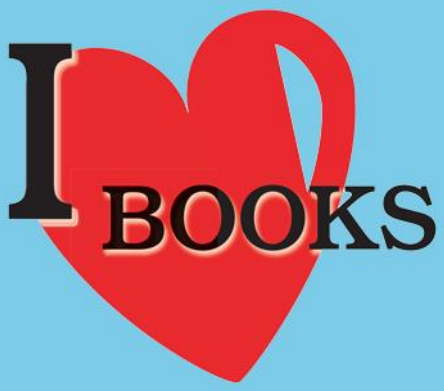


Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from

The Lion Storyteller Awesome Book of Stories

Written by

Bob Hartman

Illustrated by

Krisztina Kallai Nagy

Published by

Lion Children's Books

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

Text copyright © 1998, 2002, 2009, 2011, 2016 Bob Hartman Illustrations
copyright © 2009, 2011 Krisztina Kállai Nagy This edition copyright © 2016
Lion Hudson

The right of Bob Hartman to be identified as the author and of Krisztina Kállai Nagy to be identified as the illustrator of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Published by Lion Children's Books an imprint of
Lion Hudson plc Wilkinson House,
Jordan Hill Road,
Oxford OX2 8DR, England
www.lionhudson.com/lionchildrens

ISBN 978 0 7459 7636 5
e-ISBN 978 0 7459 6799 8 (*Bedtime Book*; text-only)
e-ISBN 978 0 7459 6798 1 (*Animal Tales*; text-only)

First edition 2016

The stories in this book were first published in *The Lion Storyteller Bedtime Book* and *The Lion Storyteller Book of Animal Tales.*

Acknowledgments
Cover image: © angel_1978/iStock

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library Printed and bound in China, April 2016, LH06

THE Lion Storyteller

AwESomE BookofSToriES

Retold by Bob Hartman Illustrations by Krisztina Kállai Nagy



LION CHILDREN'S

Contents

Introduction 8

The Mouse and the Lion 10
A Story from Greece

Silly Jack 12
A Story from England

The Girl Who Played With the Stars 14
A Story from Scotland

Three Months' Night 18
A Story from North America

Arion and the Dolphin 20
A Story from Greece

Rabbit and Tiger Save the World 23
A Story from Puerto Rico

The Shepherd and the Clever Princess 24
A Story from Finland

Tortoise Brings Food 28
A Story from Africa

Polly and the Frog 31
A Story from England

Rabbit and Tiger Go Fishing 35
A Story from Puerto Rico

The Mouse Deer's Wisdom 36
A Story from Java

The Four Friends 39
A Story from India

The Brave Bull Calf 42
A Story from England

Tiger Gets Stuck 46
A Story from Puerto Rico

The Clever Mouse 48
A Story from Wales

The Amazing Pine Cone 50
A Story from Finland

The Very Strong Sparrow 53
A Story from Africa

Simple John 56
A Story from Germany

The Selfish Sand Frog 60
A Story from Australia

The Mouse's Bride 62
A Story from India

The Big Wave 65
A Story from Japan

Tiger and the Storm 68
A Story from Puerto Rico

The Knee-High Man 71
A Story from North America

The Clever Baker 73
A Story from Scotland

How the Kangaroo Got Its Tail 76
A Story from Australia

The Greedy Farmer 78
A Story from Wales

The Generous Bird 81
A Story by Bob Hartman

Tiger Eats a Monkey 85
A Story from Puerto Rico

Lazy Tom 87
A Story from Ireland

The Contented Priest 90
A Story from Spain

Olle and the Troll 94
A Story from Norway

The Steel Man 98
A Story from North America

The Crafty Farmer 102
A Story from Japan

Tiger Tries to Cheat 104
A Story from Puerto Rico

The Two Brothers 107
A Story from Brazil

Kayoku and the Crane 110
A Story from Japan

The Two Sisters 114
A Story from France

The Selfish Beasts 117
A Story from Africa





The Determined Frog 120
A Story from Russia

The Robber and the Monk 122
A Story from Egypt

The Fox and the Crow 126
A Story from Ancient Greece

City Mouse and Country Mouse 128
A Story from Ancient Greece

Why the Cat Falls on Her Feet 132
A Native American Story

Big Jack, Little Jack and the Donkey 134
A Story from Ancient Greece

The Lion's Advice 137
A Story from Africa

The Dog and the Wolf 140
A Story from Ancient Greece

The Kind Parrot 143

Why Dogs Chase Cats and Cats Chase Mice 149

Rabbit and the Briar Patch 152
A Story from North America

The Crocodile Brother 155
A Story from Africa

The Boastful Toad 158
A Story from Ancient Greece

The Clever Mouse Deer 161
A Story from Indonesia

The Ant and the Grasshopper 164
A Story from Ancient Greece

Big Jack, Little Jack and the Farmer 166
A Story from Ancient Greece

Three Days of the Dragon 170
A Story by Bob Hartman

How the Turkey Got Its Spots 176
A Story from Africa

The Generous Rabbit 182
A Story from China

The Noble Rooster 185
A Story from Japan

Rabbit and the Crops 189
A Story from North America

The Woman and the Bird 192
A Story from Africa

The Mole's Bridegroom 196
A Story from Japan

The Kind-hearted Crocodile 198
A Story by Bob Hartman

Why the Tortoise Has No Hair 202
A Story from Africa

Big Jack, Little Jack and the Bird 205
A Story from Eastern Europe

How the Rabbit Lost Its Tail 208
A Story from Japan

The Badger Teapot 211
A Story from Japan

The Kind of Hungry Lion 214
A Story by Bob Hartman

The Big, Soft, Fluffy Bed 218
A Story from Puerto Rico

The Peanut Boy 221
A Story from North America

The Wonderful Bird 225
A Story from Indonesia

The Cat, the Mice and the Cheese 229
A Story from Ancient Greece

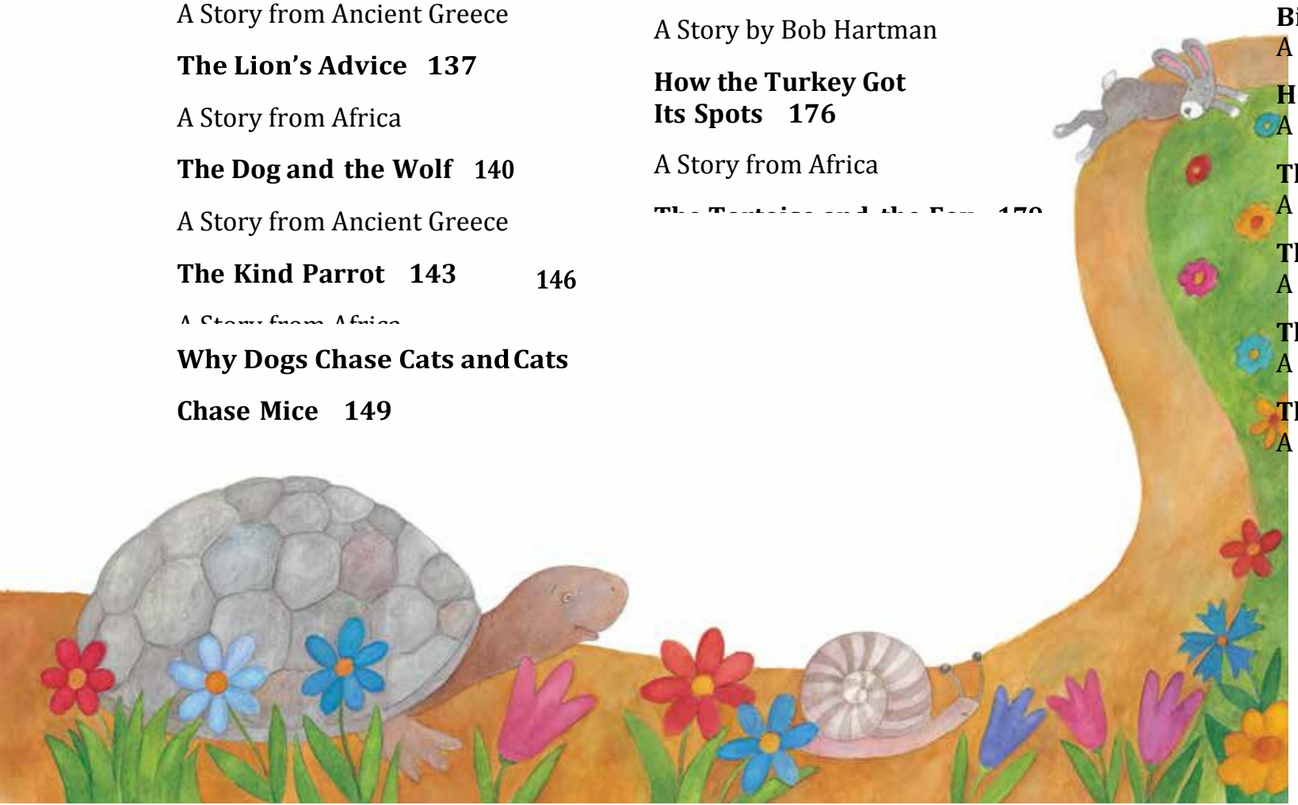
The Goats and the Hyena 232
A Story from Syria

The Clever Crows 235
A Story from Ancient Greece

The Monkeys and the Mangoes 237
A Story from India

Sharing stories with a crowd 242

A note from the author 255





Introduction



It's hard to tell a story you don't love.
That's my experience, anyway. Some stories grab hold of you by the collar and shout, "Tell me! Tell me, please."
And others are just, "Meh, if you have to tell me, fair enough. But I don't really see us in a long-term relationship, here."
When I wrote the two books that are bundled together in this collection, I spent hours in the bowels of the Pittsburgh Public Libraries, gathering up collections of stories from around the world. Then I spent hours more, in my study, reading what I'd gathered and letting the stories speak.
Some tales, like "The Mouse and the Lion", leaped and roared at me. Others, like "Tortoise Brings Food", crept up on me (slowly and carefully – when you read it, you'll see). And Danny and Granny and "The Big, Soft, Fluffy Bed" jumped up and down and made all kinds of noises until I paid attention. They have all become lifelong friends.

I have gathered the stories in this collection from every part of the globe. Some of them may be familiar to you. But I hope that many more will be new – that you will share my delight in discovering them for the first time and also come to appreciate, as I did, how similar our dreams and values are, regardless of culture, nature or race.
I have also consciously chosen stories that I believe encourage the very best human traits. I really think that stories can encourage children to be more kind or gentle or compassionate – that's another of my hopes for this book.
I also hope that, as you read these stories yourself, or read them to the children in your life, they will become your friends as well as mine. I can't guarantee it, of course. Stories don't work like that. But I'm happy to have the chance to introduce them to you – the stories in this collection – and see what happens.
Perhaps you will make a few friends as well.

Bob Hartman





The Fox and the Crow

Fox crept slowly – crept up on Crow.
But as he sprang into the air – red fur flying and white teeth flashing – Crow flew away into the branches of a tall tree.
It was not Crow that Fox wanted, but the fat piece of cheese she held in her beak. So he stood thinking for a moment, and, when he had come up with another plan, Fox trotted towards the tree and called to Crow in his most pleasant voice, "Crow! Dear Crow, I'm sorry I startled you. I was just overcome, that's all."
Overcome? wondered Crow silently. And she stared at Fox, confused.
"How else can I put it?" Fox said. "It is rare that one stumbles upon such beauty as yours in this rough and ordinary world."
Crow stared, more puzzled than ever. Beauty? Me? she wondered. And she went to fly away.
"I can tell by your expression," Fox continued, "that you are not following my meaning. Stay with me, just a moment, and I will explain.
"I have seen crows before. Many crows, in fact. But none with such shiny feathers as yours. None with such shapely wings. And certainly none with such deep black eyes."
Crow could not hide her pleasure! This was all a surprise to her. But a wonderful surprise, to be sure. She wanted to say, "Go on. More please!"
But there was the cheese to consider and, besides, Fox showed no signs of stopping!

"It is not only your appearance that has touched me," he went on, "but your considerable
talent as well. Most birds of your kind would have launched themselves clumsily from the ground. But you
soared! The graceful arc of your wings was a picture – no, a poem! – against the evening sky!"
Crow was trembling now, overwhelmed by Fox's flattery. And so she was totally unprepared for what came next.
"Dare I say it?" Fox whispered. "Is it too much to hope for? But is it possible, just possible, that flying is not your only gift? Is it possible that you can also... sing?
"If so, then I would love nothing more than to hear you. Could you...? Would you... (Dare I even suggest such a thing?) ... honour me with just one note from that lovely crow throat?"
Crow could no longer think. She was so taken in by Fox's sweet words that she forgot even the simplest thing – that crows cannot sing. Not even one note.
So Crow opened her mouth, and two things happened.
The most awful "squawk" came out of her beak. And the cheese came out as well!
In fact, it dropped straight to the ground, where Fox gobbled it down in one bite.
"Thank you very kindly," he grinned. "I knew something wonderful would come out of that mouth of yours."
Then he trotted off into the forest,
leaving Crow feeling foolish and flattered
all at the same time.



City Mouse and Country Mouse

City Mouse went to visit Country Mouse.
He shut the door of his flat. He climbed into the lift.
He walked into the garage, hopped into his car and nosed his way out onto the city streets.
He stopped at one light after another, crawling slowly past office blocks and theatres and restaurants.
He sped up a little when he reached the suburbs. He motored past schools and parks and shopping malls, and row after row of houses.
Finally, City Mouse reached the country. Fields flew by, dotted with hungry sheep. Then barns and hedgerows and trees and hills.
He drove faster and faster, slowing down only to race around the occasional tractor. And then he stopped. For there, at the side of the road, sat Country Mouse's cosy country cottage.
Flowers filled the front garden, and the back garden too. And there were apple trees and pear trees, and birds singing all around.
The two friends sat in the garden and chatted. They sipped home-made cider and shared simple country meals – bread and cheese and pickle.
But after a few days of this, City Mouse found that he was just a little bit bored.

"This is all very pretty," he said to his friend. "But it's nothing compared to the city! There's so much to see there! So much to do! So much excitement and adventure!"
"Well, let's go then!" squeaked Country Mouse. "Let's go at once!"
So they packed their things, watered the plants and hopped into the car.
And City Mouse took Country Mouse back with him to the city.
They drove fast at first, slowing down only to race around the occasional tractor. They flew past hills and trees and hedgerows and barns, and fields dotted with hungry sheep.
They slowed down when they reached the suburbs, driving past row after row of houses. They motored past shopping malls, parks and schools. And at last they reached the city.
They were barely crawling along now – past restaurants and theatres and office blocks – stopping at one light after another.
Country Mouse pressed his long nose against the window and just stared.
"You were right!" he said, gazing up at the tall, tall buildings. "There is so much to see! So much to do! Let's start at once!"

So they parked the car in the garage and walked out onto the city streets. They tried on fancy clothes, looked at expensive jewellery and ate their dinner at a restaurant so fine that Country Mouse could not even pronounce the names of the food on the menu! But as they walked home, talking and laughing about what they had done, they were suddenly met by a gang of very big and very hungry City Cats.

"What do we do now?" asked Country Mouse. "We run!" squeaked City Mouse. "I told you the city was exciting!"

And that's what they did, scampering this way and that, through city streets and city alleys, until they had left the City Cats far behind.

They leaned against a city building and huffed and puffed, but before they could catch their breath, they were surprised by a pack of noisy City Dogs!

"What now?" trembled Country Mouse.

"We run again!" squeaked City Mouse. "I told you the city was full of adventure!"

Over city pavements and under city cars they raced until they ducked at last into a hole in a city wall. And while the dogs barked outside, they crept along a narrow, dark passage towards a pinprick of light at the other end.

“I smell cheese!” squeaked Country Mouse. “Careful!” warned City Mouse, but before he could stop
him, his friend was racing to the light at the end of the hole.
There was cheese, he could smell it. There was cheese, he could taste it. There was cheese! Lying there, just waiting for him, on top
of a contraption made of metal and wood. But just before he could grab it, City Mouse raced to his side and pushed Country Mouse out of
the way. And the metal sprang up from the wood and chopped the cheese in half!
“City cheese board?” asked Country Mouse.
“City mousetrap,” answered his friend. “I think it’s time we went home.” So the two friends crept carefully back to City Mouse’s flat.
City Mouse slept soundly that night. But Country Mouse tossed and turned. At first, the noise of the traffic kept him awake, but when, at last, he fell asleep, his dreams were filled with cats’ teeth and dog growls and the “snap” of waiting traps.
When morning came, City Mouse crawled out of bed and found his friend packing his bags.
“I’m going home,” said Country Mouse. “The city may be exciting. It may be filled with adventure. But it’s also very dangerous! And I think I would be happier in the country, where I belong.”
City Mouse was sad to see his friend go, but he understood, he really did.
For he was much happier where he belonged as well.
So the two friends locked up the flat and climbed in the lift and went down to the garage. They hopped into the car. And, crawling through the city, motoring through the suburbs and flying through the country, City Mouse took his friend back home.