

Don't kill the goose that lays golden eggs

Meaning: Don't be fool hardy. Don't mortgage the future for immediate benefits.

Alternatives: Do not run too fast after gain. Covet all lose all.

Illustrative Story:

"Take this gosling. This is all that I can offer you for helping me raise a fence round my house," the farmer told his assistant. "Just a gosling.

Not even a fully grown goose? And I worked for six days?" the young man complained.

"This bird will make you rich. Very rich.

Just wait till it starts laying eggs," saying this, the farmer sent the young man away.

The young man walked home, carrying the gosling along. He wondered, "How can this bird make me rich? The farmer has fooled me."

That made him angry. So he did not take much care of the gosling.

He gave it to his wife and said, "When it becomes big, we will make a meal of it."

His wife nodded her head, took the bird away and left it in the backyard.

There the gosling foraged for itself. It lived on worms and insects and grains. Soon it grew big and fat.

One morning the woman heard the goose cackling loudly and came round to find out the reason.

Her eyes came to rest on an egg/ There was something odd about the egg.

Its color was golden. The woman picked up the egg. It was unusually heavy.

She turned it around. It looked to be made of gold. Could it indeed be so!

She ran to her husband and showed him the egg. He took it to the goldsmith who checked the quality of the gold.

"It is 24 carat gold. Where did you find it? Want to sell it?"

The man nodded his head. He came back home, carrying a wad of notes.

He remembered the farmer's words, "The goose will make you rich."

Every day the goose laid a golden egg. The young man built a palatial house.

He began to live in style. Then an idea came to his mind. "Why should I wait for the goose to deliver one egg every day?

The goose must be holding several eggs inside its belly. If I kill the goose, I will get all the eggs at once."

He consulted his wife. She found it very sensible. "What a wonderful idea!"

She smiled and hurried to get hold of the carving knife.

The couple went to the backyard. The man seized the goose. It struggled to free itself.

But the man held it firmly. His wife gave him the knife. He ran the knife through the goose.

The bird died.

The man removed the feathers and cut open the goose's belly. He thought he would find many golden eggs.

Not even one egg was there. He buried his face in his hands and sobbed. His wife wailed very loudly,

"We killed the goose that laid a golden egg every day. We were greedy. Now we have lost everything.

We acted foolishly."

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