



Aesop's Fables

26. THE OLD LION AND THE FOX

By Tracey Hammett

'It isn't easy being old,' said Lion one day as he looked in the mirror. 'Look at my fangs. They're all worn down and my claws are short and stubby! I'm so hungry, I could eat a herd of wildebeests,' Lion grizzled, 'but I'm not very good at hunting these days. I'm too slow! I need to think of an easy way to catch my dinner.'

Then he had an idea.

'If I can't get to my dinner, I'll make my dinner come to me! I'll pretend that I'm sick and all the animals will feel sorry for me. They'll come to visit and as soon as they do I'll gobble them up!'

Lion put his plan to work straight away. He settled himself in his den, put on his poorly face and let out a sorrowful growl.

'Oh woe is me, oh woe is me, I'm feeling sick as sick can be!' he groaned.

Bird came flitting by...

'Oooh poor Lion, you look very skinny!' she said.

'That's because I'm poorly and I haven't felt like eating!' Lion fibbed.

'Let me check your temperature,' chirped Bird and she hopped inside Lion's jaws with her thermometer.

Then Lion nabbed her - grrr, grrr, snap - and put her in his dinner sack.

'Bird's aren't very filling,' said Lion. 'Let's see what else I can catch.'

He put on his poorly face again and let out another sorrowful growl.

'Oh woe is me, oh woe is me, I'm feeling sick as sick can be!'

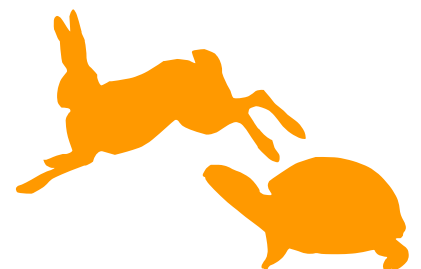
Monkey jumped down from a tree to help.

'What's wrong with you Lion?' he asked.

'I feel weak and wobbly!' Lion fibbed.

'Well you are looking a bit skinny. Let me look at your tongue,' said Monkey kindly. He peered inside Lion's jaws... Then Lion nabbed him - grrr snap - and put him in his dinner sack.

'There isn't much meat on a monkey,' grizzled Lion. 'I'll have to keep trying. I need one more creature...something bigger I hope.'





He let out another sad roar.

‘Oh woe is me, oh woe is me, I’m feeling poorly as can be!’

‘That’s a shame,’ said Fox, appearing at the door of Lion’s den.

‘I think I might have a thorn in my throat,’ grizzled Lion. ‘Maybe you can pull it out.’

Fox looked at all the footprints outside Lion’s den - they were leading inside, but they didn’t come out again. She spotted Lion’s dinner sack too...it was wriggling.

‘Hmmm,’ she thought. ‘Lion is up to something, I’d better be careful.’

‘I’ll pull out the thorn in your throat,’ Fox told Lion, ‘but it’s a tricky job. I want you to close your eyes and keep very still.’

Lion closed his eyes tight, opened his jaws and got ready to snap.

He waited and he waited then suddenly Fox shouted: ‘You can open your eyes now Lion!’

Lion opened his eyes just in time to see Fox running off with his precious dinner sack. ‘Drat!’ thought Lion. ‘There’s goes my dinner!’

When Fox reached the wood she opened Lion’s dinner sack and set the creatures free.

‘I’ll set you free this once,’ Fox gruffed. ‘But never fall for a lion’s bluffs, ‘cos if you do not use your brains you’ll end up in his sack again!’