

One day, the prince was playing with his friends in the forest. He challenged them. "The first one to climb the tree will be the winner!"

As he raced up the tree, he saw his friends run away in fear. The prince turned around. Suddenly he saw a fearsome snake ready to bite him!



Without fear the prince picked up the snake. He had the strength to crush it with his bare hands. But the prince did not wish to kill another living being. He had respect for all forms of life. And so he chose to lead the snake away to a safe place.

His friends watched in awe. News of the prince's bravery and compassion spread to the city. Soon the people began calling him Mahavira, which means "very brave."