

MRGARI THE HUNTER

Theme A change of heart.



STORY

Mrgari the Hunter (a story from India)

The storyteller tells the story whilst others mime.

There was once a wicked hunter called Mrgari. (*Mrgari enters and waves his bow in the air.*)

He enjoyed walking through the forest shooting any living creature he saw. (*A rabbit enters, followed by a deer. Mrgari shoots them and they roll on the ground in pain. Mrgari stands over them laughing.*)

Cruel Mrgari laughed. He enjoyed seeing the injured creatures suffer. (*Mrgari laughs again and continues his journey leaving the animals dying. Other creatures he meets on his way suffer the same fate.*)

One day, after the hunter had shot yet another poor rabbit, he met a wise person walking through the forest. (*Narada, the wise person, enters and pauses, looking sadly at the injured animals.*)

The wise person was very upset when he saw the suffering of the poor-creatures. (*Narada moves towards Mrgari and mimes tears and anger.*)

Mrgari proudly boasted that he was a very powerful hunter and was doing his job well. (*Mrgari shrugs his shoulders at Narada's protest and mimes strength with a raised fist. Narada takes the hunter by the hand, points to the suffering animals and raises his arms to the sky.*)

The wise person showed the hunter a frightening dream. (*Mrgari closes his eyes.*) In his dream Mrgari saw himself being hunted and felt himself dying in pain. (*Mrgari falls to his knees shaking and mimes a slow death.*)

The wise person woke him up and told him that those who cause suffering to others may one day suffer themselves. (*Narada wakes the hunter up and shakes a finger at him, telling him off.*)

Mrgari jumped to his feet in shame, broke his bow in half and vowed never to harm living creatures again. He asked the wise person to forgive him. (*Mrgari falls to his knees and Narada places a hand on his head.*)

The hunter became a changed person. He went around doing good and never harmed another living thing. All who knew him were amazed that such a cruel person could change his ways. (*Mrgari walks around smiling and shaking hands with people and patting animals on the head.*)

Several years later the wise person brought a friend to meet the hunter. Mrgari was sitting under a tree with his animal friends. He saw the visitors and thought he would run to meet them. He jumped up (*Mrgari jumps up*) and set off but suddenly he noticed a small group of ants on the ground in front of him. (*He notices the ants, mimes horror and with great care tip toes over them.*) With great care Mrgari stepped gently over the ants' nest so that he would not stand on any of the tiny insects.

'Ah,' said the wise person, 'even the cruel can change their ways, if someone shows them what to do.'

'Yes,' said the friend, 'and you, Narada, were the touchstone who led the hunter back to the path of truth.' (*Mrgari reaches two wise people and they join hands. He kneels and Narada blesses him.*)



DEVELOPING THE THEME

Perform another scene, previously rehearsed in class. A playground scene. A cruel bully teases new pupils and steals all their sweets. An older pupil tells him or her that this is wrong.

Or talk about the Indian play and its characters. Why was Mrgari cruel? What do you think the wise person said to him? What caused him to change? Would he be forgiven? Contrast the shooting of the rabbit with the stepping over the ants. Point out that it is never too late to change.



THOUGHTFUL MOMENT

*Forgive the bad deeds that we may have committed.
Many mornings remain to dawn upon us;
Lead us through them all.
(from the Rig Veda)*

Sing a song from India. (For songs, write to ISKCON Educational Services, Bhaktivedanta Manor, Letchmore Heath, Watford WD2 8EP)



IN CLASS

Many people who tell this story have become vegetarian. Look up some vegetarian recipes.

Look up a Christian story about a person who changes their ways. You will find St Paul's story in the *Bible, Galatians, Chapter 1 verses 13-24*.

