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## **Why White Ants Always Harm Man's Property**

THERE came once such a terrible famine in the land that a grain of corn was worth far more than its weight in gold. A hungry spider was wandering through the forest looking for food. To his great joy he found a dead antelope.

Knowing that he would not be allowed to reach home in safety with it, he wrapped it up very carefully in a long mat and bound it securely.

Placing it on his head, he started for home. As he went, he wept bitterly, telling every one that this was his dead grandfather's body. Every one he met sympathized heartily with him.

On his way he met the wolf and the leopard. These two wise animals suspected that this was one of Spider's tricks. They knew that he was not to be trusted. Walking on a little way, they discussed what they could do to find out what was in the bundle.

They agreed to take a short cut across the country to a tree which they knew Cousin Spider must pass. When they reached this tree they hid themselves very carefully behind it and waited for him.

As he passed the place they shook the tree and uttered frightful noises. This so frightened Mr. Spider that he dropped his load and ran away.

The two gentlemen opened the bundle and, to their great joy, discovered the flesh of the antelope in it. They carried it off to their own home and began to prepare supper.

When Mr. Spider recovered from his fear he began to wonder who could have been at the tree to make the noises. He decided that his enemies must be Wolf and Leopard. He made up his mind he would get his meat back from them.

He took a small lizard and filed his teeth to fine, sharp points. He then sent him to spy upon the wolf and leopard—by begging fire from them. He was to get the fire and quench it as soon as he left their cottage. He could then return and ask a second time. If they asked him questions, he must smile and show his teeth.

The lizard did as he was told, and everything turned out just as Spider had expected. Wolf and Leopard eagerly asked the lizard where he had had his teeth filed so beautifully. He replied that "Filing Spider" had done it for him.

Wolf and Leopard discussed the matter and decided to have their teeth filed in the same way. They could then easily break the bones of their food.

Accordingly, they went to the house of the disguised spider and asked him to make their teeth like Lizard's. Spider agreed, but said that, to do it properly, he would first have to hang them on a tree. They made no objection to this.

When he had them safely hung, Spider and his family came and mocked them. Spider then went to their cottage and brought away the body of the antelope. The whole village was invited to the feast, which was held in front of the two poor animals on the tree. During this festival every one made fun of the wolf and leopard.

Next morning White Ant and his children passed the place on their way to some friends. Mr. Leopard begged them to set him and his friend free. White Ant and his family set to work, destroyed the tree and set them at liberty. Leopard and Wolf promised the ants that on their return they would spread a feast for them.

Unfortunately, Spider heard the invitation and made up his mind to benefit by it. On the third day (which was the very time set by the wolf and leopard) Spider dressed up his children like the ants. They set out, singing the ants' chorus, in order to deceive Leopard.

Wolf and Leopard welcomed them heartily and spread a splendid feast for them, which the spiders thoroughly enjoyed.

Soon after their departure the real ants arrived. The two hosts, thinking these must be Spider and his family, poured boiling water over them and killed them all except the father.

White Ant, on reaching home again, in great anger, vowed that he would never again help any one. He would take every opportunity to harm property. From that day to this white ants have been a perfect pest to man.