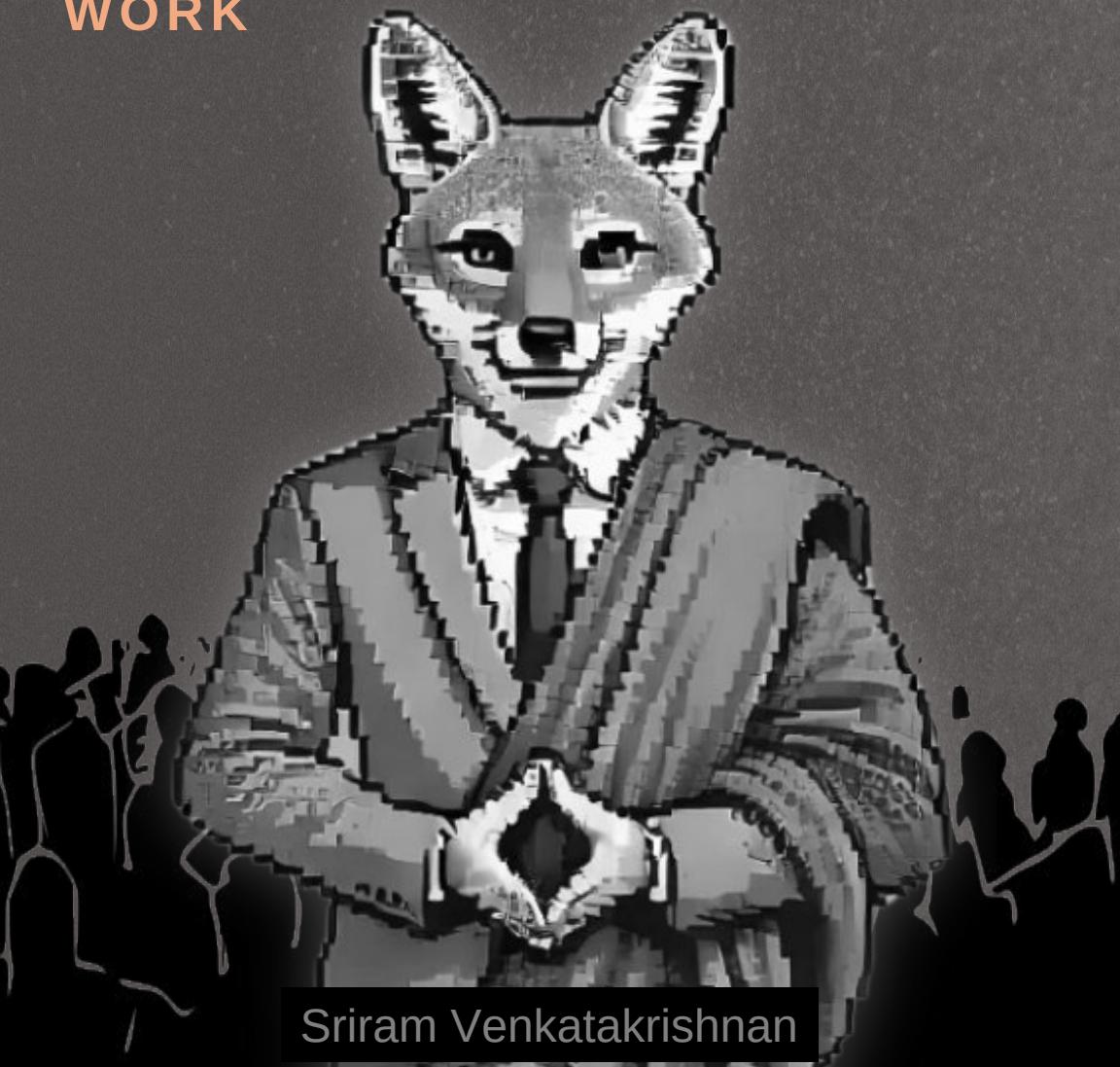


STORYDHARMA



the panchatantra code

BECOME A SUPER STAR AT
WORK



Sriram Venkatakrishnan

Why should you read this book?

I used to think that working hard and being talented were enough to do well in the corporate world. I was proved wrong by DeceptiveGlow.

But who am I? My name is Siddharth*. I'm one of the leaders at DeceptiveGlow today. But when I first joined, I was a beginner with big dreams. I came from a family that taught me the importance of working hard, using my skills, and doing the right thing. When I started, I was shocked to see office politics, people doing unfair things, and coworkers talking badly behind each other's backs. My growth stopped. I didn't want to lower myself to play these dirty games. I couldn't fix the system because all the power was with the wrong people. I was close to losing who I was.

Then, I found the Panchatantra through my mentor, Dr. Vishnusharma. With help from the Panchatantra and Dr. Vishnusharma, I moved up in the company and became a senior leader. Along the way, I also made sure DeceptiveGlow became one of the most honest and fair companies in the world. I call this 'Dharmic success'.

I earned a lot of respect, got noticed, grew in my job, gained power, and became successful. This book is about what I learned from the Panchatantra and how you can use it in your work life too.

* Siddharth is a fictional character based on real professionals

Why did we write this book?

We wrote this book for awesome, hardworking folks just like you—whether you're just starting out or halfway through the climb—because:

1. You totally deserve to shine like a star at work.
2. You can win the corporate game *and* sleep well at night (yes, your conscience can come too!)
3. The world needs more good people in charge—imagine what you could do with some real power!

How to benefit from this book?

Ready to Rise at Work?

- [Tap to Take our FREE assessment](#)
- Read this book
- Learn 26 powerful lessons
- Work with our FREE 26 AI coaches
- [Reflect on 200+ wise Nitis](#)
- Use what you learn at work
- Earn respect, fame, growth, power—and Dharmic success

Become a super star at work

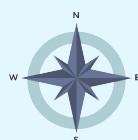


We've done our best to make this book as solid as grandma's paratha—stuffed with wisdom and made with love. But if you spot a mistake, think of it as a little extra mirchi we didn't mean to add. 

Tell us at **storyteller@storydharma.com**—we'll fix it faster than you can say *chutney on the side!* 

Are you
ready for the
Journey?

JOURNEY PART-1



JOURNEY PART-2



JOURNEY PART-3



JOURNEY PART-4



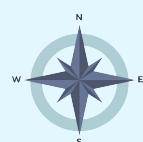
JOURNEY PART-5



Part 1

The preparation

JOURNEY PART-1



What is Panchatantra?

When I was growing up, I used to read Panchatantra stories from Amar Chitra Katha books. And I was told many stories from the Panchatantra by my grandmother and my mother. All this time, I thought Panchatantra was just a bunch of moral stories for kids. But I was very wrong.

First, Panchatantra is not for children. It was written for young princes to help them become wise rulers. We will see why this is true very soon. So, it also has many lessons for people working today.

Second, Panchatantra is not just about teaching good behavior. It teaches how to be smart in the real world. Sometimes it even talks about things that may not seem fair or right. It tells us that the world is not always fair. It doesn't just talk about being talented, but also shows how luck plays a big role in success.

Third, Panchatantra is not just full of stories. Only about one-third of it is stories. The rest is made up of poems and short verses that teach us important lessons about life and how to do well in the world of money and work.

For you to get most out of this book, you need to first understand what Panchatantra is.

Panchatantra is an ancient Indian book written in Sanskrit. It is part of a group of books called Nitisastra. ‘Niti’ means the things that help us live well in the real world. Panchatantra talks about many topics that help us do better in life.

It also belongs to Arthashastra. ‘Artha’ means money or wealth. So, Panchatantra gives us smart lessons on how to live and do well in the world of money and business.

We don’t know exactly who wrote Panchatantra. But the book says it was made by someone named Vishnusharma. Now, there’s another famous name – Vishnugupta – who is also known as Chanakya. Is Vishnusharma the same person as Vishnugupta? Or is it just a name Chanakya used? We’re not sure. But some of the ideas in Panchatantra are like what Chanakya wrote in Arthashastra. So, reading Panchatantra is almost like getting taught by Chanakya – but in a fun and story-filled way!

Is Panchatantra relevant today?

Ok I can clearly see. You say , Panchatantra could have been written for Princes to become effective rulers. But how does it make that relevant to today's corporate setting? At best, it will have lessons for Kings during ancient times, right?

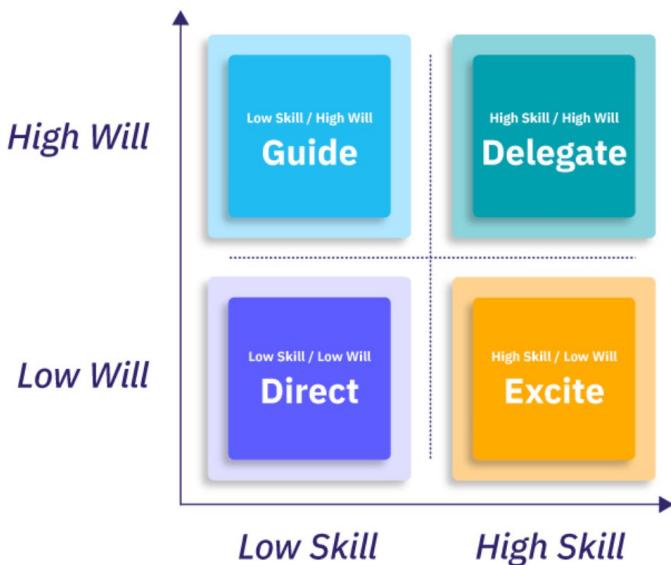
Well, my short answer is that , although society has changed , culture has changed and technology and science has progressed, people haven't changed much. What was true 2500 years ago about human nature still remains the same. Still not convinced?

Let me show you three ideas from Panchatantra which is going to make you nod your head and go wanting for more.

Example #1

If you have been an individual contributor , I am going to let you in on a dirty little secret. The skill-will matrix. If you had attended any leadership program one of the key frameworks they teach is called the 'Skill-Will matrix'. This is how the Skill-will matrix looks.

The Skill Will Matrix



Put simply, People in organizations fall under 4 buckets segregated by their level of skill/Competence and by their level of Will/Commitment. As a leader your approach would change for People with high will and low skill vs People with high skill and low will and so on. I am not going to go into whether this is right or whether it works etc. Let us look at a scenario in Panchatantra.

A Jackal (an old employee) which has been exiled from inner power circle of a King (i.e. it doesn't have any power or voice), approaches the lion and questions the Lion about why it had been outcasted.

The Jackal points out to the Lion.

*bhaktam śaktam ca mām rājan nāvajñātum tvam
arhasi*

“I am both competent and committed, you cannot ignore me”

To that the King replies.

Bhavatvevam tāvat, asamarthah samarthah vā

Let it be thus, for the time being, whether one is incompetent or competent.”

If you watch closely, the Jackal seems to know the Skill-Will matrix. It says I am competent and committed. One who is competent and Committed cannot be ignored. To that the king , responds with a sly remark about the jackal's competence. It doesn't question its commitment. Typically the Lion should be guiding the Jackal in this case according to the Skill-Will matrix, but it has kept the Jackal at bay.

Another important nuance are the words used by the Jackal and Lion to mean competence. ‘Saktam’ and ‘samartah’. Let us look at how these words are derived in Sanskrit to know the powerful thought process of our ancestors.

Śaktam (शक्तम्) (used by the Jackal)

Root: Derived from the root "śak" (शक्), meaning "to be able" or "to have power."

Meaning: Refers to strength, capability, or power in a general sense. It often emphasizes potential or energy.

It is often used in reference to physical or inherent power.

Samarthah (समर्थः): (used by the lion)

Root: Derived from "sam" (सम्) meaning "together" or "complete," and "artha" (अर्थ) meaning "purpose" or "meaning."

Meaning: Refers to being competent, efficient, or fit for a purpose. It emphasizes proficiency or effectiveness.

It refers to practical capability or expertise, beyond just potential.

Key Difference:

Śaktam highlights raw strength or potential ability (can be latent or active).

Samarthah emphasizes practical competence and efficiency in achieving a purpose.

Analogy

1. A powerful car engine is **śaktam** (it has the strength to run fast).
2. A skilled driver is **samarthah** (he knows how to use that power effectively).

So, the King is able to point out why the Jackal was ousted in the first place. It is not just competence. But effectiveness. The Jackal has the potential, but the King wants fit for purpose or effectiveness. This is one up on Western management ideas.

Ok, let us look at the next example.

Example #2

What do you think are the reasons people leave a manager? If you are a leader/manager think about the last time when people in your team left. If you are an individual contributor, think about why you will leave your manager. Done thinking? Let's see what Panchatantra has to say about this.

The same Jackal we saw earlier is now starting to throw some punches back to the lion. Here's what he states.

asamaiḥ samīyamānah samaiś ca pariḥiyamāṇa-sat-kārah |
dhuri yo na yujyamānas tribhir artha-patiṁ tyajati bhṛtyah

Explanation

People leave their leaders for 3 reasons

1. Treating equals unequally
2. Treating unequals equally
3. Not employing people to their potential

If you are a leader , this is a very simple framework to retain your employees. If you are an individual contributor , open you eyes and ears and appreciate the difficult balance your managers are trying to get done in the world of ‘curve-fitting’ appraisals.

OK, we have seen two examples on the ‘Skill-will’ matrix and retaining employees. Now, let us look at one on ‘executing an Idea’ or ‘Project Management’.

Example 3:

In another episode, the Jackal’s idea had gone into a zone where nobody knows what would happen. In short it had not thought about all the consequences of his ideas. There is another Jackal who is his friend and alter-ego who points out this mistake. In this context, Panchatantra offers a brilliant framework to think about execution of Ideas called ‘*mantragati*’ or in short ‘The movement or flow of thought, plan, or discourse’.

Panchavidho hi mantrah, sa ca

1. *Karmanām ārambha upāyah.*
2. *Puruṣadravyasampat*
3. *Deśakālavibhāgah*
4. *Vinipāta Pratikārah*
5. *Kāryasiddhi*

One has to think about these 5 aspects when one is executing something

1. How to start the execution?
2. Who are the People and Material required to execute?
3. When and where should the work happen?
4. What can go wrong? How to mitigate?
5. Attainment of a goal (outcomes)

The Jackal points out risk mitigation or *Vinipāta Pratikārah* as the flaw in the current plan to the other Jackal.

Imagine this. This was written 2500 years ago. If you apply this even today, your endeavours will be successful. I am equally humbled and proud to have been born in such a civilization which has such insight and also having this brought this book to fruition. Now, I am hoping you are convinced on the applicability of lessons from Panchatantra for today's world.

Before we jump into actual lessons, we have to cover a little bit of ground on introducing the Panchatantra.

What does the Panchatantra contain?

Earlier, I had mentioned that Panchatantra was written for Princes. We will cover this at length in our first lesson. However, I am providing a short version here to give you more context to understand the structure of Panchatantra. This part is called 'Kathamukha' in Panchatantra.

Once upon a time, there was a king, who had three sons. All three were dumb. So, he was worried he didn't have any rightful heir. He, then asks his ministers for help. They refuse, afraid to take up such a task. One of his ministers suggests Vishnusharma. Vishnusharma takes up the challenges to make the dumb princes , wise kings in 6 months time. For their sake, he creates the Panchatantra and starts teaching them wisdom through animal stories. This is how Panchatantra was created.

As you would have already noted, it covers a lot of ground from Leadership to Project management. Vishnusharma calls his story-based teaching as 'Saraswati Vinodha' or an innovative experiment in teaching. But what is he teaching? Where does the content come from?

Vishnusharma himself gives us a clue.

*Sakalārthaśāstrasāraṁ samālokya Viṣṇuśarmedam
Tantraiḥ pañcabhiretacchakāra sumanoharam
śāstram*

"Having examined the essence of all treatises on polity and wisdom, Vishnu Sharma created this delightful scripture, consisting of five tantras (sections)."

So, the wisdom or the content is coming from all the Arthasastras at the time of writing ‘Panchatantra’. So, reading this is as good as reading all Arthasastras. We know one of the ‘Arthashastra’ was written by Chanakya. Do we have others? I will leave that exploration to you.

Now, Panchatantra means ‘Five tantras’ or ‘5 Strategies’. What are they?

- 1. Mitra-bheda:** The Loss of Friends
- 2. Mitra-labha:** The Winning of Friends
- 3. Kakolookiyam:** On Crows and Owls
- 4. Labdhapranasam:** Loss of Gains
- 5. Apariksitakarakam:** Ill-Considered Action

In this book, we will be covering the first tantra (Mitra-bhedha). Each tantra consists of a **framing story** which runs along the length of the book. Then there are **shorter stories within the framing story** narrated by characters in the framing story.

There are lessons in the framing story as well as in the shorter stories within the framing story. We have picked 26 key lessons from the first book (Mitra Bhedha) , which are applicable for today's modern work place and have presented them in this book. The hacks/ lessons cover '**ways to handle yourself**', '**ways to handle others**' and '**ways to handle your work**'.

We also provide AI coaches and nitis (short sound bites) from Panchatantra to help you practice and reflect the lessons at work. You can tap or click on the links to access them. As we said, this is a very different type of book. You can gain a lot by just reading through. But, true results will come from working with our AI coaches and reading and reflecting on the Nitis.

At this point, you might be thinking , there are so many books which look at Indian wisdom. What's so different about this?

How this book is different?

First, let us start from the source and its application. Typically, authors take a philosophical literature (Bhagavad Gita) or characters from Epics and interpret them to corporate context. This book is different. The source is Panchatantra which is written with leadership and management in mind. And the lessons are not interpreted, they are given verbatim in the core text.

Second, the form of this book is not dry teaching. It is presented as a business story making it easy to read and remember.

Third, this is a Phygital experience. We have an online assessment. You can read this book in physical or digital form, tap or click on links to access AI Coaches to work with, we have stories presented in Comic form, you will be asked to solve dharmaic puzzles online and then we have the 200+ nitis collection which are lessons in short poetry form with translation.

Fourth, just as the source , this book doesn't shy away from stating the facts. The lessons in this book will fall under 4 buckets.

Some lessons, you will say 'I know this' already.

Some lessons, you will say 'It might not work in my Organization'.

Some lessons, you will ask 'Isn't that unethical?'

Some lessons, you will say 'Wow! That's awesome'.

Be rest assured, all of them work. It will make you a successful, no not just successful, but a very dangerous and successful version of yourself without compromising on your conscience.

Now, let us start with the framing story of Mitra-Bhedha.

The framing story of Mitra-Bhedha is the story of how a growing friendship between a Lion and the Bull was broken by a cunning and back-biting Jackal.

But,

How did a Lion become friends with a bull in the first place?

How can a cunning Jackal be successful? Aren't moral stories supposed to punish the bad?

Read on to find out.



STORYDHARMA

Mitrabhedā



People usually recount this story as the tale of how a blossoming friendship between a lion and a bull was shattered by a conniving and greedy jackal (who happened to be me. My name is Damanaka).



However, I prefer to perceive this as a story depicting my journey from a powerless position to the highest post in the Kingdom. Allow me to commence from the beginning.



PART - 1

The Lion is Afraid



In a southern city, lived a wealthy Dharmic Merchant who desired further prosperity. Consequently, he embarked on an entrepreneurial journey to a distant city.



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)



With his entourage, the merchant set off on the journey, accompanied by a bull named 'Sanjivaka'. Despite receiving diligent care, Sanjivaka, a domestically raised bull, still bore the weight of its arduous tasks.

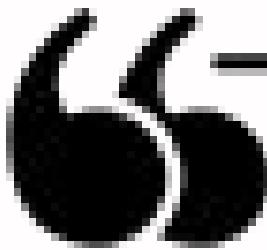


A black and white photograph of a dense jungle. A narrow, light-colored path or stream bed winds its way through the center of the frame. The surrounding trees and foliage are heavily textured and layered, creating a sense of depth and complexity. The lighting is dramatic, with bright highlights on the path and deep shadows in the canopy.

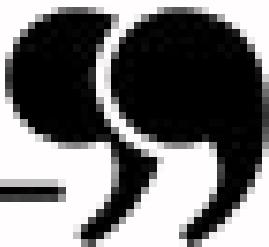
Their expedition led
them through a
treacherous jungle.

“During their jungle passage, the bull's yoke suddenly gave way, resulting in an injury that rendered the bull unable to continue.





The merchant stayed by the bull's side for three nights. However, due to the danger it posed to his fellow merchants, he reluctantly chose to leave two servants behind to care for the wounded animal.



[Attempt first dharmic puzzle](#)

[Attempt second dharmic puzzle](#)

The servants returned and lied to the merchant that the bull had passed away. They assured him that they had performed the proper last rites for the bull.



“

However, the bull not only survives
but also regains its health,
wandering through the jungle and
emitting loud noises.

”



Simultaneously, a lion and his entourage arrive in the vicinity to quench their thirst. Upon hearing the bull's roar, unaware of the creature's identity, the lion fearfully takes refuge under a banyan tree.



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

Within the lion's retinue, there are two jackals named Damanaka and Karataka, both lacking significant political influence. Damanaka wants to exploit the lion's predicament as an opportunity to regain political clout.



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)



PART - 2

Jackals take advantage



"Why is our King sitting under a Banyan tree,
looking afraid, even though he is thirsty and
wants to drink water from Yamuna?"

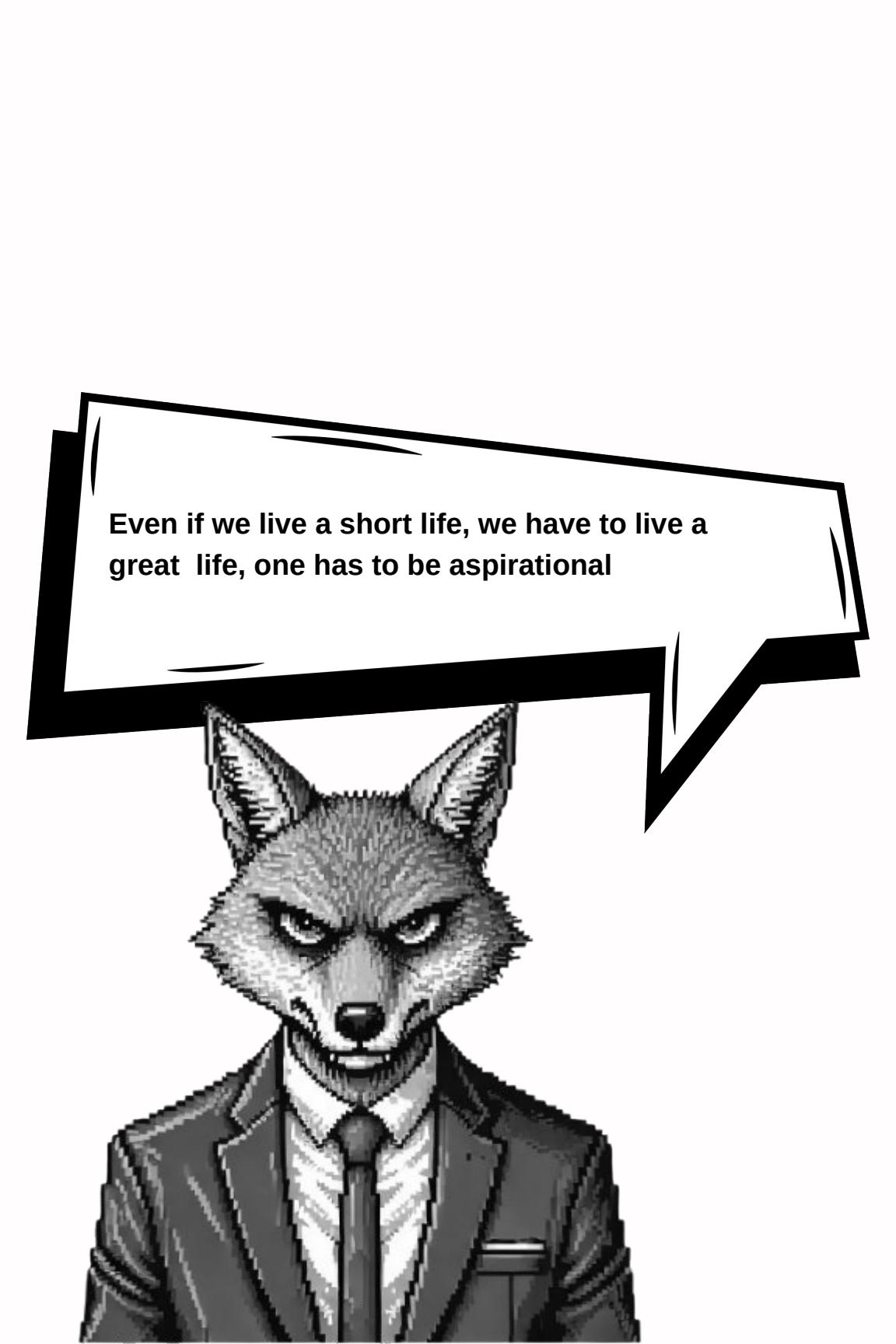




Why worry about things that aren't our concern? We're getting food, so let other senior leaders handle it

We should not merely settle for food; we should strive to fulfill our potential.





Even if we live a short life, we have to live a great life, one has to be aspirational



We are powerless people, why bother? There
are other powerful people to take care of this



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

By taking on tasks, normally done by powerful (senior) people, we can ascend to senior positions.



Even someone who is powerful, can lose their seniority by not taking up endeavours which don't match with their seniority





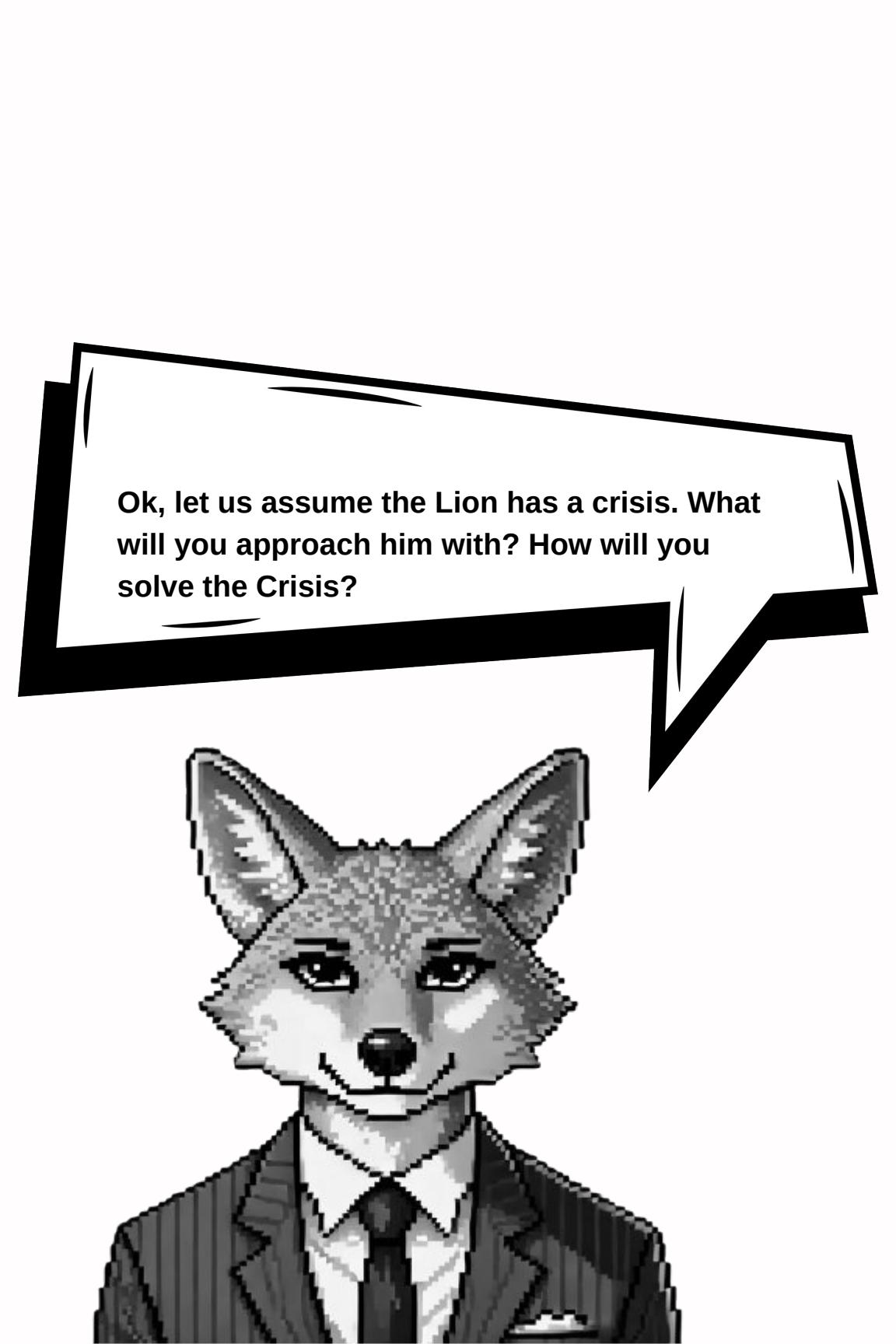
**Even if I agree with you on that. Are you sure
the Lion has a crisis? How do you know the
Lion is afraid?**



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

**Even animals can understand spoken words.
I can read the unwritten and unspoken words.
I am a master of what is called as Ingita**





Ok, let us assume the Lion has a crisis. What will you approach him with? How will you solve the Crisis?



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

I have been learning political science from my childhood. I will use Sadhgunya or 6 strategies to dealing with externalities





We are powerless and the Lion doesn't entertain us. How can you influence the Lion with your point of view?



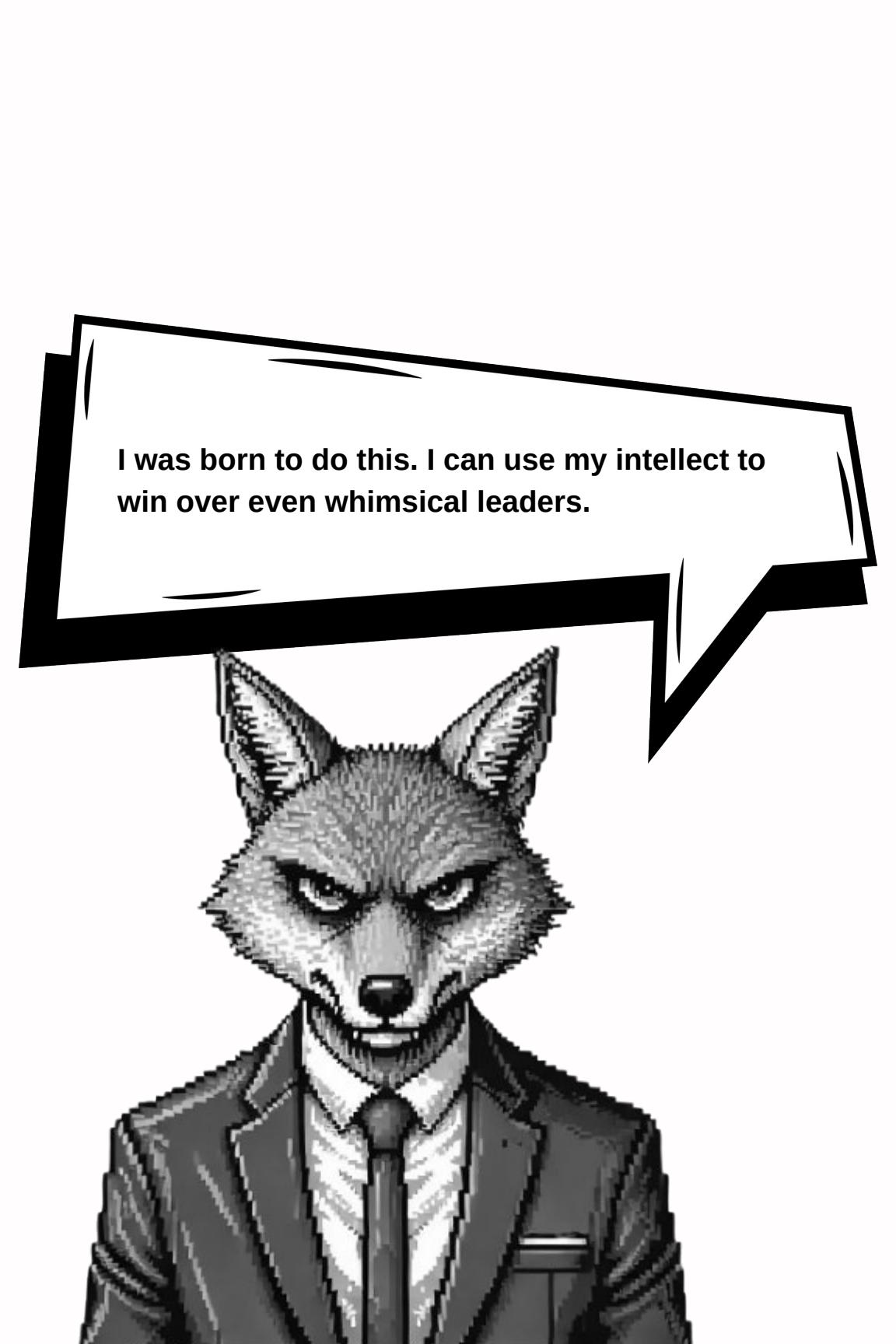
[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

I know the secrets of Sevadharma, which will allow me to influence the lion.

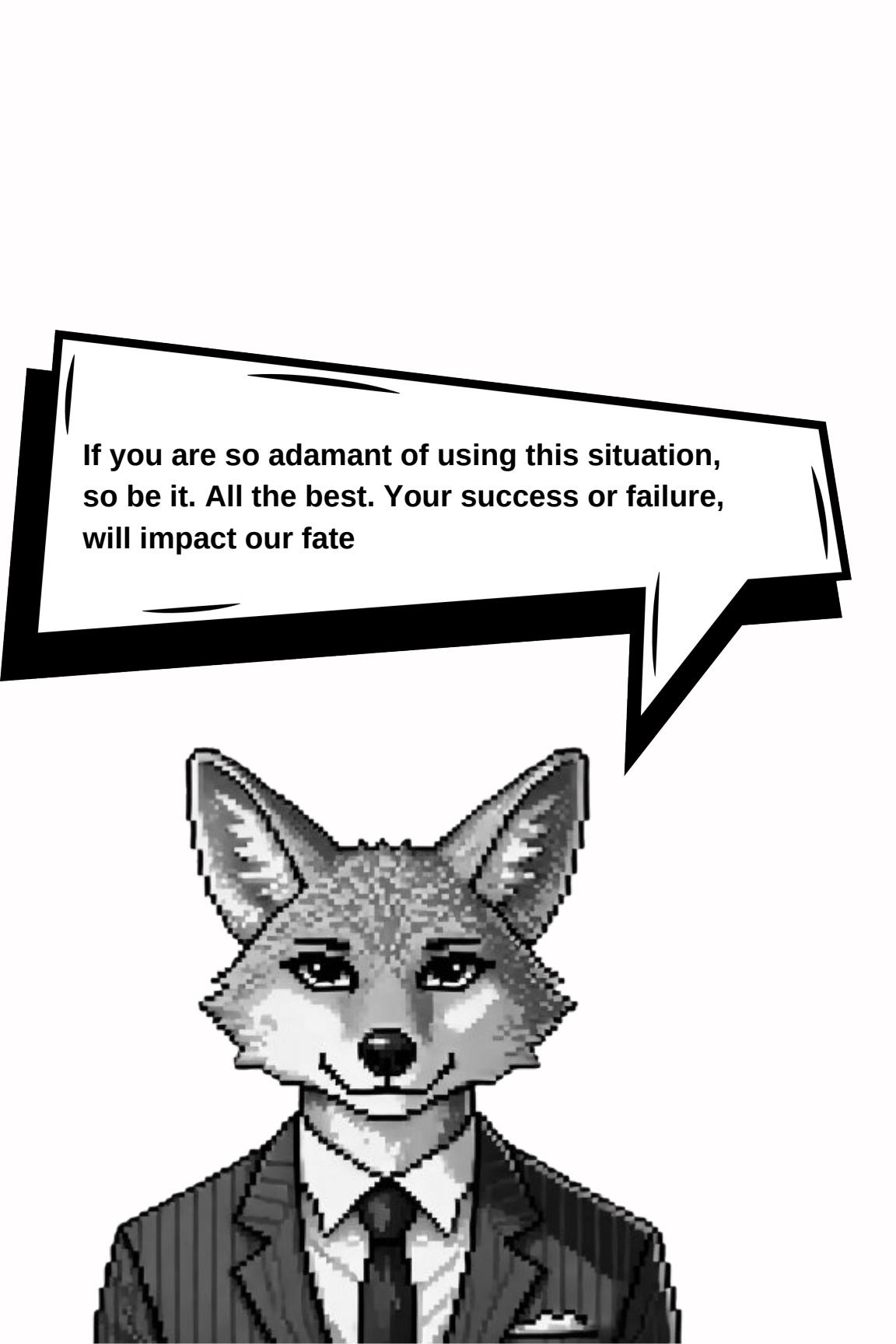




There is no guarantee that your plan will work. Leaders could be capricious and whimsical



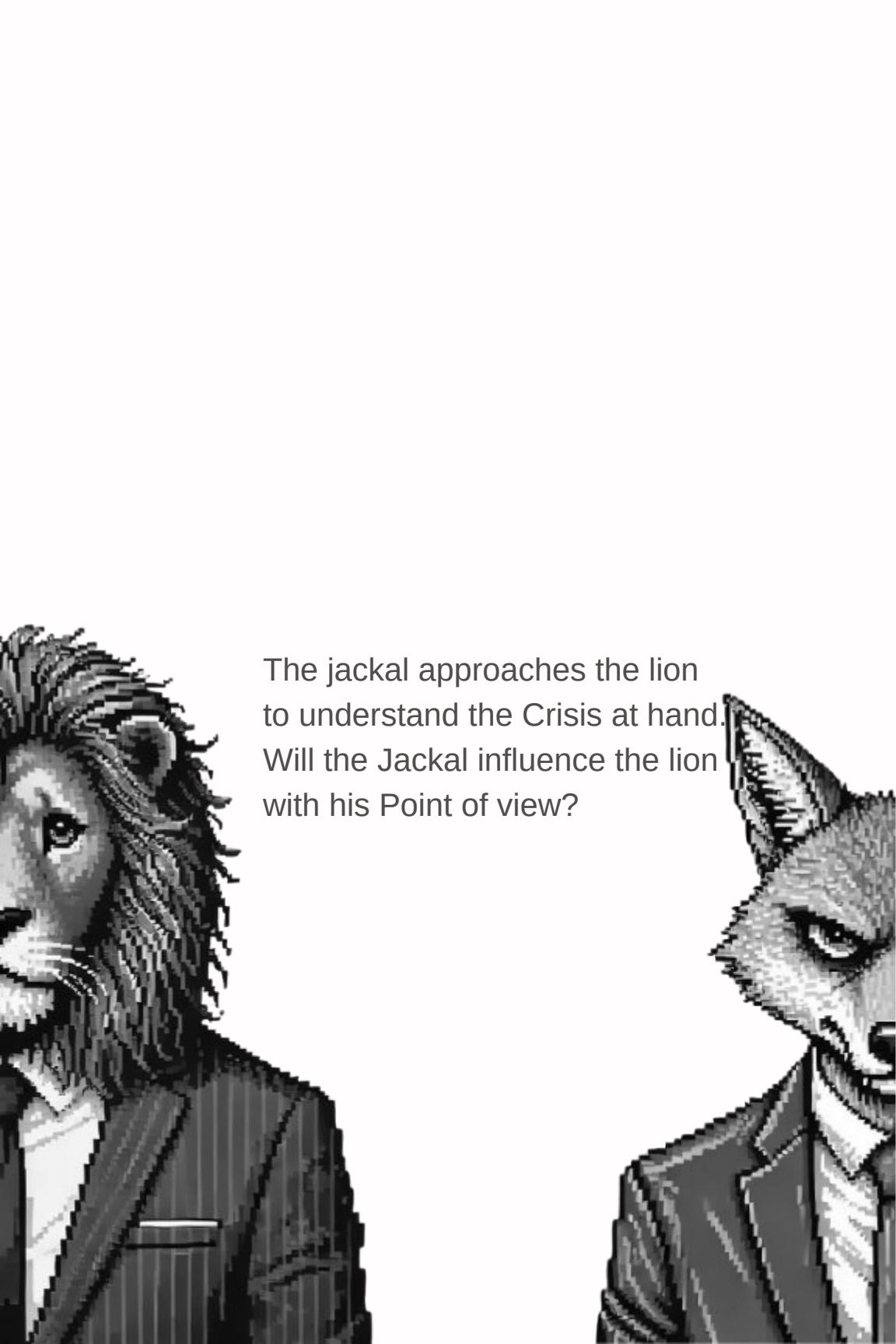
I was born to do this. I can use my intellect to win over even whimsical leaders.



If you are so adamant of using this situation,
so be it. All the best. Your success or failure,
will impact our fate



**Thanks to your wishes. Now, let me approach
the Lion and understand**



The jackal approaches the lion
to understand the Crisis at hand.
Will the Jackal influence the lion
with his Point of view?

PART - 3

Jackal gains the Lion's trust



Welcome, Damanaka. Why haven't I seen you
for a while? What brings you here?





[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

When a leader treats equals unequally, unequals equally, and fails to utilize a person's potential, that individual eventually departs from the leader





[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

One competent person is of greater value than a hundred incompetent individuals. But still you don't keep me close or listen to me.



**Let us not delve into your competence.
Instead, tell me what has brought you here**



It is the duty of an employee to assist their leaders when they encounter difficulties. I kindly request you to disclose the troubles you are facing,





Can I trust him. I
should not.

o
o



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

I am not in any trouble Damanaka. Let us talk about other things..



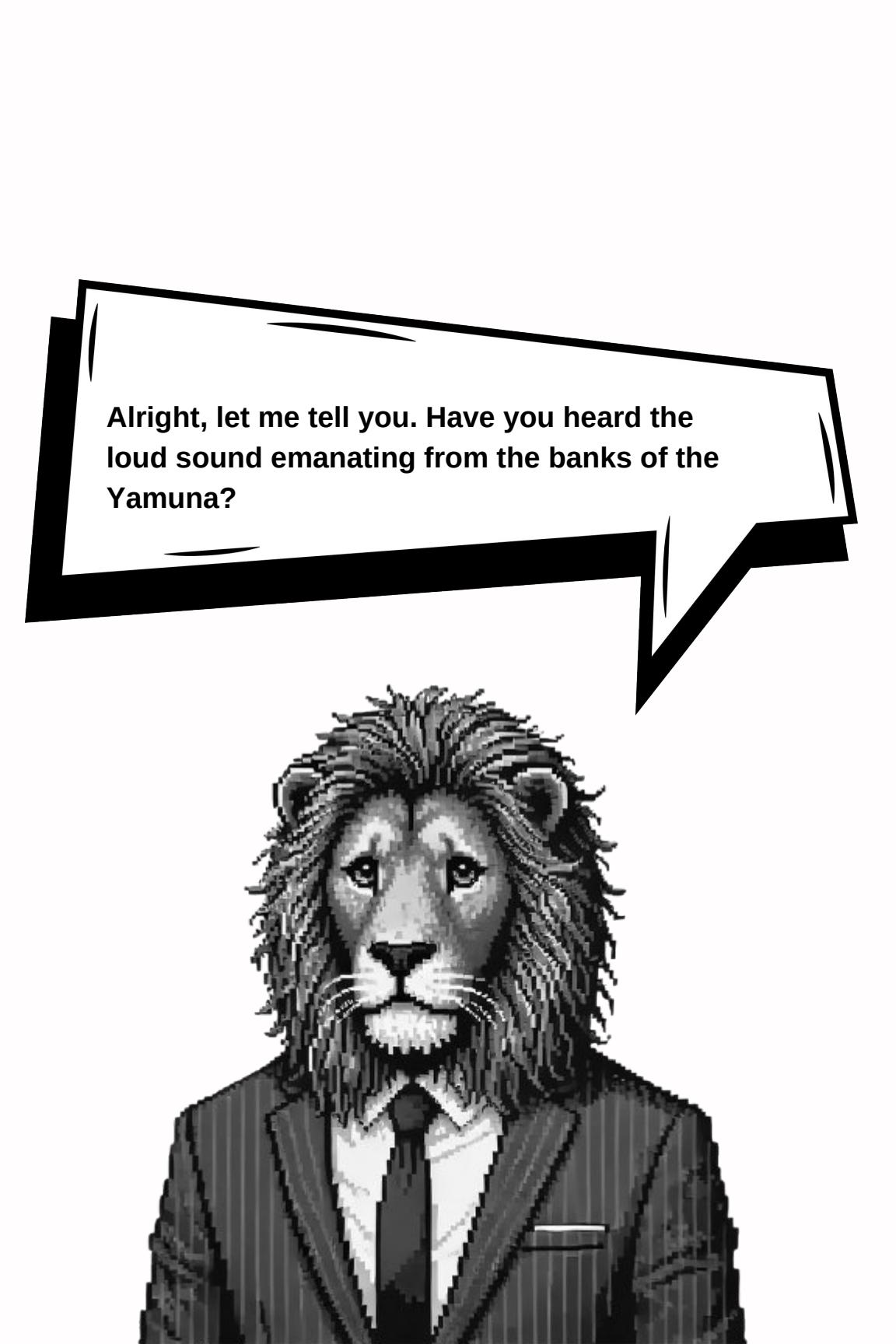
If you prefer not to share it with me, that is perfectly understandable. A secret should not be disclosed to those who are not meant to know





seems to be a
reasonable person..
besides I want to
share my fears with
others to feel better



A black and white illustration of a lion's head and upper body. The lion has a full, dark mane and is dressed in a dark pinstripe suit jacket over a white shirt and a dark tie. It is looking directly at the viewer. Above the lion is a large, hollow speech bubble. Inside the speech bubble, the text is written in a bold, sans-serif font.

**Alright, let me tell you. Have you heard the
loud sound emanating from the banks of the
Yamuna?**



Yes, so what?



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

I believe some creature has arrived to usurp
my kingdom. I am filled with fear, and I desire
to abandon this kingdom





First and foremost, one should not be fearful of a mere sound

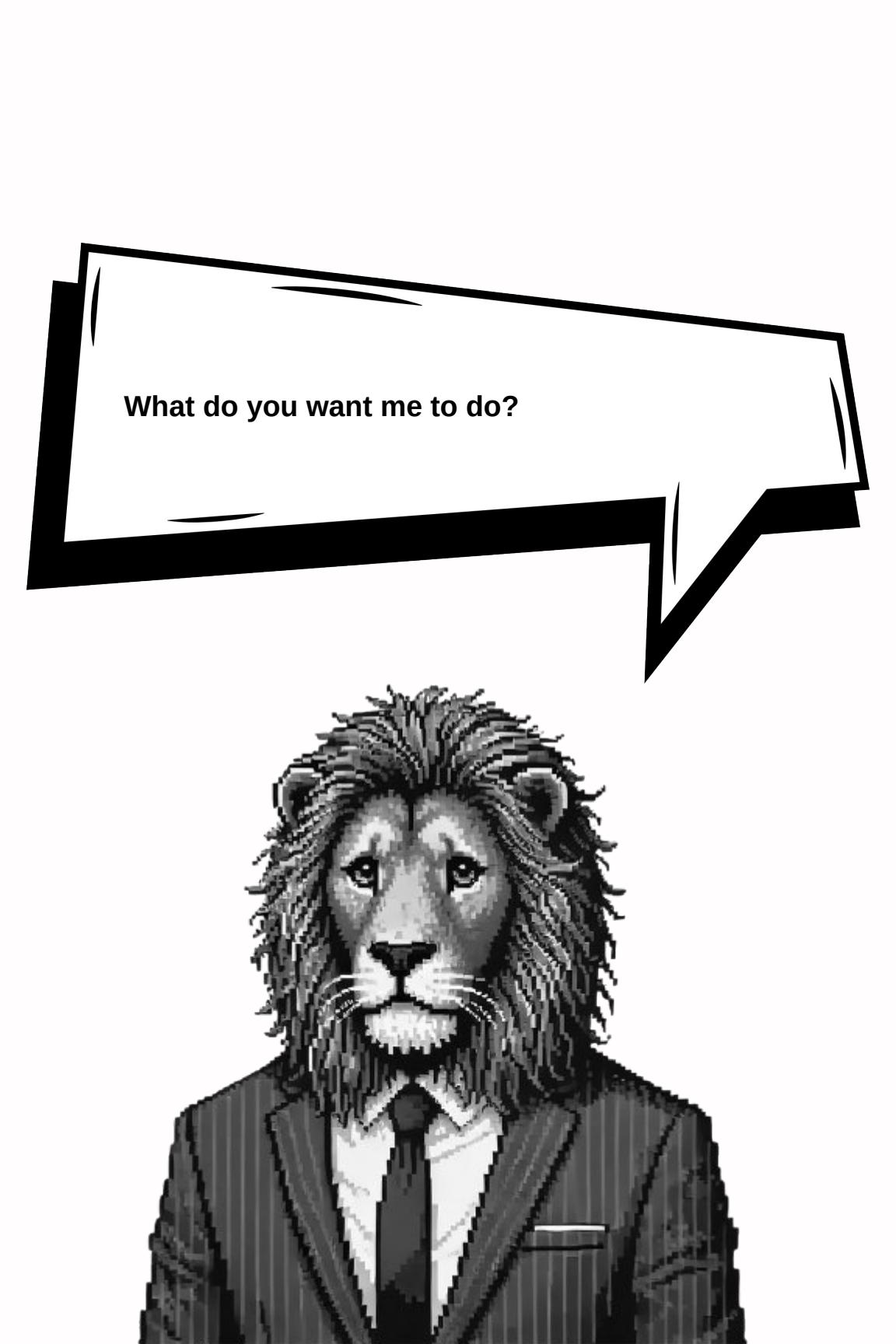


Secondly, as a steward, your responsibilities have been entrusted to you by others, and therefore, you cannot simply abandon them



Thirdly, you are also instilling fear in your retinue



A black and white illustration of a lion's head and upper body. The lion is wearing a dark pinstripe suit jacket over a white shirt and a dark tie. A large, white, speech bubble is positioned above the lion's head, containing the text "What do you want me to do?".

What do you want me to do?



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

You give me sometime; I will Go and discover the origin of the sound.



A black and white illustration of a lion's head and upper body. The lion has a large, full mane and is wearing a dark pinstripe suit jacket over a white shirt and a dark tie. Above the lion's head is a large, hollow speech bubble with a thick black outline. The text "Can you really do that?" is written in a bold, sans-serif font inside the bubble.

Can you really do that?



With your permission, as a loyal employee, I believe anything is possible. I will go after the sound,



A black and white illustration of a lion's head and upper body. The lion has a full, dark mane and is dressed in a dark pinstripe suit jacket over a white shirt and a dark tie. Above the lion's head is a large, hollow speech bubble with thick black outlines. Inside the speech bubble, the text "Please go ahead" is written in a bold, sans-serif font.

Please go ahead



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

**What have I done? I
have revealed my
vulnerability to
someone whom I had
mistreated in the past**



**What if he joins hands with the
enemy and take over my
kingdom? It would be wise for
me to keep a close watch on
him**



A leader relies on someone not solely due to their intelligence or eloquence, but because that person can effectively resolve crises for the leader,





**I have to devise a plan to
leverage this crisis and
regain some of my
political influence**



With this thought in mind, he set off towards the origin of the sound, determined to investigate and uncover its source.

pt

PART - 4

The Lion and the Bull become friends.



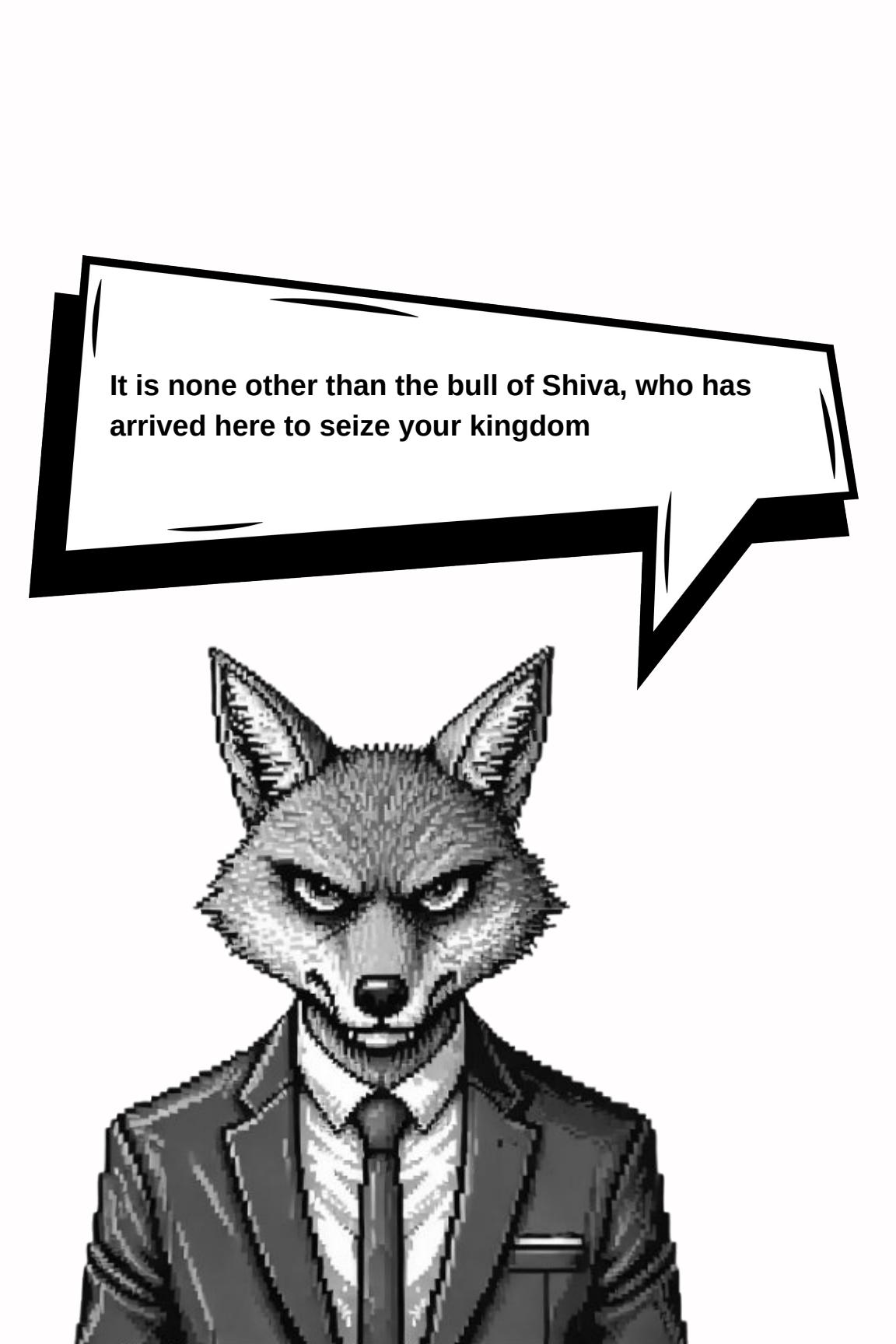
The jackal discovers that the source of the sound is merely a bull and decides to exploit the situation to his advantage, capitalizing on the crisis



The jackal approaches the lion
and they have a conversation



I have seen the source of the sound, your majesty



It is none other than the bull of Shiva, who has arrived here to seize your kingdom



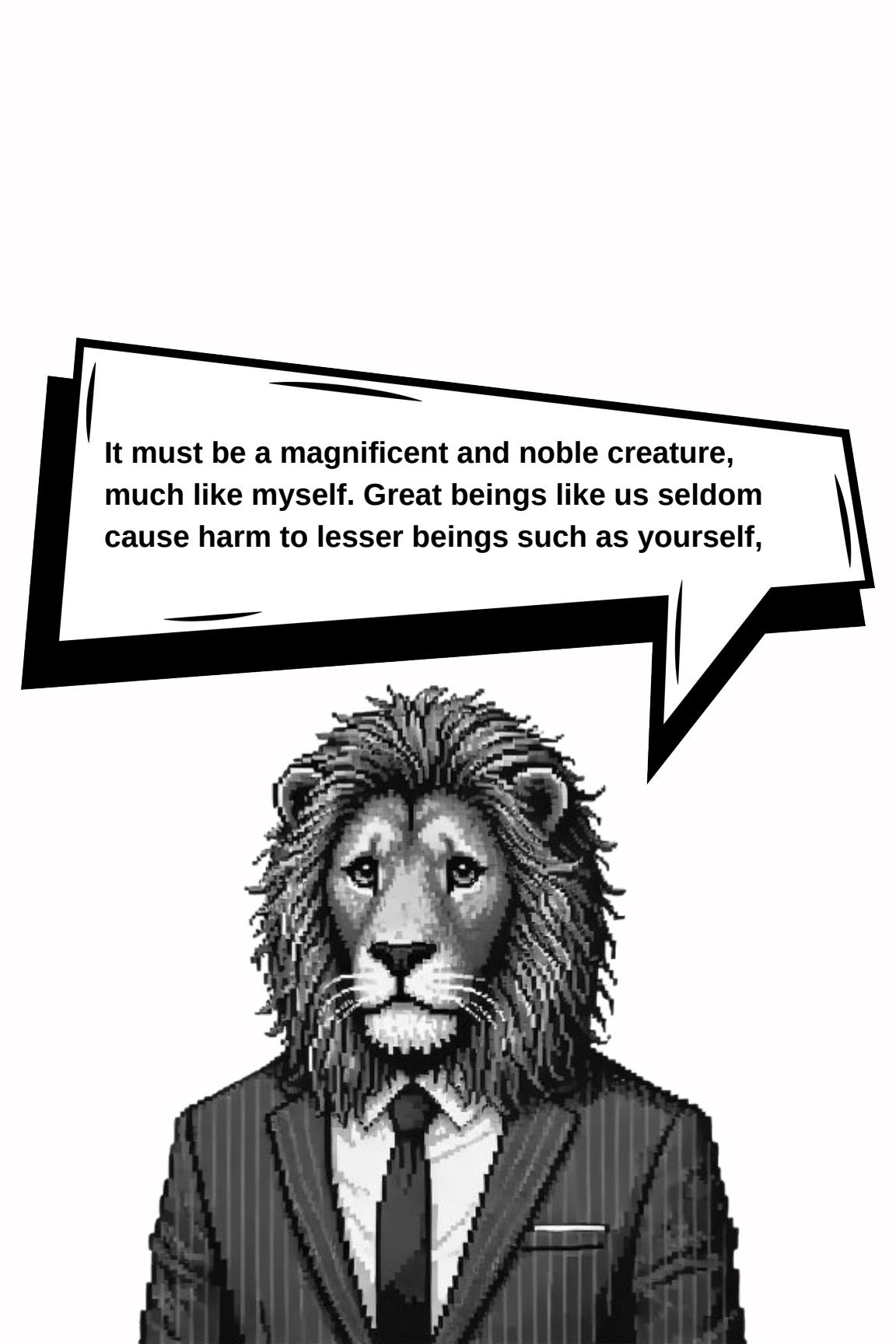
[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

No wonder! Only a divine creature would possess the audacity to wander freely in my forest





**But how come the creature has not harmed
you?**



**It must be a magnificent and noble creature,
much like myself. Great beings like us seldom
cause harm to lesser beings such as yourself,**

As you wish, Your Majesty. It is possible that the bull is a remarkable creature. If you permit, I can bring it under your protection.



A black and white illustration of a lion's head and upper body. The lion has a large, full mane and is dressed in a dark pinstripe suit jacket over a white shirt and a dark tie. A speech bubble originates from its mouth, containing the text "Can you really accomplish that?".

Can you really accomplish that?



A loyal employee can accomplish anything. You just have to order me.



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

Then, so be it.. if you accomplish that , I will make you a senior minister.



The jackal approaches the bull
and they have a conversation



**How dare you roam around freely in King
Pingalaka's forest! Your life will soon come to an
end**





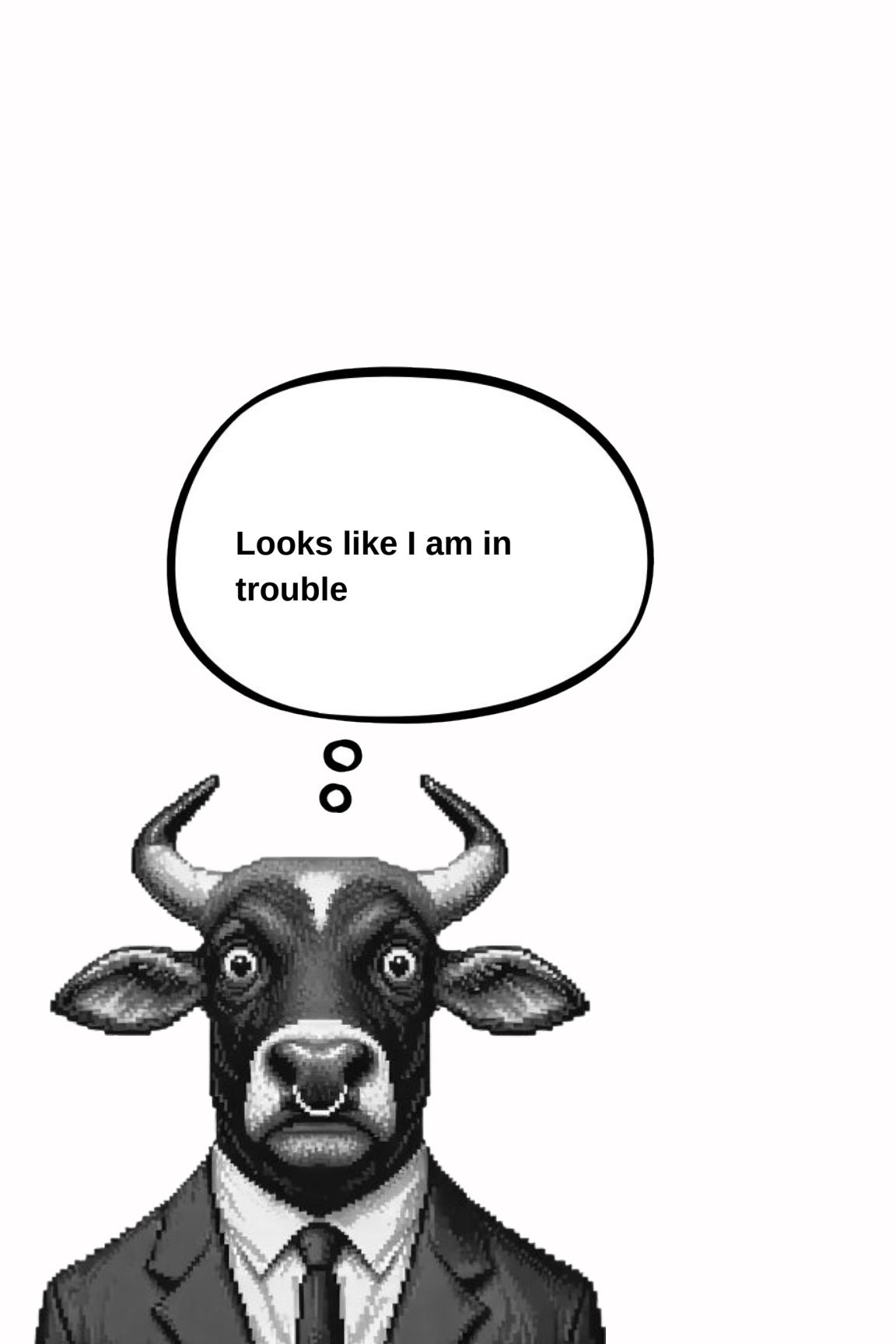
[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

Who is this Pingalaka you talk about?



You seem unaware of our Pingalaka, the mighty king of this jungle. Soon, you will come to know him through the consequences of your actions,





**Looks like I am in
trouble**



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

Listen, you appear to be a wise individual. I have no desire to meet my demise. Could you assist me in obtaining protection under King Pingalaka the Lion?



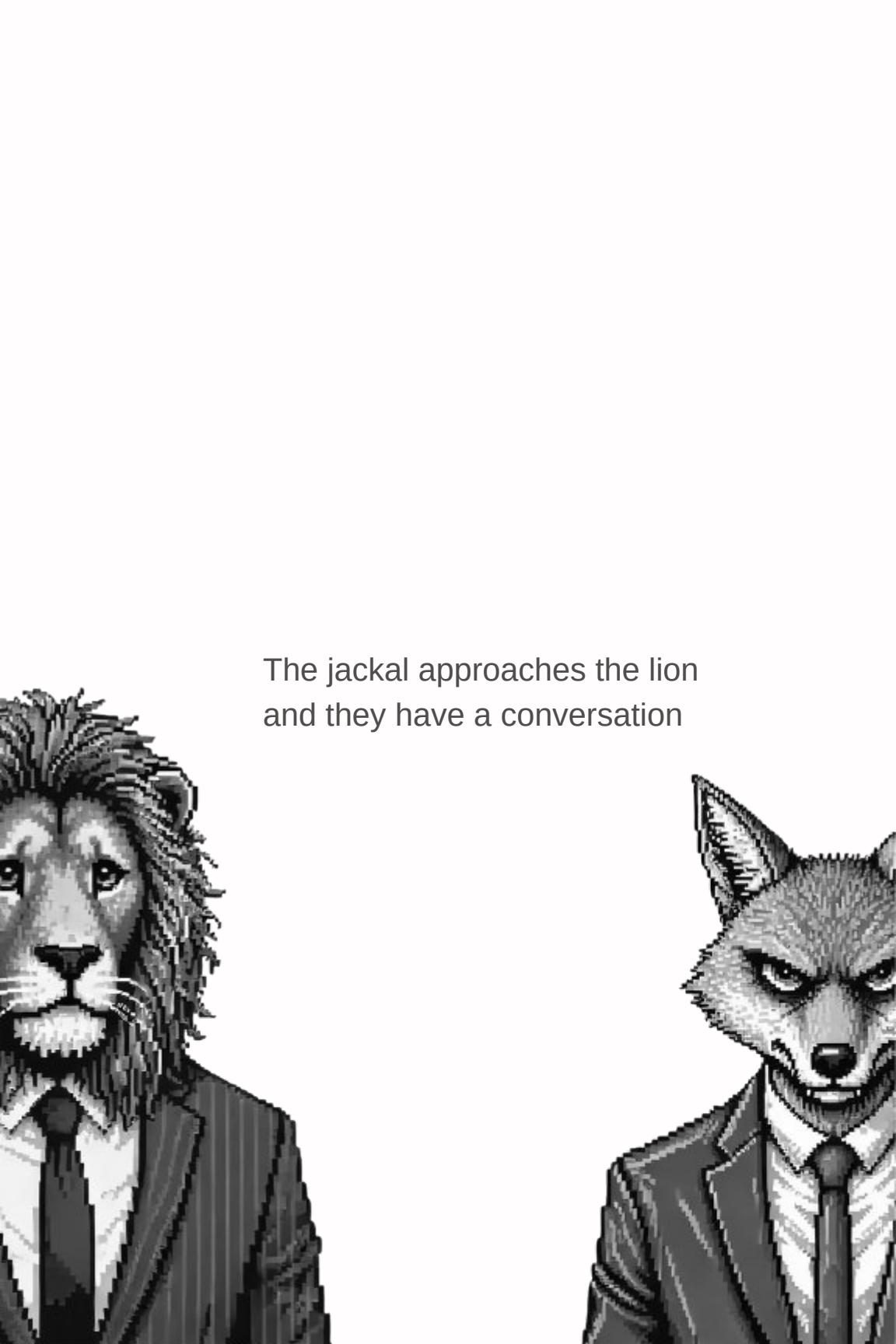


You have spoken wisely, let me talk to the Lion
and see where it takes us.

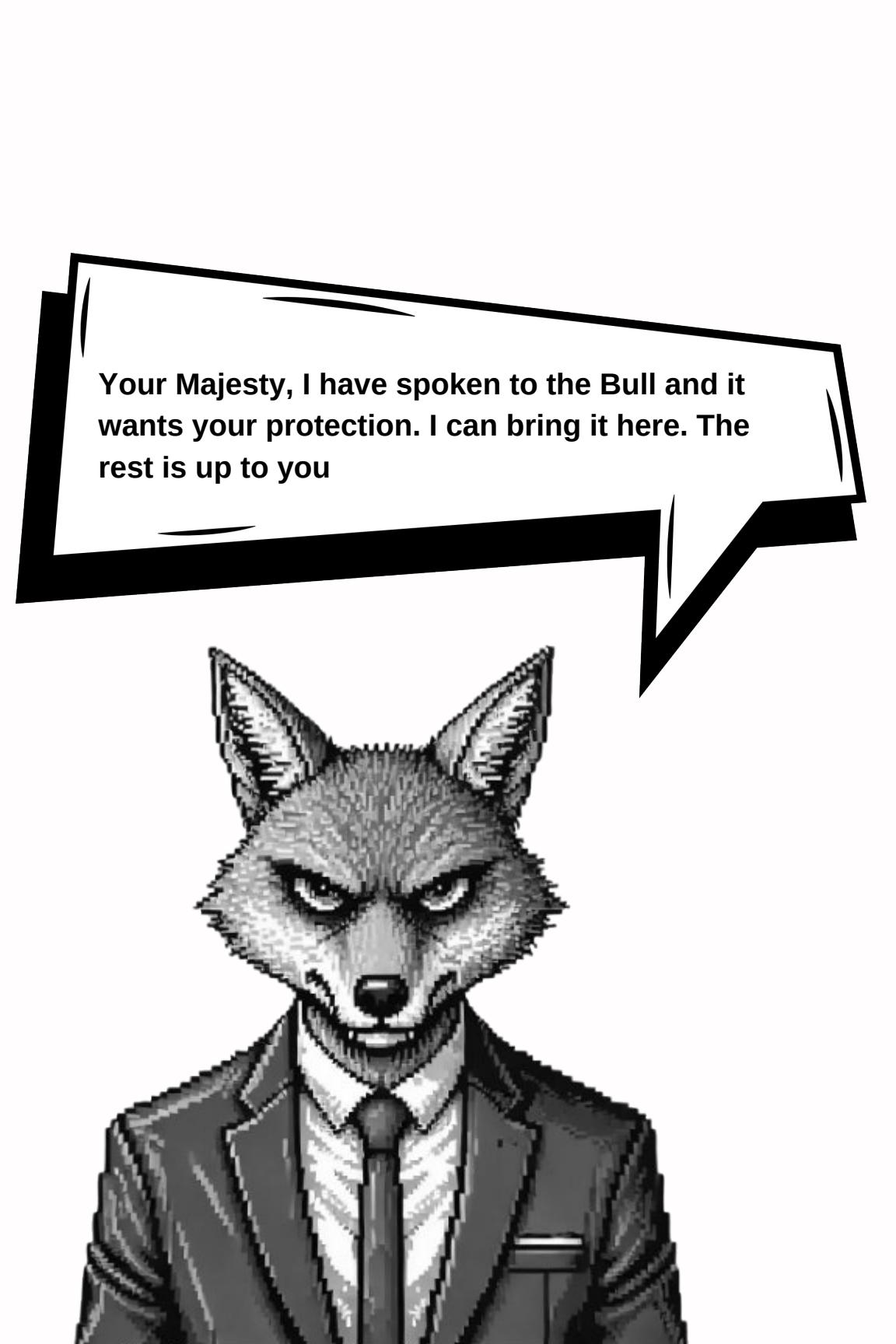


However, you have to work closely with me and
you shouldn't do anything without consulting me



A black and white illustration showing a lion and a jackal from the chest up. Both animals are dressed in dark business suits, white shirts, and dark ties. They are facing each other, looking directly at the viewer. The lion is on the left, and the jackal is on the right. The background is plain white.

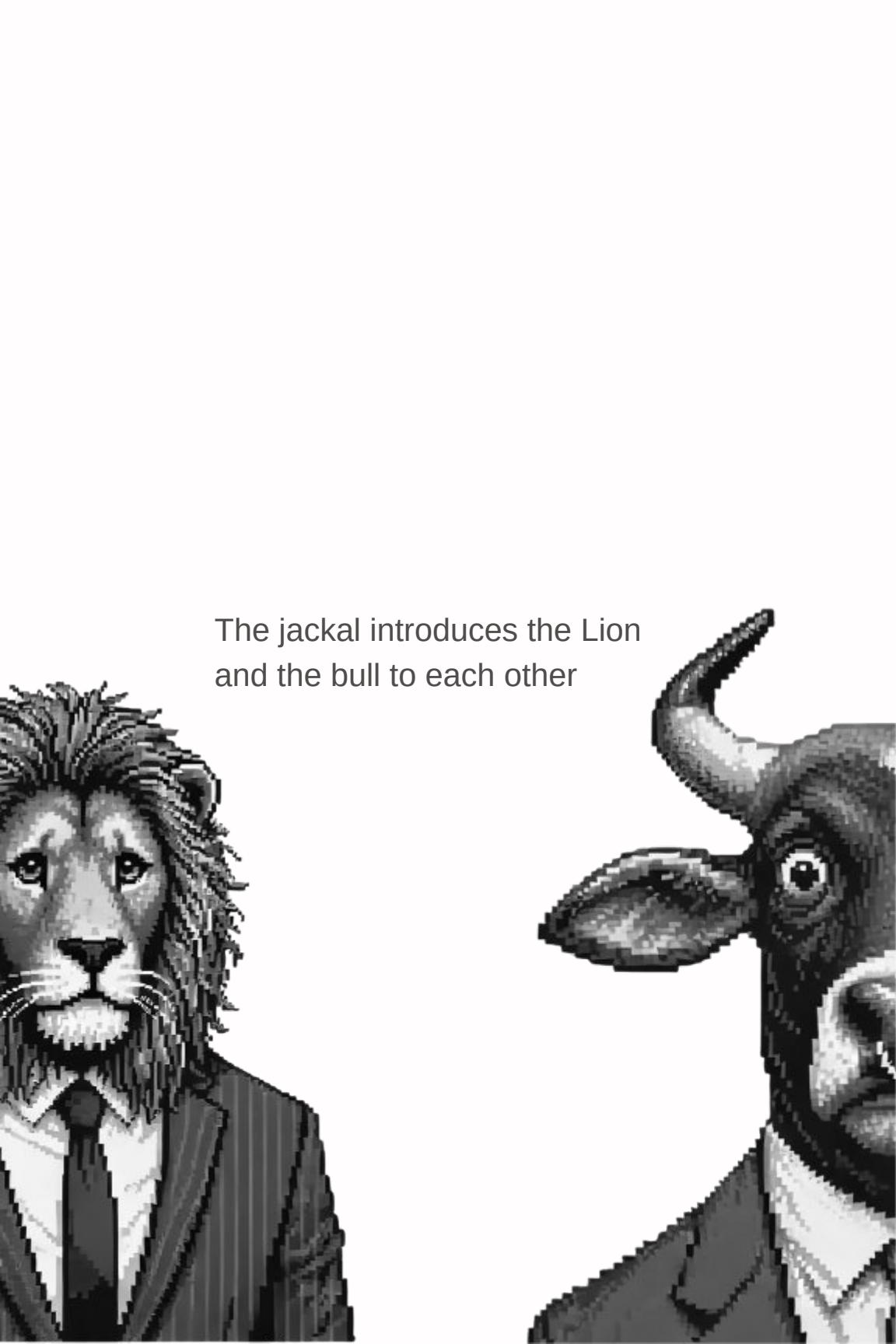
The jackal approaches the lion
and they have a conversation



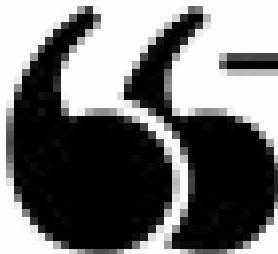
Your Majesty, I have spoken to the Bull and it wants your protection. I can bring it here. The rest is up to you

A black and white illustration of a lion's head and upper body. The lion has a full, dark mane and is dressed in a dark pinstripe suit jacket over a white shirt and a dark tie. It is positioned below a large, hollow speech bubble. The speech bubble is outlined in black and has several thick, black, angular lines extending from its sides and bottom, giving it a dynamic, three-dimensional appearance.

Alright, let me offer it protection. Bring it here.

A black and white illustration showing the heads and shoulders of a lion on the left and a bull on the right, facing each other. The lion has a full mane and is wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt. The bull has large, curved horns and is also wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt.

The jackal introduces the Lion
and the bull to each other



The bull recounts his journey from his original home to the circumstances that led him to be trapped in the forest.



The Lion and the bull become thick
friends





[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

“The Jackal becomes a senior minister in the Lion's ministry



PART - 5

The Jungle goes for a toss

The Lion slowly starts listening
to the bull





I come from the city. This is how we operate in the city. We are so great that we don't hunt each other. You have to become wise like us

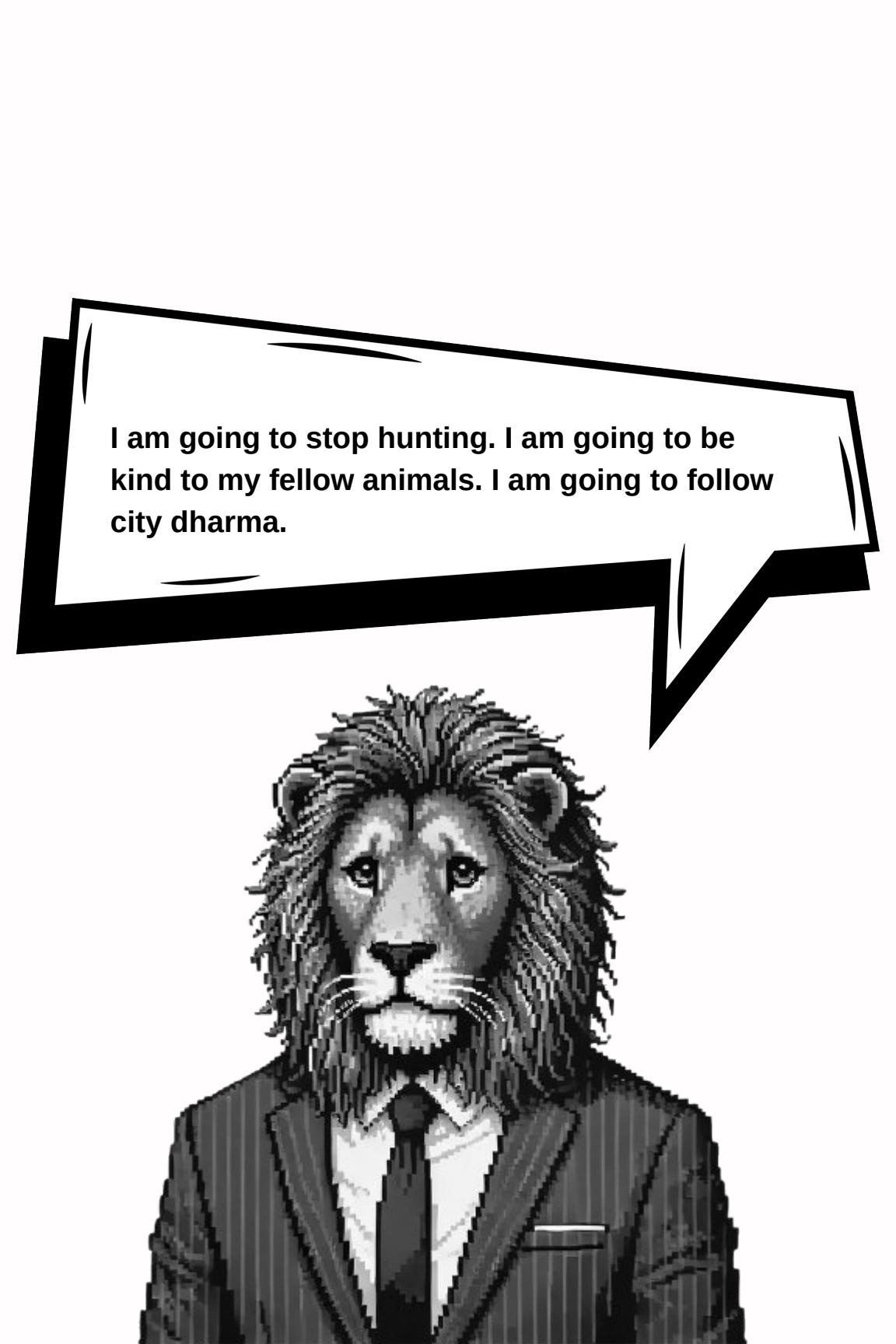


How interesting. I am going to start following
that. I have lived my life as a very aggressive
person so far





What are you going to do?



I am going to stop hunting. I am going to be kind to my fellow animals. I am going to follow city dharma.





That's great.

The Lion slowly starts getting influenced by the bull and stops hunting and starts following the city dharma in the Jungle



The Jackals no longer have access to the Lion. The Lion spends a lot of time with the bull. They don't even get the food they were getting previously.





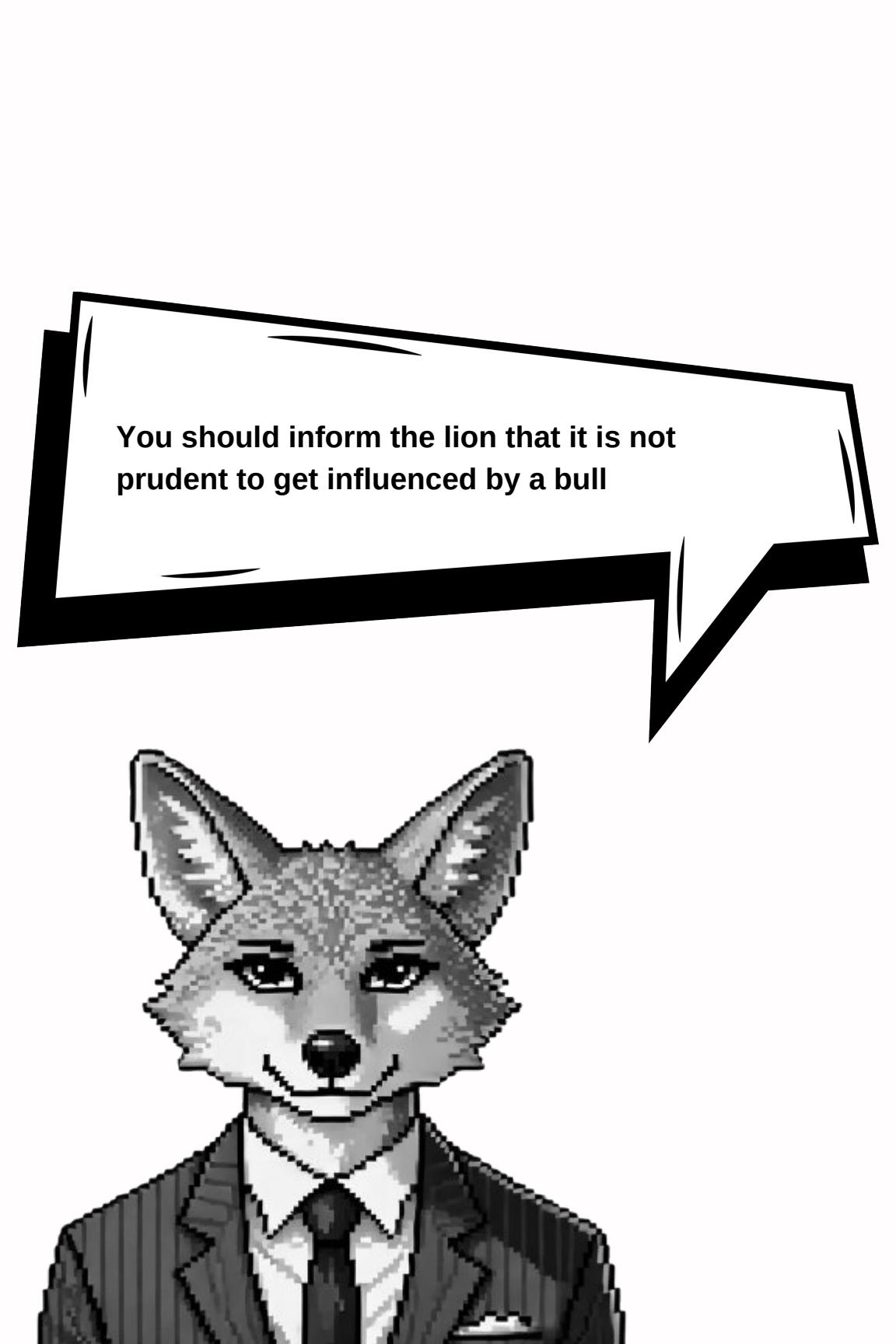
[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

Damanaka! with your stupid idea , we are back to square one with no power. Your plan has backfired





Yes, I agree. I don't think our King is to blame here. It is my own fault which has brought us to this space. What should I do?



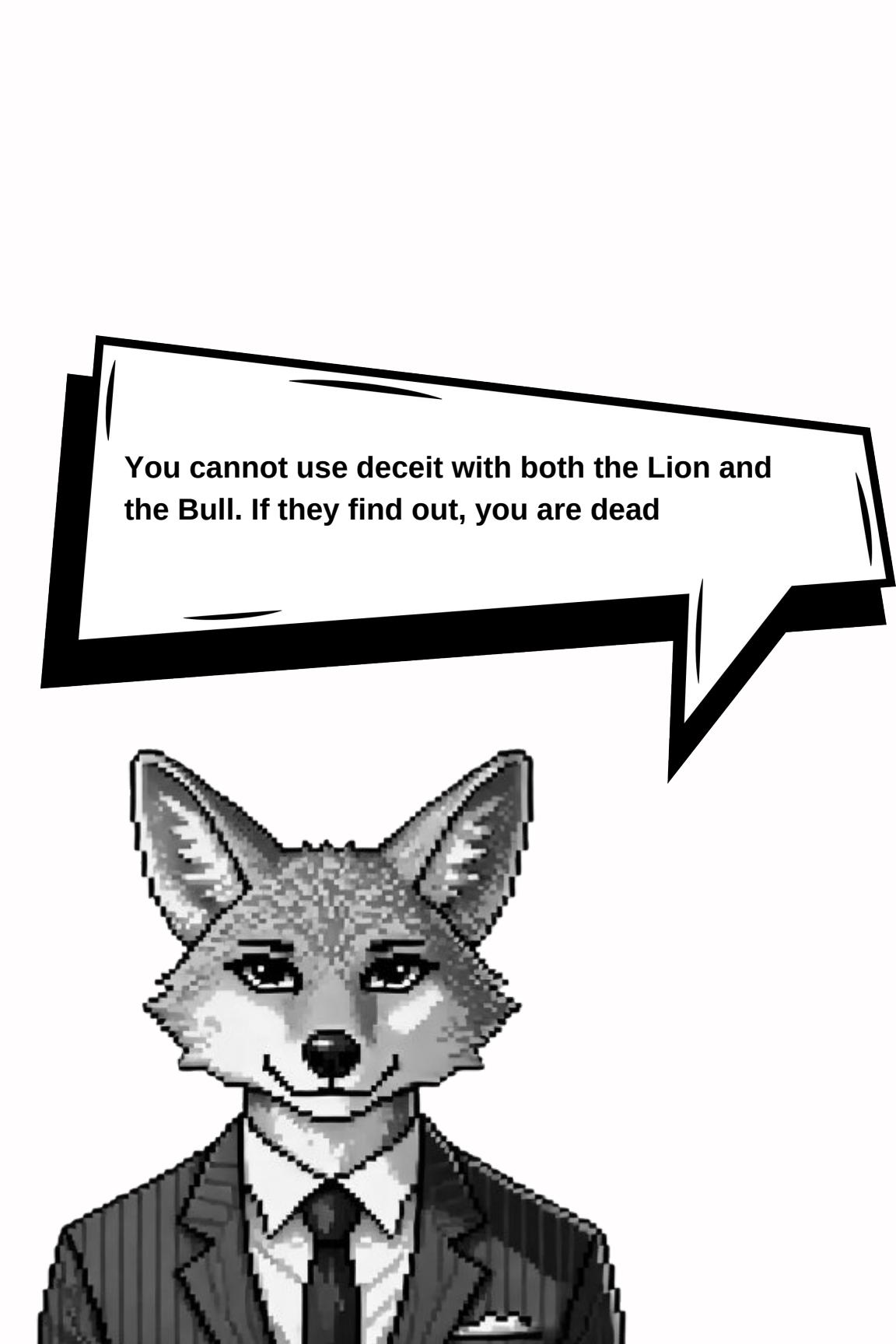
You should inform the lion that it is not
prudent to get influenced by a bull



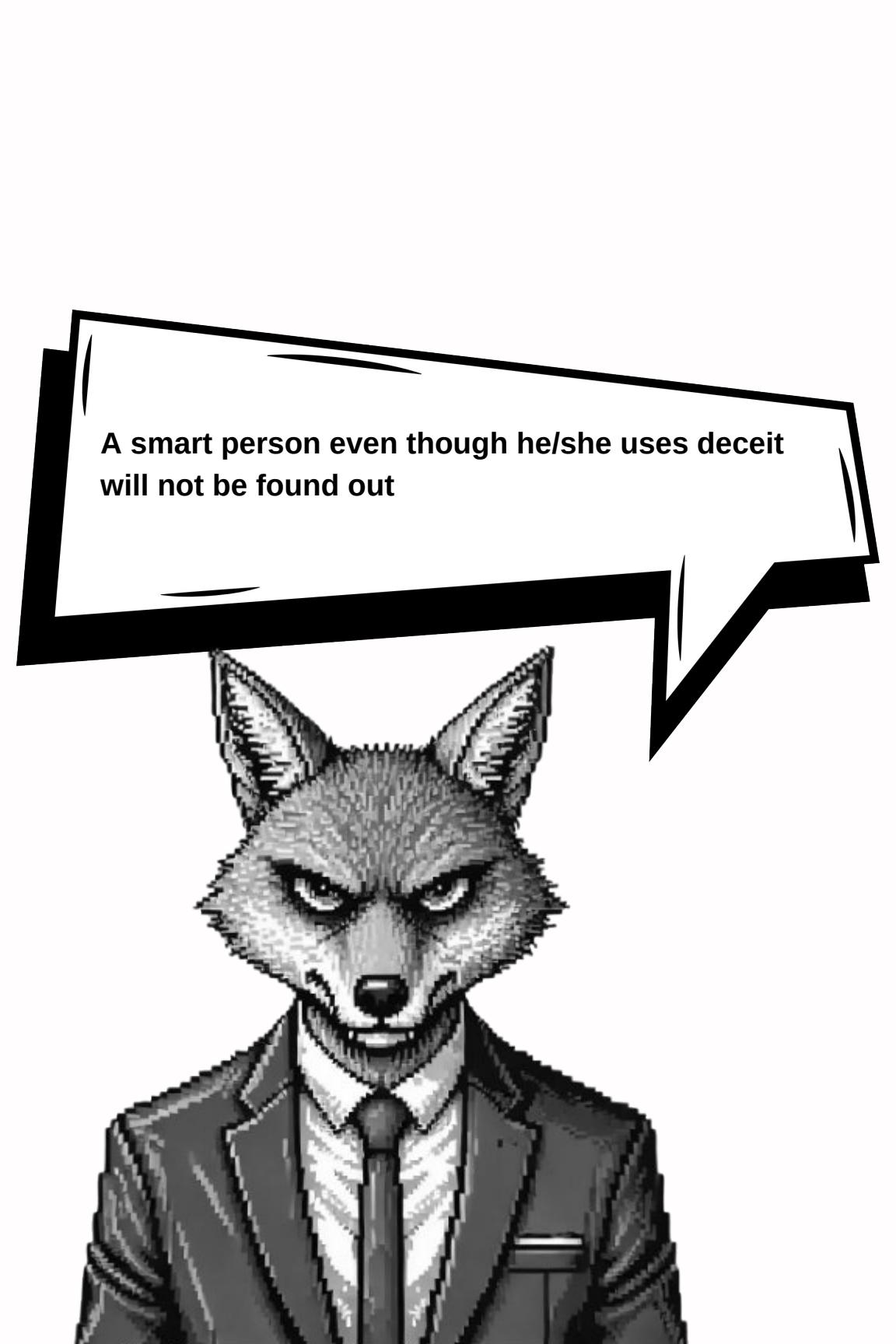
[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

I am going to tell our King that and also find a deceitful way to destroy his friendship with the bull, which is what is the root cause of all this.





You cannot use deceit with both the Lion and
the Bull. If they find out, you are dead



A smart person even though he/she uses deceit
will not be found out



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

If that is what you want to do, I would not
advise doing it and I don't want any part in it



Sometimes you have to use deceit to reach your goals. You don't understand the intricacies of Politics in the working world. Let me handle it.

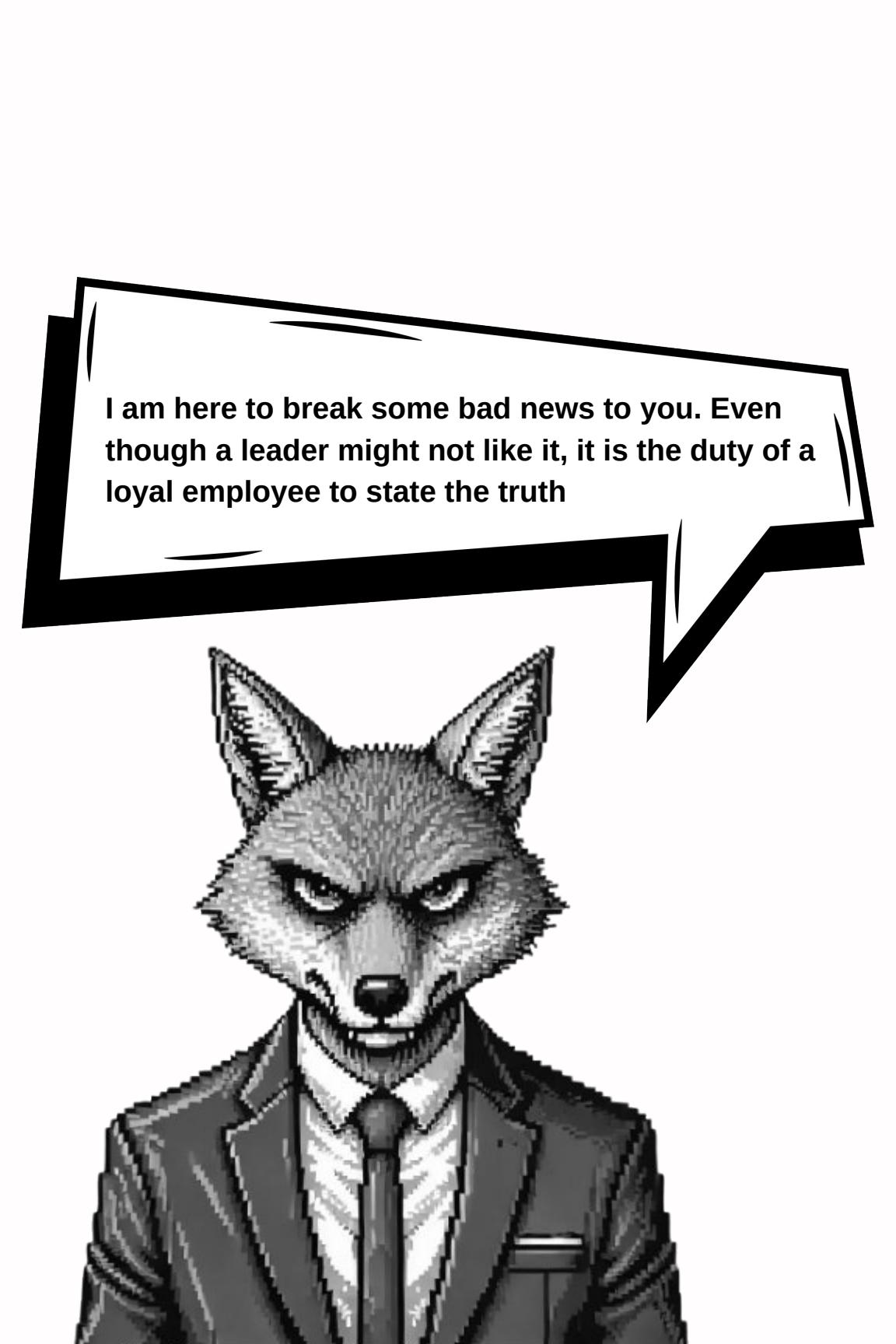


PART - 6

The Jackal finds a way to break friendship

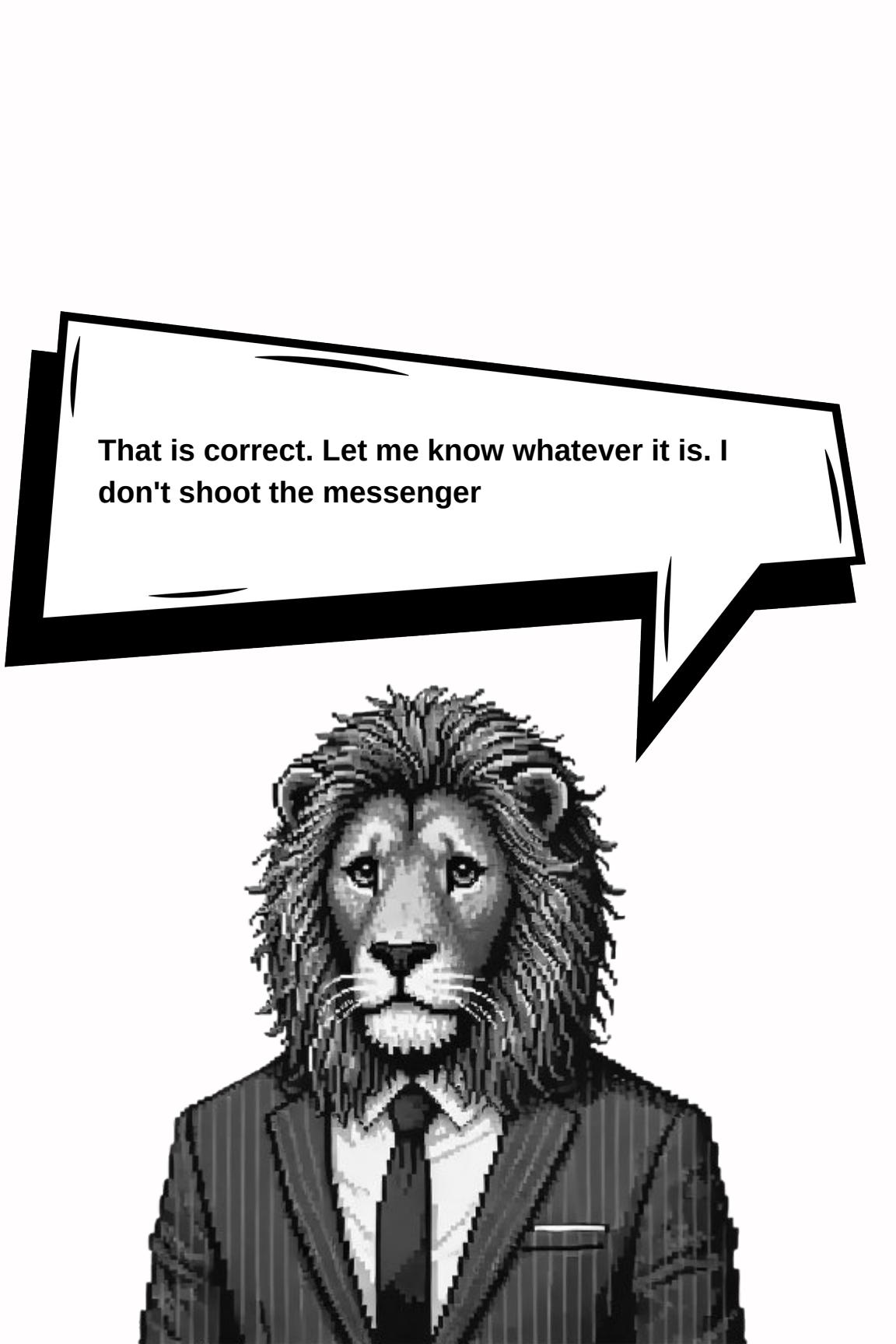
The jackal approaches the lion
and they have a conversation





I am here to break some bad news to you. Even though a leader might not like it, it is the duty of a loyal employee to state the truth





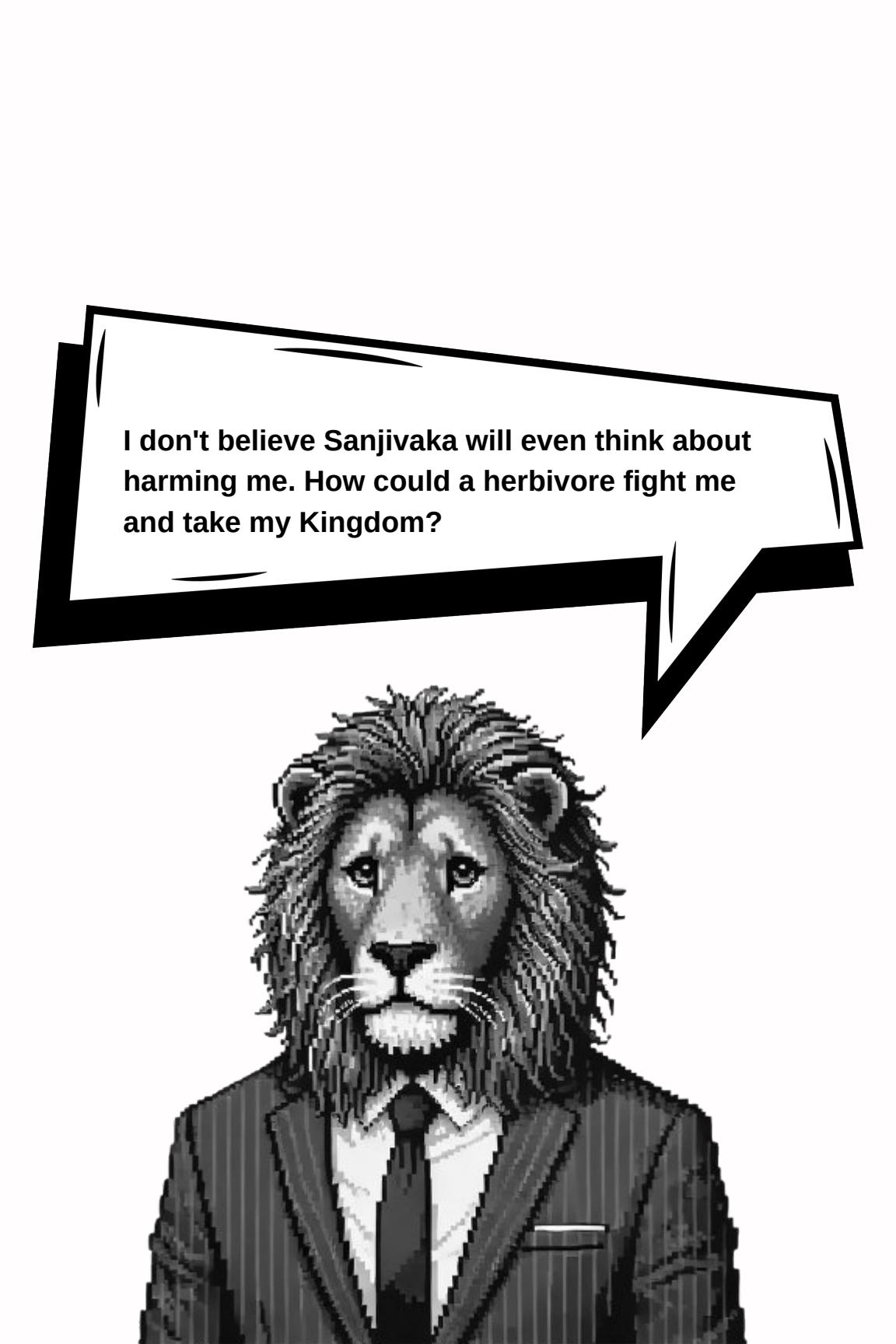
**That is correct. Let me know whatever it is. I
don't shoot the messenger**

Sanjivaka , the bull, your friend is planning to take over your Kingdom. You should kill him immediately before things get worse





**May be this guy is
mistaken, how can my
friend Sanjivaka think
about doing harm to me?**



I don't believe Sanjivaka will even think about
harming me. How could a herbivore fight me
and take my Kingdom?



You are confused between motivation and ability. A person doesn't take power, because he doesn't have the ability. The moment ones feels he/she has the ability, they will take advantage

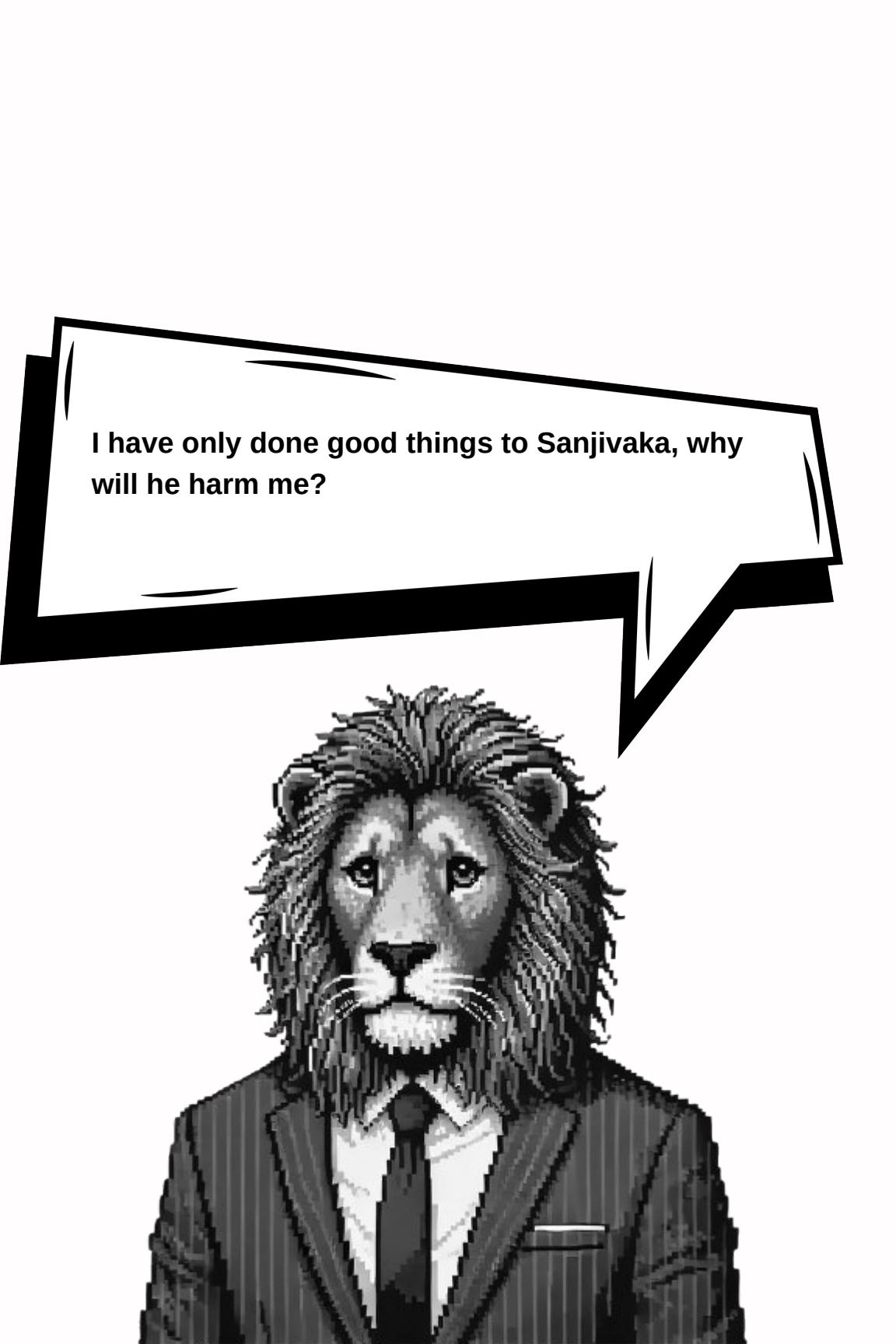


Everybody aspires. What's wrong with aspiration? How can I kill someone dear to me for having aspiration?



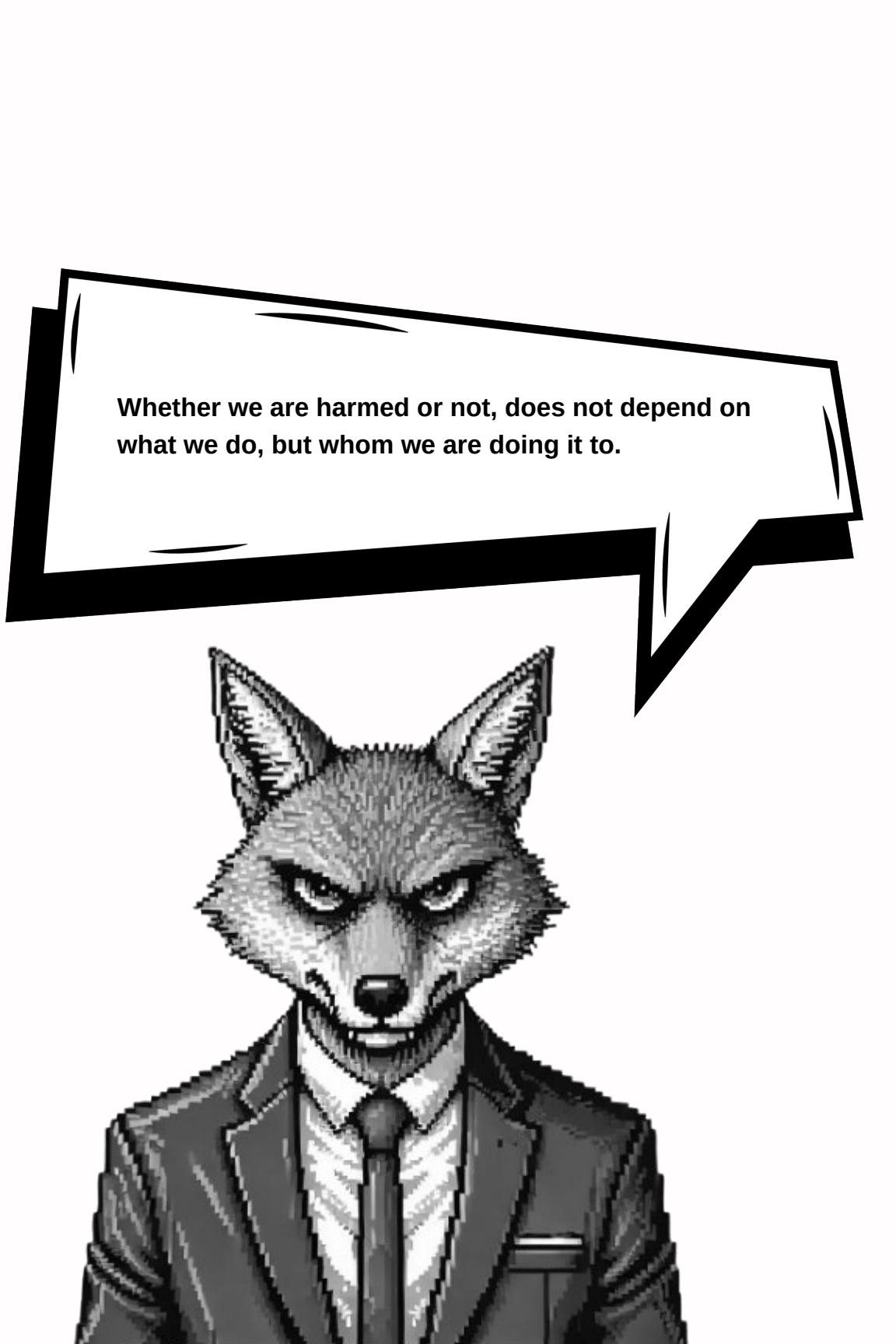
You should realize that the Bull is your Natural enemy, and he is aspiring for 'your' kingdom. One should be ready to Kill as not doing so, is as good as losing your life





I have only done good things to Sanjivaka, why
will he harm me?

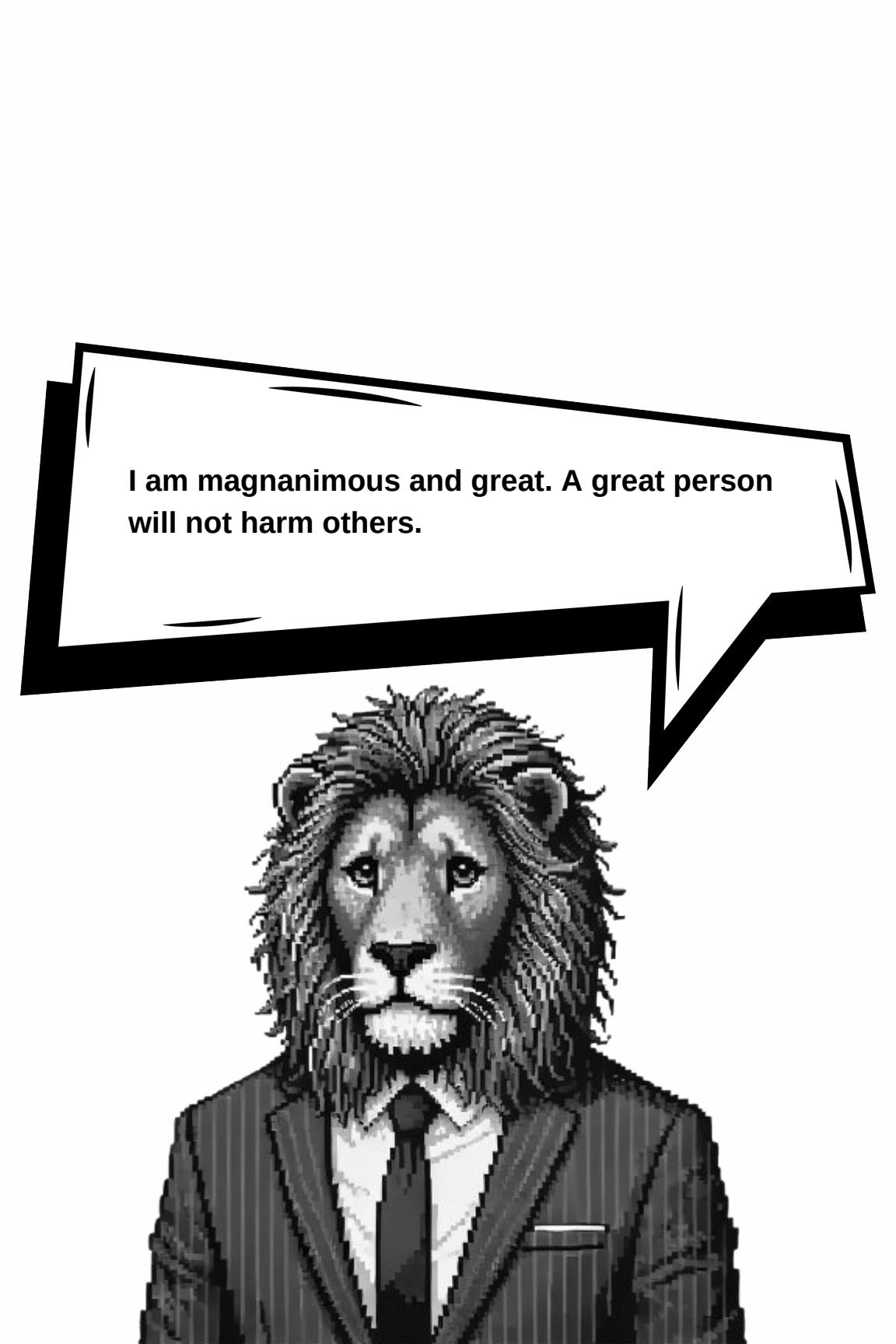




**Whether we are harmed or not, does not depend on
what we do, but whom we are doing it to.**



I have praised this Sanjivaka in front of everybody , now if I declare that he is a traitor, what will everyone think of me?

A black and white illustration of a lion's head and upper body. The lion has a full, dark mane and is dressed in a dark pinstripe suit jacket over a white shirt and a dark tie. It is positioned behind a large, hollow speech bubble. The speech bubble is outlined in black and has a three-dimensional perspective, appearing to float above the lion.

**I am magnanimous and great. A great person
will not harm others.**



Further, I cannot harm someone who has taken refuge under me.





**What you don't realize is that, you have become
too influenced by the bull.**



**Vanadharma or Jungle law shows no mercy to
enemies. One's enemy should be destroyed while
they are just cropping up**

Further, by following city dharma here, all the animals dependent on you have left you, as they get no food.





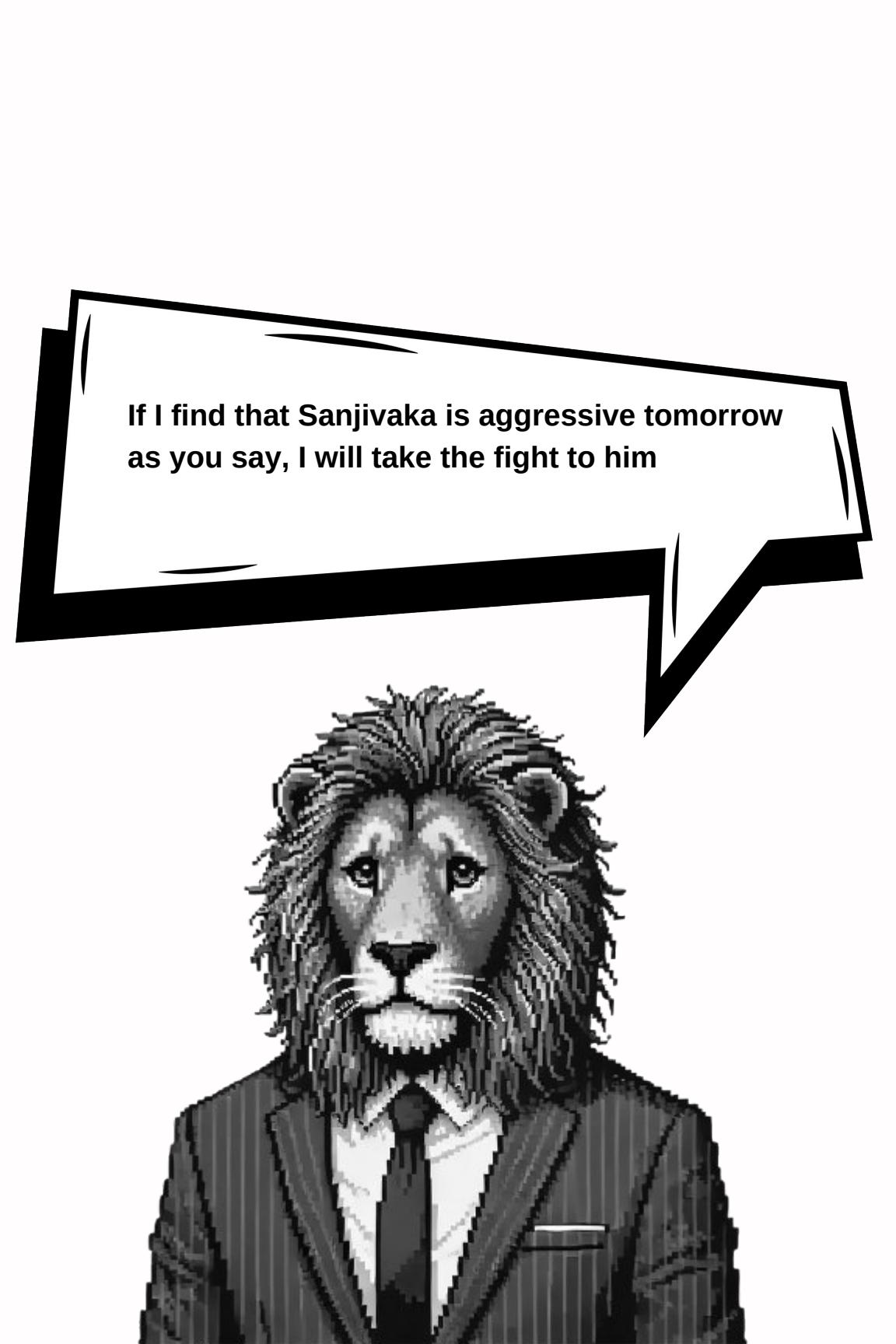
**For the sake of a newcomer, you have sacrificed
your long timers.**



I see you have a point. But, I cannot act based on assumptions. What proof do you have that Sanjivaka has turned against me?

Watch Sanjivaka closely, tomorrow he will sit at a distance from you. He will have his head down in defiance, it is a clear indication that he is scheming against you.





If I find that Sanjivaka is aggressive tomorrow
as you say, I will take the fight to him



**Now let me convince the
Bull to get out of the
Kingdom. Our problem
will be solved**



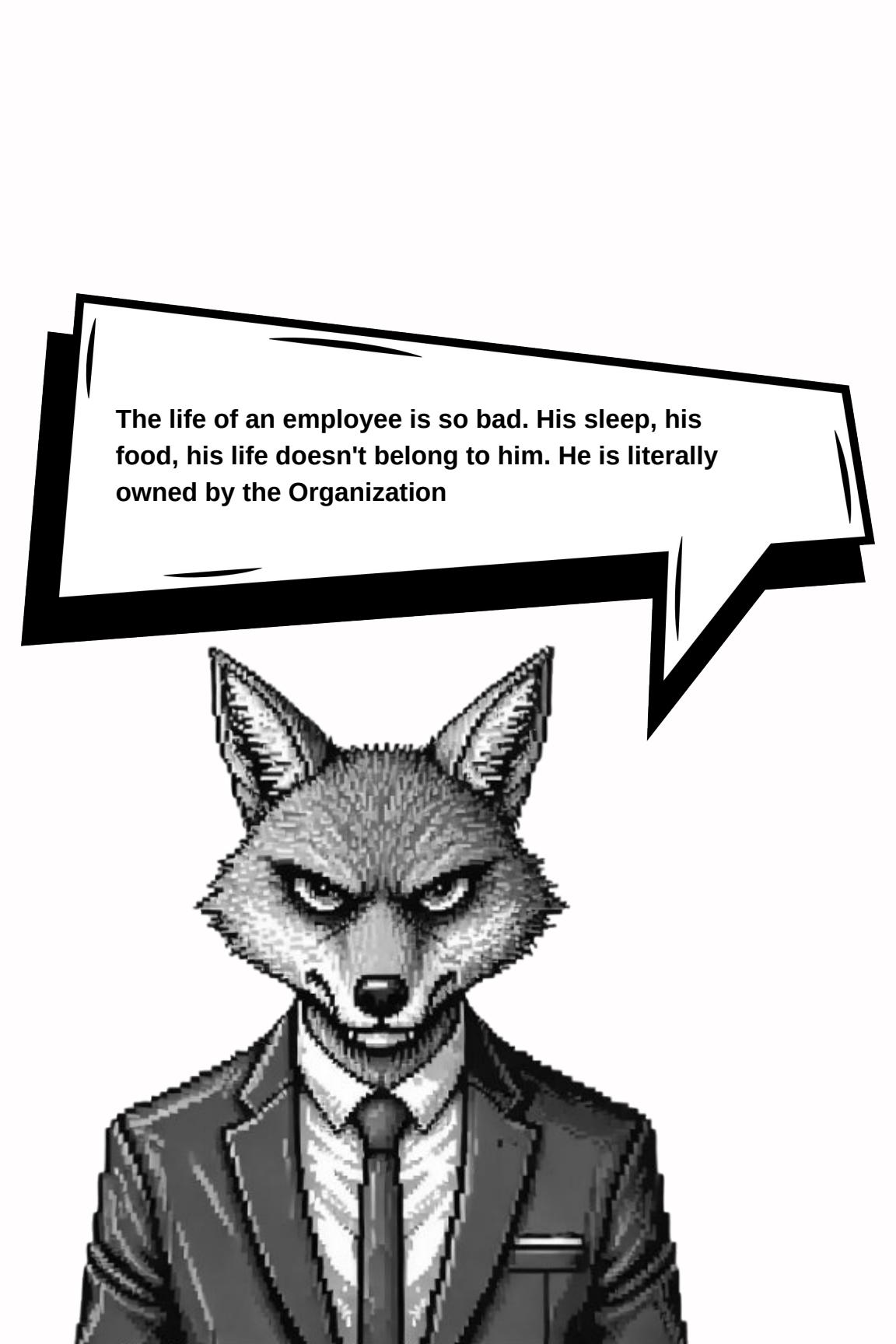
PART - 7

The Jackal convinces the Bull



The jackal approaches the bull
and they have a conversation





The life of an employee is so bad. His sleep, his food, his life doesn't belong to him. He is literally owned by the Organization



Why do you say so? What happened?



I should not divulge royal secrets. However,
because you are my friend. I want to tell you a
secret which I overheard





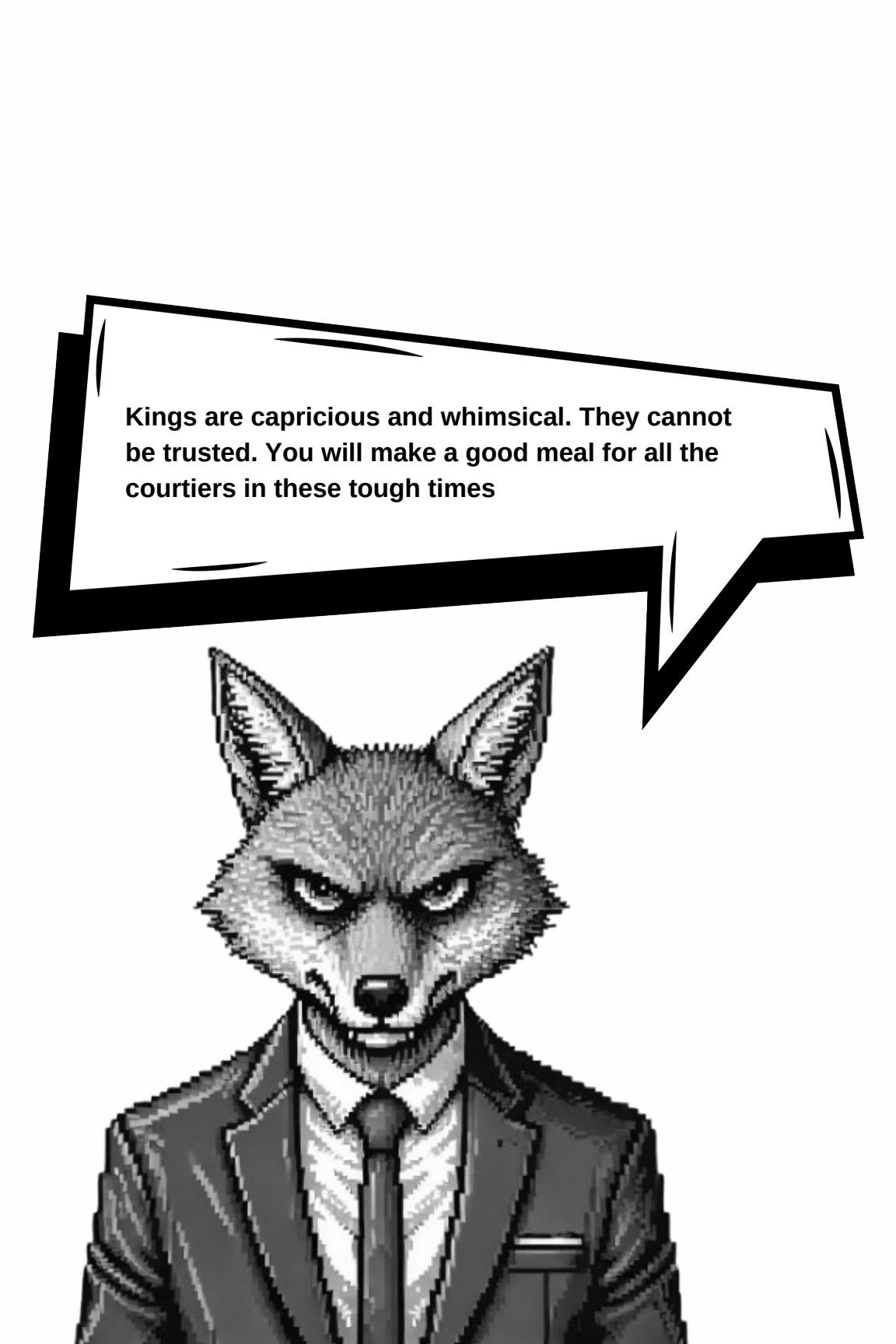
What is that? Is it about me?



Yes, the Lion has planned to kill you



Oh my god! What wrong have I done?



Kings are capricious and whimsical. They cannot be trusted. You will make a good meal for all the courtiers in these tough times





I know it will come to this. Why did I form
friendship with a Carnivore?



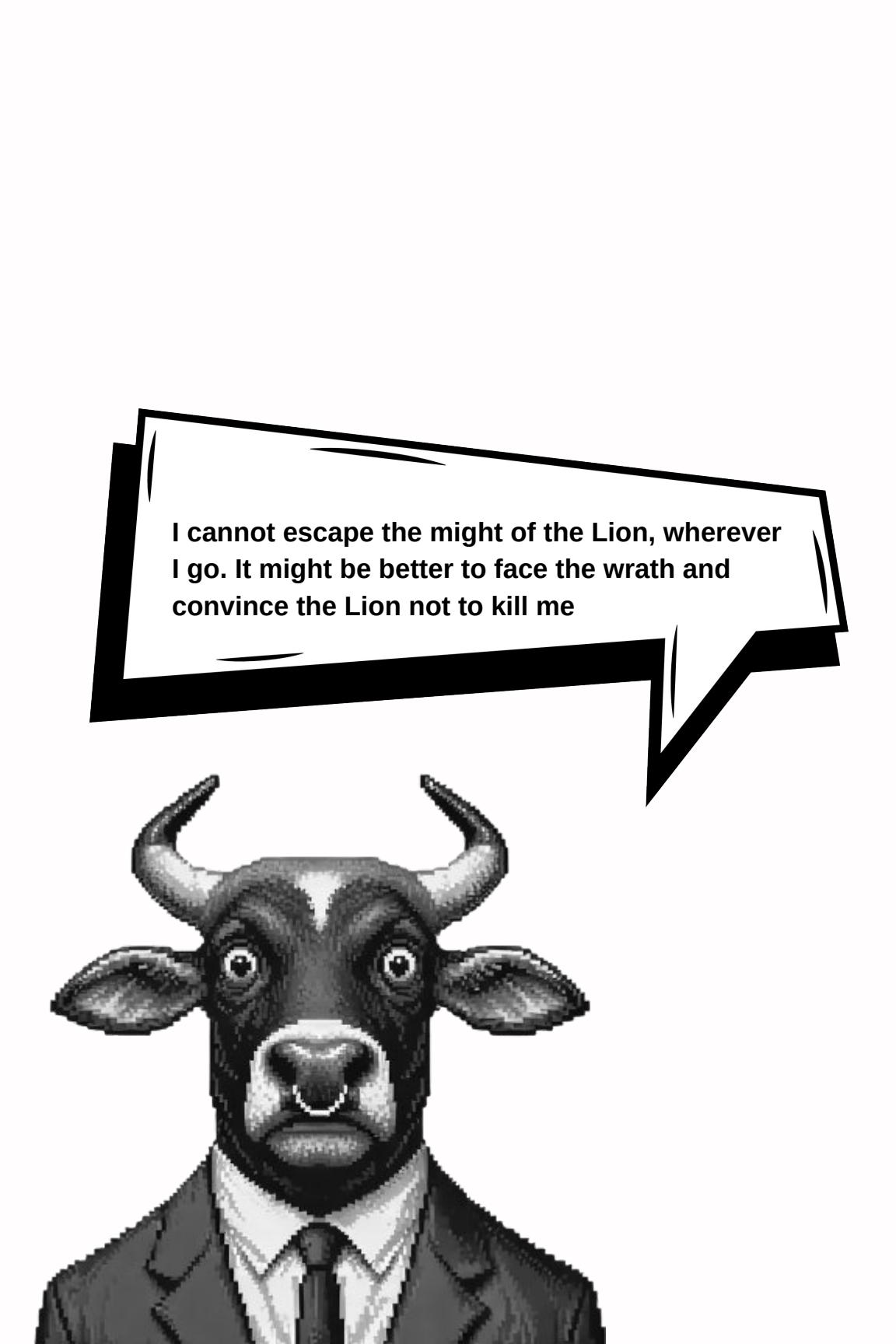
[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

I think someone is Jealous of me because I am
meritorious. They have put in venomous
thoughts with the lion

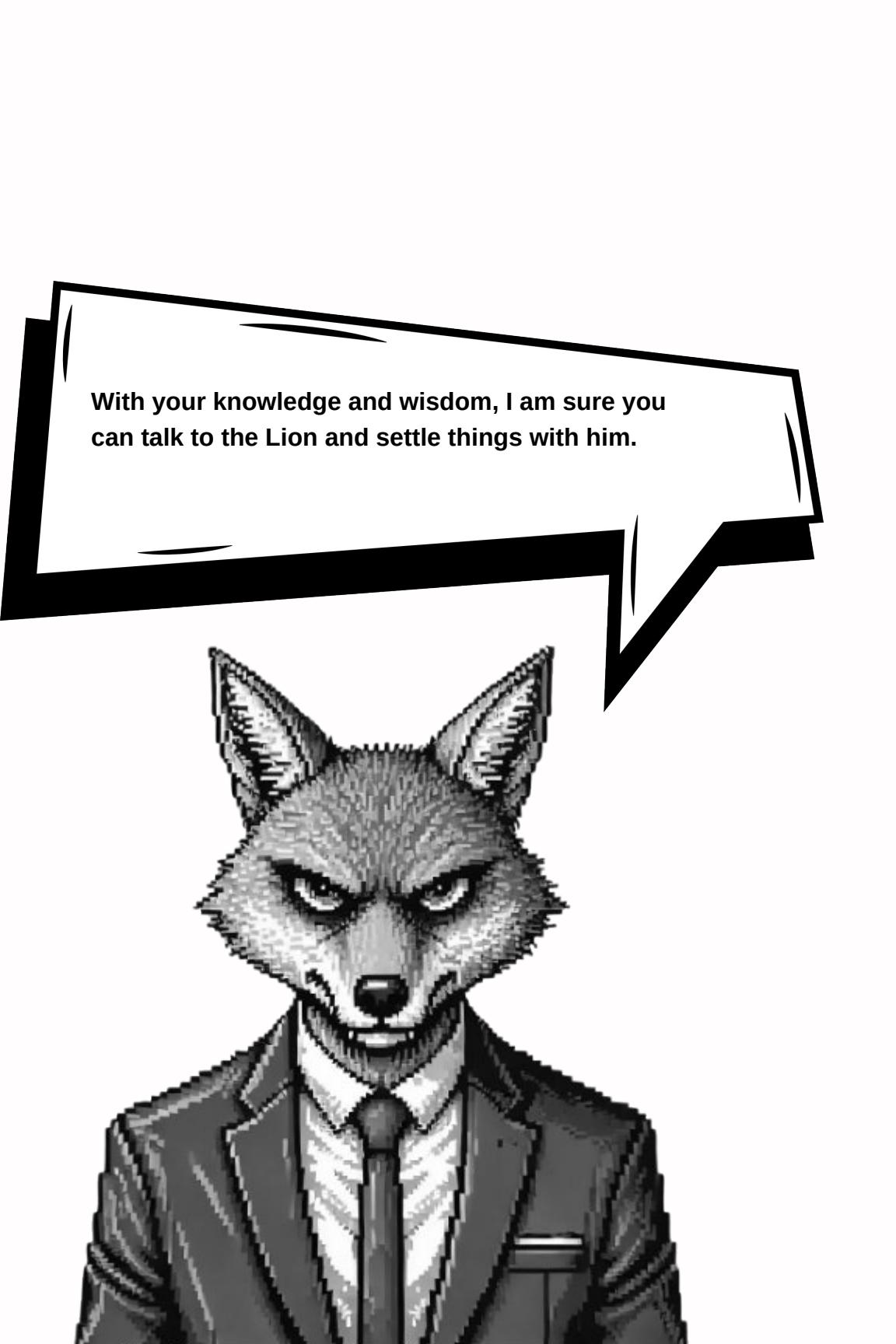




I would advice you to leave this forest. Otherwise
your life is in Jeopardy



I cannot escape the might of the Lion, wherever I go. It might be better to face the wrath and convince the Lion not to kill me



**With your knowledge and wisdom, I am sure you
can talk to the Lion and settle things with him.**



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

No, I would like to stay firm and face the Lion



It is not Prudent to fight a stronger enemy. It is very important to protect yourself than stand for a principle which is not practical in the Jungle





**I have decided to fight. How can I know the Lion
is aggressive towards me**

**He will keep watching you with keen eyes
wherever you go. You stay away from him and
have your head down in submission. May be he
will relent.**





**I have set the Lion and
the Bull apart, what
follows depends on my
Luck. Let us wait and
watch**

PART - 8

The Jackal becomes the Prime Minister

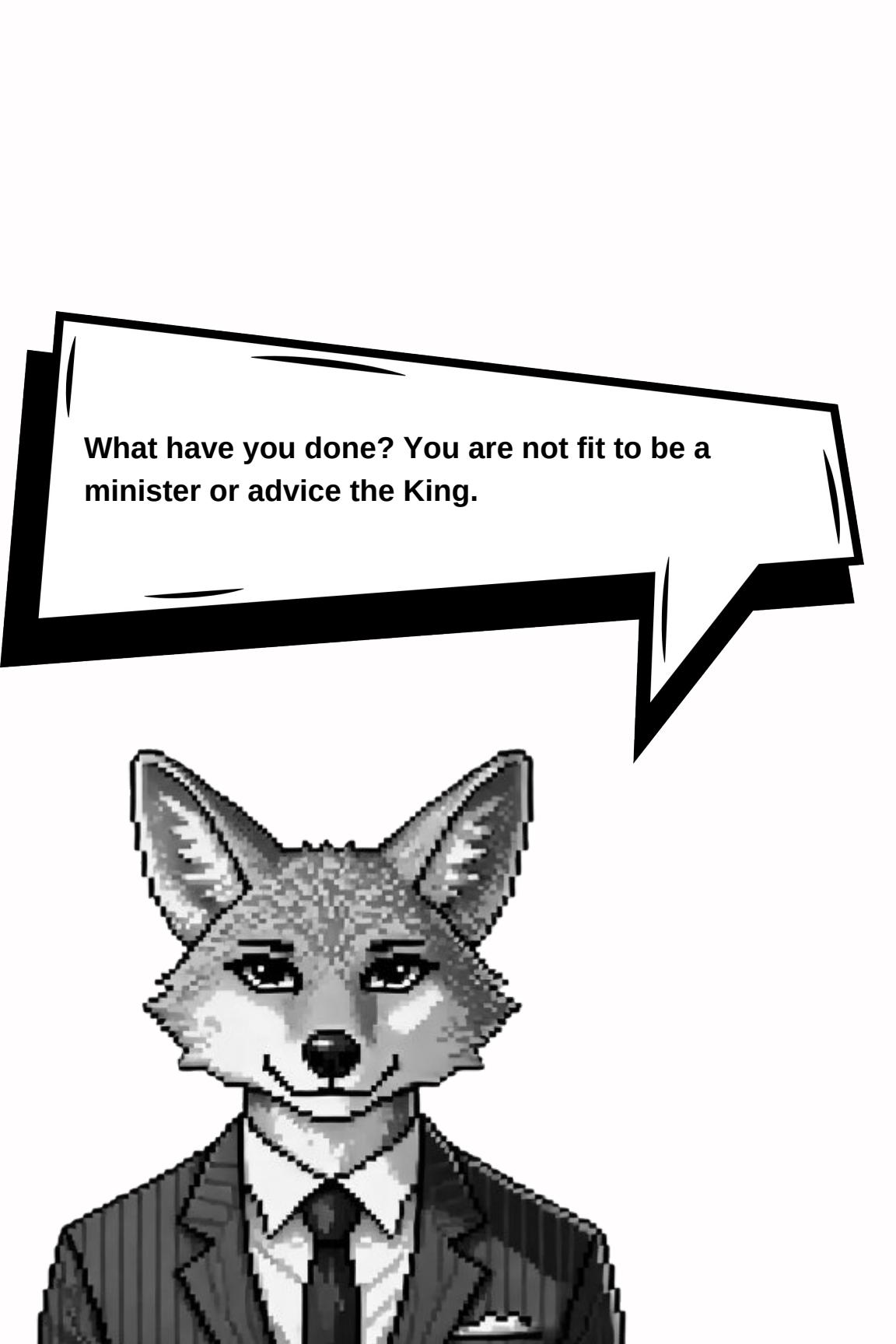


The Lion seeing the bull take a seat faraway in the assembly and having his head down, is convinced that he should kill the Bull. He invites the bull to a fight. The bull is also ready to fight



The Jackals have a side conversation
while the Lion and the Bull fight.





**What have you done? You are not fit to be a
minister or advice the King.**



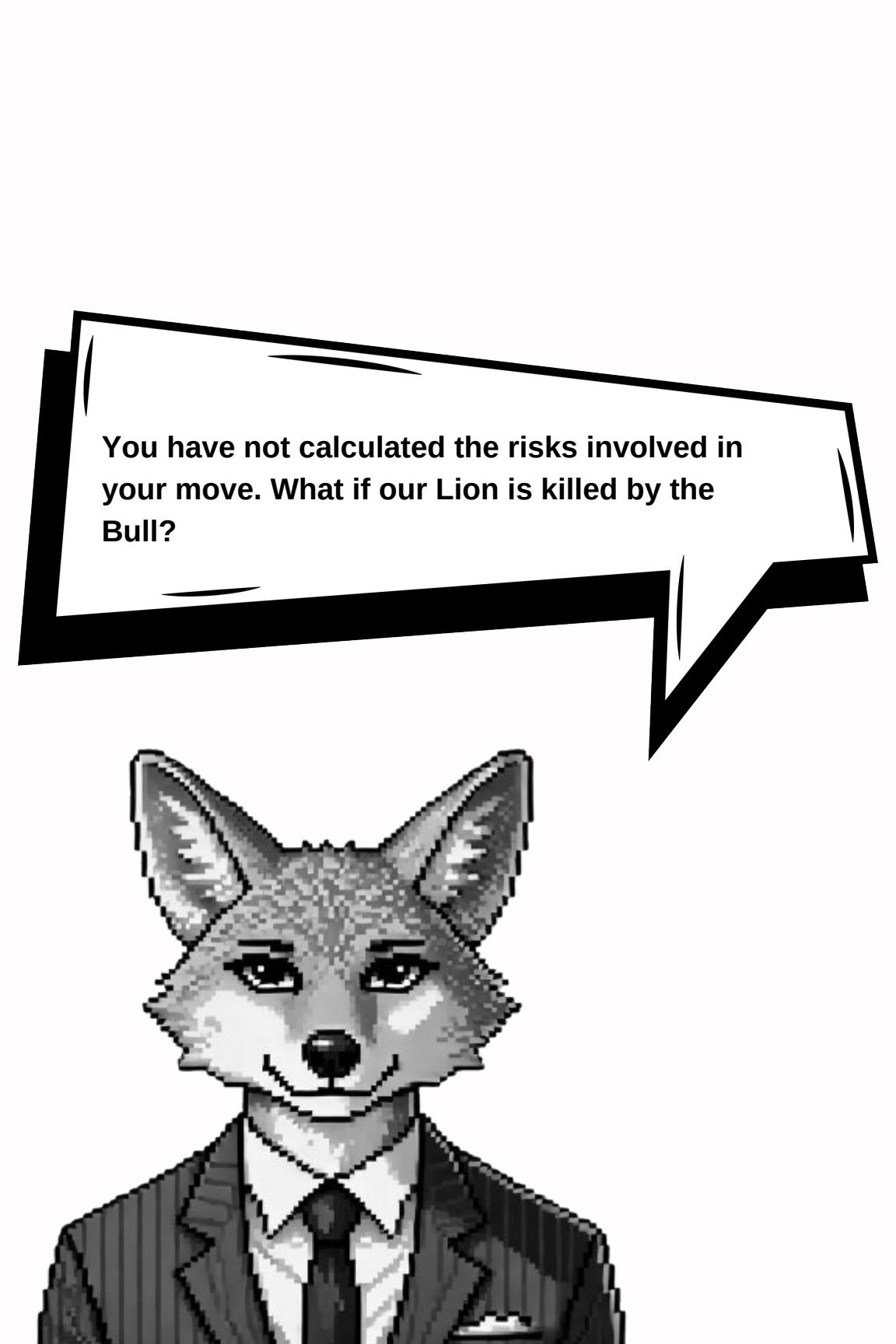
[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

Why do you ask? Soon, you will see the results.

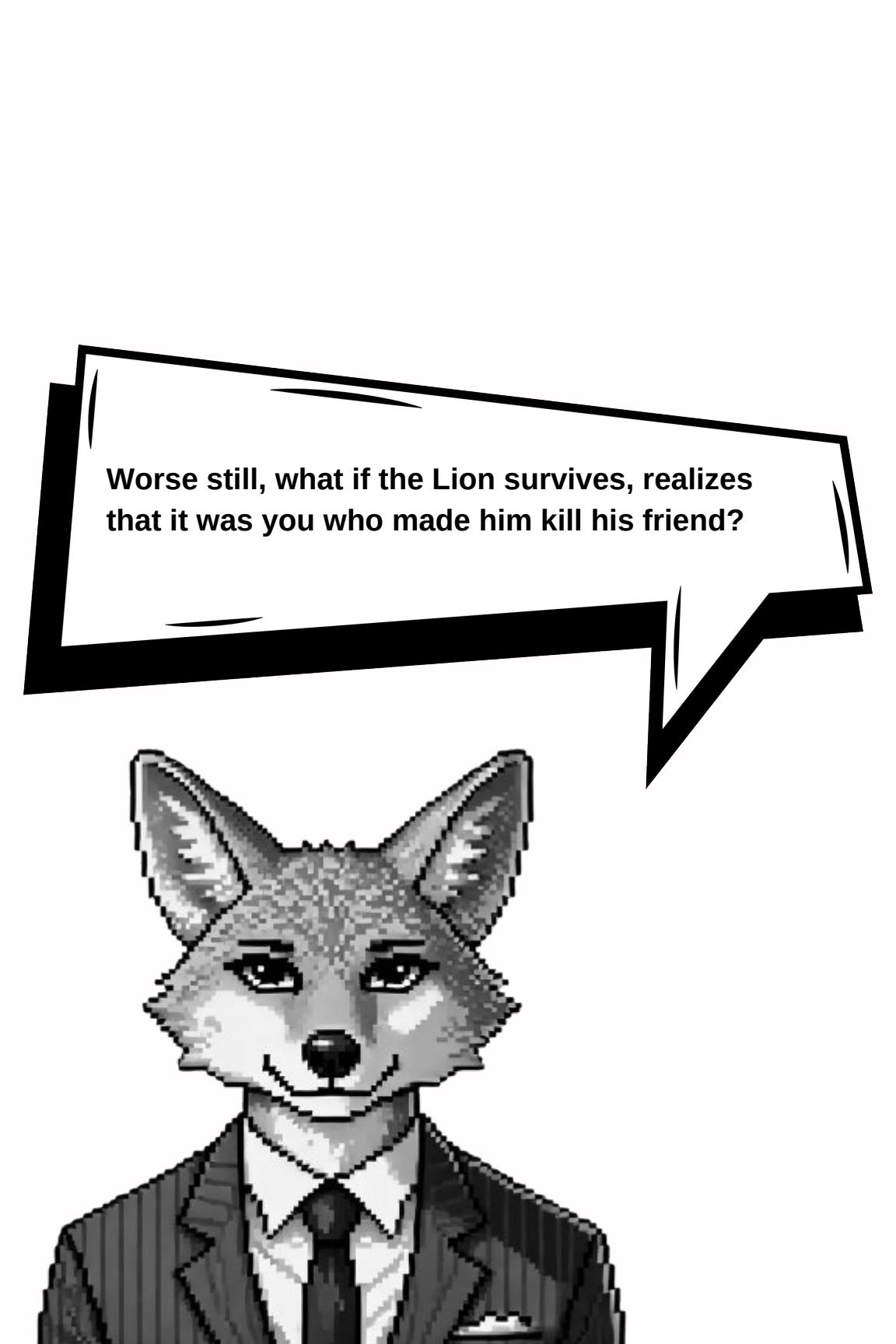


**Don't think you are so clever, what could
have been done through peaceful means, you
have done through deceit and violence**

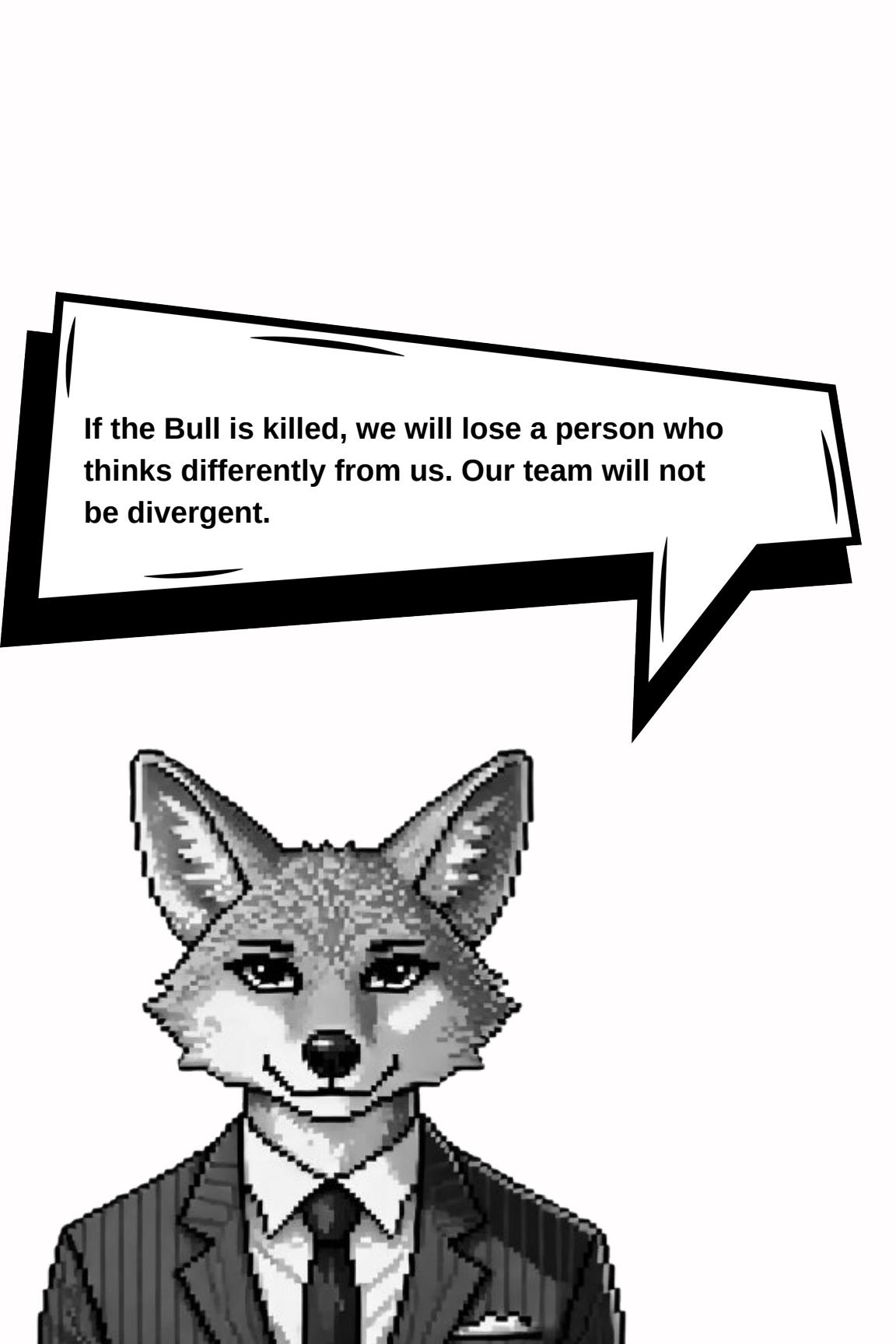




**You have not calculated the risks involved in
your move. What if our Lion is killed by the
Bull?**



**Worse still, what if the Lion survives, realizes
that it was you who made him kill his friend?**



If the Bull is killed, we will lose a person who thinks differently from us. Our team will not be divergent.



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

The bull is our natural enemy. Don't forget. He took what was rightfully ours. Because of him we lost our food. So, there is nothing wrong in this approach



The bull is killed by the Lion in the fight. But, somehow he comes back to his senses just after he kills the bull.





[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

What have I done. I have killed my own friend





[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

I have killed someone who came to me for protection. I will be repenting this forever

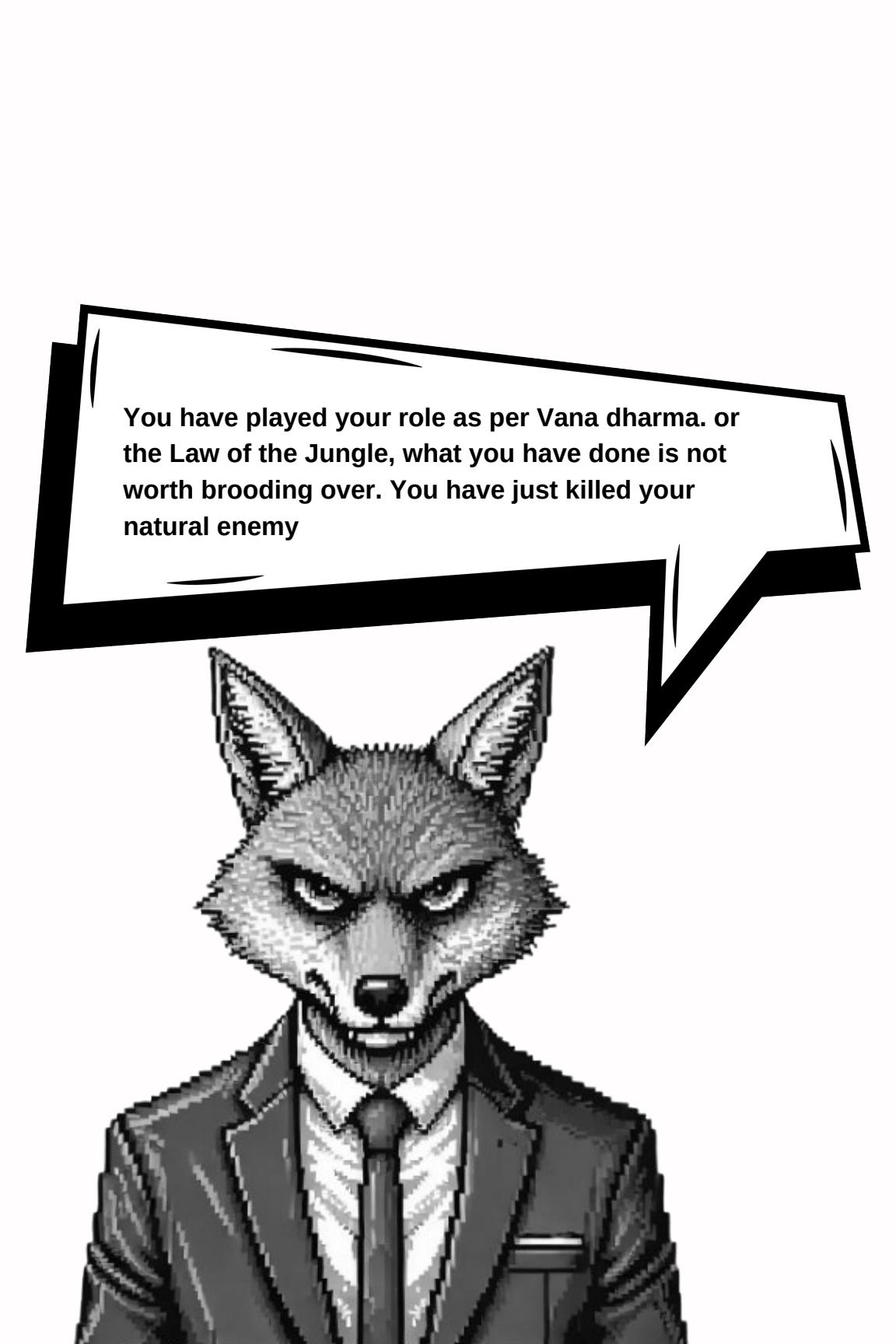




[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

Political diplomacy in the world of Artha takes many forms like a prostitute. One has to be friendly in some cases, one has to be aggressive in some cases, To be successful, one has to take many forms and stands





You have played your role as per Vana dharma, or the Law of the Jungle, what you have done is not worth brooding over. You have just killed your natural enemy

Further, a snake is respected because it can cause harm. So, by being cruel your respect has increased in the Jungle



**Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, the wise
lament neither the dead or the living. So, why
worry and brood over?**



The lion recovers from his loss
and then makes Damanaka his
Permanent Prime Minister.



[Attempt Dharmic Puzzle](#)

People tell my story as the story of how, an evil Jackal broke the friendship of a Lion and the Bull. However, for me, It is the story of my success. How I grew from being totally powerless to hold the highest post in the Kingdom



What do you think?



Part 2

The basics

JOURNEY PART-2





Direction

Hard work and talent can only take you so far!

Siddharth walked out of his performance appraisal; his heart heavy with disappointment. The poor ratings he received were a blow to his morale, and with them, his chances of getting promoted dwindled. Settling back into his chair, Siddharth's mind raced, trying to understand where he had gone wrong. He was one of the most talented and hardworking members of his team. Why wasn't that enough?

His thoughts drifted back to his hometown, where his journey began.

Siddharth hailed from a middle-class family in a small town. His parents had instilled in him the values of diligence, honesty, and integrity. After completing his schooling at a modest private school, Siddharth moved to the city to pursue a degree in Computer Science Engineering. His hard work paid off as he emerged among the top students in his batch.

When campus placement season arrived, Siddharth set his sights on DeceptiveGlow, a beauty e-commerce company known for its world-class product team and rapid growth. Despite the tough selection process, Siddharth's love for solving puzzles and his diligence earned him his dream job.

The first year at DeceptiveGlow was phenomenal. Siddharth quickly gained respect and recognition. But now, here he was, dejected after his appraisal. What had gone wrong?

As Siddharth delved deeper into his work at DeceptiveGlow, he began to notice unsettling things. He discovered that product ratings were being manipulated to artificially drive sales of high-value items. Worse, user data was being sold to third parties without consent.

At first, he thought it was a mistake. He brought his concerns to his supervisor, who told him to keep quiet and focus on his work. Unsatisfied, Siddharth raised the issue in an open team meeting with a senior leader. The leader promised to look into it, and for a moment, Siddharth felt relieved. But no action followed, and soon, strange things began to happen.

His colleagues started avoiding him, and he was no longer considered for any rewards or recognition. His ideas were dismissed, and he sensed a growing undercurrent of politics and backbiting. But he couldn't pinpoint the exact cause.

When the time for performance appraisal came, Siddharth was hopeful. He expected a promotion, believing that his hard work and talent would be rewarded. Instead, his boss highlighted minor mistakes to justify giving him poor ratings. With that, Siddharth's promotion hopes evaporated.

Sitting in his chair, Siddharth made a list of what was wrong with DeceptiveGlow: unethical practices, office politics, lack of recognition, and a stagnant career path. What should he do next?

Siddharth found himself at crossroads. Should he quit and find another job? Should he stay and fight the system? Should he become a whistleblower? Or should he stay and endure the system?

He pondered whether it was possible to fight the system and still build a career. If he stayed without fighting, wouldn't he be compromising his values for money? Could he turn a blind eye to the unethical practices around him? If he left, what guarantee was there that his next workplace would be any better?

His value-driven upbringing made it hard for him to accept selling his soul for money. He wondered if the financial benefits were worth compromising his values. How were others managing this? What would happen if he didn't find another job?

Lost in thought, Siddharth walked to a nearby chai shop and ordered tea. As he waited, he noticed an older man sitting opposite him with a book in his hand. The man looked up and introduced himself as Dr. Vishnusharma. They struck up a conversation.

Vishnusharma mentioned that he worked for DeceptiveGlow. Surprised, Siddharth introduced himself and asked about Vishnusharma's role.

"I was brought in by the CEO to instill ethical practices at DeceptiveGlow," Vishnusharma said.

Siddharth couldn't help but laugh. "DeceptiveGlow and ethics in the same sentence is funny," he said.

"I understand your skepticism. Why do you feel that way?" Vishnusharma asked.

Siddharth recounted his experiences and his current dilemma. Meanwhile, his eyes fell on the book Vishnusharma was holding.

"What's the book you're reading?" Siddharth asked.

"It's the Panchatantra," Vishnusharma replied.

"What relevance does that have in today's world?" Siddharth asked, puzzled.

"What do you know about the Panchatantra?" Vishnusharma asked.

"Well, it's a set of moral stories for children, isn't it?" Siddharth responded.

"You couldn't be more wrong," Vishnusharma said. "The Panchatantra starts with a story that offers valuable lessons on navigating life's challenges."

Vishnusharma starts narrating the Panchatantra story

2500 years ago

In the sunny lands of the south, there was a beautiful city called Mahilarupa. Inside this city, everything was going well. People were happy, and there was no sickness, no poverty, and no crime. The reason for this perfect place was the kind and wise rule of a great king. Like the magical Kalpavruksha, a tree from old stories that gives whatever you wish for, the king's rule brought plenty and happiness to all.

His royal shoes shone brightly, showing how other kings bowed down to him out of respect. But even with all his greatness, the king had a worry in his heart. He had three sons, who were princes only in name. They didn't have any wisdom or sense of purpose. The king was worried about who would take care of the kingdom after him. He asked his group of wise advisors for help to teach and guide his sons. But the problem seemed too big, and the advisors were afraid it was too hard for anyone to solve.

Then, one advisor gave a little hope. He said the name of Vishnusharma, a wise and clever sage known by many. The king quickly grabbed on to this hope and sent for Vishnusharma right away. When the sage arrived, the king welcomed him with great respect and shared his problem. Vishnusharma with his calm demeanor and a glint of wisdom in his eyes, not only accepted the challenge to enlighten the royal heirs but also vowed to achieve this monumental feat within a mere span of six months.

Impressed by Vishnusharma's confidence, the king offered a lavish reward of 100 villages as a token of gratitude. However, Vishnusharma gracefully declined, proclaiming, "Wisdom is beyond price, Your Majesty. My true reward lies in the enlightenment of your sons and the prosperity of your kingdom."

With a sense of determination, Vishnusharma unveiled his ground-breaking educational plan to the king. He proposed a unique approach: teaching the princes through engaging and morally rich stories that would impart wisdom, strategic thinking, and ethical values.

"Your Majesty," Vishnusharma began, "education is not merely the accumulation of knowledge. It is the cultivation of wisdom, the ability to discern right from wrong, and the skill to navigate the complexities of life. Allow me to guide your sons through the path of wisdom using stories that have withstood the test of time."

Moved by Vishnusharma's vision, the king decided to place his unwavering faith in the sage. "I trust you, Vishnusharma," he said. "Take my sons and mold them into wise and just leaders."

With the king's blessing, Vishnusharma began the journey. He took the princes far away from the palace, into a quiet forest home, where they could focus completely on learning.

There, Vishnusharma started his teachings with a powerful story. He told them how a clever jackal managed to break the friendship between a lion and a bull.

"In the bright and happy city of Mahilarupa," he began, "lived a rich and smart merchant named Vardhamanaka. One calm night, lying on his fancy bed, he started thinking about how to grow his wealth."

The merchant thought:

- *"There is nothing in this world that money can't help achieve. That's why wise people always try to earn more, but in honest ways."*
- *"When you have money, you have many friends and family around you. People with wealth are respected—even if they don't really deserve it."*
- *"Even strangers treat rich people nicely. But sometimes, even your own relatives may treat you badly if you are poor." "Just like rivers grow when small streams flow into them from all sides, our work also grows when wealth comes from different sources."*
- *"Because of money, people who don't deserve respect get respected, and those who shouldn't be followed are followed."*

- “Just like our body becomes strong with food, all our actions become possible with wealth. That’s why wealth is the tool to do everything.”
- “People are ready to risk their lives, or even leave their families, for the sake of wealth.”
- “Those with money seem young forever. Without money, even a young person can seem old and tired.”

Realizing how important money was, the merchant wanted to earn more. Full of energy and big dreams, he decided to travel to the busy city of Mathura.

Today..

Dr. Vishnusharma, having narrated the beginnings of Panchatantra and the story of the Merchant, turned to Siddharth.

"Now, Siddharth, tell me, what will you do about your job?"

"I'm still not clear on how this story relates to my work," Siddharth replied.

"Think about it. The Merchant is already wealthy. Why is he striving to earn more money?"

"Greed, I suppose," Siddharth suggested hesitantly.

"The Merchant's wealth has come from dharmic means; he is not greedy by any standard," Dr. Vishnusharma corrected gently.

"So, are there other reasons people earn money?" Siddharth pondered aloud.

"You tell me," Dr. Vishnusharma encouraged.

"I can't think of any," Siddharth admitted.

"First, do you think earning money is important?" Dr. Vishnusharma asked.

"I'm not sure," Siddharth responded.

"There are people who risk their lives for the sake of money. Imagine the construction worker who works on unsafe high-rise buildings. Why do they do it? Is money worth more than their lives?" Dr. Vishnusharma queried."

"People leave their families and relatives to go to far-off places to earn money. Is money worth more than their families?" he continued.

According to our Indian tradition, a person has four goals in life: Artha (wealth), Kama (desires), Dharma (righteous living), and Moksha (liberation). People generally think our Indian scriptures are all about Moksha, but there is a rich set of literature on Artha and Niti. One example is the Panchatantra.

"Panchatantra is very clear on the importance of Artha. It doesn't advocate gaining money through unethical means, but it clearly states that seeking to earn more money is not a sin. Now, let us come back to the question. Is earning money important?" Dr. Vishnusharma reiterated.

"When I see people taking dangerous jobs or leaving their families for money, it does seem important," Siddharth conceded.

"The Panchatantra states that money gives you wings, much like a popular caffeine drink ad," Dr. Vishnusharma noted. "This is what the Panchatantra has to say about money:

Having wealth makes you look young, even if you are old. If you don't have wealth, even the young look old.

With money, even strangers become relatives; without money, even relatives become strangers.

Just like all rivers start from mountains, all human activity starts from wealth."

"Okay, earning money is important. I get it. But does the Panchatantra ask us to sell our souls for it?" Siddharth asked.

I can't give you the answer now, but the Panchatantra offers a practical solution for being happy in your job," Dr. Vishnusharma responded.

"What's that?" Siddharth inquired, intrigued.

"The Panchatantra has a simple formula for financial prudence:

Earn what you cannot earn.

Protect what you have earned.

Multiply what you have protected.

Invest in just causes."

"That sounds like advice from popular personal finance books we see today. I'm amazed that this advice was given 2,500 years ago," Siddharth remarked, surprised.

"Humans will be humans irrespective of technological progress. But there is a significant difference between top personal finance books and the Panchatantra. It says that if you don't spend your money on just causes, it will start to stink like stagnant water in a tank. Therefore, one needs to find just causes to spend money on; only then can money give you wings," Dr. Vishnusharma elaborated.

"Understood. What should I do?" Siddharth asked, seeking direction.

"First, quitting is not a great idea, at least not right now," Dr. Vishnusharma advised.

"Why?" Siddharth questioned.

"When you quit and join another company, you will still face mundane tasks and office politics. Perhaps unethical practices won't be there, but the chances are high in today's world," Dr. Vishnusharma explained.

"What do you really want here?" he asked.

"An interesting job in a company that is ethical," Siddharth stated.

"Is that enough? What about your personal needs?" Dr. Vishnusharma pressed.

"Maybe a decent pay package, some respect, a lot of recognition," Siddharth listed.

"What if I told you, you could get all that here and more?" Dr. Vishnusharma proposed.

"Okay, but how?" Siddharth asked, skeptical yet hopeful.

"First, let's address the interesting job part. There are three ways to make your job interesting. You can choose which ones make sense to you:

Job crafting: an employee-initiated approach that enables employees to shape their own work environment to fit their individual needs by adjusting the prevailing job demands and resources.

Identify a just cause: Fundamentally, if you cannot craft your job, you can craft how you use the money from the job, giving you a reason to stay.

Take on a vision: This addresses the fundamental question of 'why' regarding your job. Pick something you are passionate about and focus on that in your current job. You can find my AI coaches if you want to try these," Dr. Vishnusharma suggested, pointing to the resources available.

"Are you saying all this just to retain me?" Siddharth asked, wary of ulterior motives.

"No, not really. There is an altruistic motive and a selfish one for me," Dr. Vishnusharma admitted.

"First, the altruistic motive is that I know for a fact that organizations will have politics wherever you go. So, retaining you is not my intention here; rather, it's to help you in whichever job you want to take up."

"Second, the selfish motive is that if people like you leave the organization, my intention of making DeceptiveGlow ethical will become tough. The CEO has given me three years to make it possible, and I will retire by then," he explained.

"However, the decision is yours," Dr. Vishnusharma concluded.

"I get the gist of what you've said. Let me think about it," Siddharth replied, contemplative.

Siddharth, although appreciating the logic, still wanted to quit. He applied to a few companies and got a couple of interview calls. He converted one, only to find that DeceptiveGlow was paying him better.

Deciding to try Dr. Vishnusharma's advice, Siddharth accessed the AI Coach and crafted his role to make it more interesting. He also focused on his passion for educating the poor, donating and contributing to an NGO dedicated to this cause. This gave him a reason to earn. Lastly, after speaking to Dr. Vishnusharma, he was motivated to help make DeceptiveGlow ethical, giving him personal motivation to succeed in his career there.

You can also access the AI coach by scanning the QR code on the next page.



Job Sculptor AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-2





Unfair World

Siddharth had settled in now into his role. Yes, there was no sign of respect and recognition yet , but his job crafting, just cause and vision made his life a bit better. In some time, Siddharth also started referring his friends to DeceptiveGlow. One such friend is Pranesh. Pranesh was also from his town but had studied in a different college. Pranesh was not as talented as Siddharth. He was not a workaholic like Siddharth. But Pranesh was street-smart.

Pranesh quickly became the favorite of the bosses. He ensured that he got visibility for whatever little work he did. Siddharth couldn't get his head around the unethical practices, however Pranesh was ok with it. In fact he relished it. Soon, it was time for another promotion cycle. Siddharth although he was senior to Pranesh was not promoted. Pranesh was promoted instead. Siddharth felt a deep pain, when he heard Pranesh would be his new boss.

Now, Siddharth couldn't believe what had just happened. He had referred a friend who was not hard working or talented. That friend had been promoted and made his boss. Siddharth was now furious. He wanted to blast Vishnusharma for all the Gyaan he had given about Job crafting, Vision and Just cause. He couldn't stand this. But, he needed to know how this decision was taken. He set up a 1-o-1 with his current boss.

The 1-o-1 with his boss was still more shocking. His boss gave him a list of great things which Pranesh had done. Most of what he told him was Siddharth's work. Pranesh had taken credit for it. His boss told him about great results which Pranesh had brought in. Siddharth knew it was pure luck that the success had come. Although chance played a role, Pranesh was attributed to it.

Not only that, but his boss also seemed to know even the minor mistakes Siddharth had made in the last year. How could he possibly know all this? Post this, Siddharth was casually chatting with another colleague, when the colleague told him that Pranesh would bad mouth Siddharth to his boss over their *chutta* time. Apparently, Pranesh and his boss were smoking buddies.

Siddharth's head was spinning. He had underestimated the role politics and luck played in the corporate world. He called Vishnusharma and told him about what had just happened and how Vishnusharma was failing in his job to make DeceptiveGlow ethical.

"You had told me about just cause , vision and job crafting and all those lofty ideas, but right now none of this has made me successful."

"First calm down. Those are just the necessary conditions to make your job digestible, they cannot make you successful."

"Ok, I am calm now, tell me how can I be successful?"

"I can give you some ideas, but you will have to accept me as your mentor."

"OK, I accept your mentorship. Tell me how I can be successful".

"First, let me ask a question — is the World fair"

"No. Going by what I have just seen"

"Good. before we get into how to be successful, we must accept the world as is. The Western world is rife with literature on Justice , Equality and Freedom. These are just ideals. The world can never be that ideal. We can pursue them but never achieve them. Wherever there are organizations, there will be politics , power plays and back-biting. It is simply foolish to assume otherwise and a sure shot way to fail in our vision."

“What do you want me to do?”

“I think you should start a practice of reading Panchatantra regularly.
Not just read but also reflect on it.”

“Now, I don’t have time for that, tell me what Panchatantra talks about
this topic”

2500 years ago

After having contemplated the importance of money, Vardhamanaka, a young and ambitious merchant, decided to embark on an entrepreneurial journey to Mathura. The ancient city was renowned for its thriving commerce and rich history, a place where fortunes could be made. Years of careful planning had led to this moment, and Vardhamanaka was determined to succeed despite the known dangers of the journey.

In his retinue were two home-grown bulls, Sanjivaka and Nandaka. These bulls, though considered auspicious, were primarily beasts of burden, essential for transporting his goods. Sanjivaka, a sturdy beast with a calm demeanor, and Nandaka, equally robust but with a more spirited nature, were the cornerstone of his trade endeavors. Together with his loyal servants, Vardhamanaka set off, the promise of prosperity guiding their steps.

The journey was arduous, taking them through dense forests that whispered of lurking dangers. The canopy above blocked out much of the sunlight, casting eerie shadows that played tricks on the weary travelers' minds. The air was thick with the scent of foliage and the occasional distant roar of a predator. Despite the unease, Vardhamanaka remained focused, his eyes set on the prize that awaited in Mathura.

One fateful afternoon, disaster struck. Sanjivaka, while navigating a particularly treacherous part of the forest, stumbled and fell breaking his yoke. The bull let out a pained bellow as a sharp rock pierced its flank. Vardhamanaka's heart sank at the sight of his faithful companion in agony. He quickly ordered the group to set up camp, determined to tend to Sanjivaka's wounds.

For three days, Vardhamanaka stayed by Sanjivaka's side, cleaning and dressing the wound with the limited supplies they had. He fed the bull with the best forage they could find and whispered words of encouragement to the suffering animal. His dedication was unwavering, but the forest around them grew more ominous with each passing day.

During their stay, Vardhamanaka was approached by his fellow merchants, who had joined him on this perilous journey to Mathura. They were seasoned traders, accustomed to the risks of travel, but the forest's dangers were making them increasingly anxious. "Vardhamanaka," one of them said, his voice tinged with concern, "it is too dangerous to stay here any longer. We risk our lives every moment we linger in this forest. We must move on."

Vardhamanaka understood their fear but couldn't abandon Sanjivaka. He made a difficult decision. "I will leave two of my most trusted servants here to take care of Sanjivaka. The rest of us will continue to Mathura. We will send help as soon as we arrive."

The merchants nodded in agreement, respecting Vardhamanaka's resolve. Reluctantly, Vardhamanaka left two of his most trusted men with the injured bull, promising to return for them soon. With a heavy heart, he and the rest of the group pressed on towards Mathura. The forest seemed to close in around them, each step forward feeling like a step deeper into the maw of danger.

The two servants, however, were paralyzed with fear. As soon as Vardhamanaka was out of sight, they succumbed to their terror. They could not bear the thought of staying alone in the forest, vulnerable to its threats. In their panic, they made a hasty decision. They would return to Vardhamanaka and lie, claiming that Sanjivaka had succumbed to his injuries.

When they re-joined the group, they spun their tale with downcast eyes. "Master, we did all we could, but Sanjivaka didn't make it. The forest is too perilous to stay any longer." Vardhamanaka's heart ached at the news. He mourned the loss of Sanjivaka but knew they had to continue. His focus shifted back to reaching Mathura and ensuring the safety of his remaining retinue.

Unbeknownst to them, Sanjivaka was far from dead. The resilient bull, left alone, found an inner strength to heal. Nature, in its strange way, provided the necessary herbs and sustenance. Sanjivaka's wound began to close, and his strength returned.

Today..

Panchatantra is clear from the outset that the world is not just or ideal as the Western world would say. First, it clearly states a back-biting Jackal was successful. It doesn't say the Jackal, because of its untruthful nature, was killed or punished. Next, there are a lot of things which are not in your control. Like the yoke breaking down and Sanjivaka getting injured. The Merchant leaving him. And as luck would have it, Sanjivaka survived. As you would see, subsequently, he would be killed as well through deceit. There is deceit, unforeseen forces, luck, differences in mindsets, and values which make up the world of Artha or 'work world'. One must accept it and expect it.

"Ok, understood. Now, what do you want me to do?" Siddharth asked, his voice laced with curiosity and a hint of apprehension.

"I have created an AI coach. It will allow you to get some clarity on the version of the politics that is working in DeceptiveGlow. This will clarify your mind. I am sure you will come to me when you need me. I would request you to read the Panchatantra."

Siddharth cut the call, feeling a mix of determination and scepticism. He downloaded the worksheet and began to delve into it, hoping to change his outlook about his work.

DeceptiveGlow, the company where Siddharth worked, was a place filled with cutthroat competition and backdoor politics. Siddharth had always been a straightforward person, believing in hard work and honesty. But lately, he had started feeling out of place, as if the very fabric of his values was being tested. He often found himself at odds with the prevailing ethos of manipulation and deceit.

As he started using the AI coach, it asked him to reflect on his experiences at DeceptiveGlow. He was to identify instances where deceit or manipulation had played a role in the outcomes he had witnessed. Siddharth sighed and began to write.

The first memory that came to mind was the time when a colleague, Raj, had taken credit for a project Siddharth had worked tirelessly on. Raj's smooth talking and back-biting had earned him accolades, while Siddharth was left in the shadows. Then there was the incident with the budget report, where another colleague, Mira, had falsified figures to make her department look better, only to have it backfire later. Despite her deceit being uncovered, Mira faced no real consequences.

The more Siddharth wrote, the more he realized how pervasive the culture of deceit was in his workplace. It wasn't just about individual incidents but a systemic issue. He paused and remembered the story of Sanjivaka from the Panchatantra.

Just like the injured bull, he felt abandoned and left to fend for himself in a treacherous environment. Yet, Sanjivaka had survived against the odds, only to face deceit once more.

The AI coach then asked *Siddharth* to list the values he held dear and how they aligned or conflicted with the values he observed at DeceptiveGlow. He scribbled down words like honesty, integrity, and fairness. These were the principles that had guided him throughout his career, yet they seemed to be constantly under attack in his current environment.

Siddharth spent hours reflecting on his journey at DeceptiveGlow. He thought about the times he had been passed over for promotions because he refused to engage in office politics, and the instances where his ideas were stolen by those more adept at manoeuvring through the murky waters of corporate deceit. He felt a growing sense of disillusionment but also a spark of determination.

The AI coach then guided him to analyze the political landscape of DeceptiveGlow. He was to identify key players, their motivations, and the unwritten rules that governed their interactions. Siddharth felt a pang of cynicism as he noted down the names of colleagues who thrived on manipulation and those who were mere pawns in the larger game. The exercise was eye-opening, forcing him to confront the harsh realities of his workplace.

However, Siddharth also realized that understanding these dynamics was the first step towards navigating them effectively. The Panchatantra's stories, with their unflinching portrayal of a world rife with deceit and unpredictability, offered valuable lessons. They taught him that while he couldn't control the actions of others, he could control his responses and strategies.

Siddharth began to see parallels between his situation and the tales from the Panchatantra. Just as Sanjivaka had survived against all odds, only to be deceived later, Siddharth knew he had to be vigilant and adaptable. The stories didn't promise justice or ideal outcomes but emphasized the importance of wisdom and strategic thinking in navigating a flawed world.

Armed with these insights, Siddharth started to change his outlook about his work. He understood that while it was important to hold onto his values, he also needed to be pragmatic and strategic. He started to identify allies and build a network of like-minded colleagues who valued integrity. Together, they could create pockets of trust and collaboration within the larger, deceitful environment.

Over the next few weeks, Siddharth began to apply the lessons he had learned. He was more cautious about sharing his ideas and started documenting his contributions meticulously.

He also became more observant, learning to read the undercurrents of office politics without getting swept away by them. He engaged with colleagues strategically, ensuring that he was seen and heard without compromising his principles.

The AI coach had a final section that asked Siddharth to set goals for how he would navigate his career moving forward. Siddharth wrote down his aspirations with a renewed sense of clarity. He wanted to rise within DeceptiveGlow, not by playing dirty but by being smarter and more strategic. He pledged to uphold his values while also protecting himself from deceit and manipulation.

Siddharth finished a session with the AI coach and felt a sense of accomplishment. The stories of the Panchatantra had offered him a realistic, albeit harsh, perspective on the world of work. They didn't sugarcoat the challenges but instead provided tools to navigate them. Siddharth realized that he didn't have to become deceitful to succeed; he just had to be wiser and more strategic.

In the months that followed, Siddharth's approach started to pay off. He gained a reputation for being both competent and savvy. His projects were recognized, and his ideas were harder to steal because he had learned to protect them. Siddharth felt a renewed sense of purpose and confidence, knowing that he could thrive in DeceptiveGlow without losing himself.



Culture unearther AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-2





Ambition

Siddharth now accepted the fact that Pranesh was his boss. His vision of making DeceptiveGlow ethical was going nowhere. Despite his efforts and job crafting, acceptance of the world around him had calmed him down somewhat. Yet, respect and recognition were still nowhere in sight. How could he get recognized?

Siddharth remembered Dr. Vishnusharma had asked him to read the Panchatantra. There were so many different Panchatantra books — which ones to read? He decided to call Vishnusharma for guidance.

When Siddharth called, Vishnusharma was pleasantly surprised to hear that Siddharth was even thinking about reading the Panchatantra. Vishnusharma told him that there were different resources available but emphasized that one should always consume the original Sanskrit version along with a translation in a language they could understand. He gave some options from Vyoma, YouTube, free online sources, and books that were true to the original Sanskrit.

"Start with the basics," Vishnusharma advised. "Understand the core principles of each story. The Panchatantra is not just a collection of tales; it is a guide to navigating the complexities of life and human behavior.

The wisdom contained within these stories can offer you new perspectives on how to handle your situation at DeceptiveGlow.

Siddharth thanked Vishnusharma and decided to begin his journey with the recommended resources. He found a highly regarded translation of the Panchatantra that stayed true to the original Sanskrit and began reading. As he delved into the stories, he was struck by the timeless wisdom and the depth of insight into human nature.

2500 years ago

Just as the bull was making loud noises, at the same time, a Lion approached the Yamuna River to drink water with his retinue. The Lion King, majestic and powerful, was accustomed to the usual sounds of the forest. However, this time, as he bent down to lap up the cool water, he heard an unusually loud noise echoing through the dense forest.

The noise was not just loud; it was terrifying. It reverberated through the trees, sending flocks of birds into the sky and causing smaller animals to scurry for cover. The Lion King, despite his strength and position, felt a shiver of fear. The roar, unlike any he had ever heard, made him think that some formidable creature had come to take over his kingdom.

Fear and uncertainty gripped the Lion King. He immediately decided to form a *Chatur Mandala*, a strategic formation used in times of crisis. Calling his retinue, which included his trusted advisors, the wise old leopard, the cunning jackal, and the fierce tiger, he led them to a nearby Banyan tree. This ancient tree, with its sprawling branches and thick roots, provided a semblance of safety and a vantage point to observe the surroundings.

There are two Jackals in the king's retinue who had been ousted from their positions. Having seen the King afraid, one of the Jackals, Damanaka, saw an opportunity to take political advantage. The two Jackals had a conversation about their next steps.

Damanaka asked, "Having gone to drink water at the Yamuna, why has our King stalled?"

Karataka, the more cautious of the two, responded, "A man wishing to interfere in other people's business will die just like the Monkey who pulled the Wedge."

Damanaka was curious. "How is that?"

Karataka began his story. "Near the city, there is a temple under construction in a grove. One day, a few carpenters left for lunch, leaving a splintered log separated by a wedge. A group of Monkeys started playing with the Wedge. One monkey, whose end was near, pulled the Wedge. He did not see that his tail and testicles were between the splintered wood. I don't have to tell you what happened when the monkey pulled the Wedge."

Damanaka shuddered at the thought, understanding the implied gruesome fate of the monkey.

Karataka continued, "We get our food and we should be content. Why seek trouble?

"One should live a life worth living, according to one's potential"

Both of us are ousted and considered worthless. Why take this initiative when there are seniors more fit for this task?"

Damanaka, however, was not convinced. "A person who does what seniors do becomes a senior. A senior, if he doesn't do what he must, is demoted."

Karataka sighed, knowing Damanaka's ambitious nature. "But think, Damanaka. Our King is in a state of fear. He is vulnerable. While it might seem like an opportunity, it is also a risk. If we fail, we could be punished severely. The story of the monkey teaches us that meddling in matters that do not concern us can lead to our downfall."

Damanaka, however, was determined. "But it also teaches us that with careful planning and understanding, one can seize opportunities. The seniors are paralyzed by indecision. If we step up and manage to calm the King, we can regain our positions and respect."

Karataka remained skeptical. "We have been ousted for a reason. To try and reinsert ourselves into the King's favour could backfire. It is wiser to stay within the bounds of our current position and ensure our survival rather than risk everything for a chance that might not even exist."

Damanaka shook his head. "Survival is not enough. We must thrive. I will approach the King. If I succeed, we both stand to gain. If I fail, the blame will fall on me alone. But doing nothing is the surest way to remain in obscurity."

Today

Siddharth began reflecting on what he had just learned, but he still couldn't decipher how to apply it to his work life. He wanted to meet Vishnusharma in person to discuss this further. So, he blocked some time in Vishnusharma's calendar and went to his cabin.

"Hey Siddharth, how did your Panchatantra reading go?" Vishnusharma asked, looking up from his desk with a welcoming smile.

"It is good, but I am not able to connect the dots to my work life," Siddharth admitted, feeling a bit frustrated.

"Did you read it in full?" Vishnusharma inquired.

"No, I read up to the part where Karataka and Damanaka have a conversation after seeing that the Lion King Pingalaka is afraid," Siddharth replied.

"Okay, what's your inference from that part?" Vishnusharma probed.

"Nothing much. It looks like a normal story, and I am starting to think the Panchatantra is useless for my situation," Siddharth confessed, feeling more disheartened.

"Let's start with this character Damanaka—what do you think of him?" Vishnusharma asked, steering the conversation.

"He comes across as someone who wants to interfere with other people's matters," Siddharth responded thoughtfully.

"Why do you think he is doing it?" Vishnusharma prompted.

"Possibly to gain a good name with the King?" Siddharth ventured.

"Good. What do you call this in your work world?" Vishnusharma asked, guiding Siddharth towards the insight.

"Recognition," Siddharth answered, a light bulb going off in his mind.

"Excellent. What's his approach to gain recognition?" Vishnusharma continued.

"He wants to poke his nose in the King's business," Siddharth explained.

"Is the King just another person?" Vishnusharma queried.

"No. He is his boss," Siddharth clarified.

"Is the King just a boss?" Vishnusharma pressed further.

"I think the entire forest reports to him. He probably makes all the important decisions on how the forest is run," Siddharth elaborated.

Now what do you think Damanaka is doing?" Vishnusharma asked.

"He is trying to interfere in matters beyond his capabilities and scope of work," Siddharth concluded.

"Okay. How do you categorize Damanaka?" Vishnusharma asked.

"Ambitious," Siddharth replied.

"To summarize, to gain recognition, one of the ways is to start interfering and contributing to areas beyond your scope of work. In short, you should start punching above your weight in your organization," Vishnusharma explained.

"You're just making this up to align with popular management techniques. This is not in the Panchatantra," Siddharth objected.

"On the contrary, this is explicitly stated in the Panchatantra. Before we go there, let us look at the other character, Karataka—what do you make of him?" Vishnusharma asked.

"Karataka pokes holes in Damanaka's thinking," Siddharth answered.

"What's his view?" Vishnusharma probed.

"Protecting the status quo, I assume," Siddharth said.

"Good. How do you know that?" Vishnusharma asked.

"He says, 'We are getting our food and we should be content with it. Why rock the boat?'" Siddharth explained.

"What else does Karataka say?" Vishnusharma inquired.

"He says that they are already 'apradhana' or not important, and there are other important people to take care of this. Why should we bother?" Siddharth elaborated.

"What do you think is Damanaka's response?" Vishnusharma asked.

"Possibly to interfere in the King's matter," Siddharth speculated.

"Yes but let us look at his answers precisely. First, he says life, even if short-lived, should be a great life. Just being content is not a life at all. Then, he says if one doesn't use his potential, that potential is wasted like the latent fire in the wood.

"Third, he says one who does the job which seniors or important people do becomes important. When important people don't do important work, they lose their importance," Vishnusharma explained.

Got it. You are pretty much advising me to stop doing my job and pick up something important to do instead," Siddharth summarized.

"Don't stop doing what you are doing. But slowly start contributing to what's important," Vishnusharma clarified.

"Will it help me achieve my vision?" Siddharth asked.

"No, not really. But it will gain you recognition which will help you set yourself up for your vision," Vishnusharma answered.

"Do you have some AI coaches for this as well?" Siddharth inquired.

"Of course. But before that, let us look at Karataka and Damanaka's characters again to drive home the point. If Karataka is maintaining the status quo, what does Damanaka do?" Vishnusharma asked.

"He is challenging the status quo," Siddharth replied.

"One secret to gaining recognition in the organization is to challenge the status quo. Also, what do you think is the status quo in DeceptiveGlow?" Vishnusharma asked.

"Unethical practices are okay to drive business outcomes," Siddharth answered.

"Excellent. What do you think challenging the status quo would look like?" Vishnusharma continued.

"Unethical practices are not okay," Siddharth replied.

"Great. We cannot change that immediately, but I am setting you up for it," Vishnusharma said.

Siddharth then accessed the AI coach Vishnusharma provided and began mapping out how he could punch above his weight in his organization. However, even with his new strategy, he still found that his needle didn't move as much as he hoped. But why?



Punching above your weight AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-2





Insight

Siddharth had always been a diligent and hardworking developer, dedicated to his craft and constantly striving to improve his technical skills. However, Panchatantra taught him that to advance in his career, he needed to go beyond his current role and start punching above his weight.

Determined to make a mark, Siddharth began to actively participate in meetings that were typically dominated by Product Managers. Despite being just a developer, he started offering innovative product ideas and suggestions, which he had meticulously brainstormed and refined. His contributions quickly caught the attention of his peers and superiors. People began to recognize his enthusiasm and creativity, and he soon found himself being praised for his forward-thinking ideas.

However, as time passed and Siddharth took a step back to reflect on his progress, he noticed a disheartening pattern. Despite the positive feedback and the recognition, he received, none of his ideas were being implemented. Each suggestion he made was met with nods of approval and words of appreciation, yet they never materialized into actual projects or changes within the company.

This realization left Siddharth perplexed and frustrated. He couldn't understand why his ideas, which were evidently well-received, never saw the light of day. He began to ponder the true measure of influence within an organization. Was it enough to be heard and appreciated, or was the real mark of influence the ability to see one's ideas come to fruition? To Siddharth, true organizational influence meant getting things done, not just being acknowledged.

Hoping to find some guidance, he decided to revisit Panchatantra, believing that the timeless wisdom they offered might shed light on his predicament. He went home and dusted off his old copy of the Panchatantra. As he delved into the pages, he found himself engrossed in the narratives once again.

2500 years ago

In the heart of the forest, under the canopy of ancient trees, the air was thick with the murmurs of unseen creatures. Among them, Karataka and Damanaka, two jackals, sat beside a sparkling stream. They had just finished a discussion about the complexities of power and influence within their jungle society. Damanaka had mentioned something that intrigued Karataka profoundly: the concept of punching above one's weight.

Karataka asks, "How do you know the Lion is afraid?"

"Karataka," Damanaka began, his eyes gleaming with a mix of mischief and wisdom, "you seem puzzled by my assertion that our Lion King is afraid. But let me explain how I discerned this truth."

Karataka leaned in closer, eager to absorb the knowledge his clever friend was about to impart. Damanaka continued, "There is an ancient art called *Ingita*. It is the art of knowing things without being directly told. Even animals can understand spoken words, but it is the truly intelligent who can grasp the unspoken."

Karataka's ears perked up, his curiosity piqued. "Tell me more, Damanaka. How does one master this art?"

Damanaka nodded, pleased with Karataka's enthusiasm.

"Firstly, one must learn to read body language. The Lion King may roar loudly and appear fierce, but subtle signs can betray his true emotions. Notice how his tail flicks nervously when he hears news of other powerful animals nearby. Or how his eyes dart around, never settling, when he speaks of potential threats. These are signs of underlying fear."

Karataka thought back to his recent encounters with the Lion King and realized he had indeed missed these subtle cues. "So, by observing these small details, we can understand his true feelings?"

“Precisely,” Damanaka affirmed. “But *Ingita* goes beyond just body language. It encompasses understanding the dynamics of our kingdom—what actions are rewarded, what behaviors are punished, and what the king values above all else. Our Lion King, for instance, deeply values loyalty and bravery. Yet, he fears the rise of any creature that might challenge his authority. This fear influences his decisions, his rewards, and his punishments.”

Damanaka’s words painted a vivid picture in Karataka’s mind. He could now see the intricate web of influences that shaped their kingdom’s power structure. “So, by knowing what the king considers important, we can predict his actions and position ourselves accordingly?”

“Exactly,” Damanaka said with a smile. “Consider this: when the Lion King rewards his subjects, he does so not just for their actions, but for their alignment with his own interests and insecurities. He may publicly praise the brave, but he privately nurtures loyalty in those who do not pose a threat to his reign.”

Karataka nodded slowly, absorbing the layers of strategy that Damanaka was revealing. “And how does this help us punch above our weight?”

Damanaka leaned back, his eyes twinkling. “By mastering *Ingita*, we can influence the king’s decisions without him even realizing it. We can plant ideas that align with his fears and values, guiding him subtly to outcomes that benefit us. In essence, we become invisible puppeteers, steering the kingdom’s course while appearing to merely follow.”

A newfound respect for his friend’s cunning filled Karataka’s heart. He realized that true power lay not in raw strength, but in the ability to understand and manipulate the unseen currents of influence that flowed through their society.

As the moon cast its silvery glow over the forest, Karataka and Damanaka continued their conversation, delving deeper into the nuances of *Ingita*. Karataka knew that with Damanaka's insights, they could navigate the complex hierarchy of their kingdom. The art of understanding the unspoken would be their greatest weapon in the jungle's relentless game of power.

Today

As he did every time he faced a challenge, Siddharth scheduled some time with Dr. Vishnusharma. They sat down together and started discussing the recent developments at work.

"I've been punching above my weight and contributing in meetings," Siddharth began. "But although my words are heard, I feel they're not being listened to."

"What are you contributing to?" Dr. Vishnusharma asked.

"I learned from my business understanding that revenue growth is crucial, so I've been offering ideas to improve revenue," Siddharth explained.

"And what's the response from the team?" Dr. Vishnusharma inquired.

"They appreciate my ideas," Siddharth replied.

"But?" Dr. Vishnusharma prompted.

"The ideas never materialize," Siddharth admitted.

"Why do you think that is?" Dr. Vishnusharma probed further.

"Politics?" Siddharth suggested hesitantly.

"Really? Are there other ideas from your peers that are accepted?" Dr. Vishnusharma asked.

"Yes, from people who are adept at playing the political game," Siddharth acknowledged.

"You will also start playing it well in time. But what are those accepted ideas about?" Dr. Vishnusharma continued.

"They're about saving costs," Siddharth said.

"And yours were about?" Dr. Vishnusharma asked.

"Adding revenue. But it was explicitly stated that growing revenue was important," Siddharth responded, puzzled.

"There lies your answer—why your ideas are not materializing," Dr. Vishnusharma said pointedly."

"??" Siddharth looked confused.

"You are following what is explicitly stated. But organizations don't operate with everything laid out explicitly. There are things you need to understand without being directly told. Panchatantra calls it *Ingita*," Dr. Vishnusharma explained.

"Okay. But *Ingita* is more about observing body language to understand what isn't being told, right? Do you want me to observe my manager's body language?" Siddharth asked, seeking clarification.

"That is just one part of it. There's also a body language for the organization. It's called culture. When you join a new organization, move into different roles, or try something new in your current role as you're doing now, you need to pay close attention to the culture. Specifically, what's being rewarded, who is being rewarded, and what is said and done by those who have been rewarded," Dr. Vishnusharma elaborated.

"And...?" Siddharth prompted, leaning in.

"You need to follow those patterns, and the chances of your ideas getting recognized will increase significantly. I'm not saying all your ideas will materialize, but your chances will improve," Dr. Vishnusharma advised.

"I assume you have some AI coach for this as well. Why don't you give everything to me at once?" Siddharth asked, seeking more tools.

"No, that won't serve the purpose. Unless you have a burning problem, the AI coach won't help. So, feel free to access them work on them as needed," Dr. Vishnusharma suggested.

Siddharth accessed the AI coach and began learning about making sense and sense-making in the organization, aiming to punch above his weight in areas that were truly important for his immediate environment.



Organization Decoder AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-2



Strategy

Siddharth had finally grasped the secrets of understanding what truly mattered in his organization. His ideas were slowly gaining recognition and, more importantly, being implemented in the product. Specifically, Siddharth had proposed ideas that saved costs by 20% within the product development model. He suggested strategies to reduce the number of crashes in the application and contributed to improving the app's overall performance. These initiatives had a significant impact, and his career began to take a positive turn after the appraisal fiasco that had previously left him disheartened.

However, as he basked in the satisfaction of seeing his ideas come to life, Siddharth noticed something peculiar. Yes, he was now recognized, and his ideas were being implemented, but not all of them. Despite his contributions, he faced stiff competition from his peers. Many of them were not only more talented but also far more adept at navigating the political landscape of the organization. Siddharth found himself pondering how he could successfully compete with his peers in such a cutthroat environment.

Determined to find a solution, Siddharth turned to his usual source of wisdom—the Panchatantra

2500 years ago

Damanaka had just finished his perspective on even understanding the unspoken or ingita. But is it just enough to understand the unspoken?. Karataka continued, "Even if you know the Lion King is afraid, how will you address his fear?"

Damanaka, ever the insightful jackal, leaned back and contemplated for a moment before responding. "Having known what he is afraid of, I will speak about the six ways to handle external threats. These are time-tested strategies that can be adapted to our situation. The Panchatantra outlines them as *Sandhi, Vigraha, Yana, Asana, Samrasya, and Dvaidhibhava.*"

"Tell me more about these strategies," Karataka urged, eager to deepen his understanding.

Damanaka began with the first strategy, *Sandhi*. "Sandhi means making a treaty. When faced with a formidable opponent, sometimes the best course of action is to negotiate a peace agreement. This can involve compromises or mutually beneficial arrangements. For the Lion King, making a treaty with neighboring territories could alleviate his fears of invasion or attack. By forging alliances, he can create a network of support that strengthens his position without the need for direct confrontation."

Karataka nodded, seeing the wisdom in this approach. "And what about *Vigraha*?"

"*Vigraha*," Damanaka continued, "refers to war. When negotiation fails or is not an option, engaging in battle becomes necessary. However, this should always be a last resort, as it involves great risk and potential loss. The Lion King must carefully assess his strengths and weaknesses before opting for war. *Vigraha* requires not only courage but also strategic planning to ensure victory and minimize casualties."

"*Yana* is next," Damanaka said. "*Yana* means marching. This is a show of strength without direct engagement. By mobilizing troops and demonstrating military might, the Lion King can deter potential aggressors. The sight of a well-prepared and disciplined army can make enemies think twice before initiating conflict. *Yana* is about showcasing power and readiness, creating a psychological advantage over adversaries."

Karataka's eyes gleamed with interest. "That makes sense. What about *Asana*?"

"*Asana*," Damanaka explained, "means sitting quietly. Sometimes, the best action is inaction. By remaining calm and observant, the Lion King can wait for the right moment to act. This strategy involves patience and the ability to read the situation accurately. By sitting quietly, he can gather more information and let potential threats reveal their intentions. It also allows him to conserve resources and avoid unnecessary conflicts."

"And *Samrasya*?" Karataka asked.

"*Samrasya*," Damanaka replied, "is resorting to another mightier king for defense. When the Lion King feels overwhelmed by a threat, seeking the protection of a more powerful ally can be a wise move. This strategy involves forming a subordinate relationship with a stronger ruler in exchange for safety and support. While it may require some concessions, it provides security and stability in times of great peril."

Karataka was thoroughly engrossed. "And the last one, *Dvaidhibhava*?"

"*Dvaidhibhava*," Damanaka concluded, "means employing two strategies at once. This is the art of deception and complexity. By using a combination of tactics, the Lion King can confuse and out-maneuver his enemies. For instance, he might appear to make a treaty while secretly preparing for war. Or he could march his troops while also negotiating with another powerful ally. *Dvaidhibhava* requires cunning and flexibility, allowing the Lion King to adapt to changing circumstances and keep his adversaries off balance."

Karataka pondered these rich descriptions, realizing how each strategy could be tailored to address the Lion King's fears. "Your insights are invaluable, Damanaka. Understanding these strategies not only helps in dealing with external threats but also in navigating the internal politics of our kingdom".

Damanaka smiled, pleased with Karataka's keen interest. "Indeed, Karataka. By mastering these strategies, we can influence the Lion King and ensure the stability and prosperity of our realm. Knowledge and wisdom are our greatest weapons in this jungle."

With this newfound understanding, Karataka felt more confident in Damanaka's ability to address the Lion King's fears and guide him through the complexities of ruling their kingdom..

Today..

He read it, reread it, but couldn't figure out how this could change his life. There was something about six expedients. They seemed like something a king would use with other kings. What did this have to do with his peers? He had a vague idea it could be related, but how? He decided to visit Dr. Vishnusharma.

"How do I manage the competition with my peers? If I want to progress, I have to surpass them," Siddharth said.

"Great observation. As the African saying goes, you have to run faster than the slowest deer to survive a lion attack," Dr. Vishnusharma replied.

"I understand. I saw the Panchatantra talk about six expedients of strategy. How do I apply them to my peers? Aren't they meant for enemy kings?" Siddharth asked.

"Excellent question. I see your understanding of the material has improved. Now, you need to understand something about enemies," Dr. Vishnusharma began.

"What about them? Are my colleagues my enemies?" Siddharth inquired.

"More precisely, they are your natural enemies," Dr. Vishnusharma explained.

"What is natural enmity?" Siddharth asked.

"If you and another person don't like each other or compete for a specific reason, when the reason goes away, your enmity with that person ends. However, if you both are in a situation where the reason for your enmity never ends, then you are natural enemies," Dr. Vishnusharma elucidated.

"What does this have to do with my work?" Siddharth asked, puzzled.

"Let us first consider the king's case and derive it to your work. Whom do you think is a king's natural enemy?" Dr. Vishnusharma asked.

"There could be many, but predominantly another king," Siddharth replied.

"Why is that?" Dr. Vishnusharma prompted.

"The other king can take over his kingdom," Siddharth answered.

"Can all kings take over his kingdom?" Dr. Vishnusharma questioned further.

"A king who is as strong or stronger than him," Siddharth responded.

"Good. But what if the other king is not interested in taking over his kingdom?" Dr. Vishnusharma continued.

"Then he is not a natural enemy," Siddharth reasoned.

"What would make the other king uninterested?" Dr. Vishnusharma asked.

"He is peace-loving," Siddharth suggested.

"There were not many peace-loving kings. What else? Remember, he is stronger than this king," Dr. Vishnusharma pressed.

"Maybe he cannot win the war with this king in some way," Siddharth ventured.

"What could be the reason? Again, this king's army and resources are stronger, and he is not peace-loving," Dr. Vishnusharma prodded.

"Interdependency—maybe he depends on the other kingdom for some resources," Siddharth hypothesized."

"If he takes over the kingdom, the resources will also be his," Dr. Vishnusharma countered.

"Ah, got it. He is probably far away, and moving his army to fight this king is tough," Siddharth realized.

"You are almost there. Chanakya in Arthashastra says one is a natural enemy if one competes for the same resource. A nearby kingdom is a potential enemy because they can take over your land," Dr. Vishnusharma explained.

So, are you saying my peers are my natural enemies?" Siddharth asked.

"Yes. Not only your peers, but in the current organizational structure, even your boss can be a natural enemy. The same department budgets decide your raises and promotions, your peers' promotions, and also your boss's," Dr. Vishnusharma elaborated.

"How should I handle them? Go to war with them and finish them off?" Siddharth asked, concerned.

"Not so fast. This is where diplomacy plays a big role. It is neither practical nor necessary to fight with your peers. There are other ways. We will get to know when one should fight later," Dr. Vishnusharma assured.

"Are they the six ways mentioned?" Siddharth queried.

"Yes. Those six ways were outlined by Chanakya for foreign policy, but they equally apply to any natural enemy who competes for the same resources. It can be your peers or other companies in the same industry. First, Sandhi, or alliance. You ally with your peers to drive your agenda. Second, Vigraha, or war. You go and fight them head-on. Third, Yana, or marching. Strategic positioning of resources. Fourth, Asana. Sit tight and do nothing. Wait for opponents to make a mistake.

Fifth, Samrasya. Partner with a bigger force, for example, your boss's boss. Sixth, Dvaidhibhava, a two-pronged strategy—use two or more strategies mentioned above simultaneously in different areas. You basically have to list down your natural enemies (your peers) and have strategies to address them," Dr. Vishnusharma explained in detail.

I assume you have an AI coach for this. Where can I get it?" Siddharth asked.

"You can find it here. But be careful. We are venturing into grey areas. This is no longer completely ethical, nor can one say it is completely unethical. Our Indian scriptures talk about different types of Dharma. A common man's dharma is different from a king's dharma. Some of these are about Raja dharma. A king has to be ruthless with his enemies but compassionate to his people. Defining who your people and who your enemy are in our corporate world is tough. So, do your homework but execute with caution. Next time we meet, remind me to talk about Chanakya and Abraham Lincoln," Dr. Vishnusharma advised.

Siddharth accessed the AI coach and worked with it. Now, he felt confident in handling his peers. He started seeing the results he wanted. But something nagged at him. He had set out to make DeceptiveGlow ethical, and now he was using strategies to handle his peers. Had he moved away from his initial vision? More importantly, was he moving in the opposite direction? Was Dr. Vishnusharma making DeceptiveGlow more unethical? But he mentioned Chanakya and Lincoln. What could it be?



Peer Strategy AI with Vishnusharma



Prelude to next chapters

Siddharth had worked with the AI coach on strategy. However, coming from a family background that valued integrity and hard work, he found it difficult to digest the suggestions the six expedients provided. Yes, other people stooped to whatever means they wished, but should he follow?

He couldn't sleep. He tossed and turned in bed, thinking about the morality and ethics of it all. He was now convinced that Dr. Vishnusharma was actually working against his own role—to bring ethics into DeceptiveGlow. Siddharth realized he wasn't doing anything to make DeceptiveGlow ethical.

The next morning, he received a call from Dr. Vishnusharma. The first question Vishnusharma asked was, "How was your session with the six expedients AI coach?"

"I was about to call you about that. I feel guilty even for engaging in this exercise. It presents choices that are outright unethical. I don't want to pursue this route," Siddharth replied.

"I understand your concerns. Many people who read the Panchatantra have this reaction. However, before we discuss what's right and wrong, let us look at three examples—one from the US, one from India, and one from the natural world," Dr. Vishnusharma said.

"I'm all ears," Siddharth said.

Dr. Vishnusharma began with the first example, Mudrarakshasa. "There is a Sanskrit play called Mudrarakshasa. Have you heard of it?"

"No, not really," Siddharth replied.

"It tells the story of Chanakya, specifically how he made Rakshasa, a minister loyal to the Nanda kings, the minister of Chandragupta Maurya," Dr. Vishnusharma explained.

"What's that got to do with the six expedients?" Siddharth asked.

"Chanakya uses 'unethical' or 'deceitful' practices to achieve this. Is Chanakya good or bad in this case?" Dr. Vishnusharma asked.

"I don't know the background, but knowing Chanakya was a genius and hearing good things about him, I assume what he did have a reason," Siddharth responded.

"Exactly. The Nanda kings were evil. Adharma was rampant, and foreign powers were encroaching. Someone had to unite all of Bharath to defend against these threats. The Nanda kings were neither strong nor cared for their people. There are many resources, from Amar Chitra Katha to TV series, to help you understand this better," Dr. Vishnusharma continued.

"What about Rakshasa?" Siddharth asked.

"Yes, Rakshasa was loyal to the Nandas but very smart and sincere. Chanakya believed he would be a better minister for Chandragupta Maurya than himself. After Chandragupta took over the Nanda kingdom, Rakshasa continued scheming with other kings to overthrow him, threatening Chanakya's vision of a unified Bharath under dharmic rule. Chanakya used Rakshasa's signet ring (Mudra) to turn Rakshasa into a traitor through deceitful ways, forcing him to join Chandragupta," Dr. Vishnusharma explained.

"What happened to Chanakya after that?" Siddharth asked.

"This is where the story gets interesting. After making Rakshasa the minister of Chandragupta Maurya, Chanakya retired to his hut to continue teaching. He didn't play any major role in the government after that," Dr. Vishnusharma said.

"So, does the end justify the means?" Siddharth asked.

"Yes, but not any end. The end must be just or dharmic in nature and beneficial to others, not selfishly to oneself. It's about playing small deceits to meet a just end. Remember, this is Rajadharma, which is different from a common man's dharma. Some of the Panchatantra's teachings will have a grey tint. They give you great power, but with great power comes great responsibility," Dr. Vishnusharma explained.

You mentioned Lincoln. What about him?" Siddharth asked.

"Good point. What do you know about Lincoln?" Dr. Vishnusharma asked.

"He is one of the greatest leaders the US has seen," Siddharth replied.

"Why do you say that?" Dr. Vishnusharma asked.

"I think he abolished slavery," Siddharth said.

"Do you think abolishing slavery is a just end?" Dr. Vishnusharma asked.

"Yes," Siddharth replied.

"Did you know how he abolished slavery?" Dr. Vishnusharma asked.

"I assume it was by passing a law," Siddharth said.

"What is required to pass a law?" Dr. Vishnusharma prompted.

"A majority of ministers voting for it," Siddharth answered.

"Great. But do you think every minister supported abolishing slavery at that time?" Dr. Vishnusharma asked.

"No, because it was the prevalent practice, and some ministers owned slaves," Siddharth replied.

"Then, how did Lincoln abolish slavery?" Dr. Vishnusharma asked.

"He used unethical means?" Siddharth guessed.

"Precisely. Lincoln used many unethical means to achieve a just end. But again, this is Rajadharma and should not be pursued for selfish ends," Dr. Vishnusharma explained.

"Today's leadership literature emphasizes authenticity. How can we be authentic and still play this game?" Siddharth asked.

"Good question. Think of it like a river. A river starts as a stream, then becomes a waterfall, a pond, and so on, depending on the terrain. It can evaporate, become ice, or take the shape of any container. Yet, it always remains water. Authenticity means maintaining your essence while adapting to the circumstances. We'll cover this aspect of Rajadharma later when we discuss Svadharma (one's own dharma) and the nature of diplomacy," Dr. Vishnusharma said.

"That's a profound example," Siddharth remarked.

"Let's conclude with an example from the Mahabharata. In the Ramayana, Rama followed all the rules and was very dharmic. He even allowed a tired Ravana to rest and fight the next day. In contrast, Krishna in the Mahabharata used many deceitful tactics to uphold a larger Dharma. For instance, when Draupadi was lost in the dice game, Dushasana had the right to disrobe her. Even Bhishma had no answer to this. But Krishna intervened, extending her garment to protect her dignity, thus upholding a higher Dharma," Dr. Vishnusharma explained.

"So, our scriptures and the Panchatantra allow deceit?"
Siddharth asked.

"Yes, but only on special occasions. The cause must be just, and it's to prevent adharma from taking over. Rajadharma applies to managing wealth, protecting people, and dealing with natural enemies and governance, which fits our roles in the corporate world," Dr. Vishnusharma explained.

Siddharth was still confused but realized he needed to focus on his vision of making DeceptiveGlow ethical again. He was determined to pursue that path.

JOURNEY PART-2





Influence

Siddharth had made up his mind to try his luck playing the political game. He wanted to be like water, adaptable and persistent, flowing around obstacles to achieve his goals. His vision of making DeceptiveGlow ethical was unwavering, but he knew that to make a real impact, he needed to be in a position of influence within the organization.

He already had one strategy in his quiver: contributing to areas where he wanted to effect change. Specifically, he targeted areas plagued by unethical practices. His first focus was on the manipulation of customer ratings, a significant issue that undermined trust in the company.

However, he soon discovered that customer reviews fell under the marketing division, not the product organization where he worked. This presented a challenge. But luck seemed to favor him when a cross-functional leadership meeting was scheduled.

Siddharth volunteered to attend, seeing it as a golden opportunity to raise his concerns.

During the meeting, Siddharth asked the marketing leader pertinent questions, skilfully steering the conversation toward the issue of unethical practices in customer reviews. The marketing leader acknowledged the problem but dismissed its urgency, stating that their primary focus was on building the brand.

Siddharth's plan had backfired. He realized that even if he managed to move into the marketing division, he might not be able to make significant changes if the leadership did not prioritize ethical practices. Frustrated but not defeated, he wondered if the Panchatantra held any wisdom that could help him navigate this complex situation. He started reading the ancient text again and found relevant insights about influence.

2500 years ago

Damanaka just finished speaking about the 6 expedients of strategy to solve the problems of the Lion. But, will the Lion listen to Damanaka?

Karataka continued, "Even if you take this approach, how are you sure the Lion will listen to you?"

Damanaka replied confidently, "I will employ what is known as Sevadharma. Only three types of people become rich: the valorous, the learned, and those who understand Sevadharma."

"Sevadharma? What does that entail?" Karataka asked, intrigued.

"Sevadharma involves several key principles for effective influence," Damanaka explained. "First, use a trusted channel to send your message. The credibility of the messenger can significantly impact how the message is received."

Karataka nodded, understanding the importance of trust. "And then?"

"Second, providing your ideas in the flow of dialogue matters. Integrate your suggestions naturally into conversations rather than presenting them abruptly," Damanaka continued.

Timing is also crucial. You need to time your influence carefully, choosing moments when the King is most receptive," Damanaka emphasized.

Karataka pondered this. "And how do you ensure your communication is effective?"

"Think and communicate well," Damanaka advised. "Craft your words thoughtfully and ensure your message is clear and compelling. Additionally, you must advise on the negative and positive consequences of actions. Highlight the potential benefits of good decisions and the dangers of poor ones."

Karataka responded, "However, kings are known to be fastidious and whimsical. How do you handle that?"

Damanaka smiled. "One should know the disposition of the audience. Understand the King's moods and preferences. There are techniques to bring your boss under your sway: praise the King when he is angry, show affection towards those dear to him, display hatred towards his adversaries, and commend gifts from the King."

Karataka was impressed. "These techniques sound promising. But if you are so intent on approaching Pingalaka the Lion, I wish you all the best."

Damanaka bowed his head slightly, acknowledging the sentiment. "Thank you, Karataka. However, I must be careful. I should not make any mistakes while approaching the King. Our sustenance depends on it."

Today..

Siddharth wanted to get some perspective on the Panchatantra's influence strategy, so he called Dr. Vishnusharma.

"How is your pursuit to get into Marketing?" Vishnusharma asked sharply.

"As you would know by now, it was a disaster. The marketing leader didn't even want to talk about unethical practices, let alone consider me for the team to address them. By the way, can you pull me into your ethics team? My purpose will be better served there," Siddharth replied.

"No, Siddharth, bringing you into my team would cluster everyone who is pro-ethics into one group, making us weaker. As we speak, I am in talks with multiple departments to place ethics evangelists. I would advise you to work with the Marketing team."

"But I am not sure how I can get in," Siddharth admitted.

"First, let us start with education. Do you know what the marketing team is made of?" Vishnusharma asked.

"Yes, all of them are MBAs with a marketing major," Siddharth answered.

"How well-versed are you with their terminologies?" Vishnusharma continued.

"I know a few, but not a lot. Are you suggesting I start learning their terminologies?" Siddharth asked.

"Yes, and I would advise getting an MBA in marketing if you can manage it. You cannot move into a department that requires a completely different education and experience just because you want to," Vishnusharma explained.

"Yeah, I know that. I am planning to do that. But do you want me to not do anything before that?" Siddharth inquired.

"No, not really. You can influence even before you formally change roles," Vishnusharma replied.

"Yes, I read about influence in the Panchatantra. As usual, I can only vaguely relate to it," Siddharth admitted.

"Actually, the Panchatantra keeps the influence strategy short and sweet. Let us start from the basics. You are yet to join the organization, and the leader has just met you. Do you think he is going to agree to what you say?" Vishnusharma asked.

"No, what else can I do?" Siddharth asked.

"Think about it. If 'you' cannot do it, who else can?" Vishnusharma prompted.

"Ahhh, go through someone he already trusts. Got it," Siddharth realized.

"What else did you learn from the Panchatantra?" Vishnusharma continued.

"Now it all comes back to me. The next one is 'Provide your ideas in the flow of things.' I don't understand this at all," Siddharth said.

"Okay, let us take a step back. How did you bring up the topic of unethical practices with the marketing leader?" Vishnusharma asked.

"What do you mean? I just told him," Siddharth replied.

"In short, you blurted it out, right?" Vishnusharma asked.

"Yes," Siddharth admitted.

"What else could you have done?" Vishnusharma asked.

"I am supposed to bring it up as part of a dialogue?" Siddharth asked.

"Yes," Vishnusharma confirmed.

"I still don't get it. How can I bring it up?" Siddharth asked.

"Think about it. What was the session about?" Vishnusharma prompted.

"Marketing," Siddharth replied.

"Why would ethics come up in a session about marketing? Just because it is the same leader taking care of Marketing and Reviews?" Vishnusharma asked.

"No. At least the conversation should be about reviews to bring it up," Siddharth acknowledged.

"Did reviews come up?" Vishnusharma asked.

"No," Siddharth admitted.

"Why didn't it come up?" Vishnusharma probed.

"It was not important for the marketing leader," Siddharth reasoned.

"Why wasn't it important?" Vishnusharma continued.

"It didn't serve marketing well in what it is meant to achieve, which is building the brand," Siddharth explained.

"Precisely. Now, is having manipulated reviews bad for the brand?" Vishnusharma asked.

"Maybe. I don't know," Siddharth responded.

"So, the crux of this lesson about 'in the flow of dialogue' is that if you present your thoughts in the context—when there is a question or discussion about it—then it will fit in. If you present your thoughts without any context, then it won't fit in," Vishnusharma clarified.

"How do I make it fit in?" Siddharth asked.

"Think about it. Or access the AI coach to work through it," Vishnusharma suggested.

"Now, let us come to other hacks, which are self-evident," Vishnusharma continued. "Time your influence. Communicate both the positive consequences of action and the negative consequences of inaction. Both the thought process (function) and the presentation (form) are important. The disposition or the mood of the person you are presenting to also matters. The general level of trust the person has in you also matters when it comes to influence. You have to work to improve this."

"I get all this. Let me work with the AI coach and see if it improves my chances," Siddharth concludes.



Influence AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-2





Retention

Over the past year, Siddharth has made significant strides in his career, transitioning from his previous role into the dynamic world of Marketing. His journey began with a keen interest in e-commerce marketing, leading him to successfully complete a certificate program in this specialized field. This educational achievement equipped him with the necessary skills and knowledge to influence his organization positively.

Recognizing the importance of integrating product management with brand strategy, Siddharth proposed the establishment of a dedicated product team within the Marketing department. His initiative was well-received, and the new team was tasked with overseeing all brand-related product changes, marking a pivotal shift in how the company managed its product offerings.

As a testament to his capabilities and the trust placed in him by the organization, Siddharth was appointed to oversee the Reviews section of the Product. This role not only highlighted his expertise but also expanded his responsibilities significantly. His leadership qualities shone through, earning him a promotion. Subsequently, he began leading a team, steering them towards achieving collective goals and fostering a spirit of collaboration and innovation.

Initially, Siddharth's leadership was met with widespread acclaim. Under his guidance, the team thrived, showing remarkable progress and creativity. However, as time passed, a concerning trend emerged. His department started experiencing a high rate of attrition, one of the highest within the marketing division. This unexpected challenge signalled a need for introspection and strategy recalibration. In search of solutions, Siddharth turned to the ancient wisdom of the Panchatantra

2500 years ago

After his conversation with Karataka on Sevadharma, Damanaka approaches Pingalaka the Lion, but the sentries initially stop him. Pingalaka then instructs the sentries to let Damanaka, the minister's son and a jackal, enter.

Pingalaka: "How come I haven't seen you for a while?"

Damanaka says, "Although your majesty does not require our services, we still want to make a humble submission that even people who seem useless can be made useful by a king."

Damanaka continues, "Consider this, even straws, toothpicks, and ear-picks have their uses. How much more then can humans, who possess both minds and hands?"

Damanaka adds, "We, your servants, have traditionally been with you, even in times of distress. It is not appropriate for you to remove us from your court."

Damanaka explains, "Nobody wears a crown on their feet and claims they can do anything. Similarly, a servant should be employed and used only in the right places."

Damanaka points out, "A king who is not aware of his servants' qualities will not be followed by them."

Damanaka notes, "A servant leaves a king for three reasons: when treated the same as those who are not equals, when not treated equally with equals, and when not employed in higher positions for which they qualify."

Damanaka warns, "Moreover, if a king, out of indiscretion, employs capable servants in the lowest and most dishonourable positions, they either pass time or leave those positions."

Damanaka elaborates, "When a king treats all his servants equally, making no distinction among them, then the zeal of those competent to do an excellent job turns tardy."

Damanaka emphasizes, "A king cannot rule without his servants, nor can the servants survive without the king, just like the Nave and Spokes of wheel are interdependent."

Damanaka concludes, "If pleased, a king can reward his servants with wealth, but the servants give their lives in service."

Today..

Siddharth is eager to discuss his recent insights with Vishnusharma and gives him a call.

Siddharth says, "I just finished reading about retention in the Panchatantra. I think it offers profound insights for both new and established leaders."

Vishnusharma responds, "It's great to see you reading and reflecting on the Panchatantra. Remember, one who reads and reflects on the Panchatantra cannot be defeated by even the king of gods. Tell me, what have you learned?"

Siddharth explains, "Firstly, the reasons people leave their leaders include being treated equally with those who are not equals, being treated unequally with those who are equals, and not being given work that matches their potential."

Vishnusharma asks, "Before I add my two cents, what else does it discuss?"

Siddharth says, "It talks about how leaders and their teams are interdependent."

Vishnusharma asks, "Did you notice the metaphor that is shown here?"

Siddharth answers, "Yes, the nave and spokes."

Vishnusharma prompts, "Another interesting aspect we should talk about. What else?"

Siddharth says, "The team provides their blood and sweat, but the leader just provides monetary compensation for the team."

Vishnusharma praises, "Excellent. It looks like you have now got the ability to get the gist from what you read. Now, let's discuss this whole concept of equals. What do you think you should do to enable it?"

Siddharth suggests, "Well, I think I should know my team intimately. To determine whether people are equals or unequals, or even to know their potential, I must have an intimate understanding of them. Only then can I implement them effectively."

Vishnusharma inquires, "How are you planning to do that?"

Siddharth asks, "I'm assuming you have a worksheet for that as well?"

Vishnusharma confirms, "Precisely, you can download them from here."

Siddharth responds, "Great. Let me do that."

Vishnusharma continues before hanging up, "Before you hang up, what do you think about the metaphor of the wheel?"

Siddharth reflects, "Well, it tells me the whole wheel is made of the leader and the team. It shows interdependence."

Vishnusharma asks, "OK, anything else?"

Siddharth admits, "None I can think of."

Vishnusharma shares his insight, "I have my own theory. The wheel allows you to move forward. Only when the leader and the team are aligned, or more precisely when the team is aligned to the leader as a hub, then the organization can move forward. If the wheel represents the leader and his team, what about the vehicle?"

Siddharth guesses, "Does it represent the organization?"

Vishnusharma confirms, "Precisely, sometimes when you take these slokas and see what's missing, you can derive rich meaning from it."

Vishnusharma asks, "And, what's your take on the 'blood and sweat' sloka?"

Siddharth concludes, "I agree, as leaders we can influence hikes and promotions, but our team members sacrifice their family time and personal time to help us win in the marketplace."

Vishnusharma concludes, "That's precisely true. Panchatantra talks about leaving a leader in multiple places. Think of this as 'Retention 101'. We will revisit this theme in a different lesson later."

Siddharth then disconnects the phone, downloads the worksheet, and starts working towards a retention strategy.



Leadership Mirror AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-2





Hiring

Siddharth has recently been appointed as the leader of the reviews team at his organization, a critical unit previously marred by unethical practices such as the manipulation of reviews. His leadership has brought about a significant shift in these practices. Under his guidance, such deceptive actions have been completely eradicated, establishing a new standard of integrity for the team. Additionally, Siddharth has tackled the issue of high employee turnover, which had been a longstanding problem. His efforts have not only arrested this attrition but have reversed the trend entirely. Now, his team is renowned across the organization for having the lowest attrition rate, a testament to the positive changes he has implemented.

However, despite these successes, Siddharth faces a new challenge that threatens to undermine the recent improvements: a noticeable decline in team productivity. Upon closer observation, Siddharth has identified that certain members of his team have begun to slack off. This decrease in diligence and effort is visibly impacting the team's output and efficiency, posing a significant problem that needs immediate attention.

The situation is made more complicated by the vacancies that have arisen due to the previous high attrition rates, which now need to be filled to restore the team to its full operational capacity. These open roles are crucial for maintaining the smooth functioning of the team, and the lack of sufficient personnel is directly correlating with the recent drop in productivity.

To address these issues, Siddharth is contemplating several strategic moves. He is considering the dismissal of several team members whose performance has been consistently poor and who have contributed to the current productivity issues. He realizes that without taking decisive action against these underperforming elements, the team's overall performance may continue to suffer. As usual Siddharth picks up his copy of Panchatantra and starts reading

2500 years ago

In the verdant depths of a sprawling ancient forest, beneath the dense canopy of towering trees, sat Pingalaka, the lion king of the animal kingdom, his mane glistening in the dappled sunlight that managed to pierce the leafy roof. Beside him stood Damanaka. Damanaka had just explained about the relationship between leaders and their team. Pingalaka, the lion feels a pinch of guilt on having not been a good leader.

Pingalaka, troubled, asked, "Damanaka, you have told me about how I should behave. Tell me, how should a good employee be? What traits define one who truly serves the kingdom well?"

Damanaka, with an eager glint in his eyes, responded earnestly, "Great king, I shall describe the ideal follower. Firstly, a good employee does not boast. They let their work demonstrate their worth, and their humility keeps the grounds of our kingdom fertile with cooperation and respect."

"Moreover," Damanaka continued, "they must be trustworthy. Like the deep roots of our ancient trees, trust is essential for the stability of our kingdom. An employee who is reliable secures the confidence of their peers and superiors alike."

"An effective member of our staff must also be proactive," the jackal advised, his tail flicking thoughtfully. "Anticipating needs and challenges before they arise guards our kingdom against unforeseen threats and ensures that opportunities are not missed."

"Equanimity is crucial," Damanaka added. "One must maintain balance in the face of internal storms—handling their emotions with grace. This steadiness prevents chaos and nurtures a peaceful work environment."

"Passion drives them to exceptional lengths," he went on, his voice growing more animated. "They forsake comfort—be it hunger, sleep, heat, or cold—to achieve greatness for our kingdom. Such dedication ensures that our realm thrives."

"A good employee should also be ready to face challenges. They view every difficulty as a stepping stone to greater success, much like our young saplings that push through the soil to reach the sun."

"They must aim to expand the kingdom," Damanaka declared, sweeping his paw towards the horizon. "Their work should lead to growth, never stagnation or decline. They must be builders, not destroyers."

"Remember, my king," the jackal concluded with a note of inspiration in his tone, "greatness can come from any quarter of our kingdom. We must remain open to finding value in unexpected places."

"And finally," Damanaka said with a firm nod, "one good employee, one truly dedicated and capable individual, is better than a hundred inadequate ones. The right servant not only adds value but multiplies it, bringing prosperity to all corners of our realm."

Pingalaka listened intently to each word, absorbing the wisdom imparted by his advisor. He knew that these principles would guide him in refining his administration, ensuring that his kingdom not only survived but flourished under the watchful eyes of such valuable followers.

Damanaka continued, "I am both committed and competent, I do not deserve your disrespect"

Pingalaka, "Let us drop the discussion on your competence, tell me why you are here?"

Damanaka, "After having gone near Yamuna to drink water, why are you seated here under the Banyan tree?"

Today..

Siddharth no longer finds it necessary to engage in lengthy discussions with Dr. Vishnusharma. Now, he only contacts the doctor when he finds himself at an impasse and unable to proceed. Siddharth knows exactly where to find the worksheet he needs, which he promptly downloads and starts working on.

First, he creates a checklist of qualities to look for in the ideal team member. He carefully assesses each team member based on these criteria:

Results without Boasting: Siddharth notes which team members have delivered the desired results. He particularly marks those who have previously tried to oversell their accomplishments, listing them as potential candidates for dismissal.

Trustworthiness: He identifies team members whom he can entrust with his own tasks, expecting them to deliver similar results. These members are marked for retention.

Proactivity: Siddharth recalls instances where a team member has proactively proposed solutions to unarticulated problems. Finding few such occurrences, he resolves to be more observant of this trait moving forward.

Equanimity: Although he lacks a direct measure for this trait, Siddharth makes a note of team members who recover quickly from setbacks.

Passion: He lists examples where team members have gone beyond the call of duty without prompting—working extra hours, producing exceptionally high-quality work, or strongly advocating for beneficial organizational changes.

Challenge-Ready: He documents moments when a team member has persevered through tough situations, showing resilience and determination.

Organizational Growth: Siddharth evaluates how team members have contributed to the organization's growth, noting any behaviors that might hinder this progress.

After completing this assessment using the downloaded worksheet, Siddharth gains clear insights into his team's dynamics, identifying standout performers and those who may not be as effective. Rather than making immediate personnel changes, he discusses this evaluation framework with his team to align everyone towards these ideal characteristics.

However, a lingering question remains in his mind about team members who may lack passion for their work. Seeking advice, he calls Dr. Vishnusharma, who suggests "Job Sculpting" as a solution. This approach involves breaking down the work into components and redistributing tasks according to each team member's inclinations and strengths.

Vishnusharma also reminds Siddharth to regularly apply this framework for evaluating his team and to incorporate these principles into his hiring process. Moreover, he advises Siddharth to remember three additional hiring principles from the Panchatantra:

Inclusivity in Hiring: Recognize that greatness can come from anywhere, so avoid restricting hiring to specific educational or experiential backgrounds.

Value over Favoritism: Hire and retain employees based on their value to the organization, not based on Favoritism.

Quality over Quantity: Focus on hiring for quality rather than quantity.

Siddharth thanks Dr. Vishnusharma for the valuable advice and hangs up, now fully equipped to transform his team into a world-class unit.



Team assessor AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-2





Stewardship

Siddharth was managing a successful team, recognized for producing excellent results, and he was increasingly being viewed as an emerging leader within his organization. He had experienced multiple promotions, and his team had grown significantly. However, just as Siddharth was enjoying his career high, disaster struck. He received a call from his boss informing him that the reviews section of their product would be outsourced to a third-party platform that curated reviews from various e-commerce entities. This decision was financially logical, as maintaining a product team was becoming prohibitively expensive.

Amid these changes, Siddharth aspired to cultivate a team atmosphere free from the typical office politics and back-biting. However, he soon faced the harsh reality that the law of natural enmity had crept into his team, creating a perception that his team was the most politically charged in the company. This revelation shocked him, considering the considerable effort he had put into carefully selecting, training, and retaining his team members, and even eradicating unethical practices within the team to boost morale.

Despite these efforts, office politics had infiltrated his team, making Siddharth feel as though he was fighting an inevitable force like gravity. To compound his troubles, he learned that his team might be completely dismantled. Overwhelmed, Siddharth began to question his future and considered resigning, feeling that perhaps his growth in the company had reached its peak. His confidence, which had once served him well, had perhaps led to a degree of complacency, causing him to miss signs of impending organizational changes.

Dejected, Siddharth sat alone in his cabin, pondering his next moves. It was then that Dr. Vishnusharma, a familiar face and trusted confidante, appeared.

"Welcome, Doc. How have you been?" Siddharth greeted him.

"I am good. Listen, I wanted to meet you as I have been hearing about the politics and back-biting in your team. I'm a bit surprised," Dr. Vishnusharma expressed his concern.

"I'm not surprised. It seems like a natural law—wherever there are people organized, politics will inevitably arise," Siddharth responded resignedly.

"I was about to call you myself. I feel like quitting. Maybe my growth here has ended," he confessed.

"You're quitting because there's politics in your own team? I thought you had matured beyond such concerns," Dr. Vishnusharma remarked.

"No, it's not just the politics. My team will likely be dismantled soon because a third-party product will replace us. I feel like I have nowhere to go," Siddharth explained his predicament.

"Have you finished reading the Panchatantra by now?" Dr. Vishnusharma asked.

"No, I haven't had the time," Siddharth admitted.

"It's like Formula 1 cars saying they don't have time for a pit stop," the doctor analogized, highlighting the importance of taking time to reflect and learn.

"Okay, my bad. But, does the Panchatantra really have answers for this situation?" Siddharth questioned skeptically.

"Let me remind you of an incident that might help you get through this," Dr. Vishnusharma offered, ready to impart wisdom that could perhaps steer Siddharth in a new direction.

2500 years ago

Damanaka approached Pingalaka, the lion king, who had been sitting thoughtfully under a Banyan tree despite having initially set out to drink water from the Yamuna River. Sensing the gravity of the situation, Damanaka inquired, "My lord, why did you return from the Yamuna without drinking?"

Pingalaka, masking his emotions, dismissively responded, "Nothing of concern is happening, Damanaka."

However, Damanaka, perceiving the tension, replied, "If it is something that cannot be shared with me, then so be it."

Realizing Damanaka's competence and the value of sharing his burdens, Pingalaka reconsidered and asked, "Damanaka, do you hear that profound noise coming from afar?"

"Yes, what about it?" Damanaka responded, curious about the lion's sudden interest in the distant noise.

Pingalaka confessed, "I fear that a ferocious beast has arrived and intends to usurp my kingdom. The sound terrifies me so much that I want to flee."

Damanaka advised, "One should not be alarmed by a mere sound. It is unwise to abandon the kingdom that your forefathers have passed down through generations. Your fear will only serve to frighten your followers as well. This situation reminds me of the story of the Jackal and the Drum."

Intrigued, Pingalaka inquired, "What story is that?"

Damanaka explained, "Once, a hungry jackal roamed the jungle in search of food and heard a loud sound that frightened him. Driven by curiosity, he tracked down the source and discovered it was just a drum. The drum made sounds when branches fell upon it, leading the jackal to believe it was a living creature. He attacked the drum, hoping to find food inside, but was disappointed to find nothing but air. Thus, he learned that not all noises signify danger."

Reassured by the tale, Pingalaka asked, "What do you propose I do?"

Damanaka offered, "Stay here, and let me investigate the source of the noise."

Skeptical yet hopeful, Pingalaka asked, "Can you really find out what it is?"

Damanaka confidently replied, "A true servant will go to any lengths for his leader. If you permit me, I will proceed and report back to you."

With Damanaka's departure, Pingalaka was left alone with his thoughts, wrestling with his trust in Damanaka's abilities and intentions. After some contemplation, he decided to move to a different location where he could keep a watchful eye on Damanaka's progress. This decision reflected his growing anxiety and the strategic caution that a ruler must sometimes exercise, even towards his most trusted advisors.

Today..

"What do you infer from this?" Dr. Vishnusharma inquired, gauging Siddharth's reaction.

"Well, I am not getting much," Siddharth confessed, puzzled by the deeper implications of their discussion.

"As you have progressed through the organization, you've become resistant to new ideas," Dr. Vishnusharma observed pointedly.

"Sorry, can you explain?" Siddharth asked, seeking clarification.

"Firstly, the Panchatantra, through the story of Pingalaka, warns about the dangers of fearing mere noises," Dr. Vishnusharma began his explanation.

"But where is the sound here?" Siddharth interjected, trying to connect the dots.

"Sound here represents marketing, announcements, or verbal threats that lack substance," Dr. Vishnusharma clarified.

"Okay, I got this. You're telling me not to worry about the third-party product. It might not actually replace our team. Got it," Siddharth acknowledged, understanding the metaphor.

"Secondly, you don't own anything," Dr. Vishnusharma continued, introducing a new concept.

"You are being philosophical," Siddharth remarked, somewhat dismissively.

"No, I don't mean it in that sense. In your work, you don't own this designation, this piece of the product, or this team," Dr. Vishnusharma explained.

"Then, what do we do?" Siddharth asked, intrigued but confused.

"You are a steward," Dr. Vishnusharma responded.

"Steward?" Siddharth echoed, unfamiliar with the term in this context.

"Yes. Someone who has taken up this space on someone else's behalf and will hand it over to another afterward," Dr. Vishnusharma elaborated.

"So?" Siddharth pressed for more information.

"You have no right to quit midway," Dr. Vishnusharma asserted.

"Have you made this a better place since you joined?" he questioned Siddharth, who nodded in affirmation.

"Are you completely done with your work here?" Dr. Vishnusharma probed further.

"No," Siddharth admitted.

"Then, you have no reason to quit now," Dr. Vishnusharma concluded firmly.

"Also, as the Panchatantra suggests, the quality of someone or something reflects the leadership it has been subject to. If you quit, your team might follow suit. Even if for a moment we assume you have the right to quit, you have no right to lead your team to do the same," he added.

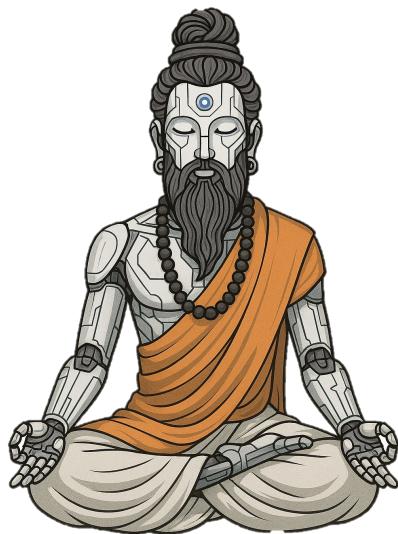
"What do you want me to do?" Siddharth asked, ready to act.

"First, access the Stewardship AI coach. Then, you'll know what to do next," Dr. Vishnusharma advised.

Siddharth accessed the Stewardship AI coach and began working on it, determined to fully grasp the concept of stewardship and apply it effectively within his role.



Stewardship AI with Vishnusharma



Part 3

The Street

Smartness

JOURNEY PART-3



Crisis

Siddharth diligently worked with the Stewardship AI coach, discovering an essential lesson: instead of fearing change, he needed to assist in what was right for the organization, even if it required personal sacrifices. He and his team conducted a thorough evaluation of the new product and determined that it would indeed benefit the organization. Armed with this information, Siddharth presented his findings to senior management, who then requested him to dismantle his team. However, thanks to the guidance from the Stewardship AI coach, he had already prepared a transition plan to ensure his team members would find new roles within the company. As for himself, Siddharth was uncertain about his next steps. Honestly, he was growing weary of the repetitive nature of his current role.

Then, one day, Siddharth received a call from Dr. Vishnusharma. The doctor informed him about a new competitor to DeceptiveGlow, which was utilizing a Gen AI-based conversational interface to recommend beauty products. He inquired if Siddharth was aware of this development. Siddharth responded that he had been keeping an eye on the GenAI space and was indeed familiar with the competitor.

Vishnusharma also mentioned that according to senior management, DeceptiveGlow was facing an existential threat from this new competitor.

Despite this pressing issue, Siddharth was not in the mood to delve into anything related to GenAI or even DeceptiveGlow at that moment. Instead, he turned to the Panchatantra for some casual reading, picking up from where he had last left off, seeking perhaps not just solace but also ancient wisdom that might subtly guide his future decisions.

2500 years ago

Damanaka set out to investigate the source of the mysterious sound that had so deeply troubled Pingalaka, the lion king. His journey through the dense forest was cautious yet determined. When he finally discovered that the alarming noise was simply a bull, an idea sparked in his mind. He saw this as a splendid opportunity to gain political leverage and strengthen his position within the animal kingdom.

Reflecting on the nature of kingship and governance, Damanaka recalled a principle: "A king does not follow the minister's advice until calamity or sorrow afflicts him." He mused over the reality that kings, when perpetually in distress, remain dependent on their ministers for counsel and decisions. Much like a healthy person has no need for a physician, a king without troubles seldom seeks out his minister's guidance. These thoughts fueled Damanaka's strategic thinking as he considered how to use the situation to his advantage.

With his plan taking shape, Damanaka returned to Pingalaka. The lion, anxious and eager, immediately inquired, "Did you see the creature?"

"Yes," Damanaka replied confidently.

Pingalaka then said, reflecting on the virtues of greatness, "You should have seen the creature. Great souls never get angry with helpless creatures; hence, it did not harm you."

Damanaka, ever the pragmatist and seizing the moment to solidify his usefulness, responded, "Let the creature be the high-souled one; we are fine with our baseness. However, if you command it, I can bring that creature under your control."

Intrigued by Damanaka's bold claim, Pingalaka questioned, "Can you really do this?"

Damanaka, with a hint of pride in his voice, answered, "What cannot be accomplished with wisdom?"

Impressed by Damanaka's confidence and strategic acumen, Pingalaka declared, "If that is so, you are appointed as a minister."

Now elevated to a position of greater influence and responsibility, Damanaka returned to the bull, named Sanjivaka, to enact his plan. His mind was teeming with strategies, not just to bring the bull under control but also to cement his position as an indispensable advisor to Pingalaka. This moment marked a significant turn in Damanaka's career, a cunning jackal's rise in the royal court, leveraging a situation that initially seemed trivial but held the potential for substantial political advantage.

Today..

"As Siddharth leafed through the pages of the Panchatantra, a realization struck him—the immense power inherent in crises. The text illuminated a concept that resonated deeply with him: one's power and success within an organization are directly proportional to the magnitude of the crises one can resolve. Sitting back in his chair, Siddharth pondered the trajectory of his career, reflecting on the significant progress he had made.

During this moment of contemplation, a news article caught his attention. It detailed how some e-commerce companies were illegally using users' data, a practice starkly unethical. Despite his ascent through the organizational ranks, Siddharth felt a pang of frustration at his continued inability to confront these unethical practices head-on. He remembered his days as a trainee developer, filled with naïve aspirations of driving change. Now, at a higher level within the company, he questioned whether he had reached a position where he could influence DeceptiveGlow to adopt completely ethical practices.

It was here that Siddharth saw a golden opportunity to step into a role of significant influence, one that would enable him to pursue his longstanding goals more assertively.

Before diving in, he accessed the crisis management AI coach. Working with it diligently, Siddharth formulated a clear strategy on how to approach the issue at hand.

Energized by his new insights and strategic direction, Siddharth convened his team to draft a proposal. This wasn't just any proposal but one that integrated the GenAI capabilities and also pondered a collaborative approach between DeceptiveGlow and its competitor. The idea was to create mutual value, a concept inspired by a six-way strategy from the Panchatantra. The proposal aimed not just at leveraging technological advancements but also at fostering cooperation in an industry often marked by fierce competition.

The management team was quickly persuaded by the innovative and cooperative nature of the proposal. Impressed by Siddharth's vision and leadership, they tasked him with heading the team that would develop this new offering. This project was not just another product line but a pioneering venture using conversational AI to recommend beauty products, setting a new standard in the industry.

With this new responsibility, Siddharth was reunited with his team, and his career took a significant leap forward.

He was appointed to a very senior role, leading the next generation of DeceptiveGlow's products. This position was not only a testament to his skill and dedication but also aligned perfectly with his ethical vision for the company.

Siddharth was now fully equipped to shape the future of DeceptiveGlow. With the wisdom of the Panchatantra and a clear strategy to tackle crises, he was set to lead his team and the company into a new era of ethical innovation and cooperative success. The journey ahead was daunting, yet Siddharth felt more prepared than ever to turn challenges into opportunities, proving that true leadership is born out of the ability to navigate through storms and steer towards brighter horizons.



Using Crisis AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-3





Reconciliation

Siddharth's innovative proposal for collaboration with a competitor had initially been met with enthusiasm by the senior management. The idea was strategic and forward-thinking, positioning DeceptiveGlow at the forefront of the industry. However, enthusiasm from within his own company didn't necessarily translate into an easy partnership. Now, the real challenge lay ahead: convincing the competitor that the partnership was in their best interest too.

Siddharth and his team set up initial conversations with the competitor. As they delved into discussions, it became apparent that the competitor harbored reservations about the collaboration. Their main concern was the potential loss of market share or dilution of their brand identity by partnering with DeceptiveGlow. Siddharth's team had passionately pitched the merits of their collaborative idea, focusing on the mutual benefits and the enhanced value they could jointly offer to the market. However, they had not adequately addressed or even fully anticipated the reasons why the competitor might decline the offer.

Realizing that the deal, as it was currently proposed, might not be as advantageous for the competitor, Siddharth felt a twinge of unease.

The success of this deal was crucial, not just for the advancement of his career but also for the strategic direction of DeceptiveGlow. If the partnership failed to materialize, he and his team would be back to square one, without a clear path forward.

Feeling the weight of these developments, Siddharth decided to take some time off to reflect and strategize. He also saw this as an opportune moment to seek the counsel of Dr. Vishnusharma, hoping that the ancient wisdom of the Panchatantra might shed light on an effective approach. They arranged to meet over lunch, where Siddharth brought up the issue of the stalled proposal.

Vishnusharma listened intently, nodding thoughtfully before speaking, "This is a fantastic opportunity for you to seek a position of power, which will enable you to drive decisions aligning with your vision for ethical practices."

"Yes, but we've hit a standstill. The competitor fears they will lose out if they partner with us," Siddharth replied, his frustration evident.

Vishnusharma, always ready with sage advice, suggested, "The Panchatantra has an interesting take on such situations. Why don't we explore what it says?".

The success of this deal was crucial, not just for the Intrigued and somewhat hopeful, Siddharth leaned in as Vishnusharma began to relate applicable lessons from the Panchatantra. The ancient text often illustrated that in negotiations or partnerships, understanding and alleviating the fears and concerns of the other party was just as important as presenting the benefits. It taught that true collaboration was not about overpowering or outmaneuvering a partner but about finding common ground where all parties could feel secure and valued.

Encouraged by this perspective, Siddharth realized that they needed to revise their approach. It wasn't enough to sell the idea based on its merits alone; they had to address the competitor's fears and craft a proposal that offered clear, tangible benefits that outweighed any perceived risks.

Reinvigorated by the wisdom of the Panchatantra and the guidance from Vishnusharma, Siddharth returned to his team with a new strategy. They would reevaluate their proposal, this time with a balanced focus on mutual gains and addressing the specific concerns of their potential partners. This approach, inspired by age-old wisdom, promised a better chance at turning their vision for collaboration into a reality.

2500 years ago

Damanaka, with a tone of authority, approached the bull in the forest, declaring, "You wicked bull, our king Pingalaka is calling you. Why are you roaming around this forest without any apprehension and making loud noises?"

Sanjivaka, puzzled, responded, "Who is Pingalaka?"

"Don't you know our King Pingalaka? You will soon understand from the consequences that follow," Damanaka replied with a hint of warning in his voice.

Sanjivaka, sensing the gravity of the situation, sought reassurance. "You seem to be a person of good character and eloquent speech. Please, get me a pledge of safety from your king."

Damanaka nodded, "You are wise to ask for that. That is worldly wisdom. Stay here while I secure an assurance of your safety from my King."

Returning to Pingalaka, Damanaka reported, "Your Majesty, the creature is no ordinary animal. It is the vehicle of Shiva."

"No wonder it behaves like this," Pingalaka acknowledged, intrigued by the revelation.

Damanaka continued, "However, I told him this kingdom belongs to you and that you are the Vehicle of Parvati, so he is our guest."

"Then the bull agreed to all my proposals and asked for an assurance of his safety. The decision is now yours," Damanaka concluded, laying the situation before Pingalaka.

Pingalaka, delighted by the clever management of the situation, exclaimed, "You are the real wise minister, Sumati. As a temple is supported by solidly made, straight, well-examined pillars, so is a kingdom upheld by good ministers. The acumen of ministers is expressed in acts of reconciliation."

Damanaka felt a surge of pride and satisfaction, thinking to himself that the King had indeed come under his favor, and he was very blessed to be back in the King's patronage.

With the king's happiness evident, Damanaka returned to Sanjivaka to convey the assurance of safety, fulfilling his role as a bridge between the king and what he perceived as a potential ally or a significant presence in the kingdom.

This strategic interaction not only reinforced Damanaka's position within the royal advisory but also highlighted his ability to navigate complex situations with wisdom and tact. By positioning both Pingalaka and Sanjivaka as divine vehicles and thus on a level playing field, Damanaka cleverly neutralized any potential threat, turning a potentially volatile situation into one of mutual respect and alliance.

This maneuver is a testament to the subtle art of governance, where wisdom and diplomacy are key to maintaining balance and harmony within a kingdom.

Today..

"Well, what do you think of it?" Vishnusharma inquired, looking expectantly at Siddharth.

"Let's discuss it. What does Panchatantra mean by reconciliation?" Siddharth asked, eager to delve deeper into the subject.

"We need to take a step back and look at the context in which this is said. Pingalaka the lion is born and brought up in the forest, following Vanadharma or the law of the jungle," Vishnusharma explained, setting the stage for their discussion.

"Hmm. However, Sanjivaka the bull is born and brought up in the city or the village, which follows Gramadharma or the law of civilized life," Siddharth noted, contrasting the two perspectives.

"Before we delve into what it would mean to reconcile them, let's first consider why Pingalaka has suddenly stooped to praise Damanaka. Why do you think he is doing so now?" Vishnusharma probed, prompting Siddharth to think critically.

"I think, so far, Damanaka has been all talk. Maybe this is the first time he is actually talking about results?" Siddharth speculated, trying to piece together the behavior changes.

"Precisely. What gets you success and power in the organization is achieving results, nothing else," Vishnusharma affirmed, reinforcing the value of outcomes over promises.

"Now, let's come to the question of reconciliation. What do you think reconciliation means here?" Vishnusharma asked, steering the conversation towards their main topic.

"There is a fundamental difference in the lifestyle of Pingalaka and Sanjivaka. One hunts, while the other was a beast of burden," Siddharth observed, identifying their intrinsic differences.

"Good. Can you draw a parallel comparison in our work world?" Vishnusharma challenged Siddharth to apply their discussion practically.

"Not that I can think of immediately. Do you have something in mind?" Siddharth responded, curious about Vishnusharma's insights.

"Okay, let me give you two examples. The lion could be like an entrepreneur who operates in the dynamic market, while the bull is like a typical employee who works within organizational boundaries." Vishnusharma elucidated, providing a clear analogy.

"Anything can happen in the market—Lion has to be ready and nimble and aggressive. However, the bull's world is a bit more stable. There is time to think and respond," Vishnusharma continued, describing their respective challenges.

"In short, the world of the Jungle is action-oriented, while the world of the city is thought-oriented. So, the reconciliation we are discussing here is between action and thinking?" Siddharth deduced, grasping the essence of their conversation.

"I don't know. It can mean many things. Let's consider another example. The lion could be like the sales team, always closing deals. The bull would be like the R&D team—based on knowledge, innovation, and intelligence. Does reconciliation mean reconciling Sales and R&D? But what does this have to do with my problem?" Siddharth mused aloud, connecting dots.

"Pingalaka praises Damanaka for reconciling. Is that right?" Vishnusharma queried, wanting Siddharth to confirm his understanding.

"I think so. It's bringing together two natural enemies, which is a commendable task," Siddharth acknowledged the significance.

"Great. But do you see anything wrong with that?" Vishnusharma asked, prompting Siddharth to scrutinize further.

"No. It seems very dharmic, I would say," Siddharth replied, affirming the ethical aspect.

"Let's hold on to that thought. Here's my view at this point: first, it is against the natural order for two natural enemies to come together. This might not be sustainable," Vishnusharma cautioned, highlighting a potential issue.

"Got it. Are you saying that DeceptiveGlow and the competitor cannot come together as they are natural enemies?" Siddharth sought clarification.

"No, there has to be something strong to make them come together in the first place," Vishnusharma concluded, offering a resolution.

"Great. Got it. Let me think through that. Yes, I recognized that reconciliation is a great strategy, but I never considered the concept of natural enmity," Siddharth admitted, gaining a new perspective.

"By the way, although this is being applied company to company, this applies to all levels from peer-to-peer collaboration to countries as well. That's the brilliance of Panchatantra; its principles work across different scales, times, and spaces," Vishnusharma added, expanding the scope of their discussion.

I am hoping you have an AI coach for this as well?" Siddharth inquired, looking for practical tools.

"Yes, absolutely, you can find it here," Vishnusharma confirmed, pointing Siddharth toward further resources.

Siddharth then accessed the AI coach on reconciliation and worked through a different proposal, which was accepted by the competitor as well by focusing on a win-win proposal ensuring the sustainability of the collaboration. Siddharth also used the reconciliation AI coach to resolve conflicts in his team or to work with his own natural enemies (his peers).



Reconciliation AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-3





Hidden Networks

Siddharth's innovative proposal had successfully captured the attention of the competitor, and they were now on the verge of formalizing a deal. This development was a significant milestone, and the management team at DeceptiveGlow was in the process of selecting a leader for this crucial collaboration. Siddharth was optimistic; he saw this role as his gateway to implementing widespread ethical reforms within the company. He was confident that securing this position would enable him to spearhead the transformation of DeceptiveGlow into a paragon of ethical business practices.

As the project's initiation date drew closer, Siddharth noticed a disturbing trend: he was being excluded from key meetings. There had been a conspicuous silence regarding updates on the program, and it became increasingly evident that he was being deliberately avoided. Concerned and puzzled by these developments, Siddharth arranged a one-on-one meeting with his boss to discuss the situation.

During the meeting, Siddharth's fears were confirmed. Senior management had decided to proceed with another candidate to lead the project.

This news was a heavy blow to Siddharth. He had been the architect of the deal, dedicating countless hours to crafting the proposal that had won over the competitor. Now, it seemed he was to be sidelined, his contributions overshadowed as someone else took the reins—and potentially the credit—for the fruits of his labor.

Devastated by this turn of events, Siddharth struggled to comprehend how this could have happened. He had always been a key player at DeceptiveGlow, known for his innovative ideas and ethical stance. The decision to appoint someone else, especially after his pivotal role in securing the deal, did not make sense to him. Was there some underlying strategy at play, or perhaps some internal politics he was not aware of? The lack of transparency and the sudden shift in his involvement made him suspect foul play.

In his quest for understanding and guidance, Siddharth turned to his trusted copy of the Panchatantra. The ancient text, known for its profound wisdom on politics, leadership, and human nature, had always served as a beacon during tumultuous times. As he delved deeper into the teachings of the Panchatantra, Siddharth sought solace and insight that might help him navigate this complex situation.

2500 years ago

Having assured the Lion of bringing the bull under his sway, Damanaka ventured forth to the bull. Damanaka addressed Sanjivaka earnestly, "O friend, I have requested our master to grant you safety." He continued, "But, having attained this favor, you must adhere to our mutual agreement. You should never behave arbitrarily or assert your authority without consideration."

"I, too, shall act upon your indications and take up the responsibility of governing. Only then can both of us enjoy the prosperity of the kingdom. It is only through our collusion that we can truly benefit. Moreover, remember that he who does not respect the king's favorites often falls from his position."

Sanjivaka, intrigued, asked, "How is that so?"

Damanaka began to recount the tale of Dantila and Gorambha. "There once lived a renowned merchant named Dantila. He was a leader of great repute, skilled in balancing the needs of his people and his duties to the state. When the time came to marry off his daughter, he invited everyone to the wedding, including the workers serving the king."

"One of the invitees was Gorambha, a sweeper in the king's palace. At the wedding, Gorambha mistakenly sat in a chair not meant for him. Seeing this, Dantila had him removed from the house, which deeply angered Gorambha. Being a mere sweeper, what could he do in retaliation?"

"The next day, as Gorambha swept the king's room, he murmured something about 'Dantila embracing the queen.' When the king inquired about it, Gorambha dismissed it, claiming he must have blabbered out of sleeplessness. Yet, the seed of doubt was planted in the king's mind, leading him to suspect Dantila and the queen, believing that there cannot be smoke without fire."

"From that day, Dantila was barred from entering the palace. He was ostracized just as Gorambha had been from Dantila's house. Dantila lost all his respect."

"One day, Dantila overheard Gorambha recounting how he had been pushed out of Dantila's house. Realizing it must have been Gorambha's doing, Dantila called him over, honored him with new clothes, and apologized. In response, Gorambha boasted, 'You are pardoned, now look at my intellect in bringing your lost respect back.'"

"The next day, as Gorambha swept the king's room, he made another puzzling comment about the king eating a cucumber in the toilet. When questioned, Gorambha claimed he must have been confused due to lack of sleep. The king realized that if Gorambha was confused about the cucumber, his previous statement about the queen and Dantila could also be false. He immediately reinstated Dantila, realizing his mistake."

Damanaka concluded, "That is why it is said, whoever has authority and does not respect the hidden social networks who can change the King's mind, whether high or low, falls from his position."

Sanjivaka, moved by the story, affirmed, "Whatever you say, I will follow." Hearing this, Damanaka confidently led Sanjivaka to Pingalaka, assured of their new understanding.

Today..

There it was—a realization Siddharth hadn't considered before. Could someone have spread negative rumors about him to senior management? He recognized a familiar pattern where credit was often misappropriated. His thoughts turned to Pranesh, a friend who had become his boss. But how could Pranesh be involved in this?

Driven by suspicion, Siddharth decided to do some digging. It didn't take long before he uncovered the truth: during one of his smoking breaks, Pranesh had been spreading rumors. He had told colleagues that Siddharth, who had nearly become a whistleblower, couldn't be trusted to run large programs. Pranesh had pointed out that while Siddharth was good with ideas and external collaborations, it would be too risky to let him lead such a significant project due to his strong ethical stance. Pranesh suggested that Siddharth might even sabotage the program.

The revelation fueled Siddharth's anger. After calming down, he knew exactly who to call for advice: Vishnusharma. Maybe he could offer a solution.

"Wow! That's a twist that could compete with Bollywood scripts," Vishnusharma exclaimed after hearing the story.

"Are you making fun? I need a way out," Siddharth replied, frustrated.

"Panchatantra itself provides a way out. Why ask me?" Vishnusharma teased gently.

"And what's that way out?" Siddharth pressed.

"First, let's understand the logic here—that there's a hidden social network close to the king, which can derail you," Vishnusharma explained.

"Yes. And the solution Panchatantra provides?" Siddharth asked eagerly.

"Give back the respect that was lost by the person involved," Vishnusharma suggested.

"What can I do in this case, then?" Siddharth pondered aloud.

"Think about it. The exact idea might be different, but you need to pacify Pranesh," Vishnusharma advised.

"I don't even know what harm I've done to him," Siddharth confessed.

"Precisely, this works without your conscious effort. Why not have a chat with him?" Vishnusharma proposed.

Siddharth downloaded a worksheet on hidden social networks to better understand the dynamics at play.

Through his research, he learned that Pranesh had been passed over for the role of Product Development Team Leader—a position Siddharth had been recommended for—and Pranesh harbored jealousy because of this.

Siddharth decided to recommend Pranesh for the Product Development Leader role, giving him what he wanted. This strategy would only be effective if Siddharth were still leading the program.

Following this, during his smoking sessions, Pranesh changed his tune and began recommending Siddharth. He praised Siddharth's approach of fighting the system from within rather than becoming a whistleblower. He highlighted Siddharth's talents to his smoking circle, stressing that removing Siddharth would be a disaster for the company.

Senior management then took a 'U-Turn' and reinstated Siddharth as the program leader. Through strategic maneuvering and a bit of cunning, Siddharth was quickly becoming a powerful figure within the organization.



Hidden Network Discovery AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-3





Svadharma

Siddharth sank deeper into his couch, a familiar seat that had witnessed his journey from a fresh graduate to a seasoned leader. His eyes roamed around his living room, filled with mementos of his career milestones—awards, certificates, and framed photos of team-building activities. He had achieved much, and his rise within DeceptiveGlow, a company known for its cutting-edge technology and innovative solutions, was meteoric. Yet, as he sat there, a lingering sense of unease gnawed at him.

From the outset, Siddharth had been captivated by the timeless wisdom of the Panchatantra, a collection of ancient Indian fables that impart lessons on morality, strategy, and leadership. These stories had been his companions during the most challenging phases of his career, offering solace and guidance when the path seemed unclear. The cleverness of the jackal, the wisdom of the turtle, and the foresight of the crow had all found parallels in his corporate battles, helping him navigate office politics, strategic dilemmas, and ethical quandaries.

Despite his successes, one particular aspiration remained unfulfilled: transforming DeceptiveGlow into an ethical powerhouse. Siddharth's vision was to lead a company that not only excelled in innovation but also upheld the highest standards of integrity and social responsibility. However, the reality was far from this ideal. The company, while thriving, often walked the fine line between aggressive competitiveness and ethical compromise. Siddharth had observed practices that, though legal, pricked his conscience. Marketing strategies that bordered on deceptive, cost-cutting measures that overlooked employee welfare, and business tactics that prioritized profit over sustainability—all these weighed heavily on his mind.

For years, he had silenced his inner voice, rationalizing his inaction with thoughts of career progression and financial security. He had convinced himself that one day, when he had amassed enough influence, he would steer the company towards the ethical horizon he envisioned. But as he climbed the corporate ladder, he found it increasingly difficult to initiate this change. The higher he went, the more entrenched the company's practices seemed, and the less he felt able to challenge the status quo.

Tonight, as he reflected on his journey, Siddharth's sense of fulfillment was overshadowed by this persistent disquiet. He questioned the worth of his achievements if they came at the cost of his values. His introspection was deep and unsettling. Was the compromise of his principles a necessary price for success, or had he strayed too far from the ideals that once guided him?

Seeking clarity, he reached for his well-worn copy of the Panchatantra, the book that had always provided him with perspective and wisdom. As he opened its pages, the familiar scent of old paper brought a wave of nostalgia and comfort.

2500 years ago

Damanaka, having warned Sanjivaka of not working closely with Damanaka took Sanjivaka to Pingalaka's court. Sanjivaka, upon entering Pingalaka's court, respectfully saluted the king and seated himself in the chair allocated to him. Pingalaka, curious about Sanjivaka's presence in the forest, enquired about how he had ended up there.

Sanjivaka then recounted his story, detailing how he had gotten injured and eventually met Pingalaka. After hearing his tale, Pingalaka assured Sanjivaka of his safety. Over time, Pingalaka and Sanjivaka became great friends, to the extent that Pingalaka began to neglect his kingdom's affairs. He entrusted the management of his stately duties to his ministers, Karataka and Damanaka.

However, gradually, Pingalaka began to change. Influenced by Sanjivaka, who followed Gramadharma (the village code of conduct), Pingalaka forgot his Vanadharma (the jungle code of conduct). He stopped hunting and became very passive, keeping all the other animals at bay. As a result, Damanaka and Karataka could no longer gain entry into the king's court. Furthermore, with Pingalaka ceasing his hunts, the food supply that the other animals, including Karataka and Damanaka, relied on dwindled. Consequently, most animals in Pingalaka's retinue began to leave his kingdom.

Damanaka and Karataka, now parched with thirst and hunger, were at a loss, not knowing what to do. In desperation, they held a conversation.

Damanaka said, "Both of us have been discharged from our duties. Sanjivaka's counsel has made Pingalaka go against his own Vanadharma. All the subordinates have left due to desperation."

Karataka responded, "Though Pingalaka doesn't honor your words, he should be apprised of the whole situation to avoid any charges levied against us. Just as Dhritarashtra was advised by Vidura, when kings and elephants go astray, then the mahouts and ministers are to be blamed."

Damanaka agreed, saying, "Yes, it is my fault. The king is not to be blamed here. But we cannot let this situation change us; we need to respond proactively, like the fish."

Karataka, curious, asked, "Which fish?"

Today..

He is amazed that the Panchatantra had something very specific to the thoughts he was having. Now, he remembers the conversation he had with Dr. Vishnusharma about Gramadharma and Vanadharma. He calls Dr. Vishnusharma.

"I have news to tell you, Siddharth. But before that, why did you call?"

"I have been thinking about my role and my growth in the organization. However, I have not moved an inch toward my vision of making DeceptiveGlow ethical."

"I agree. Did you check the Panchatantra?"

"Yes. That's why I called you. The Panchatantra shows how devastating it can be if one goes against one's own Dharma."

"No, not precisely that. When Pingalaka starts following Gramadharma, the jungle goes into chaos. What this means is that Pingalaka's svadharma, or what he thinks he should be doing, doesn't match with what the role requires."

"Right. You gave me examples from our work world as well. The first was between the laws of the jungle and that of the civilized world, between Sales and R&D."

"Yes. We should look at the context and whether our dharma—svadharma—matches with the role. In Pingalaka's case, he cannot afford to follow Gramadharma, even though he wants to."

"In short, is the Panchatantra asking us to match our svadharma with the role's dharma?"

"Yes."

"But, should we change our svadharma or change the role's dharma to match our dharma?"

"Both are possible. But, which do you think is easier?"

"Changing our svadharma."

"Good."

"But..."

"I know what you are going to ask..."

"What?"

"Isn't that going against our long-held beliefs and values? Is that right?"

"Yes."

"That's why you need to look at the context. First, we are operating in the commercial or corporate world. This more or less follows Rajadharma. If you want to succeed here, you need to follow what works here."

"Which is?"

"Playing by the rules of the system."

"Hmm... are there other ways?"

"Another way would be to get into a role that matches your svadharma."

"But remember, the role is part of a bigger system that plays by the rules of the corporate world."

"Then, how can I get into a role that matches my svadharma when, anyway, the larger organization plays by different rules?"

"Yes. It is difficult if your svadharma doesn't fit anywhere within the organization. That is why we see people retiring early, moving industries, or possibly starting on their own. This is especially true and is generally termed a mid-life crisis."

"Ahhh... that's a good way to look at a mid-life crisis."

"However, one can move into a role that has a larger purpose which aligns with one's svadharma, although achieving that purpose would require playing by the rules of the system."

"Got it, just like Abraham Lincoln, Chanakya, and the example of water."

"Great."

"As I have not moved anywhere with my vision of making DeceptiveGlow ethical, I want to move into a role to make it possible."

"That's the other thing I wanted to talk to you about."

"I am retiring in two months' time. I am looking for a replacement. I was hoping you could take over my role. You are young and you are also eager to make DeceptiveGlow ethical."

Siddharth was baffled for a second. Here he was thinking about changing roles, and this was being offered on a platter. He remembered the sloka about how luck plays a big part in one's success or failure.

"That's big news. I wouldn't like you to move out. But, given my mindset at this point, I will consider it."

He positioned himself for the ethics role. Given Siddharth's stature in the organization now, he was welcomed with open arms. Siddharth then did something even more extraordinary. He made Pranesh the leader of the new program. Pranesh was super happy to the extent that he considered Siddharth a great leader. He was ready to do anything for Siddharth now.

Siddharth is now all set to tackle DeceptiveGlow's unethical practices head-on in his new role.



Svadharma AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-3





A black and white illustration of a fish swimming upwards through a cracked frame. The fish is depicted with a large head and mouth, swimming towards the right. The background consists of abstract, brush-stroked patterns of light and dark shades. The entire scene is framed by a thick, irregular border.

Change

Siddharth had now taken up the monumental task of making DeceptiveGlow ethical again. With a sense of determination and purpose, he set out to identify all the unethical practices that the company followed. His first initiative was to establish a secret whistleblower program. This program allowed employees from all levels of the organization to report unethical behaviors and practices anonymously.

The response was overwhelming. Reports began to flood in from every corner of the organization, revealing a staggering array of unethical practices. Siddharth was stunned by the sheer volume and gravity of the issues. The list was so extensive that he didn't know where to begin or how he could possibly address everything. The enormity of the task at hand left him feeling both daunted and disheartened.

Determined to make progress, Siddharth decided to approach a few leaders whose divisions were reported to have unethical practices. He hoped that by having open and honest conversations, he could begin to initiate change. However, his efforts were met with resistance. His impassioned pleas and well-meaning sermons seemed to fall on deaf ears.

This was unlike his previous experience in product development, where he had led a team that listened and worked together towards a common goal.

Now, he found himself in the challenging position of trying to convince his peers and superiors, many of whom had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. The skill set required for this task was different from what Siddharth had honed over the years. It was not about developing products or leading a team, but about influencing and changing deeply entrenched attitudes and behavior. He realized why Vishnusharma, his predecessor, had struggled to make any significant impact. The organization simply did not want to change, and there were too many individuals who benefited from keeping things as they were.

Siddharth felt a wave of defeat wash over him. How could he possibly convince those who were not willing to listen? Talking to them was proving to be futile. The obstacles seemed insurmountable, and for the first time, Siddharth felt truly powerless in his new role. Desperation began to set in as he grappled with the enormity of the task and the resistance he faced.

In this moment of doubt and frustration, he instinctively reached for his copy of the Panchatantra. This ancient text, filled with wisdom and moral lessons, had always been a source of guidance and inspiration for him.

As he flipped through the familiar pages, he sought solace in the stories and teachings that had once helped him navigate complex challenges.

The Panchatantra had always provided him with a different perspective, a way to see beyond the immediate obstacles and find creative solutions. As he read, Siddharth hoped to find a spark of wisdom that could illuminate a path forward. He needed to find a way to make the organization see the value in ethical practices, not just for moral reasons but for the long-term success and sustainability of DeceptiveGlow.

Siddharth realized that he had to approach this challenge differently. He needed to build alliances, find like-minded individuals within the organization, and create a groundswell of support for ethical change. It was not going to be easy, but he knew that giving up was not an option. With renewed determination and the wisdom of the Panchatantra as his guide, Siddharth prepared to tackle the daunting task ahead, one step at a time.

2500 years ago

Damanaka starts narrating the story of the three fishes.

There lived three fishes in a pond named Anagatavidhata (whose destiny has not come), Pratyutpannamati (quick-witted), and Yadbhavisya (who believes that what must occur will occur).

One day, while on their way home, some fishermen spotted the pond. Seeing the abundance of fish, one fisherman said to another, "We have caught enough fish for today. Let us come back tomorrow to fish here."

Anagatavidhata, overhearing the fishermen's conversation, immediately called a meeting of the school of fish. "You should have heard the fishermen," Anagatavidhata began urgently, "Let us move to another pond. Weak creatures should move away from strong enemies. Wise beings, who have a safe resort and an easy availability of food elsewhere, should not witness the destruction of their family."

Upon hearing this, Pratyutpannamati immediately agreed to the plan. "Afraid of moving to a foreign land, one should not perish in one's own homeland," Pratyutpannamati said. He understood that taking proactive measures to ensure safety was the wisest course of action.

However, Yadbhavisya was not convinced to leave the pond. "It is not proper to leave this pond that our fathers and forefathers have left to us,"

Yadbhavisya argued. "That which has to happen will happen, so I shall not move out of this place."

Despite the warnings and pleas from Anagatavidhata and Pratyutpannamati, Yadbhavisya remained steadfast. The other fish, heeding the advice, moved to another pond to ensure their survival.

The next day, the fishermen returned as planned and cast their nets into the pond. The fish that stayed behind, including Yadbhavisya, were all caught and wiped out.

Reflecting on this tale, Anagatavidhata said, "So I tell you, those who, having estimated impending calamity, prepare and do the groundwork, live happily. A person who relies solely on fate perishes."

The story of the three fishes serves as a powerful lesson about the importance of foresight and action in the face of danger. Anagatavidhata's advice emphasizes the need to anticipate threats and take preemptive steps to safeguard oneself and one's community. Pratyutpannamati's quick decision to relocate demonstrates the value of adaptability and prompt action.

In contrast, Yadbhavisya's steadfastness in the face of danger, relying on fate rather than prudence, illustrates the perils of complacency and inaction. His refusal to leave the familiar pond, despite the clear threat posed by the fishermen, led to his demise.

This story is a reminder that while tradition and heritage are important, they should not blind us to imminent dangers. It highlights the need to balance respect for the past with the demands of the present and the uncertainties of the future.

In the context of leadership and decision-making, the tale underscores the importance of strategic thinking and the willingness to take bold steps to protect and ensure the well-being of the group. It encourages leaders to be vigilant, proactive, and ready to make difficult decisions when necessary to avert disaster.

Thus, those who prepare and act wisely, anticipating challenges and making informed decisions, are more likely to thrive and find happiness. Those who rely solely on fate and fail to take proactive measures risk perishing when faced with adversity.

Today..

It had been some time since Dr. Vishnusharma retired. Siddharth realized he had not paid him a visit in a while and thought it was time to do so.

“How is your retired life?” Siddharth asked.

“I am enjoying myself,” Vishnusharma replied. “You don’t have to deal with people following unethical practices, you see.”

“Are you making fun of me? I feel like I am stuck. I don’t know where to start. Did you make any progress at all when you were there?”

“Yes, I made progress, but it was very slow, not to my liking. There are people who benefit from those unethical practices.”

“Yes, and how did you manage to transform them? I have tried many ways, and none seem to work.”

“Siddharth, the skills required to transform and change an organization are different from building a product. You are a smart person. You learned and became strong in product development. I am sure you can do that in this area as well.”

“If I knew how, I could do it.”

But before that, let’s look at what the Panchatantra says about change.”

“I assume you are referring to the story of the three fishes.”

“Yes. It says one who acts when there is a change wins.”

“Great. What is the first criterion required for change?”

“I am not sure.”

“First, one has to be aware that change is coming or is already happening. Many times people don’t acknowledge or even know that there is a change happening. At least in your case, there is a clear role change. Many times, people don’t even have that luxury.”

“I know change is happening. What next?”

“Second, one should not be comfortable with their existing place or status quo.”

“I am not.”

“I don’t think so, Siddharth. Otherwise, you would be successful by now.”

“What am I missing?”

“You think about it. How do you change people who don’t report to you?”

“Influence them, I suppose?”

“How do you influence them?”

“I am just talking to them now.”

“That would work if there was a team reporting to you.”

“Ahh... got it. I need to be working on influence strategies when people don’t report to me.”

“Yes. And it also requires you to drop what you have learned about getting things done in the organization. Mind you, the progress will be slow, but there will be progress.”

Siddharth then accessed the 'Handling Change' AI coach and started working through it. Soon, he was seeing some traction, but it was not as much as he had intended.

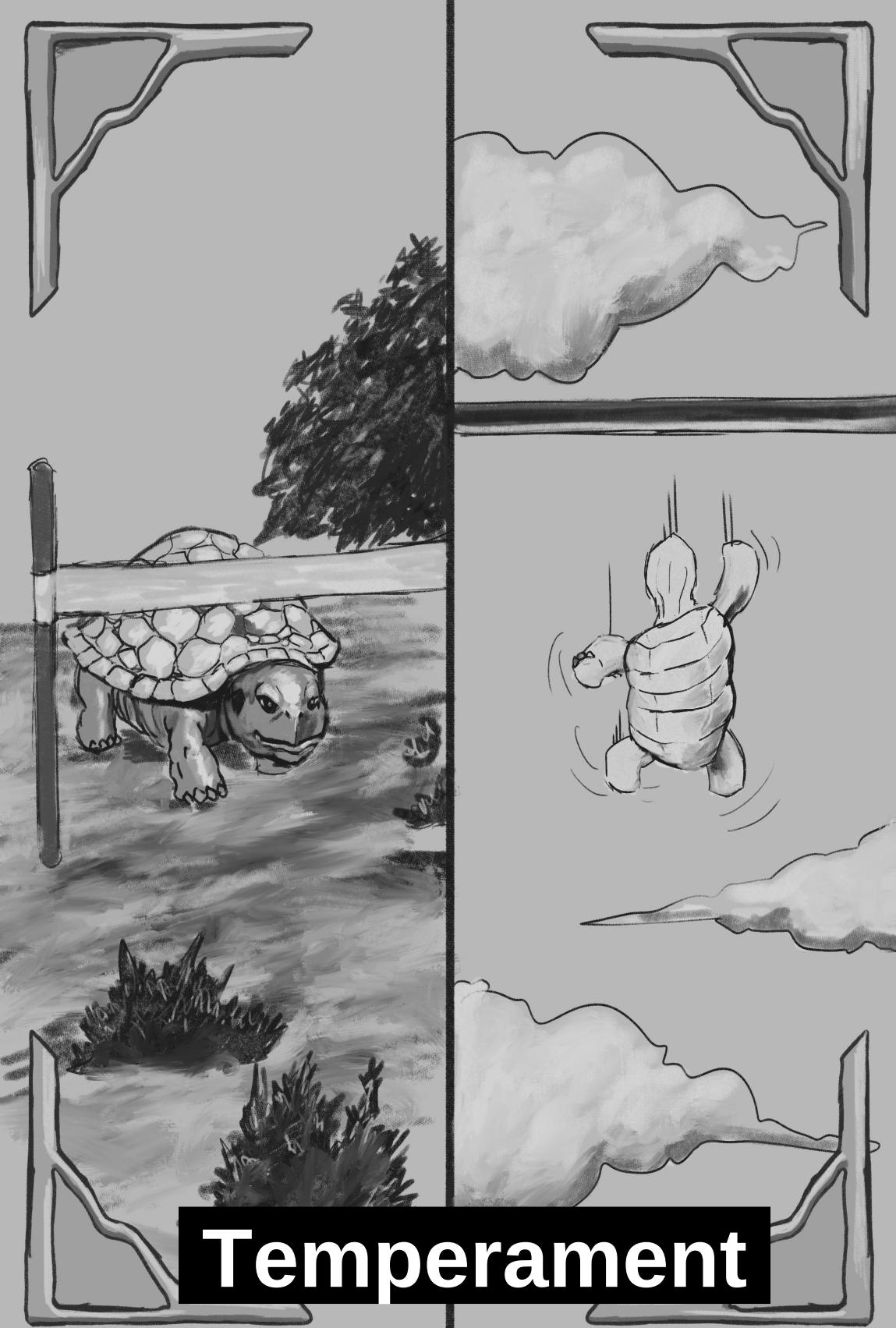


Handling change AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-3





Temperament

Siddharth gazed out of his new office window at DeceptiveGlow, the vibrant sunset reflecting the mixed emotions stirring within him. The orange and pink hues painted across the sky seemed to echo the blend of hope and uncertainty he felt. It was his first week stepping into the shoes once filled by his mentor, Dr. Vishnusharma, the company's former Ethics Leader who had retired after a distinguished career. The weight of this new role pressed on him. DeceptiveGlow had created the position during a crisis of public confidence, a time when questionable practices had become the norm rather than the exception. The company's reputation was tarnished, and it was up to Siddharth to clean up the image and steer DeceptiveGlow back to ethical practices.

Siddharth had a solid background in product management, but this task felt vastly different. The challenges were not just technical or operational but deeply rooted in the company culture. As he reflected on his mentor's advice and the stories they had shared, he understood that transforming an organization's ethical foundation would require patience, resilience, and a strategic approach.

His initial steps to instigate change were met with resistance. Colleagues who once chatted freely with him now whispered behind closed doors, wary of his new position and the implications it might have on their work. His proposals, which he presented with thorough research and genuine concern, were met with polite nods but no real commitment. The reluctance was palpable; change, especially in an entrenched system, was difficult to accept.

Siddharth felt isolated. The camaraderie he once enjoyed seemed to vanish, replaced by a barrier of skepticism and defensiveness. He realized that his task was not just to implement new policies but to shift mindsets—a far more challenging endeavor. The road ahead seemed daunting, and doubts began to creep in.

In search of guidance, Siddharth turned to the wisdom of the Panchatantra.

2500 years ago

Damanaka having told the tale of the three fishes, waited for Karataka to respond. However, Karataka, remained skeptical. "But your plan has already failed once. What if it fails again?"

Damanaka said, "Don't speak like that. When you persist, one day you will succeed. Otherwise, you are bound to perish like the tortoise."

Karataka, curious, asked, "How's that?"

Damanaka began to narrate the story. "In the same pond where the fishes lived, there was a tortoise named Kambugriva. One day, Kambugriva noticed the fish discussing their plans to move to another place. Wanting to join them, the tortoise felt a deep sense of urgency. However, Kambugriva could not move to another place by itself due to its slow pace and lack of agility.

Determined to find a solution, Kambugriva devised a clever plan. It approached its friends, the cranes, and said, 'Dear friends, I need your help to move to a safer place. Can you hold a stick between your legs while I latch onto it with my mouth? You can then fly me to the new pond.' The cranes agreed to this idea, and Kambugriva prided itself on thinking through such an ingenious plan.

As they began their journey, the cranes flew through the sky with the tortoise holding tightly to the stick with its mouth.

People below saw this unusual sight and started praising the cranes for their brilliance in transporting the tortoise. Kambugriva, filled with pride and wanting to claim credit for the idea, struggled to keep silent. For a while, it managed to control its urge to speak. But eventually, Kambugriva's temperament got the better of it. Desperate to let everyone know that it was his idea, he opened his mouth to speak. As soon as he did, he lost his grip and fell to his death.

Damanaka concluded, "Therefore, one should persist without losing one's temperament. Otherwise, one is bound to perish."

Karataka listened intently to the story, absorbing its moral. The tale of Kambugriva and the cranes was a poignant reminder of the importance of patience and perseverance, and the dangers of pride and impulsiveness. It emphasized that success often requires steadfastness and self-control, and that letting emotions dictate actions can lead to ruin.

Reflecting on the story, Karataka said, "I understand now. Persistence and patience are crucial. It's not just about having a good plan, but also about executing it with the right attitude and maintaining self-control."

Damanaka nodded, "Exactly. Just like Kambugriva, if you lose control over your temperament, even the best-laid plans can fail. Stay focused and patient, and success will eventually follow."

This story served as a powerful lesson for both Damanaka and Karataka, reinforcing the value of persistence and the need to keep one's emotions in check while pursuing their goals. The wisdom from the tale would guide them in their future endeavors, helping them navigate challenges with composure and determination.

Today..

Realizing he needed more than ancient wisdom, Siddharth picked up the phone to call his mentor.

The familiar voice of Vishnusharma came through warmly, "Siddharth! How are you, my boy?"

"Professor, I'm finding it more challenging than expected. It's like you never left, and yet everyone is waiting for me to fail," Siddharth confessed, feeling the pressure mounting.

Vishnusharma's voice was soothing yet serious. "Change is never welcomed with open arms, Siddharth. Remember the story of the tortoise and the cranes from the Panchatantra?"

"Yes, the tortoise was carried in the sky by the two cranes, but it couldn't resist talking, despite being warned. Its temperament led to its downfall," Siddharth recalled.

"Exactly," Vishnusharma continued. "In your role, understanding and managing your own temperament and that of others around you is crucial. It's about knowing when to push and when to pull back, when to speak up and when to listen."

"But how do I get them to listen, to see that change is necessary?" Siddharth asked, frustration evident in his tone.

"Lead by example and start small. You're not just replacing me, Siddharth; you're redefining what ethics means at DeceptiveGlow. That requires patience and small, steady steps. What's your first move been?"

"I've been holding meetings, outlining the new ethical guidelines I believe we should adopt," Siddharth explained.

Vishnusharma chuckled. "Meetings, eh? How about something less formal? Perhaps a workshop or informal group discussions? Invite contributions rather than imposing decisions. Remember, true change feels like a choice, not a mandate."

Siddharth absorbed the advice. "I see your point. I've been so focused on what needs changing that I forgot to consider how to bring everyone along with me on this journey."

"Exactly. And remember, being an Ethics Leader is more about nurturing a culture than policing it. Foster an environment where ethical behavior is both valued and practiced willingly."

"Thank you, Professor. I'll start first thing tomorrow with a new approach. I think it's time for less talking and more listening on my part," Siddharth concluded, feeling a mix of nerves and excitement for the challenge ahead.

"Good luck, Siddharth. I'm always here if you need me," Vishnusharma offered, his voice filled with pride.

The next day, Siddharth implemented his new strategy. He arranged small, casual meetings with different teams, discussing not just the ethical failures but their ideas and visions for a more ethical DeceptiveGlow. He listened more than he spoke, which slowly changed the office dynamics.

Months passed, and the resistance to change turned into collaborative efforts. The company's ethos began to shift visibly. Ethics were no longer just guidelines in a company handbook but were becoming integral to daily decision-making.

In his office, now adorned with a quote from the Panchatantra about wisdom and patience, Siddharth realized that his journey was just beginning. Under his guidance, DeceptiveGlow was slowly restoring its reputation, not by erasing the past but by building a more ethical future. At the heart of this transformation was not a set of rules, but a culture of integrity that he, following in Vishnusharma's footsteps, was determined to cultivate.

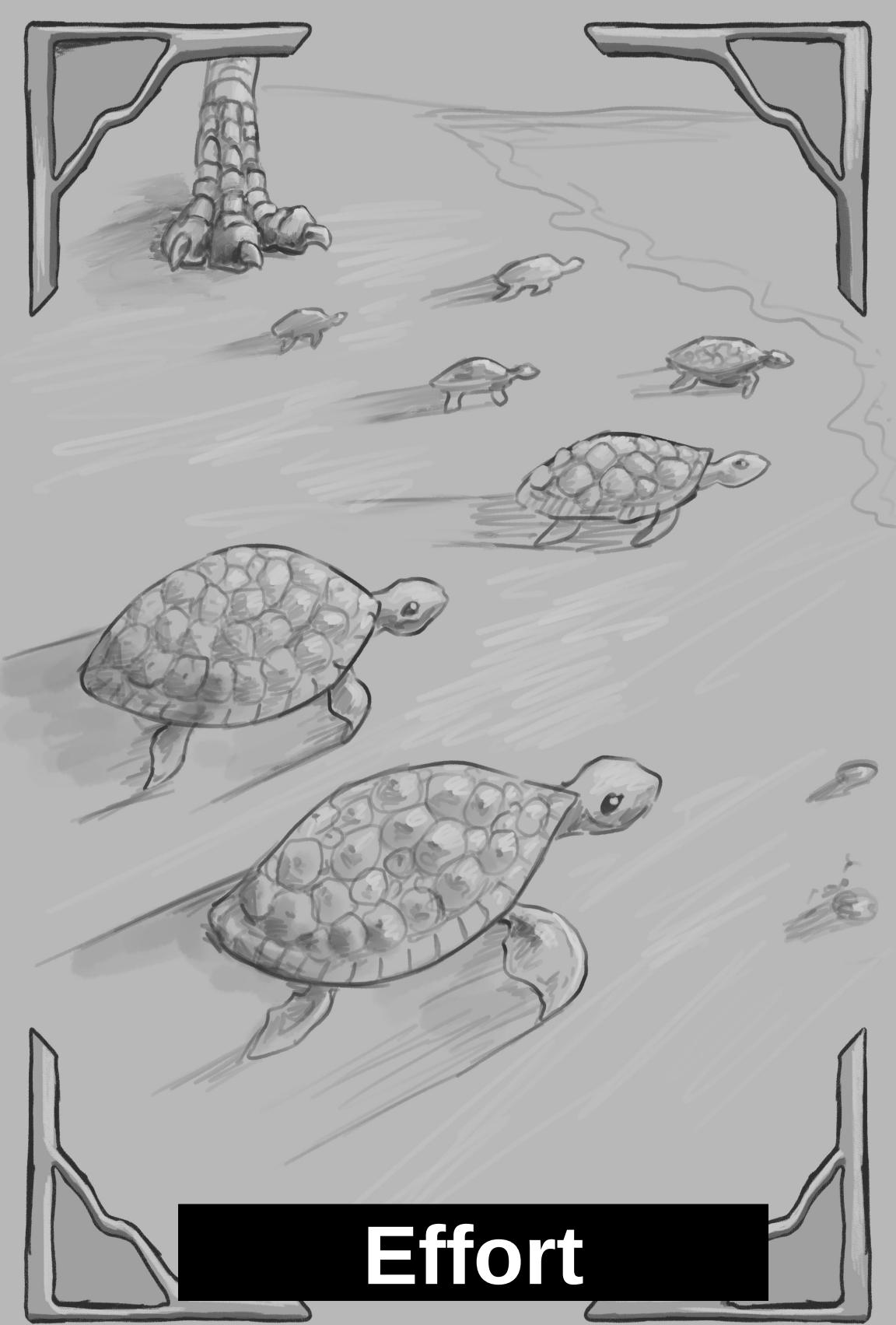


Temperament AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-3





Effort

Siddharth had witnessed the remarkable transformation of DeceptiveGlow from a company once mired in questionable practices to a paragon of corporate ethics. His office, which had initially felt like a lonely outpost on the fringes of corporate politics, had gradually become a bustling hub of activity and change. This transformation was not just a personal victory for Siddharth but a testament to the collective effort of the entire organization. Teams from various divisions had started to embrace ethical practices under his guidance, which had led to a reduction in complaints and a significant increase in transparency across the board. The ethical metrics he had introduced, once viewed with skepticism, were now showing positive results, reflecting a new culture of integrity and accountability.

The change had been hard-won. Siddharth had spent countless hours in meetings, workshops, and one-on-one sessions advocating for the importance of ethics in business. He had faced resistance, skepticism, and even outright hostility at times. But through persistence and a deep commitment to his values, he had managed to turn the tide. The impact of his work was evident not only in the company's internal dynamics but also in its external reputation.

Customers and investors had started to take notice, and DeceptiveGlow was beginning to be seen as a leader in corporate ethics.

However, just as Siddharth was beginning to feel that the foundation of ethical practices he had worked so hard to build was solid, an unexpected challenge shook the very core of his achievements. A sudden and severe stock market crash rattled the industry, leading to widespread panic and significant shifts in corporate leadership across the board. The aftermath of the crash saw many companies scrambling to stabilize their financial footing, and DeceptiveGlow was no exception.

In the midst of this turmoil, a new CEO was appointed. The new leader was tasked with steering the company through the financial crisis and prioritized financial recovery above all else. Unfortunately, this new strategic direction meant that some roles and initiatives that were deemed non-essential to immediate financial recovery were on the chopping block. Siddharth's role as the Ethics Leader, which had been crucial in transforming the company's culture, was suddenly viewed as expendable. The new CEO, while respectful of the progress made, deemed Siddharth's role redundant in the face of urgent financial strategies.

Siddharth was presented with a stark choice: return to product management, where he had originally made his mark in the company, or leave DeceptiveGlow altogether. This decision was heart-wrenching. Returning to product management meant abandoning the progress and the team he had built in the ethics division. It felt like a betrayal of his principles and the hard work that had gone into building an ethical culture within the company.

On the other hand, leaving the company meant stepping away from a project that he deeply cared about and believed in, not to mention the practical considerations of career and financial stability. Siddharth found himself at a crossroads, contemplating the best path forward not just for his career but for the ethical values he had championed.

As he considered his options, Siddharth realized that whatever decision he made would have to align with his values. The transformation he had spearheaded at DeceptiveGlow was not just about changing policies but about fostering a culture of integrity. He knew that true change often faced resistance, especially in times of crisis, and the true test of ethical leadership was not just in steering a course during calm waters but in guiding the ship through storms.

Resolved to make a decision that would reflect his commitment to ethical business practices, Siddharth prepared to meet with the new CEO. He would argue for the importance of maintaining an ethical backbone in the company's strategy, even in times of financial crisis. His journey at DeceptiveGlow had taught him that the integration of ethical practices into business strategy was not just good ethics but good business. The challenge now was to convince the new leadership of the same. Siddharth felt betrayed. His efforts, once celebrated, now seemed forgotten. The room where he had orchestrated monumental changes felt colder, emptier. He pulled a well-worn copy of the Panchatantra from his shelf, seeking solace in its ancient wisdom. Yet, the tales that once sparked ideas now echoed his despair.

2500 years ago

Karataka having listened to the story of the tortoise, understood the importance of temperament. He asked, "Even if you want to try, what will you try? Sanjivaka and Pingalaka have become thick friends now."

Damanaka paused, contemplating deeply before responding. "Let me think about something. An arrow, thrown by an archer, may kill or may not kill, but the intelligence employed by a wise person destroys the nation along with the ruler."

"So, I shall through deceit, set Pingalaka and Sanjivaka against each other," Damanaka declared, formulating his plan.

Karataka, concerned about the implications, cautioned, "If they come to know about it, if your luck runs out, you might be killed."

Damanaka, unwavering, replied, "A diplomat should employ maneuvers in times of distress. Even if destiny is against you, efforts should not be forsaken. A man should not leave patience even when destiny is adverse; he may find himself in a favorable situation at any point in time. Prosperity accrues to an enterprising lion, so leaving destiny aside, one should make an effort. And further, deities are helpful to persons who are firmly determined on their mission."

Karataka, intrigued, asked, "How is that?"

Damanaka began to tell a story to illustrate his point. "In a city, there was a weaver who had a carpenter friend. While they were walking on the streets one day, the weaver saw the princess of the kingdom coming in a procession. He was immediately struck by her beauty and fell deeply in love. Over the next few days, he was constantly thinking about her and longed to see her again."

"Seeing his friend distressed, the carpenter inquired what was the matter. The weaver told him about the princess. The carpenter then built a flying wooden Garuda to help his friend visit the princess. Wearing the costume of Vishnu, the weaver took the flying Garuda to the palace."

"The princess was also attracted to the weaver, who was dressed like Vishnu. Soon, they secretly married. However, one day the king found out about their marriage and wanted to punish his son-in-law, the weaver. But, having seen the flying Garuda and Vishnu, he was happy his daughter had married a god."

"Now, the king became greedy. Believing his son-in-law was Vishnu, he wanted to go to war with neighboring kingdoms and acquire them. The other kingdoms were also ready for war, and they all assembled to fight the king. The king asked his son-in-law to help win this war."

"Now the weaver was very much afraid. How could he fight so many kings? He was just a weaver. But he had no other choice; he made up his mind to get into battle."

"The real Garuda, who was also watching this curious case, went to Vishnu. 'Soon all your bhaktas will stop worshipping you,' Garuda warned."

Vishnu, alarmed, asked, "Why? What happened?"

Garuda narrated the incident of the weaver. "Now, if the weaver is defeated in the war, then nobody would respect you. They would think Vishnu was defeated by a mere mortal."

Vishnu immediately went into the body of the weaver, and Garuda into the wooden Garuda. As they saw Vishnu involved in the war, the other kings surrendered without any fight."

"So, you see," Damanaka concluded, "even Gods come down to help people who take the effort."

Today..

Needing more than just written words, he called Vishnusharma, his mentor.

“Vishnusharma, it’s Siddharth. Everything’s changing again, and not for the better.”

Vishnusharma’s voice, ever calm, came through. “I heard about the market crash. How are you holding up?”

“It’s a mess here. I’m being sidelined. They want me back in product management, or out. All our work on ethics... it’s like it never happened.”

Mentoring through the Panchatantra, Vishnusharma said, “Siddharth, remember Damanaka from the Panchatantra? The jackal who, despite not being favored by the king, continued to strive and use his cunning to regain position and influence?”

“Yes, I remember. Damanaka didn’t give up. He saw opportunities where others saw obstacles.”

“Exactly,” Vishnusharma continued. “You’re faced with a choice here—not just of career, but of character. Damanaka’s tale wasn’t just about ambition; it was about resilience and vision. He believed in his ability to make a difference, regardless of his position at court.”

“He even articulated to Karataka, telling him one should always make one’s effort even though the odds are not in your favor”

“But Damanaka was a fraudster, why should I listen to him?”

“One should not look at the source of the message, we should look at whether the message is true”

Siddharth listened, the story stirring something within him. “But Vishnusharma, Damanaka was in a court. I’m in a corporation that no longer values what I do.”

"That may seem so, but you still hold influence, Siddharth. Your work has touched many, and those seeds of ethical practice won't disappear overnight. This might be your Damanaka moment—to innovate within your role, to advocate for ethics subtly but effectively."

"So, you think I should stay? Even if it means no longer being the Ethics Leader?"

"Consider it, yes. Transitioning back to product management doesn't mean abandoning your principles. You'll be the ethical heartbeat in a place that desperately needs one. And who knows? This could be a strategic retreat that prepares you for a greater comeback."

Siddharth felt a renewed sense of purpose. "It won't be easy."

"It rarely is. But your journey has always been about more than just easy choices. It's about meaningful ones. Stay strong, Siddharth. Your vision for a better DeceptiveGlow is still alive, as long as you carry it in your actions and decisions."

Grateful for the guidance, Siddharth thanked his mentor and prepared for the next chapter.

After the call, Siddharth spent hours in contemplation. He reread the tale of Damanaka, absorbing its lessons on perseverance and ingenuity. The next day, he informed HR of his decision to stay, requesting a transfer back to product management.

As he settled into his new role, Siddharth carried his ethical framework with him. He integrated ethical considerations into product design briefs, led by example in meetings, and spoke on the importance of user trust and integrity. Slowly, he observed a change in discussions, a consideration for the 'right thing' over the 'profitable thing'.



Effort AI with Vishnusharma



Part 4

The Alliances

JOURNEY PART-4





Self Interest

Siddharth gazed out over the city skyline, the tall buildings piercing the evening sky like silent sentinels watching over a world in flux. Below, the city buzzed with life, oblivious to the stock market's recent tumult that had shaken the very foundations of DeceptiveGlow. The crash had been merciless, toppling the old CEO and unsettling the entire company. Siddharth's thoughts returned to his days as the Ethics Leader at DeceptiveGlow. Those were days filled with purpose and challenges, as he fought to embed a strong ethical backbone into the company's operations. Those efforts were sidelined by the market's harsh realities and the company's survival instincts.

Despite the overwhelming pressure, Siddharth knew he couldn't abandon his principles. He reached for the worn copy of the Panchatantra on his shelf, a gift from his mentor, Dr. Vishnusharma, during his early days in the ethics department.

Each story in that ancient collection taught profound lessons about morality, leadership, and practical wisdom through simple parables. Remembering Vishnusharma's sagacity, Siddharth picked up his phone and dialed his mentor.

The phone barely rang twice before Dr. Vishnusharma answered, his voice as calm and reassuring as Siddharth remembered. "Ah, Siddharth, to what do I owe the pleasure?"

"Dr. Vishnusharma, I need your guidance," Siddharth confessed, detailing the tumult at DeceptiveGlow and his new position. "I'm trying to weave ethics back into our fabric, but I fear that in their pursuit of profit, the hearts of my colleagues have hardened."

Dr. Vishnusharma chuckled softly. "You are facing a classic dilemma, Siddharth. It reminds me of a story from the Panchatantra about the Necklace and the Snake. Are you familiar with it?"

"Yes, where the crows used the soldiers to kill the snake"

"Let's look at the story again"

2500 years ago

Damanaka just finished explaining about the importance of trying even if the odds are not in your favor. Karataka was still not convinced.

Karataka expressed his skepticism, "All this is fine, but Pingalaka and Sanjivaka are more powerful than you."

Damanaka, ever confident, replied, "That's true, but there are ways to handle more powerful people than you."

Karataka, intrigued, asked, "How is that possible?"

Damanaka explained, "One way is to kindle powerful people's self-interest. Take, for example, how the crow used soldiers to kill the serpent."

Karataka, curious about the tale, prompted, "How is that?"

Damanaka began to narrate: "There once existed a majestic Banyan tree where a pair of crows had made their home. However, their tranquility was constantly disrupted by a grave threat. In a hole within the same tree, a menacing snake resided. Every time the crows hatched their young, the snake would slither silently into their nest and devour the fledglings."

Devastated by repeated losses and out of desperation, the crows consulted a wise old jackal who was renowned for his cunning. The jackal listened to their woes and spoke sagely, "A victory achieved through guile cannot be accomplished by mere weapons."

An employer of strategy, though possessing a feeble body, is not to be defeated by a valorous person."

The crows, eager for a solution, implored, "Then tell us how we can defeat the snake."

The jackal devised a clever plan: "Go to the capital and find where the King's minister resides. Observe and wait for an opportunity to steal a valuable necklace. Once you have it, drop it into the hole of the snake."

Intrigued by the plan, the crows flew to the capital. After careful observation, they saw the minister's wife place her necklace by a window. Seizing the moment, the crow swooped down, grabbed the necklace, and flew back to the Banyan tree. With precision, it dropped the necklace right into the snake's hole.

Alerted by the sight of the crow with the necklace, the royal soldiers followed the bird from the palace to the tree. They watched as the crow dropped the necklace into the hole and approached to investigate. Peering inside, they spotted the gleaming necklace—and the sinister snake guarding it.

Without a second thought, the soldiers struck down the snake to retrieve the necklace. With the snake gone, the crows' nest was safe once again. The crows lived out their days in peace, their young safe from the serpent's threat."

Karataka, absorbing the story, finally understood Damanaka's point. "So, the key is to use the strengths and resources of others to your advantage, especially when direct confrontation is not an option," he remarked.

Damanaka nodded, "Exactly. Just like the crows used the soldiers' duty to recover stolen property to eliminate their enemy, sometimes one must employ indirect methods to deal with powerful adversaries. It's all about strategic thinking and making the most of the opportunities that arise."

The lesson was clear: even in the face of greater power, intelligence and cunning could level the playing field, turning potential defeat into victory.

Today.

“What do you think happened there?”

“It is a form of indirect alliance?”

“Yes. It is about using other’s self-interest , especially powerful people than us to drive our agenda”

Siddharth listened intently, drawing parallels to his own situation.

“The moral here,” Dr. Vishnusharma continued, “is about leveraging self-interest to achieve a greater ethical good. You can use incentives to guide behavior towards ethical outcomes, even if the motives of those involved are not initially aligned with your own.”

Siddharth’s mind raced with possibilities. “So, you suggest I find what my colleagues value most and align it with ethical practices?”

“Exactly,” Dr. Vishnusharma affirmed. “It’s about forming alliances based on mutual benefits. You may not change their core, but you can influence their actions, which in turn can foster a more ethical environment.”

Buoyed by this ancient wisdom, Siddharth crafted a plan. He initiated projects that tied ethical outcomes to departmental bonuses and publicly recognized teams that excelled in maintaining high ethical standards.

His approach was met with mixed reactions. A handful of colleagues saw the value in his vision, drawn by the allure of recognition and financial incentives. They championed his cause, adapting their strategies to be more in line with Siddharth’s ethical guidelines.

However, despite his efforts and the successes of a few, the majority remained indifferent. They performed only the bare minimum to meet the newly set ethical guidelines, their actions driven by compliance rather than conviction.

As Siddharth sat in his office late one evening, he reflected on the challenges ahead. The path to ethical transformation was more arduous and complex than he had hoped, but he was undeterred. Armed with the wisdom of the Panchatantra and the innovative strategies inspired by Dr. Vishnusharma, he knew that change was possible, even if it had to be ignited one small spark at a time.

Through the glass, the city continued its restless dance, a stark reminder of the world's ceaseless machinations. Siddharth turned away, his resolve hardened. Ethics, he knew, would not win the day with grand gestures but through persistent effort and strategic alliances. And in this game of influence and incentives, he was just getting started.



Alliances (Self-interest) AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-4





Enemy's strength

Siddharth's efforts to ethically realign DeceptiveGlow were beginning to take root, although the progress was slow and the reach of these changes was not as extensive as he had envisioned. As he continued to delve deeper into the intricacies of the company's culture, he encountered a formidable obstacle that threatened to stymie his initiatives. This obstacle was none other than Mr. Karamchand, a towering figure within the organization whose influence permeated every corner of the company. Mr. Karamchand was not only charismatic and powerful but also deeply entrenched in maintaining the status quo, which served his interests well. His network within the company was extensive and his sway over decisions was considerable, making him a formidable opponent to any change that might threaten his established position.

Troubled by this revelation, Siddharth found himself at a critical juncture. Seated in his quiet, spacious office, he felt the weight of the challenge ahead. His hand reached out for the ancient wisdom contained in the Panchatantra, a text that had guided him through many dilemmas. He flipped through the pages until he stumbled upon the story of a clever hare who managed to use a lion's own strength and arrogance against it.

2500 years ago

Damanaka having spoken about using the self-interest of others to win over stronger opponents, waited for Karataka to respond.

Karataka expressed his concern, "What if you cannot find anybody powerful with self-interest?"

Damanaka, ever resourceful, replied, "Then kindle the all too destructive emotions in the other person, much like the Hare did to the Lion."

Karataka, intrigued, asked, "How is that?"

Damanaka began to narrate: "There once lived a lion named Bhasuraka, a fearsome predator who indiscriminately killed various animals in the forest—deers, hares, and others. As the killings escalated, the animal kingdom was pushed to the brink of despair."

"One day, the animals convened and appealed to Bhasuraka, pleading with him to moderate his appetite. They proposed, 'O mighty lion, you are satiated by one animal each day. From today onwards, one animal from each species shall willingly come to you for consumption. This way, you need not exert yourself, and we shall not be annihilated entirely.'"

"They further counseled, 'It is said, nourishment accrues to a king who enjoys his kingdom like taking medicine, slowly and according to his strength.'

Bhasuraka, seeing the wisdom in this arrangement, agreed but with a stern condition, 'Yes, I agree. However, if even for one day I don't see an animal for my consumption, I will eat all of you.'"

"From then on, each day an animal from each species surrendered itself. But one day, it was the turn of a clever hare who wished to end this cruelty. On its way to Bhasuraka, the hare noticed its reflection in a well and devised a cunning plan."

"As the hare approached the lion, it arrived deliberately late in the evening, knowing the lion would be raging with hunger and anger. Bhasuraka, infuriated, demanded, 'Why are you late?'"

"The hare, feigning fear, replied, 'O great king, as we are tiny creatures, four of us decided to come to you together. But on our way, we were obstructed by a gigantic lion who claimed dominion over this forest and denounced you as a thief. He challenged you to a fight, declaring that whoever succeeds will be the rightful king.'"

"Upon hearing this, Bhasuraka's pride was wounded, and he bellowed, 'Lead me to this pretender! I shall show him who is the true king of this forest!'"

"The hare cautioned, 'The Lion lives in a fortress, which cannot be easily subdued. It is said, the purpose which is not served by thousands of elephants can be served by a single fortress.'"

"Driven by fury and the prospect of a challenge, Bhasuraka disregarded the hare's advice. 'It is none of your business, hare! Show me the Lion at once!'"

"The naive and impulsive lion followed the hare to the well. Seeing his own reflection and mistaking it for his challenger, he pounced ferociously into the well and drowned."

Damanaka concluded, "Therefore, one can achieve one's ambition by igniting one's destructive emotions in others. In this case, the hare utilized Bhasuraka's own arrogance and anger to bring about his downfall."

Karataka, now understanding the depth of Damanaka's strategy, nodded thoughtfully. The tale was a stark reminder of how powerful emotions, when skillfully manipulated, could be used to change the course of events, even against formidable foes.

Today.

The tale sparked a myriad of thoughts, but also a significant ethical dilemma.

Was it right to use cunning to bring down a person, even if it was for a greater good? Uncertain, Siddharth called Dr. Vishnusharma, needing his mentor's guidance more than ever.

"Vishnusharma, I've found myself in a moral quandary," Siddharth began after the initial pleasantries. "There's a leader here, Mr. Karamchand, who's blocking any progress towards ethical reform. I know of a way to challenge his position, but it involves using his own arrogance against him, much like the hare did with the lion. I'm unsure... Is this not just another form of deceit?"

Dr. Vishnusharma's response was thoughtful. "Siddharth, you are facing one of the oldest dilemmas in the book of leadership. In the Mahabharata, Krishna advises Arjuna on the battlefield about duty and righteousness, and sometimes, the path involves harsh actions for the sake of dharma, or moral order. In corporate terms, your battlefield is the boardroom, and your dharma is the ethical backbone you wish to instill in DeceptiveGlow."

But is it right to manipulate someone, even if it's for a good cause?" Siddharth pressed, his voice tinged with conflict.

"In the realm of power and leadership, Siddharth, sometimes the ends do justify the means—especially when the stakes are the collective welfare and ethical future of the company. Corporate politics often require us to navigate through gray areas. If your actions are for the greater good, some manipulation of the self-serving might be necessary."

Reassured yet still heavy with the weight of his decision, Siddharth devised a plan. He invited Mr. Karamchand to lead a high-stakes project that, on the surface, promised substantial financial returns but was fraught with ethical pitfalls and required absolute transparency and compliance. Siddharth anticipated that Mr. Karamchand's overconfidence and his habitual overlooking of ethical guidelines would lead him into a trap of his own making.

As predicted, the project initially generated buzz and interest. Mr. Karamchand, basking in the limelight, ignored the stringent ethical standards required. It wasn't long before discrepancies began to surface, leading to an internal audit. The results were damning, exposing not just the failures of the project under Mr. Karamchand's leadership but also his long history of ethical violations, now laid bare for the board to see.

With his credibility shattered, Mr. Karamchand lost his influence and was eventually ousted from his position. He was replaced by Ms. Leela, a proponent of Siddharth's ethical vision and known for her integrity.

In the quiet aftermath of this upheaval, Siddharth couldn't shake off a lingering sense of guilt. He had saved the company's ethical future but at the cost of another man's career. He arranged another call with Dr. Vishnusharma, seeking solace.

"Vishnusharma, it's done. Karamchand is out, and Ms. Leela is in. But I find no joy in this victory," Siddharth admitted.

"Siddharth, what you feel is the weight of leadership — the burden of difficult decisions. Remember, it was Karamchand's actions, not yours, that led to his downfall. You merely set the stage for truth to emerge," Vishnusharma counseled.

"Perhaps," Siddharth mused, "but it was I who orchestrated that truth's emergence. Is this the cost of ethical leadership?"

"It can be," Vishnusharma said softly. "But remember, you haven't just ousted a man; you've potentially saved many from the consequences of his continued influence. Ethics is about the greater good, not individual comfort. You did well, Siddharth."

As he hung up, Siddharth looked out of his office window. The city stretched before him, unaware and indifferent to the battles fought in its towering glass behemoths. Siddharth knew his journey was far from over, but he felt a renewed sense of purpose. With each difficult decision, he was slowly shaping DeceptiveGlow into a beacon of ethical business practices. The path was fraught with challenges, but Siddharth was now sure of his role as a leader not just of products, but of principles. He would lead, one ethical decision at a time, in the hope that one day, the entire company would reflect the integrity he envisioned.



Alliances (Competitor) AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-4





Like Mindedness

After the ousting of Mr. Karamchand, Siddharth experienced a fleeting moment of triumph, a brief exhale in the relentless pace of his mission to instill ethical practices at DeceptiveGlow. This victory, however minor in the grand scheme, provided a much-needed boost to his morale. Yet, almost as quickly as the wave of triumph had washed over him, it receded, leaving behind the stark reality of the challenges that still lay ahead.

DeceptiveGlow was not just a large company; it was a behemoth, with thousands of departments and teams sprawling across different regions and cultures. Each of these units operated like a microcosm, entrenched in their own established ways and often resistant to change. Siddharth found that the deeper he delved into the organizational structure, the more complex and intertwined the resistance became. His initial straightforward strategies for injecting ethical practices were not sufficient to navigate the labyrinthine network of established norms and hidden agendas. The path he had embarked upon, filled with the promise of transformation, now seemed increasingly winding and isolating.

Faced with this daunting landscape, Siddharth recognized the need for a shift in his approach. The broad and sweeping changes he envisioned required not just top-down mandates but a cultivation of grassroots advocacy for ethics. He needed to engage with the company at every level, to turn reluctance into enthusiasm and skepticism into advocacy. This realization prompted him to think more strategically about fostering a culture of ethics that could permeate through the thick layers of the company's bureaucracy.

In this moment of reflection and recalibration, Siddharth once again turned to the ancient wisdom of the Panchatantra. These stories, with their deep insights into human nature and morality, had always provided him with clarity and guidance. He sought not just to find a temporary solution but to uncover enduring strategies that could guide his approach to this vast undertaking.

2500 years ago

Damanaka having spoken about using the strong emotions and strength of the opponent to win over them, waited for Karataka to respond.

Karataka expressed his doubt, "All this is fine, but our Pingalaka is not like that Lion; he is kind-hearted and a just ruler."

Damanaka acknowledged the distinction, "There are other ways to handle such a situation."

Karataka, curious about the alternatives, asked, "What else do you have?"

Damanaka proposed a strategic approach, "I can form an alliance of like-minded individuals with complementary skills, similar to how the sparrows defeated the elephant."

Karataka, intrigued by the comparison, prompted, "How's that?"

Damanaka began to recount the tale: "In a dense forest, there lived a sparrow couple in a tree. One unfortunate day, an elephant, wandering through the forest, broke the branch in arrogance where the sparrows had made their nest, destroying their eggs in the process. The loss devastated the sparrows, leaving them to lament their fate. What could they, being so small, possibly do against a mighty elephant?"

Damanaka continued, "During this time of sorrow, a woodpecker, who was a friend of the sparrow couple, came to visit. Upon seeing their despair, he advised, 'Prudent people never mourn the lost or dead. While your pain is understandable, it is essential to think of a way forward rather than remain in sorrow.'"

"The sparrows responded, 'You are right, however, this elephant, out of pride, has destroyed our offspring. If you are a true friend, help us think of a measure to kill it.' Moved by their plight, the woodpecker agreed to help."

"The woodpecker then sought the assistance of a fly, who also agreed to help. Not stopping there, the woodpecker approached a frog, who too pledged his support. Together, they devised a plan, leveraging each other's unique abilities. The frog pointed out, 'The measures devised by persons in association with benevolent but politically well-versed individuals, never fail.'"

"The frog laid out the strategy: 'Fly, you will make melodious noise near the elephant, enticing him into a state of pleasure so that he closes his eyes. At that moment, let the woodpecker pierce his eyes. The elephant, in pain, will seek water to relieve his discomfort. With his eyes closed, he will follow the sound to find water. I will keep croaking to indicate where the water is, but I will actually be croaking from the edge of a deep pit.'"

Damanaka paused for effect, then concluded, "The plan was executed perfectly. The elephant, guided by the croaking, stumbled into the pit and lost its life, unable to escape. Thus, the sparrow, the woodpecker, the fly, and the frog—all making a union—got the giant, intoxicated elephant killed unitedly."

Karataka listened intently, absorbing the profound lesson in teamwork and strategy. The story illustrated how even the mightiest challenges could be overcome by combining strengths and working together, a principle that could be applied even in the context of their current predicaments with Pingalaka.

Today.

Realizing the value of this strategy, Siddharth dialed Dr. Vishnusharma, eager for advice on how to apply these ancient lessons to his modern-day quandary.

“Vishnusharma, the Panchatantra speaks of alliances, but how do I form these in a corporate setting?” Siddharth asked after the initial greetings.

“Ah, alliances,” Dr. Vishnusharma mused, his voice rich with understanding. “In your context, these are not just alliances of convenience but of shared vision and values. You need to identify and gather like-minded individuals within DeceptiveGlow who are not only ethical but also politically savvy.”

“But how do I identify them effectively? It feels like looking for needles in a haystack,” Siddharth confessed, his frustration palpable.

“Start small,” advised Vishnusharma. “Look for those who have supported ethical initiatives in the past or who have expressed dissatisfaction with the status quo. You must also look for emerging leaders within the organization — those who have influence over their peers but have not yet risen to the high ranks where they might be corrupted by power.”

And once I find them, how do I ensure they are truly committed and capable of advocating for our cause?”

“Through grooming and coaching, Siddharth. You must invest time in developing their understanding of why these changes are essential, not just for the company’s morality but for its sustainability and success. Equip them with the skills to navigate corporate politics effectively, so they can champion ethics without compromising their or the company’s integrity.”

Siddharth nodded to himself, absorbing the sage advice. "And I suppose I should also give them a platform to voice their ideas and insights?"

"Exactly," confirmed Dr. Vishnusharma. "Empower them. Let them lead initiatives and ethics drives. Make them the face of the change you want to see. This will not only boost their confidence but also solidify their commitment to the cause."

Inspired, Siddharth set about implementing this strategy. He began by identifying potential allies through discreet inquiries, noting those who consistently upheld ethical standards or voiced concerns about dubious practices. He arranged one-on-one meetings with these individuals, framing each discussion around their career aspirations and views on corporate ethics.

Gradually, he assembled a diverse group of promising individuals from various departments. Siddharth personally mentored these rising stars, coaching them on ethical leadership and the nuances of navigating corporate politics with integrity. He encouraged open discussions, fostered a sense of camaraderie, and emphasized the importance of collective success.

As these leaders grew in confidence and capability, Siddharth encouraged them to initiate ethics-based projects within their own teams. He supported them with resources and public recognition, slowly changing the perception of ethics from a hindrance to an integral part of business success.

Months passed, and the seeds Siddharth had planted began to sprout. Departments that had once been bastions of the old, unethical ways started showing signs of change. The newly formed ethics advocates were not only upholding standards within their teams but were also influencing others. The network of ethical practice spread, growing stronger and more extensive.

The transformation was gradual but undeniable. Annual reviews began to reflect a new trend: departments that engaged actively with Siddharth's ethics initiatives were outperforming those that didn't.

The correlation between ethical practices and business success became a powerful narrative within DeceptiveGlow.

By the end of the year, a significant portion of the company had embraced the new ethical standards. The change was most evident at the mid-level management, where Siddharth's allies had taken on leadership roles, embedding ethical practices into the operational fabric of their teams.

In a meeting with his executive team, Siddharth shared his reflections on the journey. "We've turned a significant corner," he acknowledged, his voice tinged with hard-earned pride. "But the real credit belongs to the network of ethical leaders we've cultivated across the company. Their dedication and integrity have been the key drivers of this change."

As he looked around the room, seeing nods of agreement and respect from his peers, Siddharth felt a profound sense of accomplishment. He had not only navigated the company through a moral realignment but had also fostered a culture where ethics formed the backbone of business strategy.

Dr. Vishnusharma's words echoed in his mind, a reminder of the timeless wisdom that had guided him: "Ethics is about the greater good, not individual comfort." With this ethos, Siddharth had steered DeceptiveGlow into a new era—an era where ethics and success were not just aligned but interdependent. His journey had been fraught with challenges, but as he witnessed the burgeoning culture of integrity within the company, he knew every difficult decision had been worth it.



Alliances (Like-Minded) AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-4





Bad Alliances

Siddharth sat quietly in the expansive, meticulously organized office that was his domain within the gleaming headquarters of DeceptiveGlow. As the sun began its descent, the last rays spilled through the floor-to-ceiling windows, casting elongated shadows that crawled slowly across his desk. These shadows seemed almost to play out the darkening thoughts swirling through his mind, thoughts that weighed heavily on him as the day drew to a close.

The initiative he had poured his heart into, an ambitious project designed to steer the corporate culture towards a beacon of unwavering ethical standards, was now teetering on the brink of collapse. It was a bitter realization for Siddharth, especially since the erosion of this dream was being hastened not by external forces, but from within the ranks he had himself built. The evangelists, whom he had carefully selected and nurtured to be the standard-bearers of integrity and moral clarity, were now using their influence not as he had intended. Instead of fostering a culture of honesty and ethical behavior, they had begun to manipulate their positions for personal gain, reintroducing the very unethical practices Siddharth had dedicated himself to eliminate.

Feeling a deep sense of betrayal, Siddharth turned his gaze towards the large, ancient book that rested on a stand by his side—his trusted compilation of the Panchatantra tales. These stories, steeped in wisdom and moral lessons, had often served as his guide in times of personal doubt and professional dilemma. In his search for clarity and guidance, he opened the book to a story he had read many times before, yet now it seemed particularly pertinent: the tale of the bed bug and the lice.

2500 years ago

Damanaka having spoken about forming like-minded alliances to win over stronger opponents and waited for Karataka to respond. Karataka, reflecting on the complexities of alliances, solemnly observed to Damanaka, "We don't have anybody to befriend now, and Pingalaka hasn't wronged anyone."

"Also, not all friendships are beneficial. You might lose your life, like the Louse," Karataka added, weaving caution into his words.

Puzzled, Damanaka inquired, "How is it so?"

The tale begins in the secluded sanctum of a king's bedchamber, where a louse had made her home. She led a clandestine existence, spending her days nestled in the fine linens of the royal bed, sustaining herself by discreetly sucking the king's blood only when he was deep in slumber, ensuring her presence remained unnoticed.

One day, a bed bug found its way into this chamber, drawn by the lure of easy sustenance. The louse, protective of her carefully maintained sanctuary, was immediately displeased by the intrusion. She addressed the newcomer with a firm tone, "Please leave, as this place is not suitable for you."

However, the bug, with the persuasive skill of a seasoned interloper, argued, "Telling such things to a person who is visiting your house is not proper.

It is always befitting for good people to welcome others. I ask only to fill my stomach. A man lies, serves a master not worth serving, or goes to other countries driven by the needs of the stomach."

Moved by the bug's plea and perhaps a sense of kinship to another creature of similar needs, the louse made a proposition, "I suck the blood of the king only when he is sunk in deep sleep. If you agree to suck blood only when I do, then you can stay."

"I will abide by this rule," the bug promised, eager to share in the spoils.

But, driven by an extreme eagerness and the greediness of its appetite, the bug could not contain itself. It acted impulsively, stinging the king while he was awake. The painful bite roused the king from his sleep, triggering a furious and immediate search by his servants for the source of his discomfort.

While the cunning bug quickly hid itself within the cavity of the bed, evading detection, the louse, less adept at concealing herself, was found and killed.

This tragic end starkly illustrates Karataka's warning: not every friendship or partnership is beneficial. The louse's misplaced trust in the bed bug, a creature whose nature was fundamentally at odds with her own cautious approach, led to her untimely demise.

It serves as a potent reminder that one should seek alliances with those of like mind and temperance, as aligning with those who differ greatly in nature and method can sometimes lead to disastrous consequences.

This fable, rich with the wisdom of ages, underscores the need for careful selection of companions and allies, echoing through the ages to remind us that the nature of an individual cannot be altered through preaching or promises, but is instead an intrinsic truth that must be acknowledged and respected.

Today.

Ashamed and seeking guidance, he picked up the phone to call his old mentor, Dr. Vishnusharma.

"Vishnusharma, it seems I have failed," Siddharth confessed as soon as his mentor answered, his voice heavy with disappointment. "The leaders I trusted have twisted our ethics initiative to their own ends. I fear we are sliding back into the morass we fought so hard to escape."

Dr. Vishnusharma's voice was calm and soothing, a stark contrast to Siddharth's troubled tone. "Ah, Siddharth, do not be too hard on yourself. The story of the bed bug and the lice teaches us that not all who wander close share our goals or our paths. It is a common occurrence, especially in environments rich with power and ambition."

"But how could I not see their true intentions?" Siddharth implored, seeking not just comfort but a solution.

"Siddharth, understanding the human heart requires more than good intentions. It involves a constant vigilance and a readiness to reassess one's judgments of character. Even then, some will inevitably slip through the net," Vishnusharma explained.

Feeling somewhat reassured but still uncertain, Siddharth asked, "What else can I do, Vishnusharma? Is there a way to correct this course, to realign these lost leaders with our true mission?"

"There is always a way, Siddharth. But it requires clever strategy and sometimes, a return to the basics of human psychology and group dynamics. You need a plan that does not just address symptoms but cures the disease," Vishnusharma replied thoughtfully.

Eager for specific guidance, Siddharth pressed on, "Can you suggest such a strategy?"

Vishnusharma chuckled softly, his tone turning playful yet mysterious. "Indeed, I can. But for this, you need to delve into another tale from our trusted Panchatantra. Have you read the story of the pewit?"

"No, I have not," Siddharth admitted, curiosity piqued.

"The pewit employs a clever way to fight the sea. It's a tale of wit and survival that might just illuminate your path forward," Vishnusharma hinted, his voice lowering as if to emphasize the secret within the story. "However, it's a tale better discussed face to face. Why don't you visit me? We can explore this story and its lessons in depth."

Siddharth felt a flicker of hope. "I will make arrangements and come as soon as I can," he responded with renewed vigor, grateful for his mentor's wisdom and support.

"Very well, Siddharth. I await our discussion. Until then, remember the strength of the lessons you have learned, not just from your successes, but from your setbacks as well," Vishnusharma concluded, his words imbuing Siddharth with a sense of purpose and direction.

As he hung up the phone, Siddharth felt the weight of his challenges but also the potential for overcoming them. He knew that his journey was far from over, and the road ahead was fraught with difficulties. Yet, with the ancient wisdom of the Panchatantra and the guidance of his mentor, he was ready to navigate these turbulent waters. Resolute, Siddharth began preparing for his journey to see Vishnusharma, hopeful that the story of the pewit would hold the key to restoring DeceptiveGlow to its ethical aspirations.



Bad Alliances AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-4





Power Circles

Siddharth sat in the silence of his spacious, meticulously organized office at DeceptiveGlow. The initiative he had championed, designed to steer the corporate culture towards unwavering ethical standards, was unraveling before his eyes. Siddharth then recollected the conversation with Vishnusharma, his mentor. He picked up Panchatantra and read the pewit story on how the Pewit escalated its problem to be the problem of Lord Vishnu. Siddharth felt he knew what he had to do

Siddharth stepped out of the crisp air-conditioned office into the muggy Mumbai evening, his mind replaying the last few months as he drove to Vishnusharma's quaint house nestled in the older part of the city. The trees swayed gently in the night breeze as if whispering secrets or perhaps warnings. When he arrived, Vishnusharma greeted him with his usual serene smile that always seemed to see right through Siddharth's turmoil.

Vishnusharma led him to the back porch where two comfortable chairs awaited them, the dim light of a solitary lamp creating a sanctuary from the world's chaos. Siddharth wasted no time in diving into the heart of his troubles.

"Vishnusharma, my efforts to instill a culture of integrity are failing. It seems the more I push, the more resistance I face," Siddharth confessed, his voice a mixture of frustration and desperation.

Vishnusharma nodded, absorbing the weight of Siddharth's words before speaking. "Tell me, Siddharth, have you considered the story of the pewit from the Panchatantra?"

"Yes, but it would be good to hear it from you"

2500 years ago

Karataka had made a very strong point on partnering. Partnering with unknown people could result in our own destruction.

Damanaka agreed with Karataka, recognizing Karataka's curiosity about strategies for engaging with powerful entities. "Yes, what you say is correct. There is another way to find and influence powerful people," he explained.

"What is that?" Karataka inquired, intrigued by the prospect of a new tactic.

"It is called the power circle principle, which Pewit used against the sea," Damanaka replied, ready to unfold the tale that illustrated this concept.

Karataka leaned in, eager to understand, "How is that?"

Damanaka began, "There lived a Pewit couple by the sea-coast. They scoured the area and finally settled on a place to lay their eggs. However, the female Pewit expressed her concerns to the male, fearing that the sea might claim their eggs."

Unperturbed, the male Pewit reassured her, "Do not worry, as the Sea doesn't possess any power to take our eggs."

Upon overhearing this boast, the sea felt a surge of indignation. "What a conceited bird this is," it thought. In a display of its might, the sea washed their eggs away while the Pewit couple were absent.

Upon returning, the Pewits were horrified to find their eggs gone. The male Pewit, fueled by anger, declared his intention to destroy the sea. The female Pewit cautioned him against such folly, saying, "The fury of those incapable only leads to their own loss."

"Do not say so," the male Pewit retorted sharply. "The Lion plants his foot on the head of the intoxicated elephant, though it is superior in size. For men born with heroic brilliance, size and age matter little. An elephant, possessing a big body, is brought under control by a mere hook. Are the elephant and the hook equal? High-spiritedness and vivaciousness are important. Eminence or greatness is not achieved until a man makes efforts."

"If you are hell-bent on fighting the sea, then do so with the support of other birds, friends, and kin. The concurrence of many, though individually insignificant, is indomitable," the female Pewit advised, showing wisdom in unity. Taking this to heart, the male Pewit relented and called a meeting of birds. They agreed to approach Garuda, their leader. They told Garuda, "Despite you being our master, the offspring of Pewit have been taken away by the sea. Such incidents should not be tolerated as they set a dangerous precedent. It is a leader's responsibility to protect his followers."

Garuda, moved by the plight of his subjects and recognizing the truth in their words, approached Vishnu with a heavy heart. Vishnu, seeing his troubled demeanor, asked, "What injustice has been done to you?"

"A master or a king, who does not merit his servant's loyalty, should not be served. A king, though satisfied, should enrich his servants, while the servants are ready to sacrifice their lives," Garuda relayed the plight of the Pewits.

Vishnu then descended and confronted the Sea, "If you don't return the Pewit's eggs, I shall render you dry." Facing this dire threat, the sea complied and returned the eggs.

Damanaka concluded, "This principle is called the power circle—make your problem, the problems of the powers that be."

Karataka, reflecting on the story, acknowledged, "If you are hell-bent on creating discord, then do so, but do it carefully, considering your actions."

With this understanding, Damanaka then approached Pingalaka, prepared to apply the lessons of the power circle principle.

Today.

Well, what do you think of the strategy used by the Pewit?", asked Vishnusharma

"Yes, the bird made its problem Lord Vishnu's concern, leveraging a power higher than its adversaries," Siddharth replied, recalling the tale.

"Exactly," Vishnusharma said. "In our context, sometimes to implement significant changes, especially those involving ethics and morality, you must engage the higher echelons. Make it so that addressing your concerns effectively becomes their advantage."

"But how do I draw their attention without coming across as merely complaining or powerless?" Siddharth asked.

"You must present it not as your problem, but as a systemic issue that threatens the very foundation of DeceptiveGlow," Vishnusharma advised. "Demonstrate the broader implications, how these unethical practices can harm the company's reputation and financial standing in the long run."

Siddharth considered this, the strategy slowly forming in his mind. "So, essentially, make them see the chaos as their chaos, the threat as their threat?"

Precisely. Leaders at the top are often insulated from the day-to-day. You need to pierce that bubble," Vishnusharma continued. "Craft your message to resonate with what matters to them—stability, profitability, and reputation."

"Crafting the message... That's where I need to focus," Siddharth mused, feeling a spark of hope. "And perhaps, align with allies who also stand to benefit from reinstating genuine ethical practices."

"Indeed. Allies will amplify your voice and make it harder for the issues to be sidelined," Vishnusharma added with a nod.

Armed with this new perspective, Siddharth felt a renewed sense of purpose. He thanked Vishnusharma for his wisdom and left, ready to strategize.

Back in his office the next day, Siddharth began by documenting instances where unethical practices had tangibly impacted the company's operations and reputation. He gathered allies from various departments, consolidating a dossier of evidence that highlighted not only the moral failures but the financial repercussions as well.

He requested a meeting with the board, laying out the accumulated evidence clearly and succinctly.

Siddharth illustrated how the unethical behaviors threatened to undermine DeceptiveGlow's market position and could potentially attract legal issues. He articulated everything with the precision of a seasoned strategist, ensuring that every claim was backed by undeniable evidence and every argument aligned with the company's core interests.

The board was initially resistant, skeptical of the need for drastic changes. However, as the discussion unfolded, and the reality of the potential fallout became undeniable, their tone shifted. The implications of inaction were too severe to ignore.

In the weeks that followed, the board took decisive action. Investigations were launched, leading to the systematic removal of the individuals who had perpetuated the unethical practices. New guidelines and oversight mechanisms were instituted to safeguard against future ethical breaches.

As the company began to realign with its original ethical standards, Siddharth watched the transformation with a quiet satisfaction. The initiative he had championed was finally taking the shape he had envisioned, not through force, but through strategic influence and the compelling power of shared interests.

Siddharth knew there would be more challenges ahead, but he felt prepared to face them, bolstered by the wisdom of the Panchatantra and the sage advice of his mentor, Vishnusharma. With integrity and strategy hand in hand, he was ready to lead DeceptiveGlow into a new era of ethical prosperity.



Power Circles AI with Vishnusharma



Part 5

The Maturity

JOURNEY PART-5





Blindspots

As the shadows of the evening deepened into a more profound dusk, Siddharth found himself alone in the dimly lit confines of his office. The only source of illumination was the soft glow from his digital tablet, casting light on the list of names displayed on its screen. Each name represented a colleague, a friend, individuals he had once trusted implicitly and admired for their dedication and talent. The sting of betrayal he felt was not merely a professional disappointment but a deep, personal wound. It extended beyond the confines of office walls, touching upon the more intimate aspects of familial and social bonds.

Siddharth thought about their families—the spouses and children who relied on these colleagues, not just emotionally but financially. He considered their shared experiences, the many occasions where personal stories were exchanged over coffee breaks, and the mutual support they provided each other during challenging times. These were people whose lives had become intricately woven with his own through years of collaboration and camaraderie. As he contemplated the gravity of the situation, the weight of what he might need to do next felt almost unbearable.

The decisions looming on the horizon were not just about professional paths but personal livelihoods and relationships.

Amidst this internal storm of emotion and responsibility, Siddharth's gaze drifted to a particular object on his shelf—an elegant, leather-bound copy of the Panchatantra. This book was more than just a collection of ancient fables; it was a cherished gift from his mentor, Vishnusharma, who had presented it to him during the early, formative years of his career. The gift had been symbolic—a reminder of the lessons of wisdom, ethics, and leadership that Vishnusharma had imparted.

Compelled by a mix of nostalgia and a need for guidance, Siddharth reached out with a somewhat tremulous hand to take the book from its place. The leather cover felt cool and smooth under his fingers, grounding him momentarily in the physical world away from the whirlwind of his thoughts. As he opened the book, the familiar scent of aged paper filled his nostrils, bringing with it memories of past lessons learned and challenges overcome.

Turning to a story he remembered well—one that had guided him through previous dilemmas—Siddharth hoped to find solace and perhaps an answer in the timeless wisdom of the ancient text.

The tales of wise ministers and cunning animals, kings and commoners, all intertwined with moral lessons, seemed more relevant now than ever. In these stories, he sought not just escape but enlightenment on how to navigate the treacherous waters of human relationships and professional integrity.

As the night stretched on, the quiet of the office wrapped around him like a cocoon, Siddharth delved deeper into the book, searching for the courage to face the repercussions of the betrayal and to make decisions that aligned with both his conscience and the greater good of all involved. There was something in this , which related to his current situation.

2500 years ago

Damanaka having made up his mind on using the Power circles principle, went to meet Pingalaka the Lion. Damanaka's words fell heavily in the royal chamber, resonating with a grim tone as he spoke to King Pingalaka, "Sanjivaka is plotting to take over your kingdom."

Pingalaka, taken aback by the allegation against one he held dearer than life itself, responded with disbelief, "Sanjivaka is dearer to me than life, how can he plan to take over my kingdom?"

"It is not for lack of motivation that one desires to usurp a kingdom, but rather for lack of ability," Damanaka explained, trying to sow seeds of doubt.

Pingalaka questions "Everyone harbors ambitions, but what is wrong with being ambitious? A darling is still a darling, even if ambitious."

Damanaka, seeing the need to emphasize his point, added, "This very thinking, owing to excessive trust and affection, is what has landed us in trouble in the first place. A person dear to the king often prospers unduly."

He then suggested a drastic measure, "Moreover, on what merits do you continue to keep Sanjivaka around? Having accused him of false charges, kill him."

Pingalaka, however, remained reluctant and bound by his own principles, "The demerits of a person, once praised in an assembly as meritorious, should not be mentioned by one who fears the violation of a pledge. Moreover, I have given my assurance of safety; how can I kill him now?"

Pingalaka, elaborated further, "What specialty is there in a person who is well-disposed only towards benefactors? A truly great person will be well-disposed even to harmful men."

Damanaka pressed, "A king is killed who does not eliminate an attendant who equals him in wealth, might, knows his secrets, is enterprising, and capable of sharing the king's responsibilities. Furthermore, you have neglected your royal duties; due to not performing royal duties, your dependents have grown indifferent. The company you are keeping has spoiled you. So, knowing this, Sanjivaka should be eliminated by you."

Pingalaka, still wrestling with doubt, asked, "Even if I believe you, what convincing proof do you have that he is indeed planning to usurp my kingdom?"

Damanaka replied confidently, "Sanjivaka took an oath before me that he shall kill you, Pingalaka. Tomorrow morning, the bull will come with a reddened face and eyes, flapping lips, and revolving his eyes in all directions. He will sit in a place not meant for him and will look at you with a fierce sight."

Having planted these seeds of conspiracy and suspicion, Damanaka left the presence of the king and went to find the Bull, Sanjivaka, to further weave his web of intrigue. His words, heavy with foreboding, lingered in the air, leaving Pingalaka to ponder the delicate balance between trust and the harsh demands of kingship.

Today.

He picked up his phone and dialed Vishnusharma.

"Vishnusharma, I find myself at a crossroads, and the path is murky," Siddharth began as soon as his mentor answered.

Vishnusharma's voice was calm and reassuring. "Tell me more, my friend."

"It's about the people involved in the unethical practices. Some of them are those I've brought into the company, recognized, and celebrated. How can I now dismiss them without feeling like a betrayer myself?" Siddharth's voice was laden with conflict.

There was a brief pause before Vishnusharma responded. "Siddharth, it is natural to feel conflicted. Leadership, however, is often about making difficult choices, not just for the individual, but for the health of the entire organization."

"But how do I separate my personal feelings from my duties? These are not just employees; they are my friends and confidants."

Vishnusharma sighed softly. "Let me tell you a story, not from the Panchatantra this time, but from my own experiences.

Many years ago, I faced a similar situation. A trusted protégé of mine had made some grave errors. It was painful, but I had to let him go for the sake of the entire community. Over time, it was clear that keeping him would have done more harm than good, not just to the community but to him as well."

Siddharth listened intently, the story hitting close to home.

Vishnusharma continued, "You see, Siddharth, our blind spots as leaders often revolve around those closest to us. We fear losing their loyalty or friendship, or we fear how it reflects on us—having once championed their cause. But remember, the duty of a leader is not to be well-liked but to make decisions that ensure the well-being and integrity of the entire organization."

"So, you're saying I should let them go, despite my feelings?"

"Yes, Siddharth. It is not about personal betrayal but about fulfilling your role as a guardian of your company's values. Those who compromise the system, knowingly and repeatedly, do not belong in it. They endanger not only the ethical fabric but also the very survival of the organization."

Siddharth took a deep breath, absorbing the weight of Vishnusharma's words. "And what if this damages my relationships?"

"It might," Vishnusharma admitted. "But those who truly respect you will understand and perhaps even respect you more for taking a stand. And you will likely find new allies who share your commitment to integrity."

Empowered by his mentor's advice, Siddharth felt a clarity he hadn't possessed before. He thanked Vishnusharma and ended the call, his decision crystallizing in his mind.

The next day, Siddharth initiated the difficult process. Each conversation was tough, more personal and wrenching than the last. Yet, with each decision, he felt a renewed commitment to the greater good of DeceptiveGlow.

Though his heart ached with the loss of relationships and the tough changes he had enforced, Siddharth knew he had acted not out of self-interest but for the sustainability of the ethical standards he had vowed to uphold. It was a painful yet necessary step to protect the integrity and future of the organization he loved.



Blind spots AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-5





Fight or Flee

In the expansive, glass-walled office perched high above the bustling streets of Mumbai, Siddharth sat immersed in a sea of contemplation. The office, a pinnacle of modern architecture, offered a panoramic view of the city's skyline—a mesh of soaring skyscrapers and the endless energy of the metropolis. However, the beauty of this aerial spectacle offered little comfort to Siddharth as he brooded over the daunting stack of legal papers spread across his large mahogany desk. These documents, filled with dense legal jargon and accusatory language, outlined a distressing lawsuit filed by Pranesh, a former senior manager at DeceptiveGlow.

Pranesh, once a trusted member of the leadership team, had been terminated as a crucial part of Siddharth's sweeping ethical reforms aimed at purging the company of corrupt practices and instilling a new ethos of integrity. However, the lawsuit alleged wrongful termination, claiming that Pranesh had been removed on charges that were wholly fabricated. This accusation struck at the very heart of what Siddharth had striven to achieve, threatening not only to tarnish his hard-earned reputation as a reformer but also to derail the painstaking ethical restructuring he had initiated at the company.

The legal battle that loomed was not just a fight for Siddharth's professional survival but also a test of his moral convictions. The papers on his desk felt heavier with each moment, symbolizing the gravity of the situation. Each page echoed Pranesh's bitterness and sense of betrayal, and Siddharth couldn't help but reflect on the complexities of leadership and the isolating path of choosing righteousness over convenience.

Feeling the weight of the decision pressed upon him, Siddharth needed counsel that was both profound and timeless. He turned away from the documents and reached for his old and trusted guide—the Panchatantra. This ancient text, a collection of fables rich in moral and ethical lessons, had been his companion through many challenges, always providing wisdom through its complex tales of animals and humans navigating the trials of life.

As he opened the aged, leather-bound book, the familiar scent of the pages filled his senses, momentarily transporting him away from the immediate pressures.

2500 years ago

In the dense, sprawling forest, where the towering trees and rustling leaves narrated stories of the wild, Damanaka, had just sowed the seeds of discord in the mind of the Lion. Now, with a heavy heart and a shadow over his spirits, approached the bull Sanjivaka. He sat down beside him, visibly dejected, his usual cunning and lively demeanor dimmed by the gravity of the news he bore.

Noticing Damanaka's unusual demeanor, Sanjivaka, ever perceptive, queried with concern, "What troubles you so, Damanaka?" His voice carried a mix of curiosity and worry, sensing the distress in his friend.

Damanaka sighed deeply before responding, "O Sanjivaka, how can the well-being of an employee ever be assured? The riches, the minds, and the very lives of employees are perpetually controlled by others." His words were heavy, laden with an ominous tone that immediately caught Sanjivaka's attention.

Puzzled, Sanjivaka pressed, "What are you trying to convey?"

Damanaka hesitated, his voice a whisper as he disclosed, "It is not proper for ministers to reveal the secret plans of their masters. But as you are my friend, and because it was I who introduced you to the court, I feel compelled to share this with you.

Pingalaka has confided in me his plans to end your life and offer you as a meal to all the wild animals of the forest."

Sanjivaka's heart raced as he listened. "I implored him not to be hostile towards a friend," Damanaka continued, "but he retorted, stating that while you are a herbivore, we are carnivorous. He believes a natural enmity exists between us, and thus, how can an enemy be overlooked or avoided?"

"The situation being so," Damanaka concluded grimly, "he believes you should be killed. In his view, an enemy dispatched by any means, just or unjust, incurs no sin. In battle, one should not ponder over what is right or wrong."

Sanjivaka, utterly taken aback by the revelation, felt a chill of fear mixed with betrayal. "I have made a grave mistake by befriending this lion. True companionship should exist only between those of similar nature. Even if I were to approach Pingalaka to appease him, he would not be swayed. One who harbors malice without cause cannot easily be placated."

He continued, his voice tinged with despair, "I now see clearly that those who stay close to the king have turned him against me, unable to tolerate the king's favor towards me. The merits of one with lesser merits always overshadow those of a more deserving individual."

"If what you say holds truth, then perhaps your eloquent speech could sway Pingalaka," suggested Damanaka, though hope flickered weakly in his words.

Damanaka shook his head, "This might not be practical. He will not be swayed. In this perilous predicament, migration to another land seems the only viable option for you."

"But I cannot simply flee," Sanjivaka protested. "Those desiring heaven might not achieve it even after performing all sacred rites, yet a warrior finds it by sacrificing his life in battle."

Damanaka, realizing Sanjivaka's determination to confront the lion, warned, "One should not fight an enemy stronger than oneself."

Sanjivaka resolutely declared, "I am prepared to fight."

"To discern if Pingalaka truly harbors malevolence towards you, observe his demeanor upon seeing you. If his eyes are ruddy, his eyebrows crooked, and he licks his lips, then his intentions are indeed hostile. Yet, remember, when overpowered by a stronger foe, retreating to a foreign land to preserve one's life is the wiser course."

With these words, Damanaka departed, heading towards Karataka to relay the adventures and decisions of that fraught meeting.

Today.

Feeling the need for further guidance, Siddharth called his mentor, Vishnusharma. "Vishnusharma, I find myself caught in a dilemma," Siddharth began, after the initial pleasantries. "I can fight this lawsuit and try to prove Pranesh's accusations false, or I can settle out of court to avoid dragging the company through a scandal. What should I do?"

Vishnusharma's voice, calm and steady, came through the speaker. "Siddharth, remember that not every battle is worth fighting in the public eye. Consider what you stand to gain versus what you could lose. The Panchatantra teaches us that the wise king avoids war unless it is the only way to secure peace."

"But isn't settling akin to admitting guilt?" Siddharth countered, his brow furrowed in concern.

"Not necessarily," Vishnusharma explained. "It can also be seen as choosing to prioritize the company's stability and your employees' welfare over personal victory. Sometimes, preserving the peace is more courageous than entering a battle."

Siddharth nodded slowly, the wisdom of his mentor's words sinking in. After thanking Vishnusharma, he made his decision.

He instructed his lawyers to negotiate a settlement with Pranesh, choosing to protect the company from potential scandal and focus on continuing his reforms without further distractions.

The second battle came more abruptly. News broke that a competing corporation, sensing DeceptiveGlow's perceived vulnerability amidst the ethical overhaul, had proposed a competitive buyout. The offer was lucrative, and with DeceptiveGlow's stock values fluctuating due to the recent upheavals, the board was seriously considering it.

Siddharth was summoned to an emergency meeting where the atmosphere was tense. "Siddharth, the board is leaning towards accepting the buyout offer," one of the senior board members stated bluntly. "It's a financially sound option, and it absolves us of the risks your new policies are imposing."

Siddharth stood, his gaze steady as he addressed the room. “Ladies and gentlemen, I urge you to consider not just the immediate financial gain but the long-term vision for DeceptiveGlow. We’ve embarked on a path of ethical reform, not just for the good of our conscience but for the sustainable success of our company. Selling now would undermine all our efforts and sacrifice our independence.”

The decision came down to a month-long campaign where Siddharth met individually with board members, persuasively outlining the potential high returns and brand strength as an ethical leader in the industry. He carefully navigated the board dynamics, identifying allies and detractors, and, in a controversial move, strategized with shareholders to replace certain board members who were staunchly against him. His maneuvers were bold and carried risks, but Siddharth believed that the ethical future of DeceptiveGlow justified his actions.

When the final vote was tallied, Siddharth’s vision prevailed.

Not only did the board decide against the buyout, but they also appointed Siddharth as the new CEO, entrusting him with the task of guiding DeceptiveGlow through its transformation. His strategy of choosing his battles wisely—settling when necessary to protect the company, and fighting when the company’s very ethos was at stake—had solidified his leadership and renewed the company’s commitment to ethics.

As Siddharth looked out over the city from his office, now not just as a leader but as CEO, he felt the gravity of his responsibilities. He knew the road ahead would be fraught with challenges, but he was ready to lead with integrity, inspired by the lessons of the Panchatantra and the guidance of his mentor, Vishnusharma. DeceptiveGlow would not just survive; it would thrive, setting a new standard for ethical business practices in the industry.



Fight or Flight AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-5





Diplomacy

Siddharth sat alone in his office, the lights of the Mumbai skyline flickering like distant stars beyond the glass pane. The room was quiet, save for the soft hum of the air conditioner and the occasional rustle of pages as he turned them in his hands. He was holding the Panchatantra, an ancient text that had guided him many times before. But tonight, the stories seemed to mock him with their simplicity. But he read them anyway to see how stupid he had been.

2500 years ago

Damanaka had successfully induced discord between the Lion and the Bull. The results of that act is yet to be seen. He returns to Karataka to have a chat.

Karataka gazed intently at Damanaka as he returned from his covert mission, a palpable tension hanging in the air. "What did you do there?" Karataka's voice carried a mixture of curiosity and apprehension, sensing that Damanaka's actions might have stirred up significant consequences.

Damanaka, with a somewhat grim satisfaction, responded, "The seed of discord has been sown by me; the rest now depends on destiny." His tone was fatalistic, yet underscored by a certain resolve. "Even when destiny seems opposed, an intelligent person must strive onward," he added, alluding to the complex layers of strategy and manipulation he had employed.

Intrigued yet concerned, Karataka pressed further, "How did you sow these seeds of discord?" His brows furrowed, seeking to understand the depth and manner of Damanaka's machinations.

With a cold, calculating smile, Damanaka explained, "I have created discord in such a manner, through the deployment of false statements and manipulations, that you will never again see Pingalaka and Sanjivaka in consultation with each other." He spoke with a chilling assurance, confident in the chaos he had engineered.

As he revealed his schemes, news arrived that Pingalaka and Sanjivaka, driven by the mistrust Damanaka had instilled, were ready to fight, already clashing with violent ferocity, slaying each other in a grim battle driven by misunderstanding and deceit.

Karataka's initial concern turned to scorn and he began to abuse Damanaka vehemently. "You imbecile, you have not performed a righteous job by causing discord between them. You are not aware of the essence of politics." His voice was laden with disappointment and anger.

He continued passionately, "True ministers accomplish high objectives through peaceful means, which can otherwise be achieved by fight, risk, and great effort. Wicked ministers, by contrast, even for trivial results and meager benefits, resort to fight and force."

Karataka's frustration boiled over as he considered the broader implications of Damanaka's actions. "If our King dies in this process, what will you do with your policy of causing discord? And if Sanjivaka is not killed, that too will be a disaster. You do not know how to achieve your objectives through peace."

He then lectured on the nuanced strategies of governance. "From 'Sama' and ending with 'Danda,' where 'Danda'—force—is the most contemptible. Where reconciliation works, why employ bitterness? You fail to grasp the secrets of healthy counsel.

'Mantra' encompasses five kinds: the measures adopted to begin an undertaking, the resources to do it, the division of time and space, measurement and risk assessment, and the outcome of the engagement."

Karataka, his voice now a mix of desperation and wisdom, implored, "Now, with the annihilation of the king or the minister—or both—imminent, if you are capable by any means, you should have thought of a remedial measure to counter this calamity."

He concluded with a poignant reflection on the nature of leadership, "The prudence of a minister is judged in the act of joining together those who are disjointed. An ignoble person knows only to spoil the work of others; he does not know how to make somebody's business successful. Why am I even preaching to you? Preaching enrages fools."

With heavy heart and mind burdened by the unfolding disaster, Karataka turned towards the battlefield, now a tragic tableau filled with blood and the dire consequences of misguided actions. Sanjivaka had been killed in the battle.

In the tense aftermath of the battle, Damanaka and Karataka stood amidst the grim silence of the clearing where the tragedy had unfolded. There, the once mighty Sanjivaka lay lifeless, a stark testament to the brutal realities of forest politics and personal ambitions. Damanaka felt a sense of relief. His strategy had worked After all.

Turning to Karataka with a somber yet vindicated expression, Damanaka declared, "Now look who is unaware of the science of politics?" His voice carried a hint of triumph mixed with the weight of the outcome. "A person, though very powerful, if he does not quieten or nip an enemy and a disease at their inception, is certainly destroyed by them."

Damanaka's eyes were fixed on the lifeless form of Sanjivaka as he continued, "Sanjivaka turned into a foe, usurping our hereditary post. He who takes away a hereditary post is a natural enemy. Such a person, even if a dear one, must be uprooted." His words echoed through the forest, a chilling reminder of the ruthlessness required in their world.

"It was I who, having regarded him as a gentle person, provided him assurance of safety, and in doing so, I lost my post as minister," Damanaka lamented, reflecting on his initial misjudgment that had cost him dearly. He shifted his stance, his voice becoming more resolute as he outlined the harsh necessities of their existence. "A prudent person should not provide space for wicked people. One should, having rendered the heart ruthless and speech sweet like sugarcane, eliminate an offender and should never waver."

He paused, looking down at the body of Sanjivaka, "Sanjivaka will now be food. My account with him is settled. I will regain my ministership."

There was a cold determination in his voice, a stark indication of his readiness to reclaim what he believed was rightfully his.

"Why are you blaming me?" he challenged Karataka, defending his actions with a sharp intensity. "A wise person, skilled in devising cunning strategies while oppressing others and serving his own purpose, often goes unnoticed by anyone."

Just then, their attention was drawn to the distant figure of Pingalaka, who was lamenting the violent turn of events. The grief in his posture was palpable, a poignant display of the consequences of the discord sown amongst them. Moved by the sight, Damanaka and Karataka began to approach him, their steps slow and measured.

As they drew closer, the full impact of their actions weighed heavily upon them. They witnessed the sorrow and regret emanating from Pingalaka, a leader who had been manipulated into actions that clashed deeply with his nature. This moment served as a stark reflection on the complexities and often harsh realities of leadership and power dynamics within their domain. It highlighted the delicate balance between strategic foresight and moral responsibility, a balance that had been devastatingly disrupted by the events that had transpired.

Today.

As he read about the various forms of diplomacy—the blend of gentleness and severity, of honesty and manipulation—it dawned on him how far he had ventured into the gray area of ethics to secure his current position. He had fought hard for the ethical revival of DeceptiveGlow, yet the methods he employed gnawed at him. He was the CEO now, but at what cost?

Closing the book, Siddharth picked up his phone and dialed Vishnusharma. The old mentor answered after just one ring, his voice still as calm and reassuring as ever.

“Vishnusharma, I need your guidance once more,” Siddharth began, his voice heavy with uncertainty.

“Siddharth, my boy, tell me what troubles you,” Vishnusharma replied, sensing his turmoil.

“I’ve become the CEO, as I’ve always dreamed. But the path I took... I manipulated the board, ousted those who opposed me. I used the very tactics I despise to achieve what I thought was right. How do I reconcile this? Was it justified?”

Vishnusharma paused before answering. “Leadership, Siddharth, is a complex journey. The Panchatantra teaches us about the necessary balance in diplomacy. Sometimes we must be gentle, other times firm. We sweet talk to soothe, and we speak harshly to correct. Every situation demands a different facet of diplomacy.”

“But is there a line? Have I crossed it by playing what feels like destructive politics?” Siddharth’s voice cracked slightly.

“There is always a line, Siddharth. The key is not whether you cross it, but how and why. If your actions, however harsh, are truly in service of the greater good, of a higher ethical standard, then they can be justified. But they must not become the norm. Your end does not always justify your means.”

Siddharth absorbed this, the weight of his mentor's words grounding him yet swirling new doubts. "So, what now? How do I lead without losing myself to these... tactics?"

"You must strive to balance, Siddharth. Be easygoing yet firm when necessary. Engage in sweet talk to build bridges, but also be prepared to be harsh when those you lead stray from the path. Leadership is not about being liked; it's about being effective and ethical."

Feeling somewhat fortified yet not fully convinced, Siddharth made an offer, driven by a sudden impulse. "Vishnusharma, would you consider coming out of retirement to join me? Your wisdom at DeceptiveGlow could guide not just me but our whole team."

Vishnusharma chuckled softly. "I am honored, but my days in the arena are over, my friend. My place now is here, in the quiet of retirement, where I can offer counsel without being in the midst of the fray. But do not worry; I am always here for you, whenever you need to talk."

Siddharth nodded to himself, understanding and respecting his mentor's decision. "Thank you, Vishnusharma. I hope to make you proud."

"You already have, Siddharth. Just by questioning your actions, you prove your commitment to ethics. Remember, the wise leader questions himself, and that self-reflection is key to true leadership."

He realized that his journey was far from over. Each day presented a new challenge, a new decision, a new opportunity to define the kind of leader he wanted to be. His methods might have been questionable, but his intentions were clear. Now more than ever, Siddharth knew he had to strive not just for success, but for ethical success. He was still not convinced whether playing destructive politics was good. He wanted to ask Vishnusharma about it. But, Vishnusharma asked him to ponder over this for sometime. Hanging up the phone, Siddharth sat back in his chair. Vishnusharma's words echoed in his mind — a mantra to soothe the tempest in his heart.



Diplomacy AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-5





Politics

Siddharth's office was quiet, the early morning light just beginning to filter through the blinds, casting long, soft shadows across the room. He sat at his desk, the phone in his hand weighing heavy as he dialed Vishnusharma. The rings seemed to echo in the silent space until the familiar voice answered.

Vishnusharma: "Good morning, Siddharth. How are you today?"

Siddharth: "Good morning, Vishnusharma. I've been better, to be honest. I'm grappling with the decisions I've made recently... about the means I've employed to achieve our goals."

Vishnusharma: "Ah, the burden of leadership weighs heavily on your mind. Tell me, what exactly troubles you?"

Siddharth: "It's the methods, Vishnusharma. The strategies that border on what many might call destructive politics. I've removed obstacles, yes, but at what cost? I keep wondering if the end justifies the means, especially if those means involve removing those who oppose us."

Vishnusharma: "It is a dilemma as old as leadership itself, Siddharth. But let's dissect it together. When you speak of destructive politics, what are you referring to exactly?"

Siddharth: "Manipulating board decisions, influencing critical votes, even replacing board members who were likely to oppose the direction I believed was ethical for DeceptiveGlow. It was all for the greater good — our vision of an ethical company. But does that make it right?"

Vishnusharma: "You're asking if it's acceptable to use harsher tactics to remove your natural enemies from power to ensure the success of a just cause. Siddharth, throughout history, many leaders have faced this question. Some have faltered under the weight of their choices, others have thrived, believing their actions justified by the outcomes."

Siddharth: "And what do you believe, Vishnusharma?"

Vishnusharma: “I believe that leadership, particularly ethical leadership, is about balance. You must weigh the immediate impact of your actions against the long-term benefits for your people and your principles. Destructive politics can sometimes seem like the only way to remove significant barriers quickly. However, one must always consider if there is a less harmful path that could achieve the same ends.”

Siddharth: “But what if the less harmful path takes too long? What if it risks the collapse of everything we’re trying to build?”

Vishnusharma: “That is the risk, indeed. But remember, Siddharth, true leadership is also about fostering an environment where ethical behavior and respect for each other are paramount. If you resort to the tactics of those you’ve ousted, are you truly any different?”

Siddharth: “That’s precisely my concern. I fear becoming the mirror image of those I have replaced. Yet, I also fear that without decisive action, our mission to transform DeceptiveGlow will fail.”

Vishnusharma: “Let me offer you a perspective, Siddharth. Think of it as gardening. When you garden, you remove weeds because they choke the healthy plants. But you must be careful not to pull up the young shoots along with them. Similarly, removing those who corrupt or impede an organization is sometimes necessary. But it must be done with precision, care, and respect for the garden as a whole.”

Siddharth: “And if the weeds are deeply entangled with the roots of the healthy plants?”

Vishnusharma: “Then you must be even more cautious, ensuring you understand the full extent of the entanglement before you pull. It requires patience, insight, and sometimes the courage to wait and nurture rather than pulling harshly.”

Siddharth: “It’s a fine line, Vishnusharma. How do I ensure I don’t cross it?”

Vishnusharma: “By maintaining a clear ethical compass and surrounding yourself with advisors who are not afraid to question your methods. Leadership thrives in the presence of robust debate and ethical scrutiny. You must be open to criticism and prepared to adjust your course when necessary.”

Siddharth: “It sounds daunting, maintaining such vigilance over oneself and one’s actions.”

Vishnusharma: “It is, Siddharth. But that is what makes a true leader. Not the absence of doubt or the certainty of their righteousness, but the constant striving for balance, the ongoing quest to align their actions with their deepest values.”

Siddharth: “Thank you, Vishnusharma. Your words give me much to ponder. Perhaps I need to reassess some of the decisions I’ve made.”

Vishnusharma: “That you are willing to reassess and reflect is a sign of your commitment to ethical leadership, Siddharth. Remember, the path of integrity is a long one, but it is always worth traveling.”

As Siddharth hung up, he felt not lighter, but fortified. The road ahead was indeed fraught with complexity and moral peril, but he was not alone. With mentors like Vishnusharma and the guiding principles of the Panchatantra, he could navigate the treacherous waters with a firmer hand on the rudder, always mindful of the ethical beacon that had set him on this path. But Siddharth was still not convinced. He dialed again. Vishnusharma’s line was engaged. He couldn’t get around to clearing his mind.



Destructive Politics AI with Vishnusharma



JOURNEY PART-5





Moving on

Siddharth's usual morning commute was interrupted by a shocking piece of news on the radio: one of his former colleagues, Ajay, whom he had dismissed for unethical practices, had taken his own life. The report detailed how Ajay had struggled to find work after being labeled untrustworthy, eventually leading to his tragic decision. The weight of this news settled heavily in Siddharth's stomach, a tangible knot of guilt and remorse.

Compelled by a sense of responsibility, Siddharth redirected his driver to Ajay's home, where he hoped to offer condolences to the family. Upon arrival, he was overwhelmed by the scene of grief; Ajay's wife, unaware of who Siddharth was, accepted his sympathies with a numb expression, while two young children peeked from behind her, their future now uncertain and precarious.

Siddharth could barely stand the weight of his presence there, feeling like an intruder in a moment of profound sorrow. He left quickly, unable to bear the atmosphere of loss and the unspoken accusations he felt emanating from the walls themselves. Instead of heading to the office, he found himself wandering aimlessly until he settled on a park bench, far from the usual paths of bustling Mumbai.

Opening his bag, Siddharth pulled out a copy of the Panchatantra, an ancient text that had guided him through many ethical dilemmas. Now, however, the stories mocked him; their wisdom seemed irrelevant in the face of his current turmoil. In a moment of anger, he considered throwing the book away, blaming it for the advice that led to such dire consequences. Resisting the impulse, he instead pulled out his phone and called Vishnusharma.

As soon as Vishnusharma answered, Siddharth's frustration and sorrow spilled out. "This is all wrong! Your teachings, the principles we discussed — they've led to someone's death. How can this be just? How can this be right?"

Vishnusharma listened silently, allowing Siddharth to vent his emotions. Once Siddharth's words ran out, his mentor spoke calmly, "Siddharth, the world of commerce is a harsh one, where people often take advantage of each other to climb higher. It's true, people do respect the snake for its dangerous nature, not the eagle. However, remember that the eagle soars above, seeing the broader landscape, while the snake remains on the ground, limited in its view."

Siddharth listened, his breathing shallow, his mind racing.

Vishnusharma continued, "In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna reminds Arjuna of his duty as a warrior, which is not about personal sorrow or sympathies but about larger responsibilities and righteousness. You must not lose sight of the larger duty you have towards many others, not just those who fall by the wayside."

Though Siddharth's heart remained heavy, Vishnusharma's words offered a semblance of comfort and a reminder of his responsibilities as a leader. His thoughts were interrupted by the sound of a young man taking a seat beside him on the bench. The man began talking on his phone excitedly about his future plans.

"Yeah, I'm hoping to get into DeceptiveGlow. It's one of the few companies out there that isn't just about profits; they really try to do the right thing. It's tough to find places that commit to real ethical standards these days."

Overhearing this conversation, Siddharth felt a flicker of hope. Despite everything, his efforts to reshape DeceptiveGlow's culture were recognized and appreciated. This young man's words highlighted the impact of his hard decisions — the broader good that could sometimes be overshadowed by individual tragedies.

Strengthened by this realization, Siddharth stood up, his resolve solidifying. He knew he couldn't undo the past or alleviate every consequence of his decisions, but he could continue to strive for a company that others admired not just for its success, but for its commitment to doing right by the world.

2500 years ago

In the aftermath of the conflict, as the dust settled around the battered foliage of the forest, Pingalaka stood amidst the chaos, his heart heavy with a profound sense of loss and remorse. The air around him seemed charged with an oppressive silence, punctuated only by the soft rustling of leaves—a stark contrast to the tumultuous events that had just unfolded. His eyes, filled with sorrow, reflected a deep, unsettling realization of the gravity of his actions.

"O! By killing Sanjivaka, an improper act has been performed by me," Pingalaka lamented, his voice quivering with grief. "No sin surpasses the breach of trust." The weight of his words hung heavily in the air, echoing the profound regret that gripped his heart. He knew well the teachings of old—that a betrayer of a friend, a thankless man, and a traitor were condemned to the darkest depths of hell.

"A lost territory can be regained, but a lost friend or servant cannot be brought back," he continued, his sorrow deepening at the thought of Sanjivaka, who had once been a cherished companion and ally. The finality of death made the loss irreparable, and the betrayal far more painful.

Amidst Pingalaka's expressions of regret, Damanaka interjected, adopting a tone of pragmatic coldness that contrasted sharply with Pingalaka's emotional turmoil.

"This policy of yours is a policy of timidity," he chided, his words sharp and devoid of sympathy. He was quick to remind Pingalaka of the harsh realities of their world. "Even if one's relatives turn against one's life, he or she is worth killing. There is no sin in that." Damanaka's perspective was ruthless, guided by a belief in the survival of the fittest, where emotional attachments were secondary to pragmatic survival.

Damanaka continued, elucidating on the complex and often contradictory nature of royal diplomacy. "The policy of the king has various forms, much like a prostitute—it sometimes speaks the truth, other times falsehood; sometimes it behaves harshly, sometimes mercifully." He aimed to instill a sense of acceptance in Pingalaka, pushing him to recognize the necessity of flexibility and sometimes harshness in leadership.

"Also, he who does not harm is disrespected. People respect the snake but not the eagle, the killer of snakes," Damanaka added, driving home his point about the perception of strength and the necessity of instilling fear as a means of commanding respect.

Reflecting on these complexities, Damanaka recalled a profound teaching from the great epic Mahabharata: "Lord Krishna says to Arjuna, 'You grieve over those who should not be grieved for, yet you speak like a wise man. Wise men never feel a deep sorrow over the dead or the living.'

This quote was intended to counsel Pingalaka on the importance of detachment, urging him to rise above his emotions and view his actions through the lens of dharma and duty rather than personal attachment.

As Pingalaka absorbed these hard lessons, his inner turmoil was palpable. The advice, steeped in the harsh realities of power and the necessity of sometimes cruel decisions, left him to ponder the balance between moral integrity and the demanding, often brutal, necessities of kingship. This moment of reflection marked a significant point in his reign, confronting the eternal dilemma faced by all who wield power: the balance between compassion and the harsh strokes required to maintain order and authority.



Moving on AI with Vishnusharma

