The Story of the First Old Man and the Hind

I am now going to begin my story (said the old man), so please attend.

This hind (a female deer) that you see with me is my wife. We have no children of our own; therefore I adopted the son of a favorite slave, and determined to make him my heir.

My wife, however, took a great dislike to both mother and child, which she concealed from me till too late. When my adopted son was about ten years old I was obliged to go on a journey. Before I went I entrusted to my wife's keeping both the mother and child, and begged her to take care of them during my absence, which lasted a whole year. During this time she studied magic in order to carry out her wicked scheme. When she had learnt enough she took my son into a distant place and changed him into a calf. Then she gave him to my steward, and told him to look after a calf she had bought. She also changed the slave into a cow, which she sent to my steward.

When I returned I inquired after my slave and the child. "Your slave is dead," she said, "and as for your son, I have not seen him for two months, and I do not know where he is."

I was grieved to hear of my slave's death, but as my son had only disappeared, I thought I should soon find him. Eight months, however, passed, and still no tidings of him; then the feast of Bairam came.

To celebrate it I ordered my steward to bring me a very fat cow to sacrifice. He did so. The cow that he brought was my unfortunate slave. I bound her, but just as I was about to kill her she began to low most piteously, and I saw that her eyes were streaming with tears. It seemed to me most extraordinary, and, feeling a movement of pity, I ordered the steward to lead her away and bring another. My wife, who was present, scoffed at my compassion. "What are you doing?" she cried. "Kill this cow. It is the best we have to sacrifice."

To please her, I tried again, but again the animal's lows and tears disarmed me. "Take her away," I said to the steward, "and kill her; I cannot."

The steward killed her, but on skinning her found that she was nothing but bones, although she appeared so fat. I was vexed. I said to the steward, "If you have a fat calf, bring that in."

In a short time he brought a very fat calf, which, although I did not know it, was my son. It tried

hard to come to me. It threw itself at my feet, with its head on the ground, as if it wished to beg me not to take away its life. I was even more surprised and touched at this action than I had been at the tears of the cow.

"Go," I said, "take back this calf and bring me another in its place instantly."

As soon as my wife heard me speak this she at once cried out, "What are you doing, husband? Do not sacrifice any calf but this."

"Wife," I answered, "I will not sacrifice this calf," and in spite of all her remonstrances, I remained firm.

I had another calf killed; this one was led away. The next day the steward asked to speak to me in private.

"I have come," he said, "to tell you some news which I think you will like to hear. I have a daughter who knows magic. Yesterday, when I was leading back the calf which you refused to sacrifice, I noticed that she smiled, and then directly afterwards began to cry. I asked her why she did so."

"Father," she answered, "this calf is the son of our master. I smile with joy at seeing him still alive, and I weep to think of his mother, who was sacrificed yesterday as a cow. These changes have been wrought by our master's wife, who hated the mother and son."

"At these words, oh Genie," continued the old man, "I leave you to imagine my astonishment. I went immediately with the steward to speak with his daughter myself. First of all I went to the stable to see my son, and he replied in his dumb way to all my caresses. When the steward's daughter came I asked her if she could change my son back to his proper shape."

"Yes, I can," she replied, "on two conditions. One is that you will give him to me for a husband, and the other is that you will let me punish the woman who changed him into a calf."

"To the first condition," I answered, "I agree with all my heart. To the second I also agree, I only beg you to spare her life."

"That I will do," she replied; "I will treat her as she treated your son."

Then she took a vessel of water and pronounced over it some words I did not understand; then, on throwing the water over him, he became immediately a young man once more.

"My son, my dear son," I exclaimed. "This kind maiden has rescued you from a terrible enchantment, and I am sure that out of gratitude you will marry her."

He consented joyfully, but before they were married, the young girl changed my wife into a hind, and it is she whom you see before you.

Since then my son has become a widower and has gone traveling. I am now going in search of him, and not wishing to confide my wife to the care of other people, I am taking her with me. Is this not a most marvelous tale?

"It is indeed," said the Genie, "and because of it I grant to you the third part of the punishment of this merchant."

When the first old man had finished his story, the second, who was leading the two black dogs, said to the Genie, "I am going to tell you what happened to me, and I am sure that you will find my story even more astonishing than the one to which you have just been listening. But when I have related it, will you grant me also the third part of the merchant's punishment?"

"Yes," replied the Genie, "provided that your story surpasses that of the hind."

With this agreement the second old man began in this way.

1. From how it is used in the story, we can assume that a steward is a(n):
   a. servant b. family member c. land owner d. child

2. This is an example of:
   a. epic poetry b. drama c. prose d. fable

3. The slave was turned into a:
   a. genie b. hind c. cow d. goat

4. "'That I will do,' she replied; 'I will treat her as she treated your son.' This excerpt is an example of:
   a. allusion b. metaphor c. irony d. figurative language

5. The old man is telling about something that happened before his current meeting with the genie. This is an example of:
   a. flashback b. irony c. metaphor d. alliteration

6. From your memory of yesterday's story, the second old man has:
   a. a hind b. a genie lamp c. a calf d. two dogs

7. A lesson that can be learned from this passage is:
   a. what goes around comes around b. be nice to strangers
   c. one should obey his parents d. do unto others as you would done unto you

8. Why does the story end with the beginning of another one?
   a. the frame story sets it up to be one story after another b. we only have part of this story
   c. it is like "The Lady or the Tiger" and has no rising action d. the author did not finish it