



How the Cheetah Got Her Marks

Kindness, Honesty, Respect

This fairy tale from Africa tells of a dishonest hunter who stole the young cheetah from its mother in order to make hunting game easier. The tale shows how important it is to act honestly in life.



⌚ 8 min

😊 8+

Even though it was early in the morning, the sun was shining brightly on the arid steppes of the African continent. It forced a hunter from a local tribe to hide in the cool, calming shade of some trees.

He was watching a herd of tan gazelles grazing nearby. They were roaming the vast plain without a worry in the world, looking for the last few green leaves in the bushes. It was terribly hot, but two large males still found the strength to compete for the rule over their herd. Swinging their long sharp horns **like swords**, they butted each other like rams.

The sound was a little like thunder. Crash! Boom! Crash!

The hunter, hidden away in his shady spot, watched this fight with some interest. Then he remembered he still had a difficult task ahead of him: the chief of his tribe had chosen him to bring food for their village.

Killing gazelles took a lot of effort and skill, and as he intently watched the large herd, he began to prepare his hunting spear. He was carefully sharpening the flint **spearhead on a rock** when he suddenly heard **rustling in the grass**. He peered and peered, seeing nothing. Then he saw it.

A big, strong cheetah was sneaking towards the gazelles. A few of the gazelles had just separated from the rest of the herd, munching. They started jumping around, romping through the grass having fun - with no idea of how much danger they were in!

Then, the agile beast suddenly sprang up with **an unimaginable force**. She grabbed the closest gazelle with her sharp teeth. The rest of the herd panicked and quickly fled in all directions, jumping and zig-zagging away from the danger.

The hunter had watched the whole thing happen from his safe spot in the shade of the trees. It seemed to him that the cheetah had hardly had to make an effort to catch her prey. It was very unlike hunters from the tribes, who often had to hunt for a whole day to catch just one gazelle.

They'd normally do their best to throw their spears precisely and with just enough force to bring one down. But the hunter's skill didn't matter now. The frightened gazelles had all scattered across the plain. He no longer had a chance to catch one.

The hunter watched from his hideout as the cheetah dragged her prey to the shade of a nearby patch of trees. He could hear the growling of her hungry cubs **growing stronger** as they waited impatiently for their mother. As soon as she returned to them with the fresh catch, they all fell silent and watched their mother quickly divide the food into parts so that everyone could eat.

Everything seemed so simple! When everyone was fed, the cheetah got up, left her cubs and disappeared in the distance. That's when the hunter had a bright idea. He decided to steal one of the cubs and train it to hunt for him. If he had his own trained cheetah, he would never again have to work so hard and spend whole days tracking and killing animals.

He sprinted into the clearing and grabbed the closest kitten! It **growled at him wildly**, but it was too small to defend itself. The cub next to it looked a bit stronger and more agile, so the hunter decided to take that one as well. It was fiercely **swinging its paws**, but it was still very small and stood no chance against the hunter.

Then he looked at the third cub, which also looked like it would grow up to be big and fierce. He decided to take all three of them because, after all, three trained cheetahs would get him even more meat than just one!

When the mother cheetah returned, her babies were nowhere to be found. Worried sick, she looked for them everywhere, searching day and night. She looked high and low, low and high and couldn't find them anywhere.

One day, an old man passed by. He was the shaman of the thieving hunter's tribe. He was very wise and he had the ability to understand the languages of every wild animal from his region. When he heard what the hunter had done, **he was furious**.

"That lazy fool!" he fumed. The hunter hadn't just stolen defenceless cubs. He had also violated the ancient customs and traditions of the tribe! Everyone knew they could only ever use their own strength, ability and skill to hunt. The hunter knew better.

The shaman returned to the village and told everyone what he had learned. The villagers immediately went looking for the thief and banished him from their lands for good. Then they took all three cubs back to their mother.

The cheetah purred **with happiness** and her babies roared back in response. All the worrying, however, had stained the mother cheetah's cheeks forever from crying. From that day on, she had a marking shaped like a tear under each of her eyes.

Because of this, every cheetah is born with these markings on their face. It's a visual reminder to all the despicable, lazy hunters out there that the hunting traditions **must be honoured**.