The Thief’s Stick Grows an Inch

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While three people were together, one discovered that his money had been stolen. Because no one else was present, one of the three had to be the thief, yet none would confess. The matter reached the King's court, but despite the King's questioning, the thief could not be identified.

Seeing this, the minister devised a clever plan. He handed each of the three men a one-foot-long wooden stick and said: "These are three magical sticks. Whichever of you is the thief, your stick will grow longer by an inch by tomorrow. Tomorrow at this exact time, you must return and present your stick to the royal court!"

The actual thief went home and began to panic. He thought, 'If my stick grows an inch tomorrow, I will surely get caught. Therefore, if I chop off an inch right now, it will be the correct size by tomorrow.' Thinking this was clever, he measured an inch off his stick and cut it off.

The next day, when they presented their sticks at the royal court, one stick was shorter by an inch.

The minister declared, "You claimed you didn't steal! Return his money immediately and take 25 lashes of the whip as punishment."

Moral: No matter how clever one tries to be, a person who does wrong will always get caught in the end!