

“The Lion and the Rabbit” from the *Panchatantra*

Intelligence is power.
But where could power and folly make a pair?
The rabbit played upon his pride.
To fool him: the lion died.

In a certain forest a greedy lion was killing all the animals and eating them. The animals made an agreement with the lion. They promised to send him one animal a day to eat, if he would promise not to kill any of the other animals. The lion agreed.

The rabbit's turn came. The rabbit seemed unafraid. He was even late to the lion's den and the lion was furious. “Why do you dare to come late?” the lion roared.

The rabbit explained that on his way to the den, he'd been stopped by a mighty beast—another lion. The rabbit went on to say that the other lion had claimed to be the King of the forest. He'd said, “That numskull of a lion to whom you are going is a sneak thief. Whichever of us proves the stronger shall be King.”

When the lion heard this he told the rabbit to lead him to the other lion. The rabbit led him to a well and told the lion that the other lion was hiding in the well.

The lion, being a dreadful fool, looked in the well and saw his own reflection in the water and gave out a great roar. From the well came a roar twice as loud, because of the echo. This the lion heard. He decided that his rival was very powerful, hurled himself down the well and met his death. And that is why I say:

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But where could power and folly make a pair?
The rabbit played upon his pride.
To fool him: the lion died [*The Panchatantra*. Trans. Arthur W. Ryder.
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