



The Wise Rabbit vs. the Greedy Lion

A Fable from India
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NARRATOR 1:

Long ago, a lion lived in the jungle near the foot of some mountains. The lion was cruel and greedy. He hunted more animals than he needed for food.

NARRATOR 2:

One day, the animals got together to talk about greedy Lion.

FOX:

If Lion keeps killing, there won't be any animals left in the jungle.

LEOPARD:

No kidding, Fox! I say we have a talk with him.

NARRATOR 3:

So, the animals headed to Lion's den to talk him into changing his greedy ways.

NARRATOR 4:

They decided to have Monkey speak first.

MONKEY:

Oh, mighty King of the Jungle, why do you hunt so greedily? We notice that you kill many more animals than you can possible eat.

NARRATOR 5:

Next, Red Panda spoke.

RED PANDA:

It's true. At this rate, no animals will be left for you to rule. You'll be a king with no subjects. I'm talking none...zero...zip...na-da.

YAK:

We have a plan that might help. We ask that you stop hunting. Instead, each day we will send an animal for your meal.

WOLF:

Yes, Lion. Listen to Yak's yak! That way, you get to eat and we keep many animals from being killed. Get it?

NARRATOR 1:

Lion, who was very smart, got it right away.

LION:

All right. But I'm warning you...if I don't get my food on time, I'll eat all of you!

NARRATOR 2:

The animals agreed to Lion's demand. From then on, each day, an animal was sent to Lion for his meal. Things went well for a while.

NARRATOR 3:

Then, it was Old Rabbit's turn to become Lion's meal. He set out for the lion's den with his four nephews.

NARRATOR 4:

On the way, he talked about how fast he could run when he was young. He told his nephews how his speed had helped him escape even the fiercest animals of the jungle.

OLD RABBIT:

I don't want to die. I may be old and slow now, but I am still quite smart. Maybe I can think my way out of this.

NARRATOR 4:

Just then, Old Rabbit saw a well. It gave him an idea.

OLD RABBIT:

Nephews, wait quietly for me near this well. When Lion shows up, I'll be with him. Don't say a word. I'll save myself *and* the other animals.

NARRATOR 5:

By the time Old Rabbit got to Lion's den, Lion was roaring mad.

LION: (Shouting)

Why are you so late? It is wa-a-ay past my meal time!

OLD RABBIT: (Bowing his head)

I am so sorry, oh King. I was sent with four other rabbits because I am too small a meal for you. Those four slowed me down.

LION:

Where are the others?

RABBIT: (Shaking with fear)

On our way here, we met another lion. He told us that he's king of the jungle. We told him he was wrong. We told him how strong you are. We told him there's only one king of the jungle -- and it's YOU!

LION: (Feeling proud)

What happened then?

OLD RABBIT:

He told me to leave the other rabbits and to bring you back to him. He wants to fight you. He says the winner will be the *real* Jungle King.

LION: (Angrily)

Who is this imposter? I am the only king here! Take me to this fool! I'll finish him off and we'll see who's king of the jungle.

OLD RABBIT:

Of course, you're right! You must handle this. Hurry, though, before he eats the other four rabbits!

NARRATOR 1:

So, Old Rabbit took Lion to the well.

OLD RABBIT:

Be careful, Mighty King. The other lion lives in a castle in the well. He is hiding there. Finish him off first, and then you can enjoy your food.

LION: (Peering into the well)
Where is he?

NARRATOR 2:

Rabbit pointed to Lion's own reflection in the water.

OLD RABBIT:

There he is -- the sneak! See how he growls and shows his teeth? How dare he do that to you? Show him who the real king is!

NARRATOR 3:

Lion roared furiously at his reflection. In anger, he jumped into the well to get this new enemy that challenged his power.

NARRATOR 4:

Splash! Lion landed in the water, hit his head on some rocks, and quickly died.

NARRATOR 5:

Old Rabbit was delighted. His trick had worked!

NARRATOR 1:

Old Rabbit's nephews came out of their hiding places.

NARRATOR 2:

They ran to tell the other animals the exciting news. Everyone began to sing and dance.

EVERYONE:

The lion is gone! The lion is gone! Everyone sing loud and strong! We will not fear his greedy ways! We will feel safe for all our days!

NARRATOR 3:

The animals praised Old Rabbit for his wisdom. They said he was the smartest animal of all.

NARRATOR 4:

Old Rabbit thanked everyone, smiled to himself, and said:

OLD RABBIT:

Into the well, quick as a wink.

Lion did not stop to think.

He was big and strong, as we could see.

But did that help him?

No, Siree!

Moral:

Using your brain is often better than using your power.

