

# HOW THE TORTOISE GOT ITS SHELL

By Mainuk Ghosh

Now, O best beloved, this tale will tell us about how the Slow Tortoise got its hard shell we see today. Long ago, in the high and far-off times, there lived the most slowest tortoise in the middle of the Amazon Rainforest. He was so slow, he was bullied 'mensely by the animals of the forest.

One particular morning, when Slow Tortoise was munching cabbage leaves, the Mean Monkey, who was swinging from tree to tree – that's how monkeys travel, happened to spot Slow Tortoise and bellowed

“Hey slow-coach! You wanna race?” Hearing Mean Monkey's mocking comments, Slow Tortoise scampered away as quickly as he could (which O best beloved was not that quick).

Presently, the Annoying Anteater ambled along annoyingly. “Hello slow Porpoise,” jeered the Annoying Anteater. “I am a Tortoise,” replied the Slow Tortoise and scampered off as quickly as he could (which O best beloved was not that quick).

Soon after, the Colourful Parrot soared across the sky and spotted Slow Tortoise.

“OI, ugly!” she squeaked. “You look horrid.” Rhe Slow Tortoise who was hurt the most by what the parrot had said, scampered off as quickly as he could (which O best beloved was not that quick).

One day, Slow Tortoise had a sudden urge and temptation and a thought and a need to be different from the rest of the animals. So he decided to scamper off to the Painter's cottage which was located by the brink of the long, loopy, sinewy, curvy, crooked Amazon River. He trod on for days and months on end, occasionally stopping to munch on cabbage leaves.

Meanwhile the animals of the forest hadn't a clue where Slow Tortoise had gone.

“Where has that Porpoise gone to?” questioned Annoying Anteater.

“Well, I shall go and soar over the trees and find him,” suggested Emperor Eagle. So he soared over the trees for days and months on end, but couldn't find Slow Tortoise. Disappointed, he returned back to the other animals and told them.

That evening, on the other side of the forest, by the brink of the long, loopy, sinewy, curvy, crooked Amazon River. Slow Tortoise, who had recited the words of the Painter very well, exclaimed, “O Painter, O Painter, my beloved and best, make me different from the rest.” CREEAK ! Creaking open, the Painter's Cottage door opened and something scooped up Slow Tortoise.

“I shall if you wish,” replied the Painter and he grabbed a paint-brush and a bottle of paint. He painted different shades of black and white, some brown some green, some dark and light.

Exhausted, the Painter had finally completed the art. Slow Tortoise had now a colourfully painted back. “Thank you Painter, O Painter, my beloved and best, you have made me different from the rest,” recited Slow Tortoise, and set back to the animals of the rainforest.

Meeting Slow Tortoise, Annoying Anteater (who was very bewildered) exclaimed, “Who in the amazing Amazon are you?”

“I am Slow Tor – I mean, King Turtle” stumbled Slow Tortoise. “Then follow me to Eagle Palace.”

“Emperor Eagle, there is some new animal in our forest and he is king!” shouted Annoying Anteater, “we have decided to worship him instead.” So that day, all the animals chased the Eagle out of the forest and they welcomed King Turtle to the throne. “I want all the cabbage leaves in the forest,” demanded King Turtle. The next day, he told all the animals to get more and more. This, O best beloved, was how Slow Tortoise got his revenge.

Now, O best beloved, this is how the Slow Tortoise got its hard shell, but a turtle, best beloved, is a tortoise who still thinks he is king. So that is the tale, and now you know it.