

Story : Rinnie the Rabbit

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Near the gurgling stream in the forest was a tidy little cottage, cosy and comfortable. In it lived Rinnie the Rabbit, with her three cute little bunnies. She cleaned and washed while keeping an eye on her three bunnies. "Yipee" went Jingo, the eldest followed by his brother Bingo, last to run out of the house was Dingo, the youngest; not to be outdone by his brothers, he went "Yipee", "Yipee" as loudly as his little lungs could yell.

While the two elder ones, Jingo and Bingo were obedient, the youngest Dingo was a rebel, full of mischief. He loved to meddle and tell tales, much to the annoyance of their mother "Rinnie Mama."

Dingo was a tiresome little brat, often getting into trouble with his neighbourhood for meddling and carrying tales. But it did not bother him.

"He broke my glass," complained one neighbour; "He trampled on my flower beds," said another. Rinnie

would chide him for his mischief, "what a naughty fellow you are! I have half a mind to tie you up to a tree." She would yell. But, Dingo would look sad for a few minutes, then dash back to his tricks again.

Outside Rinnie's quaint, ivy covered cottage was a neat garden where peonies and daises grew in abundance. In the middle of the garden stood a huge tree, where "Chirpy" the sparrow had her nest.

"Chirpy" and "Rinnie" were good friends. Sometimes they would discuss their family problems also.

'Hai' said Rinnie. "Hai" said Chirpy.

"What did you see from the tree top?" Rinnie would ask Chirpy.

From her perch on the top branches of the tree, she could see all around and gather the latest gossip. "Oh Rinnie, did you know," she would call out excitedly, "Wily the fox was on the prowl yesterday. The cunning Jackal had a big fight with his neighbour. They both abused each other like anything."

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Chirpy would go on and on about the neighbourhood, much to the delight of Rinnie, who hardly had time to look around herself.

Always, before going out to get the essentials, Rinnie would tell her kids, "Jingo, Bingo, Dingo, lock the door from inside. Don't open it for the strangers and do not go outside, until I come. Do not fight, instead play nicely with the games of Ludo, Snakes and Ladders etc."

Then she would call out to Chirpy, "Chirpy dear, please keep an eye on the kids."

Chirpy loved the three little bunnies, and often agreed to "Bunnie sit" (Babysit) for Rinnie, when she went shopping.

Then, during her babysit, "Once upon a Time" Chirpy would read stories of Kings and Queens to the little ones.

Although she loved all three of them, she was worried and concerned about Dingo just like Rinnie. She wanted to help Rinnie to mend his ways. But he could not be reformed and continued to be mischievous with new pranks in mind.

At the other end of the stream lived Rinnie's brother Wisey, who was full of wisdom and knowledge, that the animals of the forest sought his help for all their problems. He kept a very neat little house with a place for everything. He meticulously placed everything in order, in its place.

One day 'Chirpy' the sparrow went

out to meet her sister whose nest was on a tree, close to Wisey's cottage. As she was flying, she saw Wisey giving advice and lessons in etiquette to little animals under a large tree.

"Hai there, brother Wisey," she called out.

"Hai chirpy dear, why don't you stop by for a cup of coffee?" said Wisey.

"Thanks" answered Chirpy. "Yes, I will, on my way back."

Whilst flying, an idea struck Chirpy. "Why not get Wisey to visit Rinnie and help her reform Dingo!" She knew that he would do so willingly.

After a nice cup of coffee and small cakes, Chirpy told Wisey about Rinnie and the trouble she had with Dingo.

"Don't worry," he said, "I will make the naughty little fellow, an obedient."

"Thanks" said Chirpy, "for everything" as she flew away. "I will be there tomorrow," shouted Wisey.

Chirpy could not wait to convey the good news to Rinnie. She flew fast, and called out to Rinnie breathlessly.

"Rinnie, Rinnie, I have good news for you. Your brother Wisey will be here tomorrow to teach Dingo a lesson or two."

Rinnie was beside herself with joy and happiness. She hugged Chirpy, she went around tidying her house and baking some goodies for her brother.

She baked two lovely pies and to cool them, left there on the window sill and continued with her chores.

Dingo meanwhile, having upset his brothers, toppling the furniture, entered the kitchen. He saw these pies and noticed that no one was looking around. He quietly took both of them and ran away, unaware of the fact that they were baked for his uncle.

Not far away from the cottage, he came face to face with his uncle, who had just arrived. Dingo became nervous and paled. Noticing Dingo's pale face and nervousness, Wisey guessed everything. Taking both the pies from Dingo's hands, he pretended that Dingo wanted to give him a pleasant surprise and was bringing the pies for him as a welcome. "Come Dingo." He patted him and said, "Let's walk together home."

Back home, when Rinnie turned her back, she got the shock of her life. Both the pies had disappeared. She was seething with anger. Seeing her flushed face, Wisey beckoned her, to keep quiet. Instead, placing both the pies on the table and praising Dingo, he spoke,

"Sister Rinnie, see how considerate our Dingo is. He has become so loving and affectionate."

"Do you know why he took these pies? He wanted to show me his warmth and affection to welcome me with these pies."

Rinnie's hard expression softened a bit. Uncle Wisey spoke again. "Sister dear, Dingo is a darling. He presented me these pies, when he met me outside. I am deeply touched. I do appreciate his thoughtfulness."

Rinnie's face lightened up. She hugged and kissed Dingo profusely with joy. "Oh, my darling baby, I love you so much."

Dingo was surprised at uncle Wisey's reaction and his wise remarks. Taking situation under control, his uncle, with his wisdom had saved him of all the thrashing from mother Rinnie.

Dingo was feeling ashamed of himself. He vowed never to be naughty again.