

Reckless words pierce like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing

Proverbs 12:18 -- A Proverbial Story

By Ted Hildebrandt and Chatgpt

In the village of Eldenwood, words carried weight heavier than stones and sharper than a sharpened sword. No one knew this better than a young man named Jeb. Gifted with a quick wit and a sharper tongue, Coren's words had a way of cutting deeper than he realized.

Jeb was known for his jests and clever insults, delivered with a smirk and a sparkle in his eye. The villagers laughed nervously at his remarks, too wary to confront him, for though his words amused, they often stung. He would mimic the blacksmith's limp, mock the miller's daughter, and tease old Mara about her fading memory. Coren believed himself clever, mistaking cruelty for charm.

One evening, during the spring festival, Coren stood at the heart of the village square, surrounded by flickering lanterns and the scent of blooming lilacs. His tongue, sharp as ever, turned toward gentle Elen, a quiet girl whose family had long struggled with hardship.

"Tell us, Elen," Jeb called out, loud enough for all to hear, "how does it feel to live in a house emptier than your head?"

The laughter was immediate, but hollow, like the snapping of brittle twigs. Elen's face blanched, her eyes filling with tears she would not let fall. She turned and fled, the echo of Jeb's words chasing her into the night.

The celebration faltered. An uneasy silence followed. Old Mara, stooped and wrinkled, stepped forward, her gaze steady.

"Reckless words pierce like sword thrusts," she said, her voice thin but sure, "but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

The crowd shifted, ashamed. Jeb scoffed, but something in Mara's eyes unsettled him. That night, sleep evaded him. Dreams of bloodied swords and Elen's stricken face haunted him.

Morning came, grey and heavy. Jeb found himself walking to the river's edge, where Elen often sought solace. There she sat, quiet and small against the world.

"I..." Jeb's voice, for the first time, faltered. "I spoke foolishly."

Elen did not turn.

“I thought words were only wind,” he continued, “but mine were a sharp sword blade. I am sorry.”

At last, she looked at him, her gaze tired but kind.

“Words can cut into someone’s heart, Jeb,” she murmured. “They can wound... but they can heal too.”

The lesson settled in Jeb’s heart like a stone in a still pond, rippling through him. From that day, he weighed his words, learned to mend with speech what he had once broken. His tongue, once a sword, became a balm, offering kindness and wisdom.

Years later, when the village spoke of Jeb, it was no longer with wary laughter but with quiet respect. For though none forgot his sharpness, it was his gentle and encouraging words they now remembered and the way his words, once reckless, had learned to heal, demonstrating the truth of the old proverb from the Bible: Reckless words pierce like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Proverbs 12:18