

**PROMPT:** *Update one of these traditional Persian and Indian stories to a modern setting. Rename the characters and change the places so that the events could occur in the 21st century. Use your imagination and expand on the plot.*

**Layla and Majnun:** Layla and Qays are in love from the moment they meet at school in their childhood, but are not allowed to marry. Qays (called Majnun, which means “possessed”) is perceived to be mad in his obsession with Layla. Layla is married off to another and Majnun becomes a hermit, devoting himself to writing verses about his profound love of Layla. Although they attempt to meet, they die without ever having a real relationship.

**Kalila wa Dimna:** An evil jackal is jealous of the lion king. The jackal gets the wolf and the crow to plot against the camel with him. The camel eventually falls prey to the lion king and his treacherous advisors. The bull then fights the lion to avenge the camel, but the fight is a stalemate. The jackal is found out and is put on trial in front of a jury of birds.

**The Fate of the Shepherd:** A dishonest shepherd dilutes his goat’s milk with water so that he can sell more bottles of milk at the market. One day, a flood comes and washes away his flock. A wise man pointed out the irony: the water that the shepherd mixed with his goat’s milk was the cause of the goats’ demise and the shepherd’s loss of wealth.

**Sohni and Mahiwal:** Each night, the beautiful Sohni sneaks away from her evil husband and crosses the river to meet her true love, the herder Mahiwal, who lives on the opposite bank. She uses a clay pot to float across the river. Their secret is found out by her outraged brothers, who replace the clay pot with one of unbaked clay. When Sohni crosses the river that night, the wet clay falls apart in the water and she drowns.

**Khushraw’s Disappearance:** The Iranian Shah (king) Khusraw spends many years in battle, combatting his enemies with his fierce military might. Eventually, he defeats all of his enemies. However, rather than rejoicing, he gets bored, sinking into a deep depression. His courtiers try to cheer him up with all of the spoils of war and pleasures of peacetime, but the king only grows sadder. He distributes all of his riches and lands among his followers and then vanishes in a snowstorm, never to be seen again.

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