

## The Bear and the Two Travelers

Two men were traveling in company through a forest, when all at once, a huge bear crashed out of the brush near them. One of the men, thinking of his own safety, climbed a tree. The other, unable to fight the savage beast alone, threw himself on the ground and lay still, as if he were dead. He had heard that a bear will not touch a dead body. It must have been true, for the bear snuffed at the man's head awhile and then, seeming to be satisfied that he was dead, walked away. The man in the tree climbed down. "It looked just as if that bear whispered in your ear," he said. "What did he tell you?"

"He said," answered the other, "that it was not at all wise to keep company with a fellow who would desert his friend in a moment of danger."

**Moral:** Misfortune is the test of true friendship.

## The Hare With Many Friends

A hare was very popular with the other beasts who all claimed to be her friends. But one day, she heard the hounds approaching and hoped to escape them by the aid of her many friends. So, she went to the horse and asked him to carry her away from the hounds on his back. But he declined, stating that he had important work to do for his master. He felt sure, he said, that all her other friends would come to her assistance. She then applied to the bull and hoped that he would repel the hounds with his horns. The bull replied, "I am very sorry, but I have an appointment with a lady; but I feel sure that our friend the goat will do what you want." The goat, however, feared that his back might be harmed if he took her upon it. The ram, he felt sure, was the proper friend to apply to.

So she went to the ram and told him the case. The ram replied, "Another time, my dear friend. I do not like to interfere on the present occasion, as hounds have been known to eat sheep as well as hares." The hare then applied, as a last hope, to the calf, who regretted that he was unable to help her, as he did not like to take the responsibility upon himself as so many older persons than himself had declined the task. By this time, the hounds were quite near and the hare took to her heels and luckily escaped.

**Moral:** Friendship is proven by actions, not words.

## The Farmer and the Stork

A stork of a very simple and trusting nature had been asked by a lively party of cranes to visit a field that had been newly planted. But the party ended dismally with all the birds entangled in the meshes of the farmer's net. The stork begged the farmer to spare him. "Please let me go," he pleaded. "I belong to the stork family who you know are honest and birds of good character. Besides, I did not know the cranes were going to steal."

"You may be a very good bird," answered the farmer, "but I caught you with the thieving cranes and you will have to share the same punishment with them."

**Moral:** You are judged by the company you keep.

## The Dog and the Hare

A hound, having startled a hare on the hillside, pursued her for some distance, at one time biting her with his teeth as if he would take her life and at another fawning upon her as if in play with another dog. The hare said to him, "I wish you would act sincerely by me and show yourself in your true colors. If you are a friend, why do you bite me so hard? If an enemy, why do you fawn on me?"

**Moral:** Real friends should know whether they can trust each other.

## The Wolves and the Sheep

A pack of wolves lurked near the sheep pasture. But the dogs kept them all at a respectful distance and the sheep grazed in perfect safety. But now, the wolves thought of a plan to trick the sheep. "Why is there always this hostility between us?" they asked. "If it were not for those dogs who are always stirring up trouble, I am sure we should get along beautifully. Send them away and you will see what good friends we shall become." The sheep were easily fooled. They persuaded the dogs to go away, and that very evening, the wolves had the grandest feast of their lives.

**Moral:** It's a bad idea to give up friends for foes.