

The Mighty Rabbit

One fine day Rabbit was grazing in the forest. She looked up and saw an enormous elephant not far from her. Now, Rabbit liked to show her might, especially to large, powerful animals, so you can imagine the joy she felt when she spotted this creature. Immediately, Rabbit devised a very tricky plan.

“Oh, Elephant,” boasted Rabbit, “I can pull you out of the forest!” Elephant was very annoyed to hear a small rabbit saying this to him, an enormous elephant.

Rabbit persisted in her claims to pull Elephant right out of the forest. She said, “If you don’t believe me, give me a date. We will meet at that time, and I will take you out of the forest!”

So the two creatures – the enormous elephant and the small rabbit planned the date. As she hopped away Rabbit reminded Elephant, “I am telling you, Elephant, I will pull you right out of the forest!”

Then Rabbit turned and left. The surprised Elephant watched her hop away. He was thinking to himself, “That Rabbit is a funny little creature. Imagine - she thinks she has the strength in that tiny body to pull me out of my home!” Elephant shook his enormous head. His giant ears flapped in the breeze and cooled his body like mammoth fans. Then he lumbered away.

Rabbit was busy devising the second part of her plan. She went down to the river and spotted Hippopotamus. As Rabbit put her

head down to the river to take a drink, Hippopotamus began splashing in the river. Rabbit looked annoyed with this.

“Hippopotamus, you think this river is yours. Do you know something? Why, I can pull you out right of this water!”

Of course, the huge hippopotamus was surprised by the boast of the small creature. He quietly looked Rabbit up and down. Then he concluded, “Why do you say such a thing? You can’t take me out of this river. You are much too tiny.”

“Oh, but I can take you out of the water. You will see. I’ll come tomorrow with a rope. You can hold the rope in your mouth or fasten it around your body. Then I will draw you right out of the river!”

Hippopotamus thought, “Poor Rabbit must not understand how strong and powerful I am. Well, she will learn!” He shook his head and lowered his body into the comfort of the river. Soon the water framed his body, and Hippopotamus feel asleep with the river as his blanket.

Rabbit returned the following day to carry out her plan. She knew the enormous elephant and huge hippopotamus would be surprised with her power. She went first to Elephant who was waiting gleefully in the forest to prove the small creature wrong. She gave him a rope. He laughed to himself as he fastened it to his powerful body. “Wait here Elephant,” said the Rabbit. “I must go far away so that I have much room to pull you.” Elephant, being a kindly, patient creature, was amused by Rabbit’s claims. He did as Rabbit asked and waited for the tug on the rope.

Now, remember that Rabbit is not just a trickster, she is a very wise trickster! She took the other end of the rope and gave it to

Hippopotamus. He, too, tied it onto his gigantic body, and began to lean back. This made a gentle pull on the rope.

When Elephant felt this pull, he thought to himself, “So, Rabbit thinks she will pull me out of this forest? I will show her how strong I am.” With that, Elephant started to pull.

As Elephant tugged harder and harder, Hippopotamus tugged harder and harder. Rabbit just sat back and watched the large animals pulling and tugging. Each one thought it was Rabbit who was pulling with such strength on the other end of the rope.

Finally, Rabbit saw that Elephant was nearly out of the forest. She saw, too, that Hippopotamus was almost out of the river. Rabbit thought, “Now is the time to cut the rope!” She walked to the middle of the rope and cut it into two pieces.

Crash! Hippopotamus fell backwards onto the rocks in the river! He cried out in pain. His hind leg was injured.

Boom! Elephant fell back into the forest of trees! He bellowed in agony. His back throbbed with the pain. Both animals walked off nursing their injuries.

The next day Rabbit went first to visit Elephant. “I agree, Rabbit,” said Elephant. “You are stronger than I. You would have pulled me even farther out of the forest if that rope hadn’t broken. Now I must tend to my poor back.”

Rabbit next went to the river where Hippopotamus was soaking his injured hind leg. “I felt it for myself, Rabbit,” he said. “I never would have believed that a tiny rabbit could pull me right out of the water.” Hippopotamus winced in pain and returned to soaking his foot.

Rabbit smiled to himself, “The bigger animals do not understand. I may be smaller than they, but I showed I have more power than either the enormous elephant or the huge hippopotamus!” With that she hopped off, happy to have demonstrated her own mighty mind!

Activities to Extend Your Thinking...

Expressive Language...

Find five descriptive words or phrases in this folktale. Make a list of them. Then look at your pet or a friend’s pet. Write a paragraph about this animal. Try to use as many descriptive words and phrases as possible.

Creature Characteristics...

Choose one of the following:

- Make up a playground game based on this folktale. Teach your game to your classmates or children in a younger grade.
- Make a diorama showing the most exciting part of this story.

Life Lessons...

Write a journal entry about one of the following:

- What characteristics of the rabbit would you like to have? How could these characteristics help you?
- What characteristics of the rabbit are not good? How would having these characteristics be a problem?