

1. A Mushroom Omelet

In a small town in France, there was a local restaurant named “Good Appetite”. The restaurant was famous for its mushroom omelette. They were proud that the mushrooms they used were from Brazil and were very fresh and really tasty.

One day, an American named Nick visited this town. He had heard about this restaurant and its famous dish. He decided that he had to go and give it a try. When he arrived the town, the first thing he did was to ask the local people where the restaurant was. Shortly afterwards, he found the place. It was no surprise that the restaurant was packed with people. However, one thing that also got his attention was that none of the waiters spoke English. Nick was a bit since he didn’t speak any French. However, because he still wanted to taste this great dish, he decided he had to try anyway.

He went into the restaurant and found a table to sit at. A

waiter came and said, “Good morning, sir. What would you like?” in French. Nick was lost for words when he heard the waiter. He took a deep breath, calmed himself down and said, “I’d like a mushroom omelet, please.” The waiter looked confused and asked, “What would you like?” again, but still in French. Nick got nervous and wondered, “How do people say ‘mushroom omelet’ in French? Oh, No! What should I do?” Suddenly, he got an idea. Nick took out a pen and a piece of paper. He drew a mushroom on the paper and showed it to the waiter. The waiter looked at the paper, smiled and said, “Very Well, sir.” in French. A few minutes later, the waiter came back and handed Nick an umbrella. Nick didn’t know what to do. He went home hungry and disappointed.

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2. A Very Special Guitar

Once upon a time, there was a little frog who loved music more than anything else. He loved croaking together with his brothers, but he also loved listening to the birds' singing or the crickets' chirping. He just could not get enough of all those beautiful melodies surrounding his pond each day.

One day, however, he noticed a young man who sat down in the meadow near the pond and took a strange thing out of a large case. This wooden thing had two bumps on either side and a long, thin neck on which six strings were fixed. The young man laid the thing on his legs, pressed down the strings with his left hand, pulled them with the right hand, and all of a sudden, the most wonderful music filled the air that he had ever heard.

Enchanted, the little frog listened to him, while the young man played all new melodies. How he would have loved to sing such wonderful songs on his own... But all at once, croaking seemed boring to the little frog, and even the birds' singing or the crickets' chirping appeared much more

humdrum to him now than these melodies.

When the young man put the musical instrument back into the case and went away, the little frog directly headed for the wise, old owl. He described the instrument for her and then waited for her answer in excitement.

"Hmmm, let me think", the owl said and rubbed her beak's tip thoughtfully with her right wing. "This must have been a guitar ... " "Then I will learn to play the guitar!" the frog explained and hopped back to his pond. "Frogs cannot play the guitar!" the owl called after him. But the little frog did not hear her anymore. As soon as he reached his pond, he told all of his friends that he wanted to play the guitar.

The young frog became very sad. He had no fun at all any more croaking together with the other frogs. The whole evening long, he could only think about the wonderful melodies which the young man had elicited from the guitar.

3. Birbal Finds a Thief

One fine morning, a minister hurriedly rushed to Emperor Akbar's court to tell the Emperor some bad news. "The gold coins were all gone! They must have been stolen the night before!" the minister cried.

Emperor Akbar [akbar] was shocked to hear this. The place where the minister lived was the safest in the kingdom. Surely no one could have broken into the house to steal the coins! It must have been one of the other ministers who lived there, too, took the coins. But who?

The Emperor then had Birbal to the palace and asked him how to solve the case.

Birbal called for a donkey to be tied to a pole at the place where the minister lived. He ordered all the ministers to lift the donkey's tail and say, "I did not steal the coins." Then each of them must come to the palace later that day.

When each of the ministers was at the palace, Birbal said, "Now each of you must turn your hand up, so I can see

the palm of your hand." This was odd and the ministers did not know what to think of it. But they did as they were bid.

When Birbal looked at the hand of each minister, he saw that each one of them, except Alim Khan, had a black patch of paint on their palm. A-ha! Got the thief.

You see, Birbal had painted the donkey's tail with a black coat of paint! He knew that the one minister who was guilty, in fear, would not touch the donkey's tail. And that's how the thief be caught and the case be solved.

So once again Birbal proved how clever he was, and he was rewarded by the Emperor with 1000 gold coins.

* Akbar ['akbar]

* Birbal ['bɪrbəl]

4. Jewels and Toads: A French Folktale

Once upon a time, a woman had two daughters. Mila, the older one, was mean and selfish, like her mother. The younger girl, Emma, was gentle and kind. The mother loved her older daughter more, so she treated Mila well. She made Emma work hard and walk a mile to the well to get fresh water.

One day, Emma saw a poor, ragged woman at the well. The woman begged the child for a drink. Emma gave the woman some water to drink. The ragged woman was weak so Emma carefully held the pitcher for her.

"You are so kind," said the woman. "I will give you a gift. From now on, every time you speak, a jewel will fall from your mouth."

When Emma returned home, her mother scolded her for being gone for so long. "I am so sorry, mother," said Emma. When Emma spoke, a diamond came out of her mouth.

Her mother was surprised, but she quickly caught the jewel. "How does this happen, my dear, sweet, favorite

child?" she asked.

Emma told her mother about the woman at the well. The next morning, the mother sent Mila to get water. She was sure the old woman would give Mila the same gift.

The poor, ragged woman was at the well. She asked Mila for a drink. "No. You're just an ugly, old beggar woman. Just give me the same gift you gave my sister," Mila demanded.

"I'll give you a gift," the woman muttered.

When Mila spoke, a toad tumbled out of her mouth. Her mother was very surprised, and she didn't catch the toad. "You have caused this," the mother screamed at Emma. "You must leave this house at once and never come back."

Emma left the house and went into the woods. There, she saw the king's son. "Why are you all alone in these woods?" the prince asked.

When Emma told him what happened, jewels fell from her mouth. The prince took her home to meet his family. They were soon married and lived happily ever after.