

The Bunny that Conquered Fear

A story on a Wise Action

A Jataka tale dedicated to all the children of the world.

A long, long time ago, in an Indian forest, there lived a young white rabbit.

The forest where this bunny used to live was near the sea and was overcrowded with mango trees.

One sunny day, the white bunny was taking a nap under one of these trees. The thing was that this mango tree was huge, had lots of leaves, and provided a great shade at nap time. Besides, the bunny loved the delicious smell of its mature fruits. So, every day, while his friends were running around and a beautiful deer was nibbling the grass, he would fall asleep to the pleasing and cool shade of the tree.

The world was at peace.

Suddenly, a loud rumbling noise woke him up. Very scared, the bunny felt the ground shaking under his legs. "What's going on, what's going on? The Earth must be breaking up!" he thought and hopped completely frightened. It could not be anything else! Just think about it, such noise and the ground shaking... it had to be the Earth breaking up! And without thinking twice about it, the panic-stricken bunny ran away.

He crossed the place where other rabbits were playing in a circle like a streak of lightning. "Why are you running away so scared?" they asked him. "The Earth must be breaking up, the Earth must be breaking up!" said the bunny, with his tongue out. Terrified, all rabbits started running away after him and shouting "How scary, how scary, the Earth is breaking up!"

More and more rabbits stopped playing and joined the scared white bunny running and screaming. In a short time, they were just hundreds of rabbits fleeing, with eyes like arrows and ears twisted with fear. They did their best to follow our small white rabbit in his runaway, while screaming.

Upon seeing so many rabbits running away, the beautiful elegant deer that was grazing along with them asked: "What's going on? Is there a fire?" "Worse, much worse than that: the Earth is breaking up," they answered him. "How scary!" said the deer, "we have to warn the rest of the animals!"

The deer warned the buffalo. The buffalo opened his eyes as big as two moons and ran away to warn the ox. The ox's tail shrank in fear and he set out to warn the tiger. This made the tiger's hair stand on end and he jumped up to let the elephant know. The elephant's trunk fell down and he

did his best to run away and warn the rhino. The rhino's hooves started shaking and he ran after all of them.

Hundreds and hundreds of animals stampeded after the white bunny. All over the forest, from top to bottom, it was possible to hear them screaming: "The Earth is breaking up, the Earth is breaking up!!!".

A lion, that was also taking a nap, heard the strong stampede and saw how all the animals of the forest were running up the hill towards a high cliff that ended up in the ocean. The lion realized the danger and thought: "If I don't stop them, they're going to fall off the cliff and into the ocean!" Very swiftly, the lion reached the top of the cliff before the rest of the animals and stood up in front of them. "Stop!" the powerful lion roared. All the animals suddenly came to a halt, falling one on top of the other: the elephant pushed the rhino, the rhino fell over the tiger, the tiger squashed the ox, and knocked his head against the buffalo's, the buffalo made the deer fall down, and the deer nearly squashed the bunny. "Why are you fleeing? What's going on?" "The Earth is breaking up, the Earth is breaking up!!!" each of the animals shouted in their own way.

"Oh let's see, let's see... who saw the Earth breaking up?" the lion asked very seriously, while he opened one eye more than the other and put a twig in his mouth.

"The elephant saw that" puffed the rhino.

"The tiger saw that" said the elephant, using his trunk.

"The ox saw that" growled the tiger.

"The buffalo saw that" howled the ox.

"The deer saw that" said the buffalo, making a rambling noise.

"The white bunny saw that" whispered the deer.

Finally, very softly and a bit faint-heartedly, the bunny spoke: "I heard how the Earth was breaking up! It was dreadful!"

The lion, suspecting that something strange was going on, raised an eyebrow, puffed away at the twig as if it were a pipe, and asked: "Where were you when you heard that?"

"I was sleeping under a beautiful mango tree and suddenly the Earth shook. Then I heard a horrible sound. I got really scared, lion."

"All right bunny, hop on my back and together we'll investigate what actually happened. All the rest, stay here and don't move until we come back," said the lion.

Carrying the rabbit on his back, the lion jumped forward through the forest until he approached the mango tree where the rabbit had been taking his nap.

"Is this the place where it happened?" the lion asked, raising an eyebrow again.

"Wait, Lion!. I'll get off here," the bunny shrieked. "I'm afraid of getting closer."

The lion let the rabbit get off his back, and bravely approached the place that the bunny had pointed out.

"Hmmm..." said the lion, while he hackled his whiskers. Right across the tree, there was a huge shattered mango that had fallen off the highest branches of this tree.

"Poor bunny", said the lion. "This mango fell down and caused the noise that frightened you so much. Let's rush out to let the rest of the animals know that the Earth is not breaking up."

Upon encountering the animals of the forest, the bunny got off the lion's back. The lion sat down slowly, raised an eyebrow, puffed away at the twig as if it were a pipe still lighted, and put his mane into place as if it were a detective's little hat. "My friends...", he said and then cleared his throat to get a deeper voice. "My friends, there is no reason to be afraid. The evidence that I've gathered as a result of my investigation suggests that the bunny was frightened due to a mango that fell off the tree. I know that sometimes we get scared for no good reason, but this blind fear made you run towards a great danger."

All the animals sighed with relief.

"it seemed strange to me that the earth would be breaking up"

The lion puffed away at the twig again, put his little hat into place one more time, I mean... his mane, and added: "Be always careful when thinking there are reasons to be scared, and then act wisely to help yourself and help others. Don't believe in rumours until you're sure that they are absolutely true."

The bunny and the rest of the animals promised to remember the lion's words and went back happily to their homes in the forest. The lion, upon seeing all the animals getting away relieved and happy, spat out the twig that was quite "singled" and whispered: "Well... if the Earth is not breaking up... I'd better go away and take a nap."