**The Three pearls – Short Story**

Long ago there was a King called Marthanda who ruled over the Kingdom of Indrapuri. He was very clever and ruled over his people wisely. One day a Brahmin came to his court and blessed the King. The King told the Brahmin to ask him for anything he wanted. The Brahmin replied. “Your Majesty, I have to get my daughter married. But I do not have any wealth. My words are my only wealth. Think of my sayings as pearls. For each sentence pay me one thousand gold coins. I shall tell you three valuable pearls of wisdom.” The King was impressed by the Brahmin. He asked him to tell his valuable words and paid him three thousand gold coins. The King got the three sayings of the Brahmin engraved on a silver plaque and hung it in the royal bed-chamber.

That night the King looked at the words before retiring for the night. The first pearl of wisdom was “The King should at all times be alert.”The King then disguised himself and went into the town incognito. On the way he saw an old woman crying under the street lights. He asked her why she was crying.”O what can I tell you, My Lord? In seven days time, the King of this land marthanda will die bitten by a snake. I am crying because we will not get such a good king ever again,” replied the old lady. The King was surprised to hear this but he did not reveal his identity. Consoling her as he could he returned to the palace.

The next morning as soon as the King woke up, the words of the Brahmin hung above his bed, caught his eye. A King should always respect his enemies and honour them, was the second saying. The King thought that since the snake was his enemy now, it should be treated like a royal guest. So he ordered that his bed-chamber should be sprayed with perfume and plenty of fresh fruits, milk and honey should be kept in golden bowls. The passages leading to the bed-chamber was strewn with flowers. Thus making all these arrangements the king slept peacefully in the night.

On the seventh night the snake came to the bed-chamber of the King. Seeing the flowers and the fruits in the room it was very happy. It drank the milk and tasted some honey. A man who treats his enemies with such hospitality does not deserve to die, thought the snake and slid away quietly without harming the King.

Now the Minister of Indrapuri was a wicked man. He was always planning on ways to get rid of King Marthanda as he wanted to become the ruler himself. One day the King fell ill. Seizing this opportunity, the Minister coaxed the doctor to mix a little bit of poison along with the medicine the King was supposed to take.

The Minister promised to reward the doctor handsomely after he became the King. So the doctor as suggested by the Minister, mixed a bit of poison with the King’s medicine and took it to him. The King sat up to drink his medicine. He took the glass in his hand and his eye fell on the engraved words of the Brahmin. The King started thinking about those words. The doctor who had been watching the King waited anxiously. The King seemed to be hesitating about something. Fearing that he had somehow found out about the poison, the doctor fell at the King’s feet and begged his pardon and said poisoning the King was not his idea.

The King questioned him and found out all about the Minister’s plot. He pardoned the doctor and banished the Minister. Later on after he had recovered, King Marthanda sent word for the wise Brahmin and made him his Minister.