



Aesop's Fables

4. THE MONKEY AS KING

By Sharri McGarry

There was a huge competition in the Indian jungle and the prize was to be 'King of the Beasts'!

It was very exciting. To be King of all the Beasts was a grand thing: when you were King you got to wear a shiny crown and all the animals had to call you 'Sire'. Of course, lots of animals entered the competition. Each animal got to say their piece on a big stage while the other animals judged.

The first up on stage was Fox. Fox was a very clever animal. He spoke very well about the rights of the people and the duties of the King; but he used such long words like 'fiscal' and 'jurisdiction' that most of the animals got bored and fell asleep.

'And,' said Fox, 'never forget that there are many new traps around in the jungle. Traps laid by Man to catch animals! Of course, there never was a trap made that could catch a fox. So this is my promise to you. If I am made King, I will educate each and every animal in avoiding these traps. Thank you.'

Fox went off the stage and was met by Monkey.

'Oooh-oooh-oooh! That was a fine and educated speech you just made!' said Monkey.

'Well, thank you Monkey,' replied Fox, pleased.

'Yes - very clever you are,' Monkey carried on. 'But that is not what the animals want in a king. Watch this!'

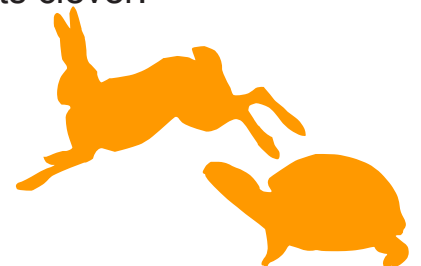
And he bounded on to the stage. 'Thank you! Thank you!' he shouted. 'It's great to be here! You know - that Fox is a clever fellow. But - poor Fox - he's got no nose. How does he smell, I hear you ask? He smells...AWFUL!'

'Oooh-oooh-oooh! Do you want to see me dance?' cried Monkey.

'YEH!' roared the audience.

And monkey danced. He frolicked and he pranced and he capered and he danced! And what faces he pulled! Monkey was funny. The audience laughed and roared and held their sides. And that is how Monkey became King of the Beasts.

'Oooh-oooh-oooh! Well, Fox!' he smirked, as he paraded up and down in his gold crown. 'Funny beats clever!'





'PA!' said Fox, angrily. 'We'll see about that!'

The next day, Fox saw Monkey lolling around in his throne with his golden crown upon his head.

'No hard feelings...Sire,' he said. 'You won, fair and square. And I want to give you a present fit for a clever king.'

'Oooh-oooh-oooh!' said Monkey.

'Being King is boring work! Where's your present?'

'It's a little way into the forest. Come with me!'

So Monkey and Fox set off into the forest together.

'Oooh-oooh-oooh! Where is it? Where is it?' said Monkey, getting excited.

'There it is, Sire,' said sly Fox, pointing at a big, ripe banana on the jungle floor.

'YUM YUM!' cried Monkey, and dived off to pick it up.

Later that day, the animals were running around in confusion. 'Where's the King?' they cried. 'Has anyone seen the King?'

At last they found him. He was sitting...in a TRAP!

Monkey held out his arms through the bars. 'Oooh-oooh-oooh! When I went to pick up a banana - this trap fell over me! Please get me out!'

But none of the animals knew anything about traps - except for Fox. Fox sat down and curled his long red tail around him.

'Fox! Fox!' cried Monkey. 'Please help me!'

The Fox turned to look at the animals.

'Should a King be clever?' asked Fox.

'Yes!' the animals cried.

'Does an animal that is clever fall in to a trap?' asked Fox.

The animals were silent. They looked at Monkey.

'You are a very foolish monkey,' said Fox. 'I will get you out of the trap, but you must give up your crown. The King of the Beasts should be an animal that is smarter than to fall into traps. Don't you think?'

And all the other animals agreed.