

The lion and the monkey

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One day Grandpa wanted to teach us a lesson about trust and gratitude, so he told us a story about the lion and the monkey...

The lion and the monkey lived in a thick jungle. The lion roamed the jungle floor, while the monkey lived in the treetops. One day the lion saw some meat on top of a banana leaf on the jungle floor. "There's a free and easy meal for me," he thought.

The lion moved towards the middle of the banana leaf, but as he sunk his teeth into the meat, the ground gave way beneath him. Together with the meat and the banana leaf, he fell into a deep pit.

"How was the lion to have known that a free meal is not always free; that an easy meal is not always as easy as it seems?" commented Grandpa. "How could the king of the jungle have known that a hunter had dug a deep pit and covered it with the banana leaf, then placed the meat in the middle of the leaf and covered the leaf with sand to disguise it."

The pit was so narrow that the lion could only stand upright, on his hind legs. He made frantic efforts to climb out of the deep pit, but with each attempt the red soil crumbled under his claws and he sank back to the bottom of the pit. The exhausted lion was still there at dusk when suddenly he saw a tail pass by. The tail belonged to a monkey who had jumped over the pit. The lion called desperately for help.

"What is the royal one doing in such a deep dark place?" asked the monkey looking into the pit.

"I fell in," said the lion in a weak voice. "I have been here all day. Please help me."

The monkey hesitated and started to walk away, but the lion begged him again. Then the monkey said, "I am told that all the animals that ever did you a good turn, never lived to tell the story."

"I know you are too smart to believe lies told by my enemies," said the lion. "Please, please help me."

In the end the monkey took pity on the lion and lowered his tail into the pit like a rope. The lion held on to the monkey's tail and climbed up it. But even when he was out of the pit, the lion hung onto the monkey's tail.

"Let me go! Haven't I helped you out of the deep pit as you begged me to?" the monkey asked the lion.

But the lion tightened his grip on the monkey's tail even more, and when the monkey looked into the lion's eyes, he saw the look of hunger. "Please let me go!" the monkey cried. But the lion's grip only got tighter.

Suddenly, an old woman appeared. She was on her way to her farm when she saw the animals arguing. She stopped and asked them why they were quarrelling. The monkey told her how he had helped the lion out of the deep pit. "But now he is holding onto my tail and he won't let me go," he complained.

"Is this true?" the old woman asked the lion. The lion nodded in agreement. Then the old woman said to the monkey, "Clasp your hands and say, 'I am about to die for my kindness. I am about to die for my kindness.'" So the monkey did this.

The old woman then turned to the lion and said, "Clasp your paws and say, 'Someone is about to die for his kindness. Someone is about to die for his kindness.'" The lion raised his free front paw and repeated the old woman's words.

"No!" said the old woman, "I said clasp your paws, and I mean your two front paws, and then say the words." As the lion obeyed her command and clasped his paws, the monkey escaped and ran away. The lion chased the monkey until the monkey climbed up a nearby tree. Crestfallen, the lion looked back at the spot where they had seen the old woman, but she was no longer there.

Grandpa paused and looked at our faces that had suddenly lit up at the happy ending for the monkey.