

Human Speech

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I once was granted the ability to speak all language
Merrily I asked a bird, “how about lending me your wings for a day?” It looked at me and
shrilled – “I do not speak human”
Amongst a vine two worm lay still, and I poked ‘em with a finger and said, “Why! You are
going to be colourful and flying soon”
It peeped out and scuffed at me as if in disgust, – “No human we speak!”
Heaved by the response I sat on the banks and watched a fish basking in the sun
With careful words and mouth peaked I whispered, “your scales are no less beautiful than the
setting sun”. It whined at me and bubbled – “I speak no human”.
I went to the temple (feeling stupid for them all), for it was time for Manny the elephant to take
the children for a ride
I sat on him and marvelled at his strength and we sang and clapped, and some even danced.
I forgot all about their inability to speak human,
And so I shouted amidst, “Manny! You are the strongest and the kindest of all”.
He lowered himself, made us all descend and cried – “I understand no human”.
I thought and pondered on how I learnt to speak and wished to teach them all.
So I went to the tree where I saw the bird perched,
There was no tree. The bird was gone. A stump lay naked and cold.
I looked for the worms, and all I could find were traces of their cocoons.
So I fixed my silk ribbon tight, and hustled away to the lake.
“I have to talk to the fish soon”, I thought.
But all I saw was a white mass.
For its scales were underneath and its white stomach reflected poorly on the setting sun.
Only, the cheetos packet by the rocks reminded me I had skipped lunch.
Yet, I set out for my last mission
Manny was still there, I could see him from the lake,
I had to teach him at least. I hurry to the temple.
When I reached with huffs and puffs
And my legs could no longer stand, I knelt to talk.
And ‘twas when I saw how human speech resonated - what I, spoke.
I saw deep carcasses and flinched skin
How a skin so thick could be seen through, I wondered.
How Manny was not like the elephants I saw on my Science textbook was no mystery now
How tired the mighty being looked,
An elephant never forgets, they say...

Without its tusks, and chains clenched, I only wished his memory be taken.
Manny saw me: patted me with his trunk.
Baffled, I looked down.
And I remembered how all creatures in the stories of my gran gran could converse.
The creatures did not forget the language, humans created a new one.
We forgot to speak the language of all kind.
And that, was when I wished I didn't speak Human at all.
The moment I cursed the language that muted the rest.