

Grand Contest in the Forest

Explanation: All the birds, animals and trees start discussing how they would dress up and present themselves for the contest to impress the Great One and get appreciation of the natural elements: Fire, Water, the Wind and the Sun. The laburnum said that it would sparkle like sunshine with its flowers that resemble the raindrops. Then the gulmohar announced that it would dress up and spread its radiance like the early morning, golden red sun. The bear proudly said that it would offer the best honey that it could find in the forest. Thus, they were all sharing as to how they would present themselves for the contest.

The elephant said that it would find a fresh fruit which, still on the branch and lay it at the feet of the Great one. But the gray squirrel with black stripes thought it had nothing to offer. The palash was willing to save some flowers though it was late and said proudly that the entire forest would be shining brightly with its flowers. The gulmohar said that it would make some flowers bloom though it was early. And the mango tree said that mangoes were ready. The ever beautiful peacock announced that emeralds and turquoises would be its feathers. Even the tiny lark said that it would impress with its beautiful song and the dove cooed that the Great One would like its musical notes.

Thus they were all boasting and competing of their beauty and planning to impress the Great One with some gift or the other. The squirrel thought that there were so many precious gifts and so much beauty to offer the Great One, and it decided to give whatever it had, and quietly gathered some nuts and seeds.

The next day, all the birds and animals, and the trees presented themselves in their ever best form and offered whatever they had brought for the Great One. At the end, the Great One asked the squirrel why it was so quiet! The squirrel said that it had neither beauty nor precious gift to offer and gave the nuts and seeds it had brought, and quickly left from there. Now everyone was eager to know who the winner was! The Great One thought for a while and to their utter surprise, announced that the squirrel was the winner as it had offered very valuable seeds which would become trees and bring forth fruits for several years.

All the animals and trees realized that they had thought about only the present or temporary beauty but the squirrel had thought about the future!

So, the **moral** of the story is: we should focus on things that would benefit us for a longer period of time instead of getting temporary satisfaction with unwanted things. For example, most of the youngsters these days, spend their time either with their mobile phones or computers which give them happiness for sometime. Instead, if they focus on their studies and career, they would get long term benefits.