



The Clever Rabbit and the Hungry Lion

Wisdom

We can beat even a much stronger enemy with our brain.

The little hare finds out it has been chosen by other animals as food for the lion. It decides to save its skin with the help of its wits and its knowledge of nature.



🕒 13 min

😊 5+

Once upon a time, far away in a vast, dry savannah, there lived a very powerful lion. For years this lion had terrorized the poor creatures of the grassy plains.

Of course, he had made himself king, and no one dared argue with him. He was too big and too strong to argue with. When he got hungry, he simply hunted in the tall grasses and ate 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 have the idea that they looked tasty enough to be his next lunch. Or his dinner. Or even his brunch! The rumble of his belly was just as frightening as his terrible roar.

One day, the animals had a meeting and decided to suggest an agreement between them and their **cruel ruler**. The zebra, the eland antelope, the giraffe and the Cape 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 delicate **hoof and waited**. Her heart was pounding in fear.

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. He licked his black lips and started to drool.

"Looks like lunch came to me, today!" he thought. He licked his lips again and swished his tail, getting ready to pounce, 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 and greedy! Wouldn't just one animal a day be enough to satisfy your

hunger? Please, sire... we've talked and we can promise to offer you one of us every day. That means you wouldn't need to hunt anymore and we would be able to live more peacefully. We would all be happier!"

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. He liked having his afternoon nap. To have a meal delivered every day sounded fantastic to him! He pretended to think a little longer, then said:

"Well, alright then. We can try this new method. But **I warn you**: if I don't get my lunch for just one day, I will eat you all for dinner, down to the smallest mouse!" The animals sighed in relief and backed slowly away from the cave.

When they'd returned to the others, they all agreed that they would randomly choose one animal to sacrifice every day. And so, that same day, they drew straws and the unlucky aardvark who happened to draw the short straw became the first to be sent to the lion's den. They all waved **a tearful goodbye**.

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 it kept him from hunting in the savannah every day and made it safe for all of the animals to feel safe enough to leave their homes, it was worth the loss. Or that's what they told themselves.

For a long time, the daily draw took place and the animals lived as peacefully as they could, knowing they could very well be next. Then, one day, they did the draw and a small brown rabbit was chosen as the sacrificial lunch.

He was, of course, very upset. He really didn't want to make peace with his fate of being a lion's meal like all of the other **animals had**. But he had no choice, and so he said farewell to the others and began the long, difficult walk to the lion's den. He walked as slowly as he could, dragging his paws. He stopped a few times to smell the purple violets and the orange.

Still slowly making his way, he came across **a deep well**. He stopped and leaned over the stone edge to see how deep it was. It was very deep, indeed,

and at the bottom he could see his reflection mirrored in the water. Suddenly, he had **an amazing idea!**

The rabbit left the well and began to walk even slower, if possible, than he had before. When he'd finally reached the den, the lion was starving and pacing outside in a towering rage. He growled and roared and raised a paw with his claws out, swiping the air angrily.

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 him his lunch so late! It was bad enough that the aardvark wanted a last meal of ants. And the puff adder nearly bit him with poison. Enough is enough!

He'd been picturing and daydreaming about all of the animals that he would eat the next day. His mouth watered just thinking about it. "I'll start with the eland," he thought, smiling wickedly, "and I'll finish with that stuttering buffalo!" The rabbit carefully moved closer to the lion and bowed deeply. The lion looked past the small brown rabbit, confused.

"What kind of a lousy lunch are you supposed to be? Not only are you late, but **you're teeny-tiny!** How are you going to feed me, with my huge appetite? You're barely just one bite!" He roared angrily again, this time as loud as he could. "After I eat you, I'm going out to the plains and I'm going to hunt 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, sire, allow me to explain. Before you eat me."

The lion growled. "Fine. Talk, but talk fast! **I'm starving!**"

"As you surely know," the rabbit began, "I was chosen to be your delicious lunch today. But as you so wisely noticed, I'm much too small to satisfy your hunger. That's why they sent another four rabbits with me. But on our way to you, we met another vicious 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 that he's the one who rules the savannah, and that we have to bring our sacrifices to him, **not to you!**

He also said you're a cheat and a liar. Then he ate my friends and told me to deliver a message to you. The message was: 'If you're not too scared or too Fraidy-cat, you should meet him for a contest of strength. Whoever can prove he's the most powerful will be the only ruler of the savannah.'" The rabbit finished his long speech and bowed to the lion.

The lion was furious and snarled as loudly and as menacingly **as he could**. Even the trees and bushes shivered. Then, with all of his might, he bellowed: "Take me to that impudent animal right now. I will destroy him! And then I'll go hunting on my savannah!"

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

"That's none of your business, lunchmeat!" the lion shouted. "Take me to him **right now!**"

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

"That is the fortress where the other lion lives, sire. Please be careful!" 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 own reflection in the water.

He thought it was the lion who had challenged him and called him a cheat and a liar! He roared as loudly and scarily **as he could**. And the lion in the well roared back, with the echoing voice of ten lions or more!

Infuriated, the lion leaped **into the well**, trying to attacking his own reflection in the ripples of the water. He couldn't swim, though, and he ended up drowning in the deep well. The rabbit rushed to the edge and looked in, overjoyed his daring plan had worked. It had actually worked!

Then he happily hopped home **to his friends**, whooping and dancing with joy, to tell the story of how he had beat the fearsome, **greedy lion**.

The animals were in awe of how smart and fierce the rabbit **had been**, and from that day on, everyone walked through the plains safely. The little brown rabbit had brought them peace, freedom and joy – and they all lived happily **ever after**.