

Once upon a time, a king and his ministers were hunting in the forest. They rode together for many hours, but they could not find any animals. As they were tired and hungry they decided to stop and rest.

The ministers ordered the servants to pitch the hunting tents and to prepare the special food for the king's lunch.

While the king was waiting for his lunch, he saw a small deer bound into the forest. He quickly spurred his horse on to chase the deer. The young horse galloped briskly after the deer, carrying the king up one path and down another.

Soon they were deep in the forest, and the king knew he was lost. He quieted his sweating horse and tried to listen for the voices of his ministers and servant.

The forest was very still. The king heard only the leaves of the trees moving slightly and a few birds calling to each other in the distance.

He gently patted his horse and was guiding her slowly through the trees when he heard the voice of a young boy.

"Hello! Is anyone there?" the king called out. "Yes!" came the answer. "It is me, the buffalo boy."

The king led his horse into the clearing, and the buffalo boy stepped out to greet him. "Hello, sir. Are you looking for me?"

The king thought it best to pretend that he was an ordinary man, so he spoke to the buffalo boy with simple words. "My dear boy, I am lost. My friends made their camp at the edge of this forest near two large pepper trees. I wandered into this forest with my horse and now I cannot find them."

"Sir," the buffalo boy said. "Do not worry. I know that place very well. I will show you the way."

"Ah! That is good!" said the king. "Please come and sit behind me on my horse and we will ride together."

The buffalo boy made sure his animals would be safe and then jumped up behind the king. He guided the king across the clearing and onto a hidden path under the spreading vines.

As they road along, the king thought to himself "This is a kind and hardworking boy. I like him. I wonder if he likes me, his king?" "Then the king asked "My dear boy, do you know the king who rules this country?"

“I don’t know what you mean” the puzzled boy answered “My grandmother used to tell me stories about kings. But I do not really know what a king is. I’ve never seen a king. I don’t even know where a king lives.”

The king was a little taken aback. “Well, do you want to know what a king is? Would you like to meet a king?”

“Oh, that would be fun,” replied the buffalo boy.

The king said “If you lead me out of the forest to meet my friends, I will give you money, and I will also show you a king. When we meet my friends, you watch everyone carefully. Any man who keeps his hat on is a king. Remember now, if you watch carefully, you will know which man is a king.”

The buffalo boy promised the king that he would watch everyone carefully. Soon they arrived at the edge of the forest near two large pepper trees.

Now, all the ministers and servants had been terribly worried about the king. When they saw him riding safely out of the forest, they all jumped up and took off their hats.

The king turned around to the buffalo boy and proudly asked “Now, my dear boy, do you know who is king?”

The overjoyed buffalo boy laughed. “Oh yes! There are two kings here! I am a king and you are a king!”

Some of the ministers who were standing nearby overheard the boy. “Hey, boy!” they scolded “You are not the king. You must never say that again.”

“Oh!” the buffalo boy protested. “This gentleman told me that anyone who does not take his hat off is king. I did not take my hat off, so I must be king!”