

Once there was a very brave girl. She was also a very talented jumper. She could jump higher than anyone she knew. She could jump so high, any place seemed reachable.

One night, she looked up at the sky and saw the full moon smiling down on her. She smiled back. She turned to her friends and family and told them she would jump there.

She would jump to the moon.

She trained hard. She trained for ten years. It would be a higher jump than she had ever jumped before. Once she made a promise, she kept it. She would make it. She had to.

Finally, the time came. She would jump to the moon. The night arrived. Everyone she had ever known gathered around to witness the feat.

The very brave girl jumped.

She jumped higher than anyone had ever jumped. She jumped above the clouds. She jumped above the stars. She jumped so high.

If her arm had been two inches longer, she would have been able to touch the moon's rocky surface. But she couldn't reach.

And then the very brave girl fell.

She fell so fast. And yet, it was as if she were in the air for a lifetime. Doctors told her she was lucky she had only broken her legs and fractured her spine. She would never walk again but she had her life. She moved on, got a steady job, got a family, but every now and then she would look down at her hands, the hands that had almost touched the moon, and would kiss them and curse them.

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Once there was a happy-go-lucky shark who had a flaw: She could only swim forward.

She got used to meeting new people, making new friends. She had to get used to it - she could never swim back to the people she had met and friends she had made before.

Leaving her established life behind each day, creating a new life each day was hard. But it was bearable, because her family followed her. She knew they would always be with her.

Her family was her only constant. They expected that eventually she would learn to swim in multiple directions, or even stay still. But she never did.

As she got older, they got older too. She continued only forward, while they got so old. They all died, and she was left alone, swimming in the one direction she could.

Her family didn't know. Perhaps the happy-go-lucky shark herself did not realise. But her affliction wasn't that she couldn't go back and needed to learn how. It was that she wouldn't go back.

She would often ask herself, why should she return to the past? She would gesture and say, there is far more out there ahead of me, than back where I've been.

She continued to make new friends in each place she passed by, but she would leave them quickly. They would feel confused, then sad, and then forget her.

The happy-go-lucky shark continued forward, always leaving everything behind, in search of something brighter ahead. She did this for her entire life.

She eventually died alone in the middle of nowhere.

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Once there was a loyal dog. Her keeper was very wise, but very old. One day, her keeper got very sick. Very very sick. He told the loyal dog that he would die very soon, and she should leave to attain her own desires.

The loyal dog asked her keeper, what must be done to attain one's desires?

He twiddled his thumbs in thought for a long time. The loyal dog waited eagerly to hear the answer.

Finally, he looked up at the loyal dog, and told her - to attain one's desires, first one must know absolutely, in words and in thought, what those desires are. Then, and only then, the answer to attaining those desires will become obvious.

He died immediately after that sentence.

The loyal dog mourned. Then the loyal dog left, to go somewhere quiet, to sit and think until she knew absolutely, in words and in thought, what her desires were.

She found a shady knoll. She sat. She thought. She thought and thought and thought. She thought for a year. She thought for a century. Wars started and ended while she thought.

She thought for so long that she feared the answer would never come to her. But then it hit her like a lightning bolt. She suddenly knew her desires and how to attain them in heart and soul, and the words were imprinted in her brain as if they had always been there. She stood up to speak the answer to her keeper's final question. But as she opened his mouth, a wasp flew in and stung her throat. The loyal dog was allergic to wasp stings and her throat swelled up, choking her, robbing her of the chance to articulate her carefully planned out thoughts, and robbing her of her life.

The loyal dog died on that knoll. The wasp lived for a few more years, then died too.