

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DON'T WORK TOGETHER?

A Tale from India

Adapted by Carole L. Cooney

Setting: A peaceful forest with grasses and trees

Characters:

Narrator

Ojasvi a *brave* hunter

Pranite a *wise* old quail

Kahali a *mischievous* quail

Dhuti a *trouble making* quail

(The above italicized words give the meaning of the Indian name.)

Narrator: It was early morning when Ojasvi crept into the verdant forest in search of quail.

Ojasvi: (whistling) Come, little ones! I know you are here!

Narrator: Ojasvi's bird call was so perfect that a large flock of quail gathered in the clearing. He hurled his wide net over the birds and caught them.

Ojasvi: What a catch! It is enormous! I have never had such a fine flock of birds. Now it's off to the market where you will earn me a large bundle of money.

Narrator: And so Ojasvi carried the net full of frightened birds to the town market where he was given a large payment. He did this every morning until the flock of birds grew smaller and smaller and smaller. Finally, it was time for Pranite, the wise old quail, to gather the remaining birds for a meeting.

Pranite: I have a plan that will out trick the skilled hunter. Only if you work together will the plan work. This is what you must do. Once he has thrown the net over you, beat your wings all together as one to lift the net and fly away. In this way he will not defeat you.

Narrator: The next morning the hunter walked quietly into the forest with his net slung over his shoulders. He whistled the quail song and immediately a flock of quail landed in the meadow.

Ojasvi: Come, my pretties! You don't know how rich you a making me! (laughing) You don't know how easy it is to catch you. Here is my wide net! That's right. Just gather under it.

Narrator: Suddenly, all of the birds began to beat their wings faster and faster. The net rose and the birds flew up with it. Up and up they went until the net snagged on a tree branch freeing the birds to fly away.

Ojasvi: What? What is happening? What did the birds do?

Narrator: The hunter shook his head and stood in amazement. He thought and thought and finally came up with the answer.

Ojasvi: They acted like a big monster that beat the air and allowed them to rise. How did they know to do this? Each bird is so small and yet when they worked together they had such power they were able to lift the net and escape. If they continue to do this, I'll never be able to capture them again.

Narrator: The next morning, Ojasvi came to the forest with little hope of catching many birds. Standing behind a large tree trunk, he saw many quail eating seeds. He slowly approached and threw his net over the large group. Once again, the birds began to beat their wings faster and faster. Suddenly, one of the quail shrieked.

Dhuti: (squawking) Watch what you're doing, Kahali! You are stomping on my tail feathers!

Kahali: (Screeching) You pushed me! (pecking) Take that! And That!

Pranite: (scolding) Young ones! This is not time to fight! The hunter is coming to gather us up in his net. Quick! Start beating your wings so we can escape!

Dhuti: Be quiet old bird! You can't tell us what to do!

Narrator: And so the birds began to squabble and fight. The hunter had such an easy time scooping up his net filled with birds. As he walked down the forest path toward the market, he shouted words of victory.

Ojasvi: I WON!

Narrator: Then he began to think about what had happened.

Ojasvi: I wonder if the birds will ever escape again? When they worked together, they were strong and able to free themselves. BUT when they did not work together, they were caught and sold and ended up on someone's dinner plate.