



# Lion and Warthog

South African Folktale  
English



Once upon a time, Lion was the strongest and most feared of all the animals.

He would catch other animals and eat them.

But one morning while he was looking for his breakfast, he got caught in a hunter's trap.





Lion gave his loudest roar from the pain.

He pulled and pulled to free himself from the trap.

The trap got tighter and tighter around his leg every time he pulled.

Lion grew tired and he felt more pain in his leg.

Finally, he gave up.

Days went past as Lion sat baking in the sun.

He was hungry and thirsty and there was nobody to save him.

He became weaker and weaker.

“I am going to die of hunger and thirst in this trap,”  
he thought to himself.





One morning, Lion heard a sound coming from the nearby bushes.

He listened and looked closer.

He saw Warthog walking with his wife and children, talking and laughing.

The Warthog family were going to the river to drink water and play in the mud before the sun got too hot.

“Warthog! Please help me! Warthog!” cried Lion.  
“Please set me free from this trap,” pleaded Lion.

“Never,” said Warthog.  
“You are a cruel animal. You will eat me and my family for breakfast if I set you free.”  
“I promise I will never do such a bad thing. We will be friends if you can set me free,” said Lion.





Warthog felt sorry for the lion.

“I do not like seeing you in such pain, thirsty and dying from hunger.”

So he pulled at the trap with his long strong tusks and released Lion.

Warthog saved his new friend.

“Thank you very much my friend for saving my life,” said Lion. “I must go to my family now, good bye.”

“Go well my friend,” said Warthog.

He was happy that Lion was his friend. “My family will never have to run from the lion again,” he thought.







Lion walked away limping and weak.

He was also very hungry.

Then he saw Warthog's children playing in the mud.

"Today is my lucky day," said Lion with his mouth watering.

“Hey Warthog, my new friend,”  
called Lion.

“I have been caught in the trap for  
days without food. But I am too  
weak to hunt.  
Please would you give one of your  
children to me for breakfast?”

Warthog was shocked.

“I saved you from the trap and now  
you want to eat my children?”





“I am very sorry my friend,” said Lion, “but I am starving. I might be weak for now but I am stronger than you.”

The lion opened his mouth and showed his strong yellow teeth.

“If you do not give me one of your children, I will take one for myself,” he roared.

Warthog knew that he did not have the speed or the strength of Lion.

He would never be able to protect his children in a fight.

“Al right,” said Warthog.

“I will give you one of my children.

But first I want you to show me how you were caught in the trap.

In case I have to save another lion from this trap.”





Lion imagined the wonderful taste of young warthog in his mouth.

He could hardly wait.

Lion went back to the trap and put his foot inside to show his friend how he was trapped.

“Ouch!” Lion roared.

Warthog had closed the trap on  
Lion’s foot.

“Aha! I got you,” said Warthog.

“You will stay in that trap hungry  
and thirsty again.  
See if your strong teeth and sharp  
claws can help you now.”







“Run! Run! Run away!” Warthog’s wife shouted to the children at the top of her voice.

“Raise your tails when you are running so that your father can see you,” she called.

The babies ran as fast as they could through the bushes.

“Warthog please help me!” begged Lion again.

He was in pain from the sharp jaws of the hunter’s trap.

“I will do anything for you if you save me.”

“No way, liar! I will never believe you again,” said Warthog.

“I will also warn other animals not to save you because you are very sly.”







Warthog saw his children running in a row with their mother.

Their tails were lifted up for him to see them.

He rushed to his family and they all escaped to safety.

To this day, Warthogs and their children always run with their tails lifted up to see that everyone is safe.

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