

Story 1094 (Taken from tape  
of Ahmet Uysal  
in Ankara)

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The Lion and the Rabbit

Once there was and once there wasn't a time when all of the animals held a meeting in the forest to discuss a problem that they had. The first animal to speak said, "We do not have any leader. We ought to choose one of our members to become our leader. He should be someone who can guide us and protect us so that we can all live together under his authority."

"Whom shall we choose?" another asked

Someone else said, "Let us choose the lion to be our leader. There is no one else among us as powerful as he."

After most of the animals had agreed to choose the lion as their leader, the rabbit spoke up and said, "It is a good idea, but if he is to spend his time leading us, he may require that we provide his food and drink

The wolf said, "Very well. Then I shall hunt food for him."

jackal then said, "And I shall cook that food for him."

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"And then I shall carry that cooked food to him."

After that matter had been settled, someone asked, "Who will carry to the lion the news of his election to be our leader?"

"I can do that," said the rabbit, and he set out at once to find the lion.

As the rabbit was walking along toward the lion's den, he came to a deep and dark river. As he gazed at the river, he saw his own image reflected from the surface. He was surprised to see that the reflection was much larger than his actual self.

When he reached the lion's den, the rabbit called out loudly, "Mr. Lion! Mr. Lion!"

When the lion came forth from his den, he asked, "What do you want?"

The rabbit answered, "All of the animals have elected you the leader of the animal community."

"But if I serve as your leader, how will I get food to eat?"

"The wolf will hunt food for you. The jackal will cook that food. And I shall deliver it to you

"Very well, then. I shall accept your request that I serve as your leader.

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The wolf searched for adequate food for the lion several days. Then other animals helped him search. Despite all of their efforts, however, they could not get enough food to satisfy the lion's hunger. They then realized that their relationship with the lion would not work. They decided to send someone to the lion's den to inform him of this.

"I shall go and inform him of this," said the rabbit. The rabbit remembered how big he had looked in the water, and he decided to trick the lion by having him look into water and see the large lion image there.

Going to the lion's den, he called, "Mr. Lion! Mr. Lion!"

Coming to the door of his den, the lion asked, "What is it?"

The rabbit said, "All the animals have decided that they no longer wish you to be their leader. They have found a much more powerful animal, and they have decided to elect him as their leader."

"Can you show me that more powerful animal?" the lion asked.

"Yes, I can. Come with me." Leading the lion to the edge of the river, the rabbit pointed into the water and said, "He is in there."

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the lion looked into the water and saw his huge image there, he grew furious at this large creature who had replaced him as leader. Jumping into the water in order to attack this larger animal, the lion drowned.

word reached the forest that the lion was dead, the animals grew terrified. They said to each other, "The rabbit has killed that powerful lion. He may decide to kill all of us too!" They then ran off in all directions to escape the approaching rabbit.

When the rabbit saw this, he regretted what he had done. He said to himself, "How can I live alone? I am really a great coward. I shall return to the river and drown myself."

When he reached the river, however, he startled a group of frogs on the bank, and they all jumped into the water. Seeing that, he said, "Maybe I am not the greatest coward in the world." Encouraged by this, he decided to return to the forest again, gather all the animals together, and become their leader.

Back in the forest, however, there were no animals to be found. In their great fear of the rabbit, they had scattered far and wide, never to be united again.