

Mosey Dawdle's Lesson

Reg Down
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Mosey Dawdle Tortoise was miserable. It had been a lovely day, but now it was raining. He was pulled inside his shell and trying to shelter under a tree. The tree had wide branches and small leaves and didn't help at all. The rain wasn't heavy, but it pitter-pattered on the ground and splashed inside his shell.

"Oh, I am so miserable," moaned Mosey Dawdle, clamping his eyes shut and hoping it would all go away.

But the gentle rain didn't go away. It kept on raining.

"How I hate the rain," groaned Mosey Dawdle, pulling himself further into his shell. "I was having such a grand time—now there is no one as miserable as me. Oh no! Not even the One Who made the universe and bears it as a shell upon His back could be as miserable as myself!"

Hardly were these words out of Mosey Dawdle's mouth when a thunderclap exploded over his head. A bolt of lightning ripped through the tree and split it in two. Branches clattered and crashed around him as his ears rang, his eyes dazzled and his toenails smelled as if they'd been scorched. The floodgates of heaven opened and a rain poured down such as Mosey Dawdle had never seen. It got worse. The rain turned icy cold. All around him water began to rise. It rose and flooded into his shell. It flooded and began to flow. It flowed and ran in muddy rivers. The rivers ran in rapids and Mosey Dawdle floated away into the darkness of the coming night. He was swept along, the growl of rocks grinding in the flood echoing around him. He was tossed, twisted, twirled, bumped, banged, plunged and flung into the air. He was flung so high that he landed on a boulder. Luckily, the water didn't come back to fetch him! All night he shivered and froze as he listened to the water surging past.

In morning Mosey Dawdle found himself stranded. The boulder he'd landed on was ten feet high. All about lay a brown, muddy lake stretching as far as his eyes could see.

"Oh dear," thought Mosey Dawdle. "Oh dear, oh dear."

The sun came out and slowly rose higher in the sky. Mosey Dawdle couldn't get off the boulder and the sun baked him mercilessly. The sun dried the lake and turned it into a sea of mud. Mosey Dawdle couldn't stay on the boulder any longer—he was roasting alive! He tried to climb down but fell. He tumbled and landed on his back with a PLOP in soft mud. He wasn't hurt, but the mud held him firmly upside down.

"Help! Help!" cried Mosey Dawdle, waving his scaly legs and stubby tail.

No one heard. All through the scorching day Mosey Dawdle lay on his back. All through the freezing night he lay on his back. The next morning the sun dried the mud some more. Finally Mosey Dawdle was able to turn over. Off he lumbered across the sea of mud. For hours he labored until he was covered from head to toe in muck. He looked like a crawling mud pie.

At last he came to a rise. It was a small hill with a tree growing on top. He struggled up and found himself on a meadow of fresh green grass and flowers. He stopped in the shade of the tree. Just then it began to rain. The rain was gentle and it washed the mud from Mosey Dawdle's shell. It cleaned his face. It pitter-pattered on the ground and rinsed the dirt from inside his shell.

Mosey Dawdle breathed a sigh of relief. "How I love the rain," he cried, closing his eyes and holding his face to the heavens. "I love rain so very much!"

And the gentle rain kept on raining, as if it knew what Mosey Dawdle was learning.