

Notes for teachers

About the story

This story is set in West Africa but is suitable for children aged 7-10 all over the world. The myth that “sweating out a fever” by covering up the patient in blankets is common worldwide and leads to thousands of deaths,

Facts for Life states i

“Children with fever should be kept cool for as long as the fever persists by:

Sponging or bathing with cool (not cold) water

Covering the child with only a few clothes or one blanket”

. Withholding drinks from people with fever is less widespread than it was some years ago but many people would still deny patients food. An English saying goes, “*Feed a cold and starve a Fever*” .

Facts for Life says **“The child should be offered food and drink frequently to prevent malnutrition and dehydration”**

Few people also realise that the body loses salt as well as water. What the giraffe and the turtle are doing are in fact giving the lion the rehydration drink recommended in “Facts for life”

Activities

Telling the story

Note that the story teller takes a neutral position here in respect of traditional medicine merely stating that in this case the king did not respond.

Quite apart from the fact that some traditional healers **can** help in some cases’ names such as “witchdoctors” alienate more than they help.

Surveys

It will be useful and effective to conduct surveys among children and families on attitudes to nursing a fever. If it is then found , as it may well be, that there are those who would agree with the Hyena and Leopard, then follow up activities such drawing, drama, and mime are particularly useful

Action at home

All pupils will have seen other children with fever so writing activities based round “What I did” and, if necessary, “What I will do next time” will be useful

Source l’Enfant pour l’Enfant *La Fièvre Du Lion* Vanves: Edicef 1992. Original story Yvon Moren, English version Child-to-Child and ICCB, *Listening for Health* Geneva/ London 1997 (Full text)
Story retold by Patricia Smyke

THE LION HAS FEVER



*and how the clever
partridges saved his life by
keeping him cool and giving
him the right drinks*

THE LION'S FEVER

One fiery hot afternoon, King Lion came back from the hunt and threw himself on his mat exhausted. He was terribly thirsty but too weak to get up. He had a burning fever. His fur was soaked with sweat.

Mrs. Lion did what she could but the King got worse. Soon Monkey was going from branch to branch, carrying the sad news. The King is near death.

The king's friends hurried to the royal den to comfort the family of the dying Lion. Famous healers were called in and animal magicians tried to cure him with secret remedies, but nothing helped. The king did not respond. Tears welled up in the eyes of his young wife. The drums were made ready to announce the death of the king.

Certain animals were pleased to see the King so ill. Proud and stealthy Leopard who wanted to become king of the forest himself crept over to the royal sickbed and sniffed about. The king did not move and eyelash. "He will not last much longer" thought Leopard.

Soon the fever began to fall. Lion opened one eye and looked around He understood instantly what nasty tricks his enemies had played on him by wrapping him so warmly and not letting him have water. He gave a mighty roar. He was so angry that the hairs of his mane stiffened and stood straight out from his head.

Hyena and Warthog were returning from the village arm-in-arm singing when Lion came upon them .They did not know what hit them. In an instant Lion had gobbled them up like chickens,

Leopard escaped Lion's fury. When he saw how clever and skilful the partridges were in treating the King's fever, he did not wait for the outcome. He fled into the deep forest.

The rest of the animals rejoiced at Lion's recovery. The elephant spoke for them all When he trumpeted "when it comes to helping someone who has fever, we couldn't do better than imitate out little friends the partridges

Suddenly a flock of partridges entered. “But you are going to kill the King with those skins and that blanket,” they cried. “He will die from the heat! Hurry let’s get to work”

Quick as a wink they used their beaks to pull off the blanket. They tore out the stitches that held the skins together and uncovered the King. Several partridges hurried off and found cool water. Some of them sprinkled the king with it, while others helped him drink it from a cup in small sips. They all fanned him with their wings.

Wise old turtle came in with a small chunk of salt, He knew that for Lion to get better salt was very necessary. Giraffe stretched up into the tree to get some honey from a bees nest. He knew that honey and salt worked together. They mixed the honey with a little salt into the drink they were feeding Lion.

With one paw Leopard pretended to wipe away a tear but with another he tripped the servant who was bringing cool water to put onto the king’s lips. “What? Cool water when the body of the king is on fire? Have you ever seen water and fire mix? Fool, do you want to kill him?” The servant fled, scared to death, taking the cool water with him.

Meantime greedy Hyena heard of the King’s illness. Hyena always hung about when an animal was dying, but he especially wanted to go and enjoy the last moments of the mighty lion who had always treated him with such contempt. “If the King is at the edge of his grave said Hyena to himself, “why not give him a little push?”

Hyena took two animal skins and sewed them together. Warthog helped him eagerly .Hyena had hinted that he could marry the young widow of the king for Warthog, poor ugly animal, could easily be tricked. They hurried off to the royal den together



“With such a fever,” said Hyena, “It is important that the sick person should not catch cold . Look, the King is shivering and his teeth are chattering. We must cover him.”

Hyena and Warthog wrapped the king securely in the skins. Warthog, for good measure threw a thick woollen blanket on top. They slipped away to prepare a

feast in the village to celebrate the death of King Lion and “Who knows,” said the Hyena, with a wink, “a Marriage as well.”

Outside the earth was cracking under the burning sun. Inside Mrs. Lion wept softly No one said a word. In the airtight skins, as if in an oven the King was suffocating. He began to breathe slowly and with a strange rattling sound.

Alone in one corner, Leopard sat very still, his yellow eyes gleaming. He was waiting....

