

THE LION AND THE GORILLA MONKEYS

daberinet.com

Once upon a time a lion and some gorilla monkeys were living as close neighbours. The male lion was living alone, but the gorillas were one big family. One day the lion asked the gorillas to go with him for hunting cows, so that they could share with him their prey equally. The gorillas accepted the suggestion of the lion, and the gorilla father and mother decided to remain at home, sending their nine children to go for hunting with the lion.

The lion and the gorilla monkeys went for hunting, and they captured ten cows all together. They then sat down to discuss about how to divide the cows. The lion started to talk first, and he said that he would take nine cows for himself, and the nine gorillas will have the remaining one cow. The reason he gave for the gorillas was that he was one, and he needed nine cows to be ten, and since they were nine they needed only one cow to be equal with him in number. The gorillas were very disappointed about the lion's unjust decision, but they were afraid to talk. The lion asked them to give their views, but the gorillas kept quiet. The lion then said to the gorillas, "Do you agree with me?" The gorillas answered reluctantly, "Yes we agree with you".

The nine gorillas, after hunting the whole day with the lion, travelled towards their home late in the afternoon. They were angry about the decision of the lion. They were also equally ashamed about their fear, on not confronting the lion by force and taking the share they rightly deserved. Most of all, they were worried about the reaction of their father, when they would have to tell him about the unjust decision of the lion, and their failure not to confront him.

As the gorilla monkeys approached their home late in the evening, they saw their father standing high up at the stones, and watching them eagerly. When the gorilla father saw his children coming with only one cow, he was very disappointed and asked them, "Is this cow the only prey you have got, after hunting the whole day with the lion?"

The gorilla children were so ashamed to talk, and none of them dared to tell their father about the unjust decision of the lion, and their lack of courage to face him. The gorilla father then said, "What is wrong with you today? Can't you talk?"

As the older gorilla children were reluctant to talk, the youngest of them could no longer hide the truth from his father, and he started to tell him the truth. He said, "Let me tell you the truth dad! We and the lion captured ten cows altogether, but the lion took nine cows for himself, and told us to take only one cow. We knew that this was unjust decision, but we were afraid to confront the lion".

The gorilla father was so disappointed and angry at his children. He said, "I am very ashamed of you! I wish I didn't have such weak children like you! How on earth could nine persons not confront one person? He then called one of his smallest sons to follow him towards the den of the lion, to take his children's share from the lion by force. He also took with him the only cow his sons brought, so that he could argue with the lion, for a bigger share.

As the gorilla father and his son approached the den of the lion, the gorilla son said to his father, "Dad! I am so afraid of the lion! I feel I am going to have diarrhoea. The gorilla father was also equally shivering from fear, and he said to his son, "My son! I am also equally afraid like you! My diarrhoea is as close as yours!"

When the gorilla father and his son came to the lion, the lion asked the gorilla arrogantly, "What happened? Why did you come back with this cow? Isn't this the share of your children?"

The gorilla then answered shivering from fear, "Listen Mr. lion! I came here to give you back the cow you have given to my children. Why did you give such a big cow to monkeys? We gorillas don't deserve to eat such a big cow. We can live on wild fruits. Take this cow back Mr. Lion, and good by!"

The gorilla father and his son then hurried towards their home, being afraid that the lion could follow after them. As they approached their home, the gorilla father was so ashamed of his fear from the lion. He was also equally ashamed of the way he treated his children earlier, when they told him that they were afraid to confront the lion.

As the gorilla father and his son approached their home, the gorilla children who waited eagerly for their father, to bring them more cows from the lion, were so disappointed, to see their father coming empty handed. The gorilla children then asked their father, "What happened dad! Why didn't you bring more cows, as you have vowed to do so?"

The gorilla father was so ashamed to tell the truth for his children, but the young gorilla that followed his father to the den of the lion could no longer hide the truth, and started to talk. He told them that both he and his father were so afraid of the lion, and their father had no choice, but to give back the only cow they had to the lion.

The children then altogether comforted their father, by hugging and kissing him, and telling him that he should never be ashamed of being afraid of the lion, as the lion is stronger than him. The gorilla father also kissed his children, and asked to forgive him, for his misjudgement, when they told him that they were afraid of the lion. He admitted that it was only natural for him and his children to be afraid of the lion. He told them that the lion is called the king of the beasts, because of his strength.

This story of the lion and the gorilla is so popular among the Blin people, and whenever a father is equally afraid as his child, or a strong person is equally afraid as a weak person, then they remind him about what the gorilla said to his son; "My son! I am equally afraid like you". In Blin, it is called, "kukhurira t'eyabuka". It is also used whenever, a person whom you expect to solve a problem, can't solve it. In another context, the story is told to teach that friendship with a powerful person is not always helpful.

This folk tale was translated from Blin to English from Tekie Alibekit's, "Blin Animal Fables and Riddles 2007".