

The Donkey, the Cock, and the Lion

The Cock is a proud bird. He likes to strut about and show off for the other animals. One day he was sitting on the branch of a tree looking at the world around him. He puffed out his chest and adjusted his comb. He was pleased with his glowing feathers and colorful plumage.

Just as he was thinking that he certainly must be the envy of the animals, he observed a donkey trudging down the path. “Friend, Donkey,” crowed the Cock, “you look so tired. Have you been walking for a long time?”

“Oh, hello, Cock,” replied Donkey. “No, I have only been walking for a few minutes. I am weary. My legs and back are tired from plowing the fields. Each morning, people come to me and strap their harnesses around my body. I toil in the hot sun all day. Plow, plow, plow, that is all I do. I am tired of this work.” Poor Donkey shook his head and started to slowly walk away.

Cock, never missing an opportunity to brag about himself, said, “Oh, poor Donkey. My fine feathers and colorful plumage mean that I have a much better life than you. In fact, my only job is to awaken everyone each morning. The people would not even get up unless I crowed the time to them!”

As Donkey was listening to Cock go on and on about his fine appearance and important job, a hungry lion spotted the Donkey. The Lion imagined a donkey dinner and fixed his eyes upon his meal. He was so intent on creeping toward the Donkey that he did not see the Cock on the tree branch. The Cock, however, noticed the Lion

slinking toward the Donkey. He began flapping his wings and crowing loudly.

This commotion shocked the Lion who had not seen the bird. Not knowing who was making this noise, the Lion turned and ran.

The Donkey who had been listening to the Cock crow about how fine he was, saw this as a chance to prove his own worth. He said, "Look at the Lion! He is a coward who fears a bird in a tree! I will chase **him!**" The Donkey, feeling proud, began to chase the mighty Lion.

The Donkey's hooves sounded like a mob of people running. This scared the Lion, so he raced faster and faster! Soon the Lion thought, "I am beginning to tire. Rather than running at this pace any longer, I shall turn and fight."

The Lion turned his head, ready for a ferocious fight, but saw it was only a Donkey who had been chasing him. Lion jumped at the poor Donkey and killed him. As he began to eat, he paused and sighed slowly, "Today I have been fooled. My own prey chased me!"

Activities to Extend Your Thinking...

Expressive Language...

The following words are used in this folktale. Pretend you are a literary reviewer. Tell why each word is a good or bad choice for this tale. Should the author have used a different word?

- plumage

- commotion
- weary
- envy
- toil

Creature Characteristics...

- Draw a picture of the Cock. Your picture should show why he is a boastful creature.
- Imagine you are the Cock. Perform a soliloquy (that's a scene where only one character is on stage). Tell the audience about the scene you witnessed today. Be sure to include what you thought about this incident.

Life Lessons...

Write your journal entry about one of these topics:

- Do you know anyone who acts like the Cock? Don't name them in your journal entry, but tell about them. How could reading this folktale help them?
- What mistakes did the Donkey make? Have you ever made mistakes like this? Tell about it and explain what you learned from your experiences.