

“Appreciation makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.”

Voltaire, c1745

Once upon a time ...

... there was a King who fell in love with a beautiful young maiden ...

It was early in the morning, on the seventh day, that he discovered her and his heart was immediately and completely smitten. And he vowed to love her and protect her always, and the King showered her with affection and gifts of all kinds. He was proud of the maiden and glorified her, placing her above all others and decreed that every door and every gate in his Kingdom be opened for her without fail.

And so it was, the maiden became his Queen.

One day, the maiden was riding in the King’s golden coach, pulled by his finest white steeds, dressed in a magnificent royal gown and holding in her arms the abundance of treasures the King bestowed upon her.

As the coach traveled down the lane, she spied through the window a coin of small value laying in the mud and thistles of the roadside.

“I must have that coin as well,” the maiden called out.

She demanded the coach stop and, waiting for when the King would not see, she dropped all the King’s treasures from her embrace and left the golden coach, descending down onto the roadside into the mud and thistles in search of the small coin.

And as the maiden searched for the coin of little value, her royal gown got covered in mud and dirt, and the driver and the ladies in waiting turned away from her in embarrassment.

Soon the King discovered the actions of the maiden and his heart was broken, for the maiden did not show even the smallest appreciation for all the King had done for her. And her actions humiliated and angered the King.

“Was not all my kingdom could offer her enough that she should disrespect me so publicly?”

So he ordered the golden coach to drive on, and he collected back all the treasures and gifts he had given her and locked them away.

In the meantime, the maiden struggled in the dirt and weeds along the side of the road and finally lay her hands upon the small coin. Upon lifting it up she said,

“Wait ... this is but a small coin, it has no value at all!”

And looking up she saw the golden coach was now gone, all the treasures of the King were gone, all the gates to the Kingdom were closed and her royal dress was soiled and tattered ...

... and all she had now was the small coin of no value.



But instead of realizing her disrespect for the King, the maiden stomped her feet and charged the gates of the Kingdom in anger, demanding all her treasures returned.

“These are mine,” she cried. “And the coin is mine. I shall have it all.”

And the King looked upon her with sadness, for she had no appreciation in her heart for anything he had done for her. And the ladies in waiting and the King’s attendants turned away from the maiden, as they did not want to look upon his humiliation and embarrass the King any further.

“You shall keep your small coin of little value,” said the King. “But the treasures of the Kingdom and the golden coach must only be held by those who will protect and honor them, for treasures are gifts of the heart and not to be wasted on one who will throw them away for something of so little value.”

And in sadness the King turned away from the maiden, his heart broken by her selfishness.

The maiden stood outside of the gates of the Kingdom in her tattered dress holding on to the small coin, angry the treasures were taken from her. And each day, to every stranger who would pass her by, she would pull out her small coin and show all who would gaze upon her,

“See? My coin is the treasure of a Queen!”

And no one could explain fully to the maiden that the smaller the heart, the greater the loss.

*“The greatest gift of life is loyalty,
the greatest treasure in life is appreciation ...”*

Indian Proverb