

Name _____

THE OLD LION

A lion grew old and weak, and it became hard for him to hunt food for his dinner. I am no longer fast and strong, he thought to himself, but I am still smart. So he came up with a plan. He went inside his cave and pretended to be sick. From time to time another animal would come by to ask about his health. Each time a well-wishing animal entered his cave the lion would jump up and devour it. In this way he managed to keep himself well fed for many weeks. One day a fox came by. He did not come into the cave, but stood outside at the entrance and called in to the lion.

“How are you today, Mr. Lion?”

“I am weak and sick,” the lion called back. “Why don’t you come in and visit me?”

“I would have,” answered the fox. “Except that all of the footprints I see are pointed into your cave, and none of them are pointed back out.”

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A **fable** is a short story that teaches a lesson. A **myth** is a traditional story passed down through generations of people, telling the story of their history, or explaining something about how nature works. Myths often include the supernatural. A **folk tale** is a story that originates in a culture and is usually passed by word-of-mouth, being told over and over again, slightly differently each time, and sometimes growing more and more exaggerated.

1. Based on the definitions above, is the story of The Old Lion is a _____ .

- a) fable
- b) myth
- c) folk tale

Use specifics from the story to support your answer.

2. Who was smarter? The Lion or the Fox? Why? Use specifics from the story to support your answer.

ANSWERS

1. A. This story is a fable because it teaches a lesson: “I would have,” answered the fox. “Except that all of the footprints I see are pointed into your cave, and none of them are pointed back out.” The fox is using his brain instead of just obeying the lion.

2. The Fox was smarter. The Lion was able to trick a lot of animals but he couldn't trick the Fox: “I would have,” answered the fox. “Except that all of the footprints I see are pointed into your cave, and none of them are pointed back out.”