



THE CLEVER RABBIT AND THE HUNGRY LION

Once upon a time, far away in a vast savannah, there lived a very powerful lion. For years this lion had terrorized the savannah. He had made himself king, and no one dared argue with him because he was very big and very strong and when he got hungry he would hunt in the tall grasses and eat as many animals as he could find. Because he was so scary and so hungry all the time, everyone lived in fear that one day he would pass by them and decide they looked tasty enough to be his next lunch.

One day, the animals had a meeting and decided to suggest a deal to their cruel ruler. The zebra, the antelope, the giraffe and the buffalo all went together to the lion's den to talk to him. Cautiously, the zebra knocked on the opening of the lion's den with her hoof and waited.

The lion had been napping, and he wasn't very happy to be woken up. He blinked drowsily and slowly walked out. In front of him he saw four very tasty looking animals.

"Looks like lunch came to me, today!" he thought. He licked his lips, but then his lunch spoke to him:

"M-m-mighty ruler," the buffalo stammered fearfully. "We would like to make a deal with you. You kill so many of us every day but surely you can't be that hungry! Wouldn't one animal a day be enough to satisfy your hunger? Please..."

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we've talked and we can promise to offer you one of us every day. But after that, you wouldn't need to hunt anymore and we would be able to live more peacefully." The lion had to think about this. He didn't like the idea of eating less, but he was also very lazy and didn't like having to hunt. To have a meal delivered every day sounded just fine to him! He thought a little longer, then said,

"Well, alright then. We can try this new deal. But I warn you: if I don't get my lunch for just one day, I will eat you all for dinner!"

The animals felt very relieved, and when they returned to the others they agreed that they would randomly choose one animal to sacrifice every day. And so, that same day, they drew straws and the unlucky animal who drew the short straw became the first to be sent to the lion's den.

It was difficult for the animals, knowing that every day they might be chosen as the sacrifice, but since the deal had been struck, the lion had kept his word. If this kept him from hunting in the savannah every day and made it safe for the animals to walk during the day, it was worth the sacrifice.

For a long time, the daily draw took place and the animals lived as peacefully as they could. Then, one day, they did the draw and a small rabbit was chosen as the sacrifice. He was, of course, very upset, and didn't want to make peace with his fate of being a lion's lunch like all the other animals had. But he had no choice, and so he said farewell to the others and began the long walk to the lion's den. He walked as slowly as he could, and on his way, he saw a deep well. He stopped at it and leaned over the edge to see how deep it was. It was very deep, indeed, and at the bottom he could see his reflection in the water. Suddenly, he had an amazing idea!

The rabbit left the well and began to walk even slower than he had before. When he finally reached the den, the lion was starving and pacing outside in a towering rage.

When he saw the rabbit, he licked his lips hungrily with his enormous tongue. He'd already been planning to go hunting in the plains again. How dare they send his lunch so late! He'd already pictured all the animals that he would eat the next day, and he started drooling just thinking about it. Cautiously, the rabbit moved

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closer to the lion and bowed deeply. The lion looked around him, confused.

“What kind of a lousy animal are you? Not only are you late, but you’re tiny! How are you supposed to feed me, you’re just one bite!” He roared angrily, as loud as he could. “After I eat you, I’m going out to the plains and I’m going to eat all your friends!”

Quickly, the rabbit said, “Mighty ruler, please, this isn’t my fault, nor is it the fault of the other animals. Please, sir, allow me to explain before you eat me.”

The lion roared again. “Fine! Talk, but fast! I’m starving!”

“As you surely know,” the rabbit began, “I was chosen to be your lunch today. But as you so wisely noticed, I’m much too small to satisfy your hunger, and so they sent another four rabbits with me. But on our way to you, we met another lion. He wanted to eat us, too, and even though we explained to him that we had promised to feed you every day, because you are the mightiest ruler of us all, he wouldn’t listen! He said it’s him who rules the savannah, and that we have to bring our sacrifices to him, not to you! He said you’re a liar, and then he ate my friends and told me to deliver a message to you. The message was: If you’re not too scared, you should meet him for a contest of strength. Whoever can prove he’s the strongest will be the new ruler of the savannah.”

The lion was furious and growled as loudly and as menacingly as he could. As loud as he could, he roared, “Take me to that impudent animal right now, I will destroy him!”

“Of course, mighty ruler!” the rabbit squeaked. “I just have to warn you that the other lion is hiding in a very strong den. It will be difficult to attack someone who lives inside a fortress. Besides, as I saw with my own eyes, he is horribly strong.”

“That’s none of your business, lunch!” the lion shouted. “Take me to him right now!”

And so the rabbit led the lion to the well. When they arrived, he pointed to it and said,

“That is the fortress where the other lion lives, sir.”

The lion prowled around the edge of the well, assessing its strength, and then hesitantly leaned over the edge to look in. Immediately, he saw his reflection

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in the water. He thought it was the lion who had challenged him! He roared as loudly and scarily as he could, but the lion in the well roared back, with the echoing voice of ten lions!

Enraged, the lion leaped into the well, attacking his own reflection and drowning in the deep water.

The rabbit rushed to the edge and looked in, relieved his daring plan had worked. Then he ran home to his friends, whooping and dancing with joy, to tell the story of how he had beat the fearsome lion.

The animals were in awe of how smart and fierce the little rabbit had been, and from that day on, everyone walked through the plains safely.