



CHARACTER BUILDING LESSONS

SOMMER-TIME STORIES

THE LION AND THREE BULLS

Story Description

The black, white, and brown bulls are the best of friends. Whenever wild animals come to attack, the bulls are undefeatable because they band together and face their enemies. A clever fox divides them with lies and rumors so he and a lion can have a feast.

The three bulls begin hating each other and end up arguing, fighting, and going in separate directions. The fox's plan nearly works, but when the lion attacks, the bulls defend each other despite their disagreements. Reunited, the bulls discover that the fox lied to them. This retelling of Aesop's classic fable demonstrates the importance of refusing to listen to those who talk about friends.



Main Character Traits

Friendship/Trust/Teamwork

Other Character Traits

Appreciation, Caring, Courage, Cooperation, Forgiveness, Humility, and Loyalty

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Friendship

In the beautiful grassy plains lived three strong bulls, one white, one black, and one brown. They were the best of friends. ... Whenever a bull found a rich patch of grass, he called out to the others, "Come over here! Look at the rich green grass I've found." The other two bulls always came and ate the grass together. Since they were best of friends, the bulls always shared.

The three bulls shared with each other because that is what friends do. A true friend thinks of the other person first rather than himself.

Teamwork and Cooperation

The three bulls enjoyed eating the rich green grass together, but they always had to watch for wild animals wanting to attack them. One day a pack of hungry hyenas raced towards them. The hyenas first attacked the black bull. "Help!" the black bull screamed. "I'm being attacked!"

"We're coming right away!" the white and brown bulls yelled as they dashed towards him. The three bulls knew that when they were together they were strong, so they quickly banded together and faced their enemies. When the bulls did this, no hyena dared to attack them.

The bulls worked together to fight off wild animals. Alone, they would have been defeated, but working together made them strong and able to defeat their enemies. Teamwork always accomplishes more than someone working alone. Remember to cooperate and work as a team, and you will create better results.

Humility

"You can mark my words," the proud fox said. "I promise you that you will capture a bull."

"It's a deal," the lion said.

"This is what we must do," the fox said. "We must get the bulls to hate each other so they will break up their friendship."

The lion scratched his head and said, "That's a good idea, but how can we do that?"

The fox stuck out his chest and with a great big smile boasted, "Just let me take care of it."

"It's a deal," the lion said. "But I can't see how you as a little fox can get three strong, friendly bulls to hate each other."

"You'll see," the smiling fox said as he strutted away.

The fox is acting proud by promising that he can get the lion a bull. It is always best not to promise something because unforeseen circumstances might prevent you from delivering on your promise.

Loyalty and Trust

"I heard the brown and black bulls say that you're stuck up and you think you're better than everyone else," whispered the fox. "On top of that they said white bulls are dumb, and that you're stubborn and proud."

... The white bull turned around and stared at the two other bulls and said, "How dare they talk that way about me behind my back?" The more he thought about what the fox had said, the angrier he became.

As the three angry bulls grazed, they began thinking evil thoughts about each other. The white bull stared at the two bulls, kicked his hoofs into the ground, and snorted, "Some rotten friends they are, talking behind my back and thinking white bulls are dumb and stubborn!"

The brown bull glanced at the other bulls and sneered, "I'm not proud and stubborn and dumb. They are! Who do they think they are? I'll never talk to them again!"

The black bull glanced at the other two from the corner of his eye and also snorted, "That's some way for friends to talk. I'm not dumb; they are! They're the ones who are rotten, proud, and stubborn!"

The more the bulls thought about what the fox had said, the farther they grazed from each other.

If the bulls really trusted each other, they would not listen to the bad things the fox is saying about their friends. Loyal friends stick up for their friends when someone speaks badly about them. You should always go to your friend and ask her if a rumor is true or not. This is called "going to the source." Don't accept what others say; go to the source.

Humility

When the fox met the lion, he proudly declared, "I have wonderful news! My plan worked! I got the three bulls hating each other. Go out tomorrow and get your easy meal."

"Great!" the lion roared. "I'm hungry."

"Remember," the sly fox sneered, "don't forget my leg."

The fox is quick to point out that HE was able to get HIS plan to work. Again, bragging is never appreciated; it will only make people dislike you.

Caring and Courage

When the brown bull got close, the lion leaped from the bushes and jumped onto his back. The brown bull jumped and kicked to throw off the lion, but he could not.

"I need help!" the brown bull said to himself. With the lion on his back, he ran as fast as he could to his two friends shouting as loud as he could, "Help me! Please! Come and help me!" When the black bull heard the brown bull yelling, he stopped fighting and ran as fast as he could to help. When he saw the lion, he charged at the lion and threw him off the brown bull. The white bull also came charging. The three bulls quickly banded together.

When the lion saw the bulls together, he was furious. "It's now hopeless for me to get my meal. But I'll get even with that proud fox!"

When the black and white bulls saw their friend in trouble, they were able to forget the rumors, hurts, and insults, and go to their friend's aide. This showed that they cared about their friend more than they cared about their hurts. They also displayed courage in going to fight the lion.

Appreciation

The brown bull said to his friends, "Thank you! Thank you! You saved my life."

The brown bull was quick to show his thanks to his friends for saving his life. Don't take what your family or friends do for granted. Always say "Thank you," even for small things.

Loyalty and Trust

"How foolish we were for listening to the lies of that sly fox," the brown bull said. "He tricked us into hating each other so we wouldn't be friends."

Now the bulls realized that they should have had more loyalty and trust for their friends. If you really trust your friends, you will not believe that they could do something bad to you. Go to your friend and hear his side of the story.

Forgiveness

The three bulls said they were sorry to each other and once again became best friends. Then they made a promise, "We will never again listen to those who want to destroy our friendship." From that day on, they looked out for each other and lived happily together.

The bulls didn't hold on to their hurts. They put their hurts behind them and looked to the future. They also apologized to one another for having listened to the fox's lies. We should all be willing to forgive and forget as well as give an apology when it is needed.

Questions

1. At the beginning of the book, what kept the hyenas from eating the black bull?

The white and brown bulls came and banded together with the black bull, facing the hyenas who then ran away.

2. What did a bull do if he found a patch of rich grass?

He called his friends over to share it with them.

3. A great big lion wanted to eat them, but could not. Why?

He knew that he was no match for the bulls when they defended one another.

4. What did the lion ask the fox to help him do?

He needed help in getting a bull away from the other bulls, so he could eat it.

5. What did the lion have to promise to give the fox for his help?

He promised to give the fox a leg from a bull.

6. What was the fox's plan?

He would get the bulls to hate each other and break up their friendship.

7. What did the fox tell the white bull about his friends?

He said that he heard the other two bulls say terrible things about him—that he was stuck up and thought he was better than everyone else, and that he was dumb, stubborn, and proud.

8. What words did the fox use to make the bull think he was a friend?

He whispered, "I shouldn't tell you this..."

9. What did the fox say to make the bull believe him.

He said, "I promise I did. I always tell the truth!"

10. Why did all three bulls get fuming mad at each other?

The fox told all three the bad things about each other.

11. What happened as the bulls grazed that day?

They became angrier and madder at one another as they continued to think about what the fox had said.

12. When the fox reported to the lion that the bulls were mad at each other, what did he say the lion could do?

He could go out the next day and get his easy meal.

13. What did the lion say the fox would get?

He would get what he had earned.

14. What happened that night when the bulls were trying to sleep?

They argued late into the night about not making noise.

15. What happened the next day when the black bull accidentally bumped the white bull?

The two bulls got into a fight, and the brown bull went on his way to find some grass.

16. What happened when the lion jumped onto the brown bull's back?

The brown bull yelled for help, and the black and white bulls came running. All three bulls banded together and ran the lion off.

17. When the lion didn't get his meal, what did he say about the fox?

He said that he would get even with that proud fox.

18. How did the lion feel when he couldn't eat the bulls?

He was probably mad, frustrated, and upset. (inference)

19. When the fox and lion met, how did the fox act?

The fox was mad that the lion didn't have a leg for him to eat.

20. What did the fox get?

He got what he had earned—the lion ate him.

21. Why did the fox deserve to be eaten by the lion?

He had lied and tricked the bulls and had not kept his bargain with the lion.

22. How did the bulls feel about themselves when they found out they had been tricked by the fox?

They probably felt foolish. (inference)

23. How did the bulls feel about the fox telling them lies?

They possibly felt hurt, confused, betrayed, mad, upset, sad, etc. (inference)

24. What did the bulls learn from this?

They learned that it is important to stick together and to not listen to gossip or to tales and bad things about friends.