

## The Power of a Rumour



### **A Jataka (Kathaye) series tale**

Once upon a time, it happened in a forest that a hare was resting under a banyan tree. He had an intuition of doom and thought, "What would happen to me, if the earth will break?" Suddenly, he heard a weird striking sound. He said, it's happened, the earth is breaking up". He jumped up and ran madly without even observing the direction.

When he was running through the forest, a hare saw him and asked, "What happened? Where are you going in such a hurry?" The hare cried, "The earth is breaking up. You better run too." The second hare ran so fast that he overtook the first hare. As they were passing the forest, both of them shouted to other hares, "The earth is breaking up". Very soon, thousands of hares were running through the forest.

On seeing the hares running through the forest, the other animals too got frightened. The news spread from mouth to mouth and soon, everyone came to know that the earth was breaking up. It didn't take much time before all the animals joined the race. All creatures whether reptiles or birds, insects or four-footed animals, everyone was trying to escape and their cries of fear created chaos all around.

A lion standing on a hill saw all the animals running and thought, "What is the matter?" He ran down the hill rapidly and positioned himself in front of the crowd. He shouted at them, "Stop! Stop!" The powerful presence of the lion curtailed the rising wave of fright among the animals. A parrot yelled, "the earth is breaking up ", alighting on a rock near him. The Lion asked, "Who said it?" The parrot replied, "I heard it from the monkeys".

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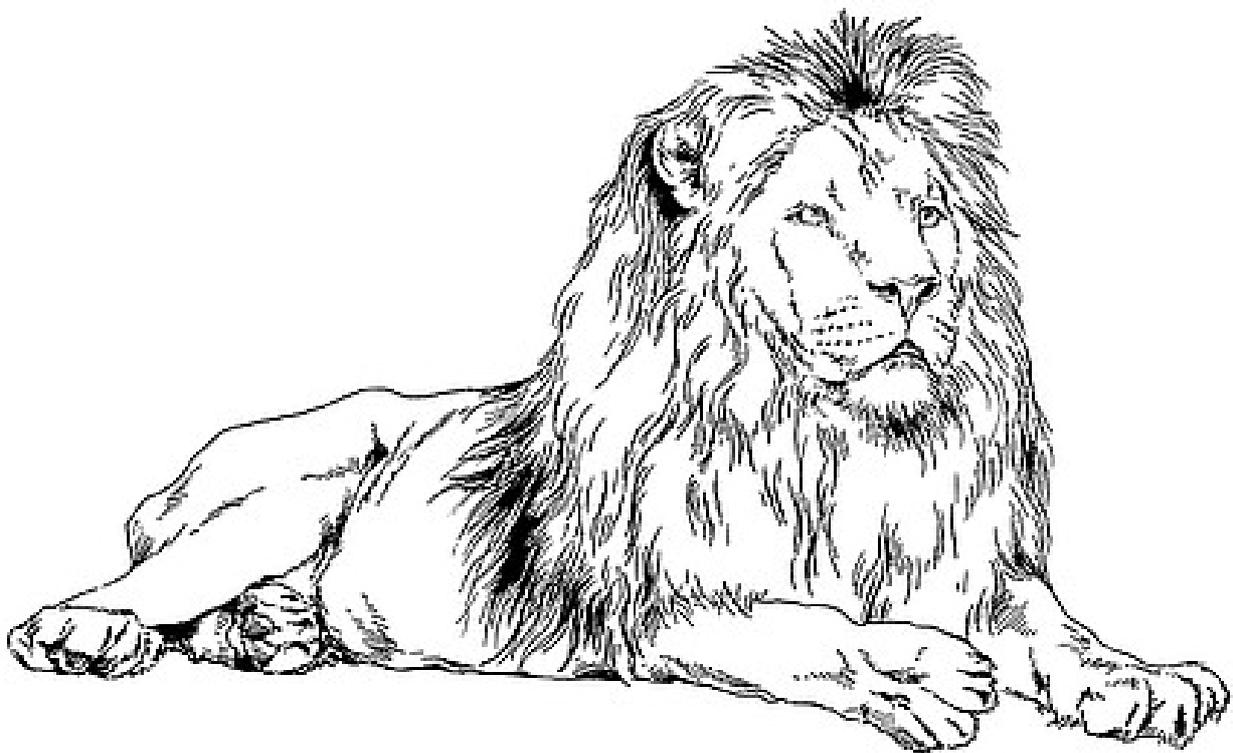
When the monkeys were asked, they replied that they had heard it from the tigers, when the tigers were asked, it was found that they were informed by the elephants. The elephants told that the buffaloes formed their source. Finally, when the hares were caught up, they pointed one to another until the one, who started this menace was recognized.

The Lion asked the hare, "What made you think that the earth was breaking up?" The hare wavering in fear answered, "Your Majesty, I heard it cracking with my own ears". The Lion investigated the matter and explored the sound that the hare had heard. Ultimately, he came to know that the sound had been caused by a large coconut falling from a tree. The coconut fell on a pile of rocks causing a minor landslide.

The Lion said to all the animals, "Go back to your homes. The earth is absolutely safe. Next time onwards, check a rumour before acting on it". The animals which were now looking quite stupid, went back to their homes.

**Moral: Check a rumour before acting on it.**

**There are some drawings for you to colour on this and the next page**



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