

Calumny, Veritas, and Lie

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“Have you caught the fish yet?” shouted Veritas.

“I almost trapped it, but you were so noisy I lost my composure,” replied Lie.

“This won’t do,” says Calumny.

“We need to use tools. Veritas, why don’t you get father’s fishing rod, spear, and net?”

“Didn’t father say we should seek permission before using them?”

“Would he know? It is only for a short time. Besides, we will return them right away,” says Lie.

Veritas went home to get the fishing tools. She handed them to her brothers, who happily went about their business; however, the rod snapped. Calumny tripped, and the net was torn.

The three were shaken upon hearing a familiar voice:

“What happened here?”

The boys immediately pointed to Veritas.

“She took your tools, Father, and asked us to use them to catch fish,” said Lie.

“We tried to remind her that we can’t use the tools without your permission, but she insisted. She said you always wanted to sip hot soup with fish. We agreed because we wanted to make you happy, Father. See, Lie, and I are drenched and wounded,” says Calumny.

The two boys showed the scratches from falling into the stream while trying to catch the fish. Veritas, in tears and a shaky voice, apologized and told Father that the stories of her brothers were untrue.

“Alright, I will call a witness since there are different versions.”

Father summoned stream and asked her to show everything that happened. Suddenly, Lie’s complexion darkened, his arms drooped, and his eyes popped out. Meanwhile, Calumny was engulfed by a cloak of shadows, his jaw dropped, his teeth transformed into fangs, and his hair extended like spikes. The two looked so hideous that Veritas burst into tears.

She begged her father to withdraw the punishment, but he could not be persuaded.

“For trying to deceive me,” Father said, “your present appearance shall serve as a warning.”

“As for you, Veritas, you shall exude brightness that pierces lies and deceit wherever you go. More importantly, this will remind your brothers never to repeat the mistake they made today.”