

Lion, Mouse, Fox and Human

Long, long ago when the world was new and just made, there lived four animals in the middle of a forest called Harmony. They were Lion, Mouse, Fox and Human. They were content because on each tree there grew something lovely to eat. The animals looked different but they were all the same size and they all walked on two legs. Sun shone down on the animals, very proud to think that she had made them all equal and fair.

Well that is what she thought, until Moon brought Monster into the world to test them. You see, the animals looked much the same but they were different inside.

Monster wasn't like the other animals. She wasn't used to living in Harmony, so when she saw the food on the trees she got a big sack, picked it all and took it back to her shelter. She shut the door, locked it and put the key in her pocket.

The animals looked at each other. What were they going to do? Something had to be done. Nobody wanted to go and talk to Monster. She looked so scary with her big teeth, so they drew lots. First it was Lion's turn to do something. Lion stood up straight. 'This is easy,' she said. 'I'm very angry. I'll give Monster a piece of my mind.' Lion rushed through the forest until she came to Monster's shelter. She banged loudly on the door. When Monster came to the door. Lion shouted at her. 'Give us back our food. Sun gave us the food.' But Monster just laughed. This made Lion even more angry and she rushed at Monster. A terrible fight followed. But Monster was bigger and stronger and Lion came back with blood on her nose.

Next it was Mouse's turn. Mouse looked worried but she went. She knocked on Monster's door. 'Please, please, please will you let us have some food? Just a little bit. We know that you are strong and tough and we can't do anything about it.' Monster looked out at Mouse and laughed. 'Run away little mouse and don't come troubling me with your whining. It gives me a headache!' She turned around and shut the door.

When Mouse came back empty-handed, Fox was already waiting to go. She was clever and she had a cunning plan. She crept through the forest until she came to Monster's shelter. She sneaked up and lay on the roof. There she waited until Monster came out and lay sleeping in the sun. She sneaked in through the small window. She only had two arms so couldn't carry very much and she was hungry so she started to eat the food. She ate and ate. She heard Monster coming in. She jumped up with a few bits of food for Mouse, Lion and Human and went to the window. But she was much fatter than when she came in and she couldn't get out. Monster looked at the greedy fox. 'You came sneaking in here and stole my food. I could kill you with one bite of my strong teeth. But I won't, not this time.' She took Fox outside and kicked her so hard that she landed back with Lion, Mouse and Human.

Human had hoped that Fox would be successful. She said, 'It's my turn. I'm not cleverer than you but I should be able to learn from your experience.'

Human thought as she walked through the forest of Harmony: 'Perhaps Monster doesn't know how hungry we are and how sad we feel! Perhaps Monster doesn't understand what she has done and thinks that there is plenty of food in another corner of the forest. Perhaps Monster doesn't know how to put things right.'

When Human got to Monster's shelter she stood tall.

'Hello, Monster, are you well?'

'No, I feel very sad and lonely and that makes me mad,' Monster roared.

'I felt very sad and hungry when you took all the food. There is no other food in the forest. I would like you to share it with me and all the other animals. We have nothing to eat.'

Monster's face fell and a look of understanding came to her face. 'I didn't know there was no other food,' she thought. 'I thought the animals were just being nasty to me.' She opened the door to her shelter wide and shouted.

'Lion, Fox, Mouse come and join me – there is food for everyone.'

Lion, Fox and Mouse walked over. They were scared of Monster, but when they saw Monster and Human chatting and laughing with each other, they came in and had a lovely feast.

When they had eaten all they could, Lion took Human to one side and said, 'How did you do it?'

'I just used my brain and worked out a plan,' she said. 'You should try it. If you want something, you don't get angry like Lion, or whiney like Mouse, or sneaky like Fox. You just ask by saying:

how you feel;

why you feel like that (what is wrong);

what you would like to happen to put it right.'

The animals tried it out when things went wrong. They called it being Human, but nowadays we call it being assertive.