

The Lion and the Three Bulls

A lion had been watching three bulls feeding in an open field. He had tried to attack them several times, but they had kept together and helped each other to drive him off. The lion had little hope of eating them, for he was no match for three strong bulls with their sharp horns and hoofs. But he could not keep away from that field, for it is hard to resist watching a good meal, even when there is little chance of getting it. Then one day, the bulls had a quarrel, and when the hungry lion came to look at them and lick his chops as he was accustomed to do, he found them in separate corners of the field, as far away from one another as they could get. It was now an easy matter for the lion to attack them one at a time, and this he proceeded to do with the greatest satisfaction and relish.

Moral: People are strongest when they stick together.

The Fox and the Pheasants

One moonlight evening, as Master Fox was taking his usual stroll in the woods, he saw a number of pheasants perched quite out of his reach on a limb of a tall old tree. The sly fox soon found a bright patch of moonlight where the pheasants could see him clearly; there he raised himself up on his hind legs and began a wild dance. First he whirled 'round and 'round like a top, then he hopped up and down, cutting all sorts of strange capers. The pheasants stared giddily. They hardly dared blink for fear of losing him out of their sight a single instant. The fox made as if to climb a tree; then he fell over and lay still, playing dead; and in the next instant, he was hopping on all fours, his back in the air, and his bushy tail shaking so that it seemed to throw out silver sparks in the moonlight. By this time, the poor birds' heads were in a whirl. And when the fox began his performance all over again, so dazed did they become that they lost their hold on the limb and fell down one by one to the fox.

Moral: Focusing on danger may cause us to fall victim to it.

The Bear and the Beehives

A bear roaming the woods in search of berries happened on a fallen tree in which a swarm of bees had stored their honey. The bear began to nose around the log very carefully to find out if the bees were at home. Just then, one of the swarm came home from the clover field with a load of sweets. Guessing what the bear was after, the bee flew at him, stung him sharply, and disappeared into the hollow log. The bear lost his temper in an instant and sprang upon the log tooth and claw to destroy the nest. But this only brought out the whole swarm. The poor bear had to take to his heels, and he was able to save himself only by diving into a pool of water.

Moral: Flying into a rage can cause a single injury to turn into a thousand.

The Kid and the Wolf

A frisky young kid had been left by the herdsman on the thatched roof of a sheep shelter to keep him out of harm's way. The kid was browsing near the edge of the roof when he spied a wolf and began to jeer at him, making faces and abusing him to his heart's content. "I hear you," said the wolf, "and I haven't the least grudge against you for what you say or do. When you are up there, it is the roof that's talking, not you."

Moral: Sometimes words that sound brave really aren't.

The Great and the Little Fishes

A fisherman was drawing up a net that he had cast into the sea and was now full of all sorts of fish. The little fish escaped through the meshes of the net and got back into the deep, but the great fish were all caught and hauled into the ship.

Moral: Our insignificance can sometimes save us.