

The ungrateful jaguar

"Mom, I'm ready for bed!" shouted Daniel. "I've brushed my teeth and put on my pajamas!"

"Very good," said his mother. "Have you taken your socks off?"

"Yup, that too! What story are you going to tell me today?" asked Daniel.

"Today I'll tell you a story that takes place in the jungle. It's about a jaguar, a bull, a horse, a donkey and a rabbit. And it goes like this:"

Once upon a time there was a jaguar. He was yellow with black spots. He was brave and determined, like all jaguars. One day he was walking through the jungle when, suddenly, he fell into a trap.

Poor jaguar! All of a sudden he found himself trapped in a dark, cold hole, so he cried out for help:

"Help, help! Please, help me! Someone help me get out of here!"

Just then a black bull was passing by. He was black as coal, and a really good-natured fellow. When he heard the screaming, he didn't hesitate a moment. He used his horns to help the jaguar out of the trap.

But who would have thought that once free, the jaguar would turn on the bull and try taking a big bite out of him.

"What are you doing?" asked the bewildered bull. "I've just freed you from the trap, and now you want to eat me alive? You should thank me instead of trying to devour me. Is that how you thank someone for a favor?"

The jaguar answered:

"Thank someone for a favor? Who says you have to be grateful for favors?"

And he got closer to try and sink his sharp teeth into the bull's neck.

"Wait a minute! Stop, jaguar!" cried the bull. "Let's make a deal-we'll ask three animals if they think you should be grateful for favors. If they say no, you can eat me alive. But if they say yes, that you should be grateful for favors, then you'll have to let me go."

And since the jaguar agreed to the deal, that's just what they did.

After a while, an old sad-faced, gray donkey came sauntering by. The jaguar and the bull stopped him and asked him:

"Listen, donkey. Do you think people should be grateful for favors?"

"No way," answered the bull. "Look at me. I've spent my whole life carrying sacks

and going here and there without complaining. And now that I'm old and feeble, my owners have turned me out of the house."

You can just imagine the alarmed look on the bull's face and the look of joy on the jaguar's face after hearing what the donkey had to say.

"I'm ahead so far," said the jaguar to the bull. "If we find two more animals who think like the donkey, I'll gobble you up in one bite."

Then a dejected-looking brown horse came plodding along the road.

"Horse!, Horse! Stop for a minute," called out the bull and the jaguar. "Tell us, please, how should favors be repaid?"

And the horse answered:

"Favors? People don't appreciate favors. Look at me. I've spent my whole life plowing the land for my owners and now that I'm old and I can't draw the cart anymore, they've turned me out of the house."

Oh! The bull was terrified! Two animals had said that favors weren't appreciated. One more and the jaguar would swallow him up. Well, you can just imagine how the jaguar was feeling. His mouth was watering at the thought of the bull's tender meat!

And just then the third animal appeared. He was a gray rabbit, fast and agile, who looked smart as a whip. As soon as they saw him, the jaguar and the bull stopped him.

"Hey, rabbit. Do you think favors should be appreciated?"

After wrinkling his nose a bit, he said:

"Well, now that depends on the favor."

Then the bull began to explain how when he was walking through the jungle he came across the jaguar and...

"Hold it!" interrupted the rabbit. "In order to answer your question, I need to see the trap."

So the jaguar and the bull showed the rabbit the trap.

"Here it is," said the jaguar. "Now can you tell us if you think favors should be repaid?"

"Not yet," answered the rabbit. "First I have to see how you fell into the trap."

The jaguar, who was eager to hear the rabbit's answer so that he could eat the bull, entered the trap.

"Well, rabbit, what do you think? Should favors be repaid?" asked the bull and the jaguar.

Then the rabbit turned to the bull and said:

"In my opinion, I think you should leave the jaguar in the trap for a couple of days - for being ungrateful! Let's see who will dare set him free now that we know how he repays favors. You're an ungrateful jaguar. The bull set you free and you wanted to eat him.

Stop a moment and think, would you like someone to do that to you?"

And then, the rabbit and the bull went off for a walk.

Two days later, the bull and the rabbit returned to the trap where they had left the jaguar.

"Have you thought it over?" they asked him.

"Yes," answered the jaguar. "I'll never do it again. I promise that I'll never be ungrateful again. The next time someone does me a favor, I'll just say thank you."

Seeing that the jaguar had changed, the bull and the rabbit freed him from the trap. And all three of them became very close friends, and if nothing has happened to change that, they probably still are!

Script: Eulàlia Carrillo

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