

The jackal and the crocodile

Today's story took place in the middle of a jungle, next to a wide and rushing river and nearby the river lived a very persnickety jackal. He was so persnickety that the only thing he liked to eat was shellfish. So every day he went down to the river to hunt for mussels and crabs in order to make himself the yummiest of meals. These meals would have been a dream come true if it weren't for the fact that there was a crocodile living in the river who had very different tastes from the jackal. The crocodile's favorite meal was jackal meat.

So this is the story of:

"The Jackal and the Crocodile".

The jackal was always very careful to check and make sure that the crocodile was not around before he dipped into the river to fish. But one day he had his mind on something else and he stuck his foot in the water without checking first and...chomp! He realized that the old crocodile had bitten him right on the leg.

The jackal thought:

"Oh, poor me, the crocodile has a tight hold on me, and now he's going to pull me down to the bottom of the river and eat me up. What can I do so he won't eat me?"

He thought and thought, and he began to laugh very loudly:

"Ha ha ha ha ha!"

The crocodile didn't know what to think, and then he heard the jackal say:

"That poor crocodile! He sure is nearsighted. He thinks he's got my leg, but really it's just a thick root. Boy is he going to have a stomachache when he eats that! Ha ha ha!"

When the crocodile heard that, he thought, "I made a mistake," and he let go of the jackal's leg. The jackal, jumping for joy, still wanted to make fun of the crocodile, so he said to him:

"Oh, Mr. Crocodile, thank you for letting me go! I'm not in the mood to eat shellfish now. I think that I'll have wild figs for lunch today," and he skipped off into the jungle, laughing as he went.

The crocodile got so mad that he vowed to eat that jackal no matter what. Since the jackal had said that he was going to eat wild figs, the crocodile thought, "Well, if you're planning on having wild figs for lunch, I'll be having a nice, tender little jackal. Ha ha ha! I'm going to go right to the fig tree and hide under the pile of figs that have fallen on the ground. That way, when you show up, I'll gobble you right up."

And that's what he did. He kept very still under the pile of figs until the jackal arrived. But when the jackal saw that the pile of figs had been moved around, he thought, "That looks like a trap set by the crocodile. Before getting close to it, I'm going to do a little test."

From a distance he said:

"Hmm, the figs I like best are the ones that have dropped from the tree and are so dry that they blow around in the wind. But that pile of figs over there is as still as can be. Those figs must not be good."

The crocodile thought, "That good-for-nothing jackal! Now he doesn't want these figs because they don't move. Well then, maybe I should wriggle around a little so he thinks that they're blowing in the wind."

So he began to wriggle so much that the figs rolled right off of him, leaving his back uncovered. The jackal, who was having a grand time, called out to the crocodile when he saw him:

"Oh, Mr. Crocodile, thank you for paying me a visit, but I don't have time to stop and say hello right now because they're expecting me at home! Ha ha ha!"

And he rushed off like a shot.

But when the jackal got home he noticed something strange. The door was wide open and he had left it closed. So, he approached the open door and said:

"What's wrong, little house? How come you're not saying anything? That's very odd! You always say hello to me when I get home and today you're not saying anything."

The crocodile, who had hidden inside the jackal's house, thought, "If I don't answer, he won't come in."

In order not to lose his prey and be left without lunch, he tried to make his voice very tiny and said:

"Hello, little jackal, how are you?"

When he heard the crocodile's voice, the jackal thought, "If I don't teach him a good lesson, he'll never leave me alone." So he went and gathered some firewood, piled it up in front of the door, and made a nice, big fire which filled the house with smoke.

A moment later the crocodile dragged himself out of the house. He had inhaled so much smoke and was so dizzy that he didn't even have the strength to talk. And that's how the crocodile lost his urge to eat jackal for a long, long time, such a long time that he probably still can't bear the thought of it.

Script: Jaume Esquiús



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