



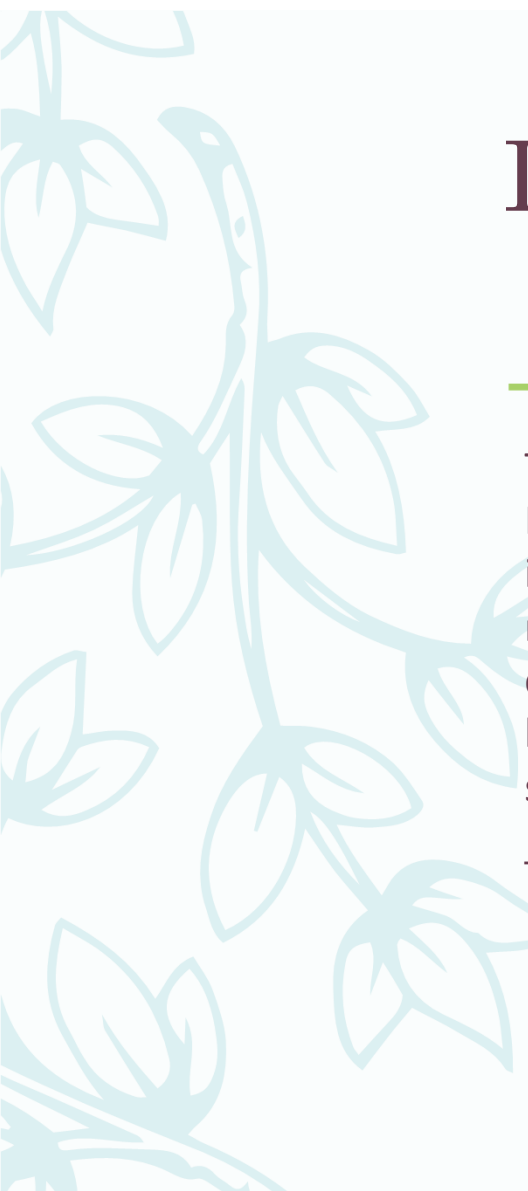
By R.K. LAXMAN

ISWARAN THE STORY TELLER

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- R.K. Laxman was an Indian cartoonist, illustrator and humourist.
- Born in 1921 in Karnataka, he worked as an eminent illustrator and a cartoonist in the leading national dailies of India.
- He was felicitated by various esteemed awards and honours before he passed away in the year 2015.





INTRODUCTION

The title of this chapter- '**Iswaran the storyteller**' tells us that this story is about Iswaran. He is called the storyteller because storytelling is an art and he is good at it. Iswaran uses special effects, does voice modulation, uses his body language to make the story realistic so that the listener, i.e. Mahendra gets attracted and captivated in his story. The writer wants to highlight this quality of Iswaran - that he was so good at telling stories that they appeared to be real. His stories were a source of entertainment for Mahendra.

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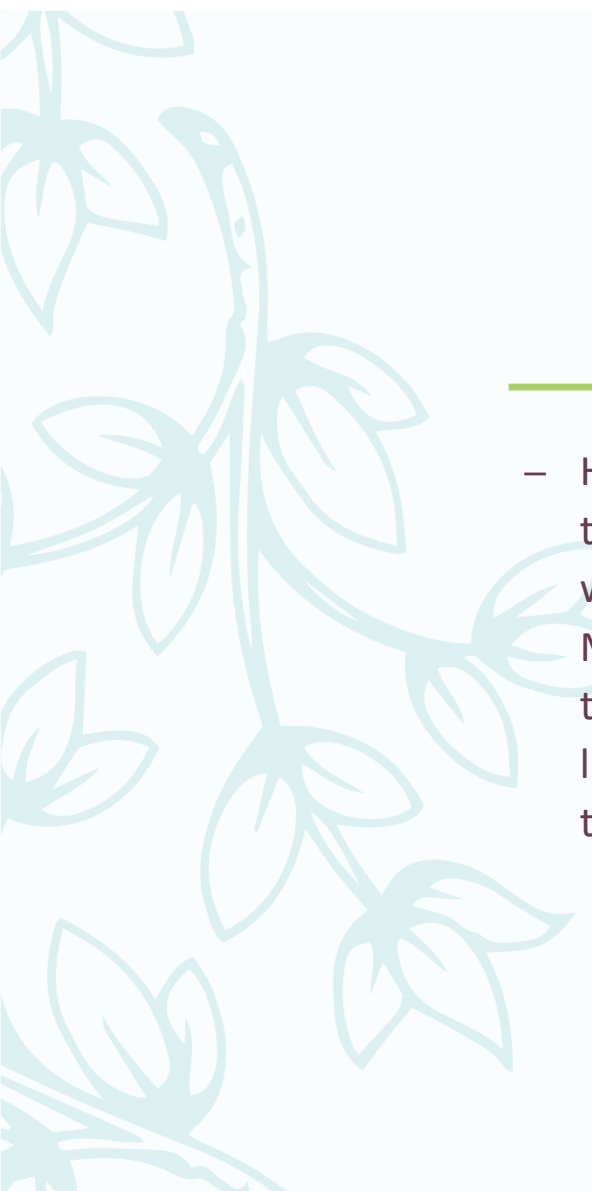
- This is a story about Mahendra, a junior supervisor and his cook, Iswaran. Mahendra had to keep moving from place to place as ordered by the head office. But he had fortunately an expert caretaker, Iswaran who cooked his meals, washed his clothes and chatted with him at night. Iswaran was very fond of reading Tamil thrillers during his spare time. As a result he innovated his own thrillers and would tell about it to Mahendra. The latter used to hear patiently without finding any loopholes in the story.



Iswaran often in his stories narrated about elephants. For example, he told a story about how he paralyzed a mad elephant that had gone berserk. He told that there were timber logs loaded on trucks. But if an elephant went mad no mahout could control it. The elephant now entered a school ground where children were playing, breaking through the brick wall. Children and teachers ran helter and skelter to save their lives. The elephant was stunned when Iswaran then only a little boy took a rod and hit at the elephant's third toe nail. The secret was if the elephant is hit there, his nervous system gets paralyzed.



- Finally, one day talking about spirits of the ancestors, Iswaran began to talk of ghosts. He said that the place where they had their shed was once a burial ground. He also had come across ghosts but he was not scared of them. He told Mahendra about a woman ghost seen only on a full moon night. She moaned and carried a foetus in her arms. This terrified Mahendra so much that he finally thought of that woman ghost on a full moon night..

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- He could hear a low moan outside his window. He peeped from his window and there stood the ghost of the woman. He flung himself down and found that he was often dreaming of that woman ghost. Iswaran used to ask grinning at Mahendra, “Sir, you were angry with me the other day when I told you about the ghost but didn’t you see her yourself last night ?” Mahendra never used to listen to Iswaran’s questions and finally decided to resign from his job and leave that haunted place