

Manu And the Hunt for the Treasure

By

Sapna Gupta

Table of Contents

The Tree	2
The Fish	5
The Cave, the Dragon and the Coat	7

The Tree

There was once a young boy by the name of Manu. He lived in a small village and worked for a carpenter. He was good in making furniture and all sorts of tools. He would work during the day and would go to the village school at night to study reading and writing. One of his jobs was to go to the forest when the wood ran out and cut some fresh wood.

So as it happened, the wood ran out, so the carpenter told him to go to the forest to cut some wood. Manu went off to the forest with his ax. He saw a nice big tree and started chopping it. Suddenly he heard a voice "Please don't cut me". Manu looked around but did not see anyone and started cutting again. He heard the voice again "Please don't cut me". At that time Manu asked, "Who said that?" The voice said, "It's me, the tree". Manu was a little surprised, so he looked at the tree and asked, "Are you speaking to me?" The tree said, "Yes".

A talking tree?!! Manu was now really surprised. The tree said again, "Please don't cut me". Manu said, "But I need the wood for my furniture which will provide me with the money so I can go to school and eat and live well." The tree said, "Please go somewhere else, but don't cut me". Manu asked "Why?" The tree said, "I am so big so I am home to so many living things. I have moles and rabbits living near my roots, birds nesting in my branches, animals taking shade from my branches and enjoying my fruits. If you cut me what will happen to all those?"

Manu thought for a while and then said, yes – that is true. I will be destroying a whole system. So he said to the tree, “I will not cut you, but then how will I survive? How will I live?” The tree said, “I understand, so I can tell you about one person who can take you to a place where there is enough treasure that you don’t have to work anytime and then you can do whatever you want with it.” Manu said, “Please tell me where I can find this person.”

The tree said, “Walk along the path that goes by my side, keep walking until you see a field of flowers, walk through it, and you will see a river. Keep walking along the river towards where the sun rises. You will see a hut near the river. In that hut lives an old man. Talk to him and he will tell you where to find this treasure.”

Manu said okay and started walking along the path. For the way, the tree gave him a branch of his tree so that Manu could use that as a walking stick as well as to give him fruits whenever he was hungry. The tree told him that the stick will also give him light when he needed it. It would never run out of fruits and he can break however many sticks he wanted from it and it would still not finish.

After about two days of walking on the path, Manu saw the field of flowers, he was happy that he was on the right path. He crossed it and saw the beautiful river. He started walking along it. The path was full of gravel, but Manu did not care, he kept walking. The next day he saw the hut.

He was really excited to see the hut, and so he started walking fast. But to his surprise, as he came closer to the hut the hut moved farther away. He started walking faster, but again the hut moved away from him!! He did not understand what was going on, but he still kept walking, and the hut kept going farther. He got so frustrated that he shouted “Hey hut, I am coming to see you and you keep moving away!” Then he heard a giggle. He looked around, he didn’t see anyone. He carefully walked a little forward, and said, “Who is it?” A fish jumped out of the river and said, “It’s me”.

The Fish

Manu was surprised, a talking fish?! He had never seen a talking fish! He spoke back to her, “What are you laughing at?” The fish jumped in and out of the water and said, “So many people have tried to reach that hut but no one could, because the house recognizes only the person who wears a golden coat. The coat can be found only under the river in a cave. When you wear the coat, the house will recognize you and not move anymore.”

Manu asked, “How do I get to this cave to get the coat? Is the river too deep? How will I breath under water if the cave is under water?” The fish said, “I am the keeper of cave and I can take you to it but then you have to go in yourself. I will give you gills so you can breathe underwater. But you should know that in the cave is a dragon you have to be careful of.” Manu asked, “How do I deal with the dragon? And then where will I find the coat?”

The fish said, “The dragon guards the golden coat and you need to kill the dragon to get to the coat. To kill the dragon you need a sword that is hidden at the entrance of the cave. Once you kill the dragon then you get into a room which the coat is kept under a rock. Getting the coat is not easy – you have to step on the right stones in the path that takes you to the coat. You can find the right stones to step on by checking which stone is the light one. A light stone will fall through the cave and into the river. But the heavier one will stay and you can step on it.

The sword to kill the dragon is near the entrance in a hole in the cave wall. To get to the sword you have to find the spot opposite the moon and the two stars in the cave. But I have to also tell you, I have taken many people down that cave and no one has come back yet. I can also not bring you back unless you wear the coat. That is the condition.”

Manu thought for a while. He had no real place to go back to, no one was waiting for him, he had come a little bit already, he had the tree’s help and if he goes a little further then he would get the treasure and he would never have to work again. So he decided to go forward with the treasure hunt. He called the fish and said he was ready to go.

The Cave, the Dragon and the Coat

The fish was happy because he thought that this boy could be different and may actually get the coat. As the fish asked him to slowly come into the water and hold his breath under water until the fish could give him gills to breathe with. Manu did as he was told and went under water to hold his breath. He felt the gills on his neck and soon he could breathe under water. It was a funny sensation for him. As he swam behind the fish, he saw many different types of fishes, beautiful corals, glowing organisms and strange new plants he had never seen before. He was amazed at all the life underwater. He held on tightly to his magical branch as he swam behind the fish.

Finally they reached a huge wall of rock. The fish swam around it to take Manu to the entrance of the cave. Manu was a little afraid, but then took a deep breath and stepped in the cave. It was completely dark. He did not know where to start walking. He took out his branch and suddenly the cave was lit up. He quickly started looking for the moon and two stars. He kept the branch up and quickly started to walk around. He could not seem to find the marks.

Suddenly he heard a roar, and he knew the dragon would be coming soon! So he started looking quickly for the marks again. He heard the heavy footsteps of the dragon so before the dragon could see him, he hid his branch to make it all dark again and waited. While he was waiting, he suddenly saw something glowing on one side of the cave. He realized he was looking at the two stars and moon!! He quickly started walking across from it on the opposite wall. He brought out his branch and started to look for any clues for a hole. He saw

rock that seemed a little out of place. He moved it and found a sword with a gold handle in the hole behind the rock.

He picked up the sword, it was very light and seemed very sharp. Suddenly the thumps of the dragon were getting louder, so Manu got ready with the sword. He was a little scared but the sword gave him strength. From the light of his branch, he saw the dragon coming towards him. He was huge and was blowing fire out of his nose. Manu made a note of where the dragon was and then hid his branch so it was completely dark. The dragon could not see him anymore. Manu then held his sword in front of him and then ran towards the dragon. The sword went straight into the dragon's body. The dragon roared loudly and then fell to his side to his death.

Suddenly there was light in the cave. The dragon was holding all the light inside him, and as soon as he was dead all the light came out of him and lit the cave. Manu now felt safe in the well lit cave. He looked around and noticed that the cave was quite big.

He looked for a path that would take him to the golden coat. He looked below to walk around the dragon, and saw that some of the stones were shinier than others. He decided to walk on the shiny stones. He followed the stones around the dragon deep into the cave. The stones took him to another smaller cave. The shiny stones were not there anymore. All the stones now looked alike now.

He stopped and remembered that the fish had told him that some stones would fall under the weight of his body. So he thought for a while and went back into the cave and brought back some big rocks. He started throwing the rocks all around the cave. Some of the lighter stones fell through and he could see the river below him. He went back and brought some more rocks and again threw them around. More stones fell through and so he kept doing that until he could see that there were some rocks in the path that did not fall down. Very carefully he stepped on each of them and came to the end of the path.

He saw a large stone. He thought he was going to need a lot of strength to move the rock but it was the spongy stone – pumice stone, and so was very light to move. Under the rock he saw the golden coat. He was thrilled by the coat and immediately wore it! It fit him perfectly. He walked out of the small cave and came to the edge of the large cave. He looked around for the fish. As his golden coat shone on the water, the fish came towards him. It was also very happy to see Manu alive.

The fish took Manu through a different part of the river this time. This was even prettier than before. There were many more glowing creatures here. The many schools of fish were many different colors and seem to follow each other. The water was very clear so Manu could see all these wonders very clearly. The fish ultimately stopped and started going to the surface. Manu followed until they reached the surface.

As he was coming out the fish said to him, "You are the only one to come alive because you are the only one brave enough to be in the dark. If you had not been in the dark, you would have missed the stars and moon as you can see those only in the dark. I wish you well. As a gift from me, you can keep the gills, nobody will be able to see them, but you can use them whenever you are under water. I wish you good luck in your journey. As you go out of the river, you will see the path to the hut. Stay on the path and you will reach the hut."

Manu thanked the fish and got out of the water. Now he was feeling a little stronger: he had the branch, the sword, the golden coat and the gills.