

Creative writing on the lion and the flamingo

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One hot morning in Sua Pan, Mr Flamingo was standing in the wetland, preening his feathers. It was the wet season in Botswana, and the overnight fall had created the perfect level for Mr Flamingo to enjoy himself.

He looked at his reflection in the pool. ' Oh my,' he sang, ' I am the most beautiful bird there ever was. My feathers are pinker and shinier than any other flamingo's.'

Nearby a group of female flamingos were having breakfast. They were picking through the water's bed, searching for shrimp. They had all heard what Mr Flamingo was saying. One of them broke away from the group and walked over to him.

' You really should try to keep your vanity under control,' she said. ' One of these days it will get you into trouble. There are more important things in life than your feathers.'

Mr Flamingo laughed. ' Maybe to *you* , Mme,' he replied. ' But then you haven't been blessed with good looks like I have.'

The female flamingo's feelings were hurt. She turned away and walked back to her friends. Mr Flamingo laughed again, and returned to admiring his reflection in the water.

Later that day, the other flamingos had moved on to another pool. However, Mr Flamingo had stayed in the same spot. He was still grooming and preening, ensuring that every feather was laying just right. He heard footsteps padding towards the water. He looked up and saw a lion standing by the edge, watching him. He was about to fly off when the lion spoke.

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‘ Dumela Rre, good day Sir, Mr Flamingo,’ said the lion. ‘ Did you know that you really have the most beautiful feathers?’

Mr Flamingo smiled.

‘ Why are you here all alone?’ continued the lion. ‘ You must have lots of friends, being as handsome as you are.’

Mr Flamingo shook his head. ‘ I think they are all jealous of me. They tell me I am vain.’

The lion laughed a roaring laugh. ‘ Well of course they are jealous of you,’ he said. ‘ they are all ugly compared to you.’

Mr Flamingo laughed as well. ‘ Yes, I suppose you’re right.’

The lion sat down and inspected one of his paws. ‘ Now, Rre, I am part of a choir,’ he said, ‘ and we are performing the *Kwasa Kwasa* next week. We are looking for someone to dance for us, and I think you would be perfect.’

‘ Me?’ asked Mr Flamingo. ‘ What makes you think I can dance?’

‘ Oh do not be so modest,’ the lion replied. ‘ You must be able to dance with those long and elegant legs. Why don’t show me? Do not be shy.’ The lion started clapping. ‘ Come on, dance to the rhythm!’

Mr Flamingo grinned. He arched his neck and started moving his body in time with the lion’s claps, lifting one of his feet and then the other.

‘ Excellent, Rre, excellent!’ The lion shouted.

Mr Flamingo smiled and carried on, shaking his tail feathers as he danced.

‘ You are wonderful, Mr Flamingo,’ the lion said, ceasing his clapping. ‘ But I want to *really* see you dance. You should come out of the water so you can move properly.’

‘ No,’ replied Mr Flamingo. ‘ I should really stay in here.’

‘ But you can only really dance on land,’ he said, ‘ and, if you come out, I could teach you the *Kwasa Kwasa* .’

Mr Flamingo looked at the lion. ‘ But... won’t you eat me?’

The lion laughed again, showing a wide mouth full of shiny teeth. ‘ Of course I won’t eat you. You’re far too beautiful to eat. Besides, if I ate you, I wouldn’t have anyone to dance for my choir.’

Mr Flamingo raised his head. ‘ Do you really want me for your choir?’

‘ Of course, Rre! There is no one in all of Botswana as beautiful or as elegant as you.’

Mr Flamingo smiled. Then he stepped slowly out of the water and onto dry land, where the lion was sitting.

The lion stood up. ‘ Wonderful. Now let me show you how to dance the *Kwasa Kwasa* . Come closer.’

Mr Flamingo stood still. He still wasn’t that comfortable being this close to a lion.

'Do not be afraid,' purred the lion. 'Show me those long pink feathers. My goodness, they are glossy.' He held out his paw.

Mr Flamingo chuckled. He thought the lion must be a very clever creature to have noticed his beauty this well. He held out his wing and put it into the lion's paw.

However, as soon as he did so the lion growled. Then he pulled Mr Flamingo towards him and ate him up.

'Oh what a silly bird,' the lion said to himself. 'Still, his vanity has given me a nice full stomach.' Then he walked back to his den for a nap.

Soon all of the other birds came to hear what had happened to poor Mr Flamingo. The *Kwasa Kwasa* remains a popular element of dance culture across Botswana. However since since that day, if a flamingo in the country sees or hears it being implemented, he will always be wary of the performers.