



The **swallow** and the **wasp**

A long, long time ago, Khan Garid, King of the **Feathered World**, sent for a **swallow** and a **wasp**. “I **command** the two of you **fly around** the world and **seek** out the **animal** with the **tastiest meat**. In **future**, I will eat only that **animal**. Come back by **nightfall** with your **news**,” he ordered.

Early the next morning, Swallow and Wasp set out on their **quest**, each **flying** off in a **different direction**. As the sun **rose** higher and higher, Swallow sang happily as he **soared** through the **blue skies**, and soon **forgot** Khan Garid’s **command**.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, Wasp was carrying out the Khan’s orders. As the day drew to a close, they **met** before the **palace**. Swallow was now **worried** about the Khan’s **anger**. **Hoping** Wasp **had discovered** the **tastiest animal**, he asked, “Wasp, did you find out which **animal’s meat tastes** best?”

Wasp **immediately** answered, “**Humans** are the **most delicious** of all. From now on, our **beloved** Khan must eat only **humans**.”

This **upset** Swallow as he liked the people of the Earth. “How can I help those **poor humans** from being **hunted** by Khan Garid forever?” he thought.

Swallow **cunningly** asked Wasp, “How did you **manage** to **taste** the **humans**?”

Wasp **proudly replied**, “I **pierced** their **skin** and **tasted** their **blood** with my **tongue**.”

“Where is this **powerful tongue** of **yours**?” asked **cunning** Swallow. When Wasp opened his **mouth** to show his **tongue**, Swallow **quickly pecked** it out. Before **shocked** Wasp could **react**, they were **summoned** to Khan Garid.

“Tell me what you have **discovered**,” **commanded** the Khan. “Wasp, you **speak** first.” But a **tongueless** wasp cannot **speak**. All Wasp could do was fly **round** and **round** and **round protesting** with a **loud buzzing** sound.

“I can’t understand a single word!” **roared** the Khan. “Swallow, tell me **whose** meat is the **sweetest**.”

“With **pleasure**, your **Majesty**,” Swallow **replied**. “The **tastiest meat** in the world **belongs** to the **snake**.”

Khan Garid **immediately vowed** to **hunt** only **snakes**. And so, this **royal tradition** is carried on to this very day by **eagles**, the **descendants** of Khan Garid. As for **wasps**, they **lost** their **voice** forever and now can only make a **whining** sound of **complaint**.

From Mongolian Folktales and Legends, collected by D. Tserensodnom, translated by D. Altangerel and adapted for Talk4Writing by Julia Strong

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Over two-thirds of the words in this story are from the 350 most common words in English (excluding the proper nouns Khan Gharid, Swallow and Wasp). The words that are not in bold are not in the 350 most common.