



Mrs. Packletide's Tiger

by Saki

Mrs. Packletide decided that she must shoot a tiger. It was not that she liked hunting. No. Or that she believed India would be safer with one tiger less. No. The reason for her decision was this. Leona Bimbleton had flown from London to India. While in India, she had shot a tiger. Now she talked about nothing else.

Mrs. Packletide did not like Leona Bimbleton. In fact, she **disliked** her very much. She was jealous, *very* jealous of Leona Bimbleton. So there was just one thing to do.

Mrs. Packletide decided that *she* would fly to India. She, too, would shoot a tiger. Then she would return to London. She would throw a great party. She would invite all the newspapers. She would invite the photographers. She would also invite Leona Bimbleton. She would be sure to show off her new tiger-skin rug. She would make it the center of attention. That would show Leona Bimbleton!



And so Mrs. Packletide went about arranging it. First, she flew to India. Then she offered a thousand rupees for the opportunity to shoot a tiger. She made it clear that there must be very little risk involved. And she hoped she would not have to use much effort or **exertion**.

And so it happened that a little village in India **responded**. In this village there lived an old, tame tiger. It had left the jungle years ago. Now it wandered around the village, living off the smaller animals that it could catch.

The villagers liked the idea of earning a thousand rupees. They posted young men on the borders of the village. The men were given orders to head the tiger back into the village whenever it attempted to roam away.

The villagers tried to keep the tiger happy. They left it small, cheap goats to satisfy its hunger. The biggest fear of the villagers was that the tiger would die of old age before Mrs. Packletide arrived.

Finally the great day came! They waited until night. Everything was perfect. The moon was shining brightly and there were no clouds. A large wooden platform had been built in a comfortable tree. Mrs. Packletide waited there with Miss Louisa Mebbin, whom she had paid to help her.

The villagers had tied a goat to a stake to attract the tiger. This goat had a very loud bleat. It was so loud that even the nearly deaf tiger would be able to hear it. Meanwhile, Mrs. Packletide waited with a very **accurate** rifle.

"I guess we are in some danger," said Mrs. Packletide.

"Nonsense," said Miss Mebbin. "It's a very old tiger. It couldn't jump up here even if it wanted to."

"If it's an old tiger, I think I ought to get it cheaper," said Mrs. Packletide. "A thousand rupees is a lot of money."

Suddenly, the tiger appeared. As soon as it saw the goat, the tiger dropped to the ground. It decided, it seems, to take a short nap before beginning the grand attack.

"I believe it's ill," said Mrs. Packletide.

"Hush!" said Miss Mebbin.

At that moment, the tiger began walking toward the goat.

"*Now!* Fire now!" urged Miss Mebbin, excitedly. "If the tiger doesn't touch the goat you don't have to pay for it." (The goat was extra.)

The rifle flashed out with a loud *bang*, and the great beast fell to one side and rolled over in the stillness of death.

In a moment, a crowd of excited villagers appeared on the scene. Their shouting quickly carried the happy news to the village.

It was Louisa Mebbin who pointed out that it was the *goat* that had been shot—not too badly in the leg. But no trace of a wound could be found on the tiger. Evidently, the wrong animal had been hit. The tiger, it seems, had died of heart failure caused by the loud bang of the rifle.

Mrs. Packletide was annoyed at this discovery. Anyway, she was the owner of a dead tiger. And the villagers, eager for the thousand rupees, were happy to say she had shot the beast.

Later, back in London, Mrs. Packletide threw her grand party. She faced the cameras with a light heart. She spoke to the reporters. And her tiger-skin rug was admired by all. Leona Bimbleton was so angry that she refused to look at the newspapers for weeks.

A few days after the party, Louisa Mebbin stopped in to visit Mrs. Packletide. "How amused everyone would be if they knew what *really* happened," said Miss Mebbin.

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Packletide quickly.

"I mean how you shot the goat and frightened the tiger to death," said Miss Mebbin, laughing.

"No one would believe it," said Mrs. Packletide, uneasily.



“Leona Bimbleton would,” said Miss Mebbin.

Mrs. Packletide’s face looked a little green. “You surely wouldn’t tell on me?” she asked.

Miss Mebbin paused. Then she said, “I’ve seen a charming little cottage that I would like to buy. It’s quite a bargain. Only I don’t happen to have the money.” She looked closely at Mrs. Packletide.

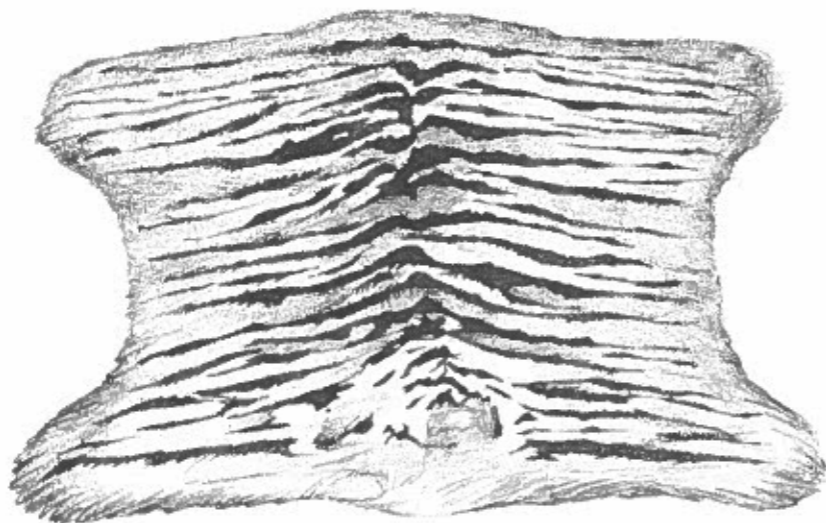
Now it was Mrs. Packletide’s turn to pause.

“Perhaps I can help you out,” she finally said. Then she wrote a large check.

Louisa Mebbin’s cottage is admired by all her friends.

“It’s amazing how Louisa can afford it,” they say. “She’s really wonderful.”

As for Mrs. Packletide, she does no more big-game hunting. She says the extra costs are too high.



GETTING THE MEANING OF THE STORY. Complete each of the following sentences by putting an *x* in the box next to the correct answer. Each sentence helps you get the meaning of the story.

1. Mrs. Packletide went to India to
 a. visit some relatives.
 b. see interesting sights there.
 c. shoot a tiger.
2. After Mrs. Packletide returned from India, she
 a. threw a grand party.
 b. got into a fight with Leona Bimbleton.
 c. refused to speak to Louisa Mebbin.
3. Mrs. Packletide’s tiger was
 a. old and tame.
 b. powerful and fierce.
 c. young and swift.
4. Mrs. Packletide gave Louisa Mebbin a
 a. photograph of her tiger-skin rug.
 b. large check.
 c. thousand rupees.

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REVIEWING STORY ELEMENTS. Each of the following questions reviews your understanding of story elements. Put an *x* in the box next to the correct answer to each question.

1. What happened first in the *plot* of the story?
 a. Mrs. Packletide went to India.
 b. The tiger took a short nap.
 c. Miss Mebbin said that she wanted to buy a cottage.
2. Which statement best *characterizes* Mrs. Packletide?
 a. She was a very wise and loving person.
 b. She was very jealous of Leona Bimbleton.
 c. She didn’t care about what other people thought of her.
3. Who is the *main character* in this story?
 a. Leona Bimbleton
 b. Louisa Mebbin
 c. Mrs. Packletide
4. Pick the sentence that best tells the *theme* of the story.
 a. A woman gets even with someone she knows—but it costs her more money than she thought it would.
 b. It is exciting to visit far-off countries.
 c. There is only one way to hunt a tiger.

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EXAMINING VOCABULARY WORDS. Answer the following vocabulary questions by putting an *x* in the box next to the correct answer. The vocabulary words are printed in **boldface** in the story. If you wish, look back at the words before you answer the questions.

- Mrs. Packletide disliked Leona Bimbleton and wanted to get even with her. Which of the following best defines the word *disliked*?
 - a. did not like
 - b. admired very much
 - c. enjoyed talking to
- One village responded to Mrs. Packletide's offer of a thousand rupees. The word *responded* means
 - a. hated.
 - b. answered.
 - c. avoided.
- Although she had a very accurate rifle, Mrs. Packletide was not able to shoot the tiger. Which group of words best defines the word *accurate*?
 - a. quiet, soft, dull
 - b. on-the-mark, exact
 - c. broken, damaged, wrecked
- Mrs. Packletide hoped that she would not have to use much effort or exertion to shoot the tiger. What is the meaning of the word *exertion*?
 - a. pleasure or joy
 - b. discussion or talk
 - c. hard work or action

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ADDING WORDS TO A PASSAGE. Complete the following paragraph by filling in each blank with one of the words listed in the box below. Each of the words appears in the story. Since there are five words and four blanks, one word in the group will not be used.

The lion has been called "the king of beasts." However, it is likely that the _____ is the more powerful animal. The tigers of _____ usually eat cattle, pigs, antelope, and deer. Tigers almost always hunt at _____. Tigers can climb _____ and are very strong swimmers.

India	night
tiger	
invite	trees

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THINKING ABOUT THE STORY. Each of the following questions will help you to think critically about the selection. Put an *x* in the box next to the correct answer.

- Which one of the following statements is true?
 - a. Mrs. Packletide wanted to shoot a tiger because she enjoyed hunting.
 - b. Mrs. Packletide and Leona Bimbleton were very close friends.
 - c. Mrs. Packletide was afraid that Miss Mebbin would tell how the tiger really died.
- We may infer that *rupees* are
 - a. foods found in India.
 - b. money used in India.
 - c. small, cheap goats.
- Why did Mrs. Packletide help Miss Mebbin buy a cottage?
 - a. Mrs. Packletide felt sorry for Miss Mebbin.
 - b. Mrs. Packletide owed Miss Mebbin a lot of money.
 - c. Mrs. Packletide wanted to keep Miss Mebbin quiet.
- It is fair to say that
 - a. Leona Bimbleton tricked Mrs. Packletide.
 - b. Mrs. Packletide tricked the villagers.
 - c. Louisa Mebbin tricked Mrs. Packletide.

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Thinking More about the Story. Your teacher might want you to write your answers.

- Suppose Mrs. Packletide hadn't given Louisa Mebbin a large check. What do you think Miss Mebbin would have done? Explain.
- If Mrs. Packletide had been unable to kill the tiger, one of the villagers (who was hiding) would have shot it. Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons to support your answer.
- Suppose you were a reporter at Mrs. Packletide's party. What do you think Mrs. Packletide would have told you?

Use the boxes below to total your scores for the exercises.

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