

## ***Color of Diamonds***

One day, King Krishnadevaraya was sitting in his court. Suddenly, a slave called Ramu came into the court and complained saying, "Your Majesty ! I want justice. I have come here with great difficulty. Give me justice, your majesty!" On being asked, Ramu narrated his story: "My master had to go to some other town for some work. He ordered me to take an umbrella and accompany him. It was a hot day. I was holding the umbrella over my master's head to protect him from the heat. But I was walking in the sun. I could not bear the scorching heat of the sun. So sometimes, for a moment, I would hold the umbrella over my head. But my master would shout at me angrily. Suddenly, clouds of dust began to rise in the sky. There was a strong whirlwind. And soon a violent storm hit the land, The law minister interrupted Ramu and said, "Why don't you come to the point? You are wasting our precious time."

"Yes, your honor," said Ramu and continued his story saying, "soon it began to rain very heavily. We ran to an old temple nearby and took shelter there. I spotted a small red purse near the wall. When I opened the purse, I saw sparkling diamonds in it." Now everyone in the court was interested in the story. "What happened then?" asked the royal priest. Ramu said, "I told my master that since we had found the diamonds in the temple, we had to give them to the king. But the master said, "Don't be foolish. Keep your mouth shut. Don't you dare tell anyone about this! Since we have found the diamonds, we will divide them equally between us." Your majesty, my greed tempted me to take the diamonds." "What happened then?" asked the royal priest. Ramu said, "When we returned home, my master did not give me my share. So I have come to you. Your majesty, please give me justice."

The king sent for Ramu's master and asked him about the diamonds. Ramu's master said, "Your Majesty, God has blessed me with a lot of wealth. I am a happy and contented man. When we found the diamonds in the temple, I gave them to Ramu and asked him to deposit them in the state treasury. But instead of showing me the receipt, he chose to complain to you. If he has not deposited the diamonds in the state treasury, he must be punished."

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Having said this, Ramu's master produced his servants as his witnesses. The three witnesses said, "Our master had given the diamonds to Ramu in our presence." Ramu was furious. He said, "That is not true, your majesty!" The king asked all of them to wait in the court. He then called the Law Minister and Tenali Rama and went with them to his resting room.

The king asked the Law Minister, "Tell me. Who, do you think, has the diamonds? Ramu? Or his master?" The Law Minister said, "We have no proof, Your Majesty. But the master has three witnesses, while Ramu has none." The king asked Tenali Rama, "Well, what do you think? Who is speaking the truth? The master? Or Ramu?" Tenali Rama got up from his seat and said, "Your majesty, I will solve this problem in a few minutes. I request you and the Law Minister to hide behind the curtain for some time." As instructed, the king and the Law Minister hid themselves behind the curtain.

Tenali Rama then sent for the first witness and asked him, "Did your master give the diamonds to Ramu in your presence?" The first witness replied, "Yes, Sir." Tenali Rama then asked him, "What was the color of the diamonds?" The witness replied "Well, I do not know what color the diamonds were. But they were kept in a red purse." Tenali Rama said, "Alright. Stand here quietly." He then called the second witness and asked him, "Did your master give the diamonds to Ramu in your presence?" The second witness replied, "Yes, Sir." Tenali Rama then asked him, "What was the color of the diamonds?" The second witness looked at the first one, as if asking for guidance. But the first witness kept mum. Tenali Rama smiled and said, "Did you not see the diamonds? Why are you looking at the first witness?" "I had seen the diamonds," said the second witness. "Then what color were they?" asked Tenali Rama. "They were red," said the second witness. "All right," said Tenali Rama.

Tenali Rama then called the third witness and asked him, "Your master gave the diamonds to Ramu in your presence, didn't he?" "Yes," said the third witness, somewhat hesitantly. The first two witnesses began to tremble with fear.

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Tenali Rama then asked the third one, "What was the color of the diamonds?" The third witness was very scared now. Gathering some courage, he said, "The diamonds were white"

The King came out from behind the curtain. He was burning with rage. The master was then produced before the three witnesses. The master and the three witnesses were severely punished.

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