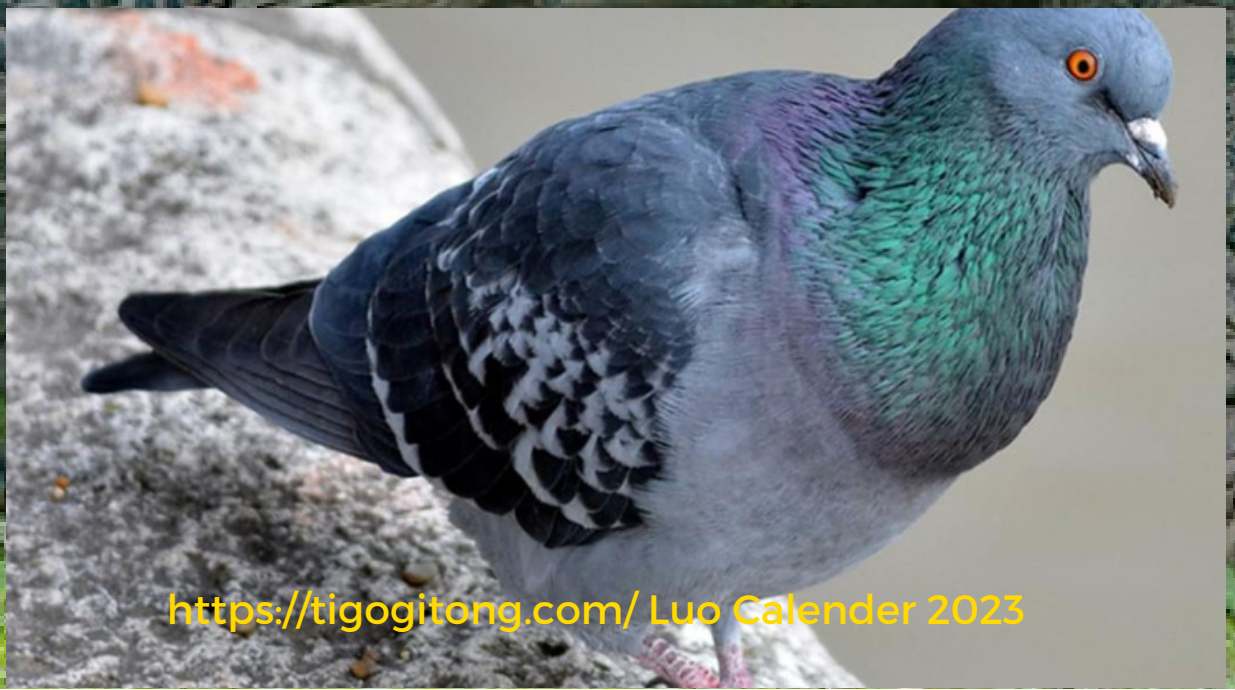


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THE TORTOISE AND THE DOVE





A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Should bad friends be avoided? This story reinforces the importance of being able to identify bad traits in friends. In this story, the tortoise, a close friend gets the dove to kill his own wife. It is a tragic story - almost inconceivable that such a thing can happen in real life. It has awesome life lessons and was told and retold to children.

Can people be so gullible and innocent to believe that such an incident cannot happen to them! We know that such incidences happen in people's lives more often than we can imagine. In the real world, bad friends are a destructive force to contend with! Great lesson in life!

Achieng



THE TORTOISE AND THE DOVE

There was a time when all animals, insects, and birds could speak the same language and understand one another. It was during this time that the tortoise and the dove became great friends. They lived harmoniously and discussed matters of mutual interest. They exchanged visits, but during such visits their wives always displeased them by breaking in on their discussions with complaints which were only of family interest and should not have been discussed in front of outsiders.

Realizing this, the tortoise asked his friend the dove to pay him a visit only when he knew that his wife was absent. When the dove enquired the whereabouts of his wife, he answered that because of his wife's constant interruptions and scolding, particularly in the presence of his guests, he had killed her. The dove expressed his sorrow at this, but the tortoise told him that there was nothing to be sorry about, since he was now leading a much happier life than he used to.



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He could go out with any girl he liked and no one ever made any complaints to him. He told the dove that this was the only solution to his problems. The dove then decided that he would do the same to his wife, so he went home and picked a quarrel with his wife and beat her to death.

The news immediately went around that he had killed his wife and all the girls became afraid of him. After this, the dove paid a surprise visit to his friend the tortoise to tell him that he had also killed his wife. To his amazement, when he knocked at the door, it was the wife who opened.

He jumped and cried out to his friend the tortoise that he had seen jachien (a ghost) in the form of the tortoise's late wife.



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The tortoise then came out and confirmed to his friend that it was not jachien, but his living wife, who was once dead but had now come back. The dove asked how this could have happened and the tortoise replied that it so happens with wives.

From this time on the dove lived a miserable life without a wife and went about crying that the tortoise had deceived him. As a result, of this incident, all doves made a vow that since there did not seem to be any honour between male friends, they must not go for walks without their wives. This is why doves always fly in pairs, and if a dove's wife dies, he never re-marry again because of the suspicion that he may have killed his former wife. Thus, a widower dove usually dies of loneliness very soon after his wife's death.



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REFLECTIONS

Luo use this story to remind married friends that they must not always believe friends, rumours and gossips when it comes to marriage without doing due diligence. Wherefore, friends are important, the Luos did not believe that they should be absolutely entrusted to help handle marital issues.

The details of marital problems need interrogation and verification. The stories not only demonstrate the depth of understanding that the traditional society had on marital issues but through such stories, we learn that friends are not always what they seem and that deep insight is needed for a marriage to survive their influence.

In the story of the tortoise and the dove, we see how a friend, the tortoise cleverly manipulates the dove into killing his wife even as his own life continues to thrive. He is not even ashamed of what he has done neither is he sorry, rather he enjoys seeing the misery that his friend is going through. Married couples are therefore compelled to take note of these stories.

THE TORTOISE AND THE DOVE



LESSONS LEARNT

- **Friends are not to be believed on marital issues without doing due diligence.**
- **Friends can be the pathway through which seeds of hatred and anger is sown into a marriage leading to total destruction of the family.**
- **Never take a friend's word at face value.**
- **Friends should never substitute family intervention on marital issues.**