

Lion's Fire Sticks

Name: _____

Read the story

This story starts in the old times when animals and people lived together. In those days people did not have fire. They ate their food raw. Only Lion had the power of fire.

The people and the animals came together to make a plan. "What can we do to get the fire from Lion so that we can cook our food?" they asked.

They decided to wait until evening and they started singing and clapping, calling everyone together. "Come dance with us," they said to Lion.

Many animals came from the bush to join in the dancing and singing. Lion brought his fire sticks. He rubbed the sticks. Soon a little smoke appeared beneath the sticks. Lion blew on the smoke and added some dry grass.



A little flame appeared and everyone brought a piece of wood. Soon everyone was dancing around a fire.

Rabbit was a cunning and fast animal. The people said to him, "While we are singing here and while Lion is dancing with us, you must take his fire sticks and run."

So while Lion was dancing, Rabbit grabbed Lion's fire sticks and ran. He did not make it because Lion caught up with him and brought the fire sticks back.

The lion sang a boastful song:

"To me it does not matter.

I don't have a problem.

I can eat you with hair, I can eat you without hair.

I don't have a problem.

Every part of you is food to me."



Springbok could run and jump very fast. The people said to him, "While Lion is dancing and singing here with us, you must grab his fire sticks and run."

When Lion was dancing and singing, Springbok grabbed the fire sticks and jumped away into the veld. But Lion said, "Why do I not hear the clippety-clop clippety-clop of Springbok's hooves dancing beside me?"

Lion turned and saw Springbok running into the veld with his fire sticks. So he ran after Springbok, caught him and came back with his fire sticks.

Again, Lion sang his boastful song.

Then the people whispered to each other. They said, "Let's ask Duiker. He is small and very fast." "Duiker," they said, "while Lion is dancing and singing here with us, you must grab his fire sticks and run away."

When they were dancing around the fire, Duiker grabbed Lion's fire sticks and ran into the veld. But Lion said, "Why do I not hear Duiker snort-snorting behind me as before?"

He turned around and chased after little Duiker who was leaping into the veld. Lion caught up with him and returned to the fire with his sticks.

Again, Lion sang his boastful song.

"Oh," sighed the people, "Which animal can help us now? Ostrich has the longest legs of all, let us ask him." They explained the plan to Ostrich and he grabbed Lion's fire sticks this time.

Lion said, "Why do I not hear Ostrich's high singing voice



behind me anymore?" He looked around, saw Ostrich and chased after him.

After a long time Lion returned with a very tired face. Ostrich ran too fast for him.

Ostrich managed to get the fire sticks from Lion! Now the people had fire.

“From this day on,” Lion said, “I will not leave any of you alone. I will hunt you all!”

This is how Lion came to be a great hunter and how people got the power of fire.

Adapted from the story: *Lion's Fire Sticks* Traditional San story From The African Storybook Project

Answer the questions:

1. Who are the main characters in the story?

2. What did the people and animals want to take from Lion?

3. How did the people and animals try to take the fire sticks?

4. Which animal was successful in taking the fire sticks? Why?

5. What did the Lion say to the people and animals when they took his fire sticks?
