

The Legend of Prahlad and Holika



Many years ago, there lived a demon king named Hiranyakashyap. He believed that he was more powerful than any god. He had taken over the whole of Earth and he demanded that everyone must worship him, making it forbidden to worship anyone or anything else.

However, annoyingly for Hiranyakashyap, he found out that his only son, Prahlad, worshipped Vishnu – a real god. Prahlad knew that he would never worship his father.

One day, Hiranyakashyap asked his son a question, "Who is the greatest, God or I?"

"God is," answered Prahlad. "You are only a king."



Prahlad's answer made Hiranyakashyap very angry and he wanted to kill his son. Hiranyakashyap made many different plans and tried lots of different ways to harm Prahlad. He was thrown over a cliff, trampled by an elephant, bitten by snakes and attacked by soldiers but, each time, the god Vishnu saved Prahlad from harm.

Finally, Hiranyakashyap asked his sister Holika to kill Prahlad. Holika was a demon and she owned a special cloak which protected her from being harmed by fire. Holika agreed to use this power to kill Prahlad once and for all.

Hiranyakashyap asked his sister Holika to wear her protective cloak and sit on a bonfire. She tricked Prahlad into sitting on her knee in the middle of the bonfire, thinking that he would be killed by the flames whilst she was safe inside her cloak.

However, the gods did not like her evil plan. As the fire roared to life, the magical cloak flew from Holika's back and wrapped itself around Prahlad. Holika was burned away but Prahlad was not harmed at all. Knowing where the plan had come from, the god Vishnu also decided to punish Hiranyakashyap for his evil plot and took him away, never to be seen again.

With his wicked father and aunt gone forever, Prahlad was free to live happily. He became the king of his land and was always fair to his people. The moral of this story is that good will always find a way to triumph over evil.



Use the text that you have just read to help you answer these questions.

1. Draw a line to match the character's name to their role in the story.

Hiranyakashyap

Prahlad

Holika

The demon king's sister

The demon king

The demon king's son

2. Which of these statements is true? Tick one.

- Prahlad thought that Hiranyakashyap was greater than God.
- Prahlad thought that God was greater than Hiranyakashyap.
- Prahlad thought that both Hiranyakashyap and Vishnu were equal.

3. Why was Hiranyakashyap angry? Tick one.

- because Prahlad had called for Holika to come
- because Prahlad had taken over the whole of the Earth
- because Prahlad said that God was greater than him

4. Which of these did Hiranyakashyap order to happen to Prahlad? Tick two answers.

- to be trampled by an elephant
- to be bitten by snakes
- to be given a special cloak

5. Which words from the first paragraph tell you that this story happened a long time ago?

6. What magical power did Holika's cloak have?

7. Why do you think that Holika agreed to hurt Prahlad?

8. Explain how you know that good triumphed over evil in this story.
