



Ririro

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The Rabbit Who Was Afraid

Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

Once upon a time, a very long way from here, a little wild Rabbit sat under a tall palm tree. All about him were other tall palm trees and larger animals than he, and the wild rabbit thought and thought. And after the Rabbit had thought a while he said to himself, "What if the earth should crack and swallow me up."

Just then the wind blew a coconut down from a tree and it fell upon the ground right beside the little wild Rabbit. Up he jumped in great fear for now he was sure that what he had dreaded was happening.

"The earth is cracking," said the Rabbit, and off he hopped as fast as he could, never stopping to try and find out what it was that had made the noise.

As he ran he met his Mother and she said to him, "Why do you run so fast?"

"The earth is cracking," said the Rabbit, "and I run that I may not be swallowed up by it."

On ran the Rabbit, and his Mother ran with him.

As they ran, they met his Father and he said to the Rabbit, "Why do you run so fast?"

"The earth is cracking," said the Rabbit, "and we run that we may not be swallowed up by it."

On ran the Rabbit and his Mother, and his Father ran with them.

As they ran they met an Elephant, and he said to the Rabbit, "Why do you run so fast?"

"The earth is cracking," said the Rabbit, "and we run that we may not be swallowed up by it."

On ran the Rabbit and his Mother and his Father, and the Elephant ran with them.

As they ran they passed a Deer. "Why do you run so fast?" he asked of the Rabbit.

"The earth is cracking," said the Rabbit, "and we run that we may not be swallowed up by it."

On ran the Rabbit and his Mother and his Father and the Elephant, and the Deer ran with them.

As they ran they met a Fox. "Why do you run so fast?" the Fox asked of the Rabbit.

"The earth is cracking," said the Rabbit, "and we run that we may not be swallowed up by it."

On ran the Rabbit and his Mother and his Father and the Elephant and the Deer, and the Fox ran with them.

As they ran they met all his Relations, and they said to the Rabbit, "Why do you run so fast?"

"The earth is cracking," said the Rabbit, "and we run that we may not be swallowed up by it."

On ran the Rabbit and his Mother and his Father and the Elephant and the Deer and the Fox, and a hundred of his Relations ran with him.

As they ran they came upon the Lion, who is the king of the beasts, and the Lion said to the Rabbit, "Why do you run so fast?"

"The earth is cracking," said the Rabbit, "and we run that we may not be swallowed up by it."

But the Lion, who is the king of the beasts, did not run. He spoke again. "Which one of you is it who saw the earth cracking?" he asked, because he felt sure that there must be some mistake about it.

"It was not I, O King," replied the Elephant.

"Nor was it I, O King," said the Deer and the Fox and each of the Rabbit's hundred Relations and his Father and his Mother, until all had spoken except the Rabbit himself.

"Is it true that the earth is cracking?" asked the Lion of the Rabbit.

"It is true, O King," replied the Rabbit. "I sat under a palm tree thinking of what would happen to me if the earth were to break up. Suddenly I heard a loud noise as it cracked."

"Then we must go back and see how wide the crack is," said the Lion. "Rabbit, jump upon my back and show me the way."



So the Rabbit jumped upon the Lion's back and away they went as fast as the wind, while the other animals all waited for them. The Rabbit guided the Lion to

the place where he had sat beneath the palm tree, and the Lion saw the coconut lying on the ground.

“What a foolish Rabbit you are!” said the Lion, who is king of all the beasts. Then he went back to the other beasts and told them that the earth had not yet cracked.

If it had not been for the Lion they might all have been running until to-day.

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