



Room to Read®

Level 4

## The Hare's Story

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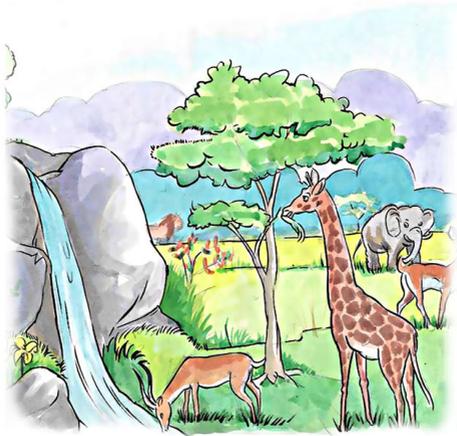
Illustrator: Godwin Chipenya

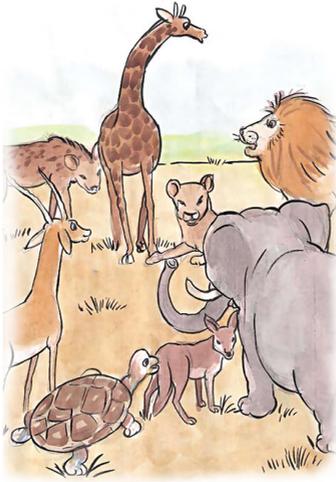
Translator: Alisha Berger

Once upon a time, all the animals lived in a land known as Kitasha. The land was beautiful and blessed. It was rich in dense forests and beautiful, tall mountains.

Water flowed in the rivers from the mountains down to the valleys throughout the year. Food was plenty. Giraffes had no reason to stretch their necks to search for leaves in high trees. Antelopes too had no difficulty finding sweet and young leaves.

But this was years ago. Until recently, Kitasha had been facing many years of drought. There was no rain, the rivers were dry. One day, the Elephant (who was the Chairperson of the Forest) called a meeting. All the animals came to the meeting except the Hare.





The Elephant said, "My fellow country-animals, water scarcity in Kitasha has affected us all. There is no indication that it will go away any time soon. I have called this meeting today to ask each of you to think of a solution."

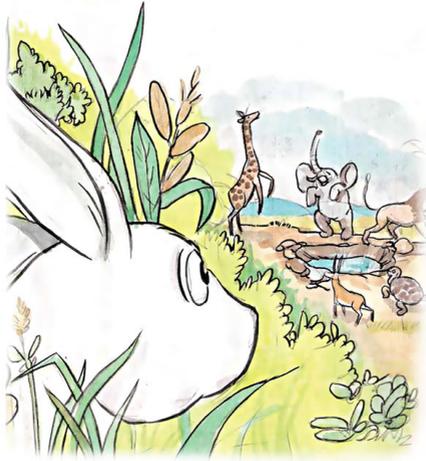
But none of the animals really cared. They kept up old habits like felling and burning trees, even near the river. Soon the rains stopped. Rivers and lakes began drying out.

The drought persisted for a long time. Crops failed in farms.

Water scarcity quickly led to food scarcity.

The Hyena was the first to contribute ideas on how to end the problem. "I suggest that we dig a big well so that we have enough water." Almost all animals agreed. They were to start digging early in the morning the following day. The

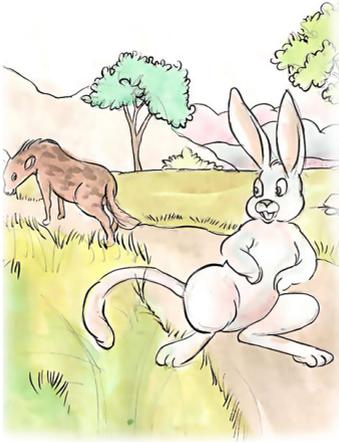
Chairperson asked every animal to keep time.



On the following day, all animals except the Hare carried their working tools to the site. Some had hoes, others spades. The work went well. By evening, water filled up the well.

The animals were happy. They sang "Water, water, water!" When the Hare heard them singing, he knew that water was now available.

After work, the Chairperson looked around but couldn't see the Hare. "Did anyone see the Hare?" The Baboon said, "I didn't see him. I know how stubborn he can be. He doesn't like working alone or with others." The Wild Dog was the Chief Guard. She decided to prepare a roster for all animals to take turns to guard the well. The Hyena was the first.



Next day, the Hare got up early in the morning. He went to draw water from the well. When he got there he found the Hyena on guard. He pretended that he had not come to fetch water from the well.

After exchanging greetings, the Hyena asked him, "Where are you going so early in the morning?" The Hare started telling him stories full of lies. He told him that he was heading for a ceremony.

"My friend, there is a huge feast today at Simba's. He has prepared so much meat. He has invited all of us to attend. The feast will start day. Let's go before other animals get there." The Hyena agreed to go with the Hare to Simba's home.

After walking together for a while, the Hare suddenly stopped. The Hyena asked him, "Why have you stopped?" The Hare pretended that he wanted to relieve himself. He asked the Hyena to wait for him.

The Hare quickly ran back to the well, drew some water and dirtied the rest of the water. Eventually, the Hyena got bored of waiting for the Hare. Instead of going back to guard the well, he went straight home..

Next day when the sun was about to go up, the animals went to the well. They were surprised to find it dirty. They did not see the Hyena either. They went to his house and asked him what happened. The Hyena didn't dare tell them the Hare's antics.

He kept mum. But as they kept asking him, he broke his silence. All the animals got very angry. They planned to search for the Hare and punish him severely.

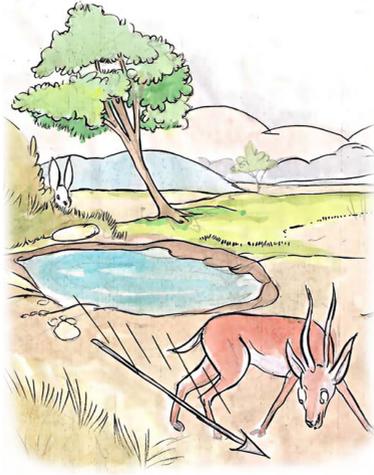
They also punished the Hyena by deciding that from that day onwards, he would only survive on the remains of food.



The next animal to be on guard was the Antelope. She promised that she would be careful and would make sure to catch the Hare. Meanwhile, the Hare found out that the Antelope was guarding the well.

He went home and collected a bow and some arrows. He went back to the well, took aim at the Antelope but just missed hurting her. The Antelope got so worried that she ran as fast as her legs could carry her. She went back home leaving the well unguarded.

The Hare saw his chance. He drew water, bathed and made sure that he dirtied the rest of the water in the well. When the other animals came to the well, they were surprised. The water was dirty. The Antelope was nowhere to be seen. Again! They summoned the Antelope to explain herself. She was shaking like a leaf. She told them how an arrow had narrowly missed her.



The animals did not give up. They vowed to continue guarding the well until they caught the water thief. It was the Tortoise's turn to guard the well.

The Hare, as usual came very early to the well. He looked this way and that but couldn't see any animal on guard. The Tortoise was hiding in his shell but the Hare didn't notice anything.

The Hare called out, "Hi, my friend. I have good news for you!" He was hoping whoever was on guard would reveal themselves. But no one came out.

The Hare began to draw the water from the well. He took a bath. Just as he was about to dirty the rest of the water in the well, the Tortoise jumped up and caught him.

He shouted excitedly, "I've caught the water thief! I've caught him!"

All the animals rushed to the well. Meanwhile, the Hare and the Tortoise were a sight to see. They held each other tightly. The Hare wanted to free himself but the Tortoise tightened his grip. The other animals were happy that at last they had caught the thief.

The Elephant suggested that the Hare should be slaughtered and that the soup from his meat should be served to the Lion who was sick. The Hare cried for forgiveness. But no one was ready to forgive him. The Rhinoceros brought a sharp knife.

The Wild Dog began sharpening the knife. The Hare knew that his time was up. He tried to free himself from the grip of the Tortoise and managed to jump out.

The Wild Don quickly threw the knife at the Hare. The knife cut the Hare's tail just it jumped behind a bush. This is why to this day, the Hare has a short tail and does not seem to trust anyone.



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## The Hare's Story (English)

There is no water in the animal kingdom and so the king called a meeting to find a solution. Everyone shows up, except for the hare. At the meeting, they all agree to dig a well, but not let the hare drink from it. The hare had his own plan. What do you think it was?

This is a Level 4 book for children who can read fluently and with confidence.



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