

THE INTELLIGENT HARE

One day Wolf and Fox left the forest and went to drink water at the river. At that time White Hare and Lamb came together to drink water at the river. As soon as Wolf saw White Hare and Lamb, he formed an evil plan. He licked his nose with his flame-colored tongue and drool ran continuously from his mouth. He gestured to Fox, and said, "Hey old friend, take a look! This is really a good era for us. Two meals of living flesh before us are about to come to our mouths. Shake a leg, quick!"

Hare and Lamb both clearly heard this unlucky speech, and when they raised their heads and looked, they saw cruel carnivorous Wolf and crafty Fox bounding toward the riverbank. White Hare and Lamb got scared and trembled, watching and watching, because a big disaster was coming toward them, and the danger to their lives was great. It was too late to run away. Its knees shaking all the time, Lamb asked White Hare, "What shall we do, what shall we do?" Hare thought of a strategem and said to little Lamb, "Friend, if we're only scared, we won't be able to avoid disaster. We both have to be brave and if we go on the offense against the enemy, we'll still escape death and have a chance to live. Isn't that better?"

Lamb smacked its lips, and quietly asked White Hare, "If we attack won't we deliver ourselves to death's door?" At that time Hare was looking for something to attack the enemies with. Suddenly he saw a paper scroll and a rope discarded on the ground. He quickly picked them up and gave them to Lamb. He whispered a few words into Lamb's ear. Very casually Lamb followed White Hare closely, and, facing Wolf and Fox, they went on the attack.

Wolf and Fox saw their shapes, but were ignorant of the situation. Then Wolf, with vicious arrogance, asked, "Where are you going?" White Hare said loudly and clearly, "Stop, you poor brat! Don't say anything at all! In accordance with the king of beast's punishment today, we've come to capture you." Quickly Fox asked, "We haven't done anything. So why have you come to catch us?" Lamb opened the scroll and announced, "The punishment of the king of beasts: We must make a wolf-skin cloak for the great king. We're still one hide short, so we must make lapels for the mantle out of fox-skin. He sent us purposely, so we came to catch a fox and a wolf each at the riverbank, and flay their skins. Whoever contravenes this punishment will certainly be executed."

Lamb went to one side, and, together with White Hare on the other side, while pulling the rope, they moved their arms as if they were getting ready to tie it. When Wolf and Fox listened to the king's punishment and saw White Hare and Lamb pull the rope, they got really scared and without looking back they quickly ran far away.

—Lcags thar 'bum, *Qinghai Folk Literature* 1, 1983