

The Jackal and the Turtle

It was well known among the animals that Jackal was a troublesome creature. His constant tricks and laziness annoyed everyone in the forest. Each time he fooled someone or refused to do his share of the work, the animal community grew more frustrated with the charlatan. So when a meeting was held to discuss the drought in the land, no one was surprised at Jackal's absence. After gossiping for a bit about him, the animals discussed the lack of rain. Together, they decided to dig a big pit. They hoped that when the rains came, the pit would be filled. There would then be enough water to drink.

The next day all the animals gathered to dig the gigantic hole. Jackal was not among those who toiled all day in the scorching sun. "Of course that trickster is not concerned about the lack of water in the forest," observed Elephant.

"No," snickered Monkey. "But he will likely find a way to swindle us out of any water we collect in this pit." The other animals nodded in agreement.

When the pit had been dug, the animals trudged back to their homes. Their muscles ached, and their bones begged for sleep. All the animals collapsed into a deep sleep and didn't stir all night long. They didn't hear the pitter patter of the rain as it filled the newly dug hole. They also didn't hear the footsteps of the Jackal as he searched for this prize pit.

The next morning, the beating sun dried the land quickly, but the pit had been dug so well and so deep, that water remained in it. The animals rejoiced as their parched mouths felt quenching streams of water. The community congratulated one another on their success.

On the second morning, the animals eagerly raced to their water source once more. "Look!" screeched Mouse. "Our water is muddy."

"And so much of it has disappeared!" moaned Buffalo. The animals chattered and growled. They chirped and roared. But they all knew who the culprit was - Jackal drank their water and muddied it by using it as a swimming hole.

Finally Turtle spoke up, "I will capture Jackal and we will feed him to the lions!" The animals looked at Turtle in amazement. They wondered just how this dawdling creature could catch the wily Jackal. "Here is what we will do," began Turtle. He went on to explain his plans to the gathered herd. When he had finished, the animals nodded in agreement.

First the turtle covered his shell with gum. Next he stepped into the pit, but he was careful to keep his gum-covered shell above the waterline. He floated silently in the water, a trap waiting for its victim.

Finally, just as Turtle expected, Jackal came along. The refreshing water was tempting, and soon Jackal decided to go for a swim. He jumped onto the stone in the pit.

"Ahhh," screamed Jackal. His feet stuck fast to the stone. He reached his front paw down to free his legs, but that, too, became a prisoner of the rock. Jackal screeched louder as this stone began to

paddle toward the land. It was then he realized that, he, the great trickster, had been tricked!”

The turtle crawled up the embankment carrying his prisoner on his shell. The Jackal grabbed a sharp stick with his one free paw. He aimed it at Turtle’s head. In a flash, Turtle drew his head into the safety of his shell. By this time, all the animals had gathered. They laughed to see that rascal, Jackal, stuck on Turtle’s shell.

“Jackal will not bother us anymore,” said Turtle with pride. He walked toward the lion’s den with the gift still stuck to his shell!

Activities to Extend Your Thinking...

Expressive Language...

Choose one of the following:

- Find five words the author used in place of said. Write your own quotations using these words.
- Go on a word hunt. Make a list of as many words as you can that could be used in place of said. Post your list and keep adding to it as you discover more words.

Creature Characteristics...

Pretend this folktale will be released as a major motion picture. Do one of the following to promote it:

- Write an advertisement for the movie. Include a small scene from it. Tape this ad and share it with your class.
- Design a poster promoting the movie.

- Write a theme song for the movie.

Life Lessons...

Write a journal entry about one of the following:

- Do you know any other stories where the turtle has emerged as the “hero”? Tell about these stories. What does the turtle show you about assuming certain people can’t do important tasks?
- What does a creature like Jackal teach you?