

ФРАНСОА ДЪО ФЕНЕЛОН
CHOOSING A KING
FENELON'S FABLE

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CHOOSING A KING^[0]

The lion was dead, and all the other beasts had met to choose some one to succeed him as king.

“I have the best right to the throne,” said the tiger; “for no other animal looks so nearly like our former ruler.”

To this the bear objected. He said, “I am as strong and quite as brave as the lion ever was. Besides this, I can climb a tree, which is more than any lion can do. I have the best right to the throne.”

“You may all boast as you please,” said the elephant, “but which of you can say that I am not the largest, the strongest, and the bravest of animals? I have the best right to the throne.”

Then the horse made his plea. “I am the most useful, and some say that I am the most beautiful, of four-footed creatures. Surely, usefulness and beauty should count for something.”

“Cunning should also count for something,” said the fox; “and where will you find a sharper animal than I?”

“I am neither strong nor beautiful,” said the monkey, “but I am clever. Choose me for your king, and I will amuse you every day of your lives. And remember that I look very much like a man.”

“Ha! I can also boast of being like a man,” said the parrot. “You resemble him only in your face, which is ugly enough. I resemble him in speech. I can talk, talk, talk.”

“Hold your tongue!” cried the monkey. “You talk, to be sure, but not as man talks. You say the same thing over and over, and you don’t understand the meaning of a word. More than this, you have no right here, for you are a bird and no beast.”

“Every one can tell of his own fine qualities,” said the dog; “but actions speak louder than words.”

Then the beasts voted to give the crown to the elephant, for they said that he was both strong and wise, and he was neither cruel like the tiger and bear, nor vain like the horse, nor silly like the monkey.

[\[0\]](#) From Fénelon's Fables. ↑

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