

【國小朗讀組】

1. Cat and Mouse Go Boating (貓和老鼠划船)

Once upon a time, Cat and Mouse were great friends. They lived in the rainforest together and were perfectly happy. Cat mainly ate small birds. Mouse mostly enjoyed a kind of sweet potato called taro. One day, Cat became restless.

“Mouse,” said Cat, “I think we should leave the forest and find a village to live in. There will be lots of houses there. We'll find plenty of food. Our lives will be much easier.”

“But,” said Mouse, “we live on an island. There are no villages. How are we going to reach the mainland?”

“We could hollow out a boat from a big taro. What do you think of that?” said Cat.

“I think I'd enjoy making that boat!” laughed Mouse. And so he did.

A week later, Cat and Mouse began their sail.

Their boat was heavy to paddle. Before long, Cat and Mouse were very tired. They were very far from land. Of course, they were getting hungry, too.

One night, while Cat was sleeping, Mouse started to nibble the taro boat. Just a little nibble couldn't hurt. But one little nibble turned into a lot of big nibbles, and before Mouse knew it, the boat began to leak. At once, Cat woke up.

“Mouse, I know what you did. When we reach land, I'm going to eat you!” he cried.

Mouse and Cat were thrown into the sea and had to swim to land.

Once on shore, Cat looked hungrily at Mouse, but Mouse told him to wait. “I'm very dirty and salty,” he said. “Let me just give myself a wash before you eat me. Here's a little hole where I can do it.”

Mouse disappeared ... and did not reappear. He dug a little tunnel and escaped.

So, you can understand why Cat and Mouse are no longer such great friends!

【國小朗讀組】

2. The Leopard and the Jackal (獵豹與豺狼)

One day, Leopard and Jackal went out hunting. Leopard caught a goat. Jackal brought home a cow.

When the cow and the goat were safely tied, Leopard and Jackal went to bed. But Leopard could not sleep. He was jealous of Jackal's cow. When he went out in the night, he found that the cow had given birth to a calf. He was even more annoyed. He stole the calf and put it with his goat.

In the morning, Jackal found that. Jackal said, "Only cows have calves. That is definitely my calf."

"Nonsense," said the Leopard. Let's go and ask Gazelle."

Now Gazelle was afraid of Leopard, so she said, "Calves used to come from cows. It's true, but I believe they can come from goats, too, these days."

When Jackal appealed to Hyena. She was too afraid of Leopard to tell the truth.

Jackal was desperate. "Let's go and ask Baboon," he said.

But Baboon refused to answer. He just plucked at a large stone. The animals waited respectfully. Eventually, Leopard could bear it no longer.

"What on earth are you doing?" he asked.

"Why, I'm playing music from this stone," said Baboon. "Can't you see?"

"You can't get music from an ordinary stone," said Leopard.

Baboon smiled and said, "Music used to come from instruments. It's true. But these days I believe it can come from ordinary stones, too."

Then the animals all laughed.

"He's joking," they said. "Of course, you can't get music from a stone. And you can't get a calf from a goat, either!"

Leopard knew he was wrong. Then the calf was returned to Jackal.

【國小朗讀組】

3. The Old Man and the Bear (老人與熊)

Once an old man went to sow some turnip seeds. He worked hard all day but just as he was about to cast his seeds on to the tilled ground, a huge bear rushed out of the forest, growling furiously.

“Don’t hurt me! Don’t hurt me!” cried the old man.

“Give me one good reason why not,” said the bear.

The old man said quickly, “If you help me to sow these seeds, we will have a wonderful harvest. Then, you can have all the green tops and I will take the roots.”

The bear agreed.

When the time came to harvest the turnips, the old man filled his cart with the roots. He gave the tops to the bear.

The bear ate the tops. Just as the old man was ready to set out for the city to sell his turnips, the bear began to wonder.

“Let me just taste one of those roots,” he said.

Well, the moment the bear tasted the turnips, he roared with anger.

“You tricked me!” he cried. “These roots are the best part of the plant.”

The following year, the old man thought it would be better not to risk a turnip crop, so he planted rye instead. A fine field of the grain grew in the summer sun. Then, just as the old man prepared to cut the rye, the bear came rushing out of the trees again.

“Old man!” he yelled. “This time I will not be fooled. Share your crop with me!”

“It will be a great pleasure,” said the old man. “And this time, good bear, I will take the tops and you can have the roots.”

Well, the bear took the roots and carried them back into the forest. When he tried to chew them, he threw them out. This was no kind of food.

When the bear realized he had been tricked, he snarled and rolled his eyes. From that day to this, bears and men have never been friends.