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How the Rabbit Lost His Tail

Unknown writer

Centuries and centuries ago, it was not the cat but the rabbit who had a long tail. Once upon a time, there was a jealous cat who envied the rabbit's tail. The cat was so jealous that one day she stole the rabbit's tail with a knife. The rabbit didn't even notice! No, he was just sleeping through it! But the rabbit woke up just as the cat was trying to attach the tail to herself. "Don't you think the tail looks much better on me than on you?" asked the cat.



"I think it looks great on you," replied the generous rabbit. "It was a bit too long for me anyway, and I'll tell you what: I'll give it to you gladly if you give me the knife you used to steal it from me." The cat gave the knife to the rabbit and he went off into the forest. "I lost my tail, but I got a knife in exchange," he said to himself, "I'll get a new tail or something just as good."

The rabbit hopped through the forest and saw a man who was busy weaving baskets. He made them from twigs and cut them to the right length with his teeth. He looked up and saw the rabbit with the knife. "Oh, please, Mr. Rabbit," said the man, "would you be so kind as to lend me your knife? I could use it to cut the twigs to the right length because my teeth are not working as well as they used to."

The rabbit gave the man his knife and he started cutting with it. But suddenly the knife broke into two pieces. "Oh no!" cried the rabbit, "you broke my knife!" The man said he was very sorry. It certainly was not his intention to break the knife. Then the rabbit said: "I have no use for a broken knife, but maybe you can repair it. I'll give you the knife if you give me one of your baskets in exchange."

The man gave the rabbit a basket. The rabbit went further into the forest and thought to himself: "I lost my tail, but I got a knife in exchange. Now I lost my knife, but in exchange I have a basket. I'll get a new tail or something just as good."

The rabbit hopped further into the forest until he came to an open space. There was a woman busy picking lettuce. She put everything she picked into her apron. She looked up and saw the rabbit with his basket.

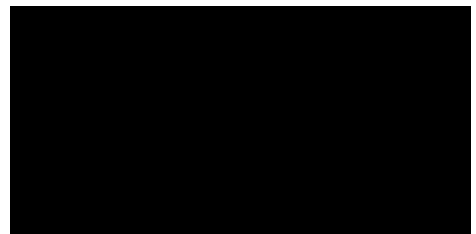


"Oh, please, Mr. Rabbit," she said, "may I borrow your beautiful basket for a moment? Then I can put my lettuce in it." The rabbit gave the basket to the woman. Just as she put the lettuce in it, the bottom of the basket suddenly fell out! "Oh no," cried the rabbit, "now my basket is broken!" "I'm so sorry," said the woman, "I can't help it, it was an accident."

Then the rabbit said: "I have no use for a broken basket. But you can keep it if you give me some of your lettuce." The woman gave him some lettuce, and the rabbit was happy and said to himself: "I lost my tail, but I got a knife. I lost my knife, but I got a basket. I lost my basket, but now I have lettuce."

As he said that, he noticed that the lettuce had a delicious smell. And suddenly the rabbit was very hungry! He ate the lettuce and found it delicious. He had never tasted anything so good before. "I don't care that I lost my tail," said the rabbit, "I found something that I like much better!"

And that's how it came to be that there are no rabbits left with long tails, and it doesn't bother the rabbits at all, as long as they can enjoy delicious lettuce, because that makes them extremely happy!



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