

Stories from other Cultures

Folk Tales from Africa

These traditional African stories have been taken from the collection [Moontales](#) by Ikenna Molobe and Elias Ozikpu.

The Lion and the Animals

a traditional African folk story by Ikenna Molobe

There was a time of famine in the land of the animals. The famine was getting severe that all the animals in the forest were looking for what to eat. The squirrel and the bush rat started climbing the palm trees to search for ripped palm fruit. The lizard started eating the back of the forest trees. The ants were boring holes and taking some fresh leaves inside it. Other animals were running helter-skelter looking for a way to get food.

The lion did not know what to do. He dug a big hole at the back of his house and covered it. The lion said that he will pretend to be sick so that any animal that comes to visit him will fall into the pit and he will eat the animal. The antelope heard this and called all the animals for a meeting. "The lion has dug a big hole at the back of his house and pretend to be sick so that any animal that comes to console him will fall inside the hole and he will eat the animal" the antelope told the animals. All the animals were grateful to the antelope and thanked him for what he has told them.

The lion waited for the animals to visit him. No animal came and he died of hunger.

Moral Lessons:

- We should always work hard for our own daily food
- Avoid short cut in life
- Do not plan evil against your fellow people
- Stop playing tricks

A Terrible Friend

a traditional African folk story by Elias Ozikpu

The leopard and fire were once good friends for several years, but during this lengthy period fire never visited the leopard in spite of the regular visits the leopard paid to the fire's house. The leopard was very unhappy and felt cheated and less-important. One bright evening, the leopard disclosed its feelings to the fire and equally let fire to understand why it should be visited as well or their long lasting relationship comes to an end. Fire laughed briefly and showed some degree of eagerness to please a friend that has been so nice. Having agreed, it then told leopard that for the visit to fully materialized, there should be construction of firewood all the way before the visit will be possible. Secondly, that a big bundle of firewood must be heaped on leopard's compound so that it may burn on them while the visit went on. Although it was a Herculean task, but the leopard obeyed all the instructions just to ensure that fire had no excuse.

On the evening of the visit, fire found its way to friend's hut by burning through the firewood the leopard had arranged. They had fun during the visit until fire consumed the big bundle of firewood and had no other place to get hold of. The leopard started running helter-skelter in search of firewood or anything that might sustain fire but found only a

few grasses but fire immediately burnt them to ashes and requested for more. When there was nothing to make fire flame, it immediately flew on the leopard's hut and started consuming the reeds. The leopard attempted persuading friend from not burning down the hut but fire warned the leopard thoroughly. After further attempts the leopard ran off with wounds when it discovered the friend was completely beyond control.

That is why fire has no friend and leopard has spots. They are the scars of the wounds it suffered from fire while pleading for the hut to be spared.

Moral Lessons:

- Do not establish friendship with a terror
- Assess whoever claims to be your friend