

A DUMB* WITNESS

*Oftentimes the word *dumb* means *mute*.
A mute person is unable to speak.

One day at noontime a poor man was riding along a road. He was tired and hungry, and wished to stop and rest. Finding a tree with low branches, he tied his horse to one of them. Then he sat down to eat his dinner.

Soon a rich man came along and started to tie his horse to the same tree.

"Do not fasten your horse to that tree," cried the poor man. "My horse is savage and he may kill yours. Fasten him to another tree."

"I shall tie my horse where I wish," the rich man replied; and he tied his horse to the same tree. Then he, too, sat down to eat.

Very soon the men heard a great noise. They looked up and saw that their horses were kicking and fighting. Both men rushed to stop them, but it was too late; the rich man's horse was dead.

"See what your horse has done!" cried the rich man in an angry voice. "But you shall pay for it! You shall pay for it!"

Then he dragged the man



1. (True/False) If a man is mute or dumb, it means that he cannot speak.
2. (True/False) The rich man obeyed the poor man's warning.
3. (True/False) The rich man's horse killed the poor man's horse.
4. What two things did the rich man want the judge to do to the poor man?
 - a.
 - b.
5. (True/False) The poor man pretended to be unable to talk.
6. (True/False) The poor man thought that if he told the judge what had happened, the rich man would say it was not so.
7. (True/False) The judge decided that the horse's death was the rich man's fault.
8. The judge praised the (poor/rich) man for his _____, and sent the (poor/rich) man away without a _____.



before a judge.

"Oh, wise judge," he cried, "I have come to you for justice. I had a beautiful, kind, gentle horse which has been killed by this man's savage horse. Make the man pay for the horse or send him to prison."

"Not so fast, my friend," the judge said. "There are two sides to every case."

He turned to the poor man. "Did your horse kill this man's horse?" he asked.

The poor man made no reply.

The judge asked in surprise, "Are you dumb? Can you not talk?"

But no word came from the poor man's lips.

Then the judge turned to the rich man.

"What more can I do?" he asked. "You see for yourself this poor man cannot speak."

"Oh, but he can," cried the rich man. "He spoke to me."

"Indeed!" said the judge. "When?"

"He spoke to me when I tied my horse to the tree."

"What did he say?" asked the judge.

"He said, 'Do not fasten your horse to that tree. My horse is savage and may kill yours.'"

"O ho!" said the judge. "This poor man warned you that his horse was savage, and you tied your horse near his after the warning. This puts a new light on the matter. You are to blame, not he."

The judge turned to the poor man and said, "My man, why did you not answer my questions?"

"Oh, wise judge," said the poor man, "if I had told you that I warned him not to tie his horse near mine, he would have denied it. Then how could you have told which one of us to believe? I let him tell his own story, and you have learned the truth."



This speech pleased the judge. He praised the poor man for his wisdom, and sent the rich man away without a penny.

—ARABIAN
TALE.