

## The Story of Tara

Story telling is an art that has mental, social and educational benefits on children. People of all ages love stories. Children are great fans of stories and love to listen to them. Storytelling literally means reading out stories to them or just telling a story from the memory to them. It is becoming a lost art today as many parents find very little time to spend with kids as the hustle and bustle of life demands them to reserve more time for the needs of life.

### Objectives

At the end of this Module, you should be able to:

1. Narrate the story of Tara.
2. Appreciate the goods qualities of Tara
3. Relate the story of Tara to the Bulbuls and development of Flock.

### Thought for Reflection

The planet does not need more successful people. The planet desperately needs more peacemakers, healers, restorers, **storytellers** and lovers of all kinds.

- Dalai Lama

Let us not forget the immeasurable benefit that stories can have in widening a child's imagination, transporting them to entirely new and unfamiliar places - geographically, historically and emotionally. Getting lost in a good story can allow you to discover more about the world, more about humankind, and more about yourself.

One such good story is the story of Tara, which is prescribed for our Bulbuls. As a Flock Leader you need to familiarise yourself with this story and you should be able to use your dramatising skills to narrate the story to the Bulbuls belonging to your Flock.

### The Story of Tara

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Tara. She was a pretty girl and she had a kind father and mother, but was a very unhappy little girl. Everyone who knew was sorry for her because she always seemed to be so sad. She lived in rather a poor little house, and her father went to work, but his pay was not much so there was not enough money to spend.

One day she came back from school and found her mother very busy. The baby on the cot was crying; her mother was trying to cook the evening meal but she had to keep on getting up to comfort the baby. The house looked untidy and uncomfortable and Tara peeped in. As soon as she saw how it was, she slipped away and said to



herself "If I show myself, mother will ask me to sweep the floor, polish the brass pots, comfort the baby and do all sorts of work. I have been to school and learned to read. Why should I do house hold chores and comfort crying babies?"

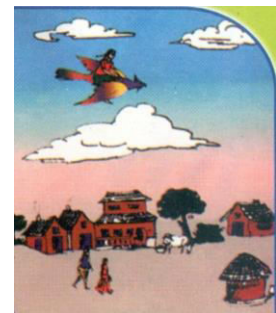
So off she went to a little mango grove not far away and there she sat in the cool shade of a tree. Presently a bulbul came and perched in the tree over her head. She cried, "Little girl! What are you doing here, all alone under a tree?" "I am thinking", said Tara. "I am a very unfortunate girl with a poor father who cannot afford me silk dresses, hair ornaments, gold necklace etc. My mother always wants me to sweep the floor, clean the pots or to comfort babies! Can I never be rich? I have a picture of a queen in my book. She has a beautiful crown of jewels and necklace of pearls. No doubt she has nothing to do and is happy throughout the day.



"Poor little Tara", said the bulbul, "It is sad that you can't be happy. Come! I'll take you out in the world and show you some of the richest and happiest people I know. Just pick a few berries for me to eat. The bird flew down as Tara did so. The Bulbul picked out a few from her hand and swallowed them. Then the Bulbul grew and grew until it was the size of a Garuda! But it was still lovely and colourful as before.



"Climb on my back, nestle down among my warm feathers and we will fly far to see some people in the world", said the bulbul. "Hold fast" cried the bulbul as Tara clung to her. At first Tara feared but no sooner she got used to it. She looked down with great interest as they flew over forests, plains, and rivers. When Tara looked down, the fields looked like little patches on a quilt. Some were green with young rice plants, others were black or red according to the colour of earth, and on some of them she could see tiny specks moving about. Those were the men and bullocks ploughing and sowing. They passed over villages and towns until at last Tara fell asleep.



When she woke up the bird spoke to her, "Put your hand under my right wing where you will find some white powder. Rub a little of it on my head and your forehead." What is that for?" asked Tara filled with curiosity. "It will make us invisible" said the bulbul. Tara did so and a miracle happened soon they both became invisible. "Are we really invisible?" asked Tara. "Yes", said the bulbul



"nobody can see us or even hear us! Come let's go into the palace". Tara was rather scared as they entered the palace but soon understood that no one saw them and was out of fear.

As they entered a gorgeous room Tara saw a beautiful little princess sitting sadly. She was dressed in silk, had pearls round her neck and wore a large nose ring. She was turning over a box of jewels. A maid held up string after string of pearls and diamonds. "See princess the lovely jewels your father has

given you” said she. “Oh yes! I suppose they are lovely,” said the princess yawning as she spoke. The door opened and another maid came in. She carried a lovely dress of pink silk with a gold border “your mother sends her greetings, princess, and this costly dress.” The princess looked up “very pretty” she said. “But I would have liked a blue one better. Put it in my cupboard and convey my pranams to my mother”.

“Oh dear! Oh dear! How dull it is to be a princess! Why can’t I be a poor girl and go to school with other children? Why can’t I go to the bazaar on Saturday and buy grain, vegetable and oil like other little girls? Why can’t I grind and cook like other little girls?” “Oh princess,” said the maid, “think how you could spoil your beautiful silk dress. Your hands would get hard with grinding. The smoke of the fire would spoil your lovely pearls.” “I don’t want pearls and silks I want something to do.” “She doesn’t seem to be happy! Does she?” said the bulbul to Tara. “Come and I will show you someone else” said the bulbul as they slipped out of the palace and flew to another great city. “Here lives a very different sort of princess” said the princess. “Come, she is just going to bed, we will slip in and see her.”

No one noticed them as they walked into the palace and the bulbul led Tara into a nice room where a little girl was sitting on her mother’s lap. “Tell me darling”, said the mother, “Have you lead a happy day today?” asked mother. “Oh! Yes” said the child, “In the morning I did much nice lessons and read the new book about other countries. Then I went out, and while I was out I met out a poor little girl who had nothing to eat, so I gave her the rupee you had given me for buying sweets. She was so glad and I was also glad to see her happy. I did not think any more about the sweets I was going to buy. Then this afternoon I went to that hospital where all the people were sad and sick. I gave some oranges and bread and felt glad on seeing them happy. When I came back home, I went to the kitchen and learnt how to make chapattis. They weren’t very good, I am afraid, but I shall try again tomorrow because you said it was a shame for any woman not to know how to cook. Now my Queen mother, tell me what you have been doing today” she said putting her arms around her mother’s neck and kissing her “You look rather tired!” said the little one. “Well, Yes” said the Queen “I am rather tired, for I have been very busy. Now I am afraid I must go and get dressed up, for another King and Queen are coming to dinner tonight. Oh! Dear I’ll be very tired before I go to bed”.



Just then the bulbul touched Tara “come we have to leave if we are going to visit another place tonight” Tara put her arm around the bird’s neck. “I like the Queen” she said, “She looks so kind but I did not know it was such hard work being a Queen. I didn’t think queens ever got tired”.

The bird chuckled, “You are learning new things, now I am going to show you a different queen.” She flew a little way out of the town and stepped before a small house. It was warm and comfortable as they entered in, but evidently belonged to quite poor people. A woman lay on a cot with a tiny baby beside her and a girl of about Tara’s age was very busy cooking. The brass pots shone like gold, the fire light and smell rose from the one that was steaming on the fire.

“Rani! Rani! Where are you?” called a voice from outside. The little girl jumped up and ran to the door. “Here I am, father dear. All is well. Mother is sleeping so is the baby. I have had a lovely day. You didn’t think I would keep the house so well, did you? I have been so busy. I swept the house, washed the baby’s clothes and cooked some porridge for mom. She said it was quite good and now I have cooked your food and I do hope it is good!”. Her father kissed her and asked, “You haven’t had any time to sit still or play”. “No, not a moment” answered the little girl proudly. “But it is much nicer to do things than to play like a baby and besides it makes me happy to do things for you and mom than to play. I like to see her resting on the bed with baby while I do the work. That makes me much happier than sitting about doing nothing.



Tara turned to the bulbul and said, “Take me home quickly, I want to go and help mother and father like this. I would sweep and cook and look after our baby just as well as the little girl.” “Climb on to my back and close your eyes”, said the bulbul. Tara did as she was told. When she reached home mother asked her “where have you been my child?” “I went in search of happiness mother but then now I have understood that it can be found at home”. She moved quickly around the house, swept the floor, polished the brass pots, and sang to the baby. She told her mother about her wonderful adventures. “Mother now I have understood that true happiness does not come by possessing gold jewels and silk, but by trying to make other people happy”.



From that day there was nowhere to be found a happier little girl than Tara. She was always ready to help a school friend. Her mother found her to be the most useful girl. The bulbul sat on the tree outside the door and sang joyfully.

Storytelling is very interactive. As a story progresses and develops, children ask questions. This is a great learning activity. When you tell stories to your Bulbuls do not forget to use ways to make a child curious and encourage them to ask questions because this makes the child think.

### **An Attempt to Recollect**

Having read through so far, you can now try to test your memory by answering the following questions:

1. Why did Tara slip out of the house and go to the mango grove?
2. How did the picture of the queen in her book impress Tara?
3. What did the princess who said “How dull it is to be a princess!” wanted to be?
4. Why was the little girl who was sitting on her mother’s lap happy?
5. Why did Rani tell her father that she had a lovely day?
6. What lesson did Tara learn from her wonderful adventures?

### **For further Reading:**

1. A Complete Handbook for Flock Leaders\*

\* Books published by The Bharat Scouts and Guides, National Headquarters, New Delhi.

### **Thought for Reflection**

“It has been said that next to hunger and thirst, our most basic human need is for storytelling.”

-Khalil Gibran

## How much have I got it right?

Here are the answers to your memory test:

1. Why did Tara slip out of the house and go to the mango grove?  
*Fearing that her mother would ask me to sweep the floor, polish the brass pots, comfort the baby and do all sorts of work.*
2. How did the picture of the queen in her book impress Tara?  
*The queen's crown of jewels and necklace of pearls and the thought that she has nothing to do and is happy throughout the day.*
3. What did the princess who said "How dull it is to be a princess!" wanted to be?  
*She wanted to be a poor girl; go to school with other children; go to the bazaar on Saturday and buy grain, vegetable and oil like other little girls; and grind and cook like other little girls.*
4. Why was the little girl who was sitting on her mother's lap happy?  
*She could read her lessons; make a poor little girl who had nothing to eat happy by giving her a rupee, making people at the hospital feel happy by giving them some oranges and learning how to make chapattis at home.*
5. Why did Rani tell her father that she had a lovely day?  
*Because she swept the house, washed the baby's clothes and cooked food for her mother and father.*
6. What lesson did Tara learn from her wonderful adventures?  
*True happiness does not come by possessing gold jewels and silk, but by trying to make other people happy.*