Tales from Africa
Why the Hare Has No Tail

Many, many years ago, when the Earth was still new and fresh, all the animals had no tails; they just had little balls of fluff where their tails would normally be. The fluff was of no use to them. It didn't help them chase the flies when it was hot and did nothing to help them balance when they ran. "This is no good!" said Chewa the lion. "The animals of the savannah need new tails!" So, Chewa left the savannah to go far away to the market to buy the animals new tails.

After a month of traveling, there was much excitement as Chewa was spotted walking across the savannah, through the long grass, with a large wooden box on his back. "Hooray! We are all going to get fancy new tails!" shouted the animals as they rushed over to Chewa. "Can we get our new tails now?" asked Ilola the cheetah. "No Ilola, it is getting late, I'm tired and the storm clouds are gathering. Tomorrow, after breakfast, you can all come to my house and choose a new tail."

So, the animals all went home and in the morning, after breakfast, they all started gathering at Chewa's house to choose their new tails. It was a cloudy day on the savannah and the rain was falling but the animals were so happy that they were getting new tails that they hardly even noticed the rain.

On the way to Chewa's house, Jabali the giraffe passed Chiumbo the hare's house. Chiumbo was still lying in his nice warm bed. "Chiumbo, you need to get up. You are going to miss the chance to choose a nice new tail!" said Jabali. "I'm not going out in the rain! I never go out in the rain, it will ruin my fine, soft fur. Someone else must bring a good tail for me." Jabali shook her head and carried on to Chewa's house.

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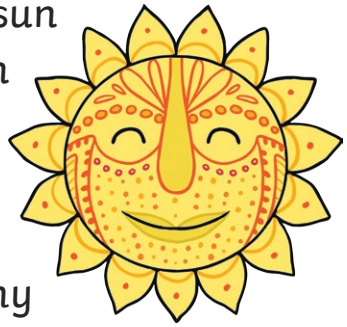
Not long after that, Zeburi the zebra came past Chiumbo the hare's house. Chiumbo was still lying in his nice warm bed. "Chiumbo, are you not going to get up? Aren't you going to choose a nice new tail?" asked Zeburi. "I'm not going out in the rain! I never go out in the rain, it will ruin my fine, soft fur. Someone else must bring a good tail for me," replied Chiumbo. Zeburi shook his head and carried on to get his own new tail.

On her way to Chewa's house, Nomandla the elephant stopped to see if Chiumbo had already left to choose a new tail. She was so surprised to find Chiumbo still lying in bed. "Chiumbo, I cannot believe you are still in bed. It is late and you need to come to choose a new tail!" exclaimed Nomandla. "I'm not going out in the rain! I never go out in the rain, it will ruin my fine, soft fur. Someone else must bring a good tail for me," replied Chiumbo. Nomandla shook her head and carried on to get her new tail.

That day, all the animals went to choose their new tails. They put them on and tested them out. They were fine tails!

Just after lunchtime, the rain stopped and the sun came out. Soon, it was hot across the savannah and the animals went to stand under the trees in the shade to cool off. Chiumbo looked outside at the sunshine. "That is much better," he thought to himself. "I think I'll go and get my new tail from the other animals." So he hopped off to find the other animals.



First, he found Nomandla at the river, spraying herself with nice, cool mud. "Hello Nomandla, I'm here to fetch my new tail."

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"I don't have YOUR new tail Chiumbo, but I do have mine. Look how lovely it is!" Disappointed that he still didn't have a new tail, Chiumbo hopped off to find one of the other animals.

Next, he found Zeburi, he was standing in the shade of a tall Acacia tree. "Hello Zeburi, I'm here to fetch my new tail." "I don't have YOUR new tail Chiumbo, but I do have mine. Look how nicely it chases away the flies!" Disappointed that he still didn't have a new tail, Chiumbo hopped off to find one of the other animals.

Chiumbo found Jabali next. He was eating the leaves of the top branches of an Acacia tree. "Hello Jabali, I'm here to fetch my new tail."
"I don't have YOUR new tail Chiumbo, but I do have mine. Isn't it beautiful?" Disappointed that he still didn't have a new tail, Chiumbo hopped off to find Chewa. He could not believe that no one had taken a tail for him!

Chewa was having a lovely nap in the long grass when Chiumbo found him. "Hello Chewa, I'm here to fetch my new tail." "I don't have YOUR new tail Chiumbo. I told all of the animals to come and see me this morning to choose their new tails. I have no more tails left. You will just have to keep your ball of fluff forever!" Chiumbo was very disappointed. Chiumbo learnt a valuable lesson that day - sometimes you have to get up and do things for yourself!

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