

**UniqueID:** 202103271738

**Author:** Henry Callaway

**Title:** [Nursery Tales, Traditions, and Histories of the Zulus](#)

**Published:** 1868

**Internet Archive:** [Always Available.](#)

**Description:**

It is said, the hyrax went without a tail because he sent other animals for it. For on the day tails were distributed, the sky had become clouded; other animals then went out to fetch their tails to the place where they were given away; but another, the hyrax, was prevented from going with them, and he exhorted all the animals who have tails, saying, "O, my neighbours, do you bring back my tail for me, for I cannot go out of my hole because it is raining." So the others returned with tails, but the hyrax himself never had a tail because he was disinclined to go out in the rain. He lost all advantages of a tail; for a tail is useful for driving away flies; the hyrax then has nothing to brush them off with.

That loitering of the hyrax is now a great word among black men; they use the words of the hyrax, and say to those who do not trouble themselves about that which others like, and who tell others [to act for them], "So-and-so, do you not know that that saying of yours, 'Do you bring it for me,' — do you not know that another does not bring a man anything, when there is only enough for those present ? O, the hyrax went without a tail because he sent for it. And you, do not act as the hyrax; you will not get any thing by asking others; go for yourself."

Such then is the tale of the hyrax. He did not actually speak with his mouth, saying, "Do you bring it for me; " but the word arose because other animals have tails, but the hyrax has none; and it was as though

the hyrax went without a tail because he sent for it; and because he is afraid of a cloudy sky, and does not go out if there are not gleams of sunshine.

Such then is the tale of the hyrax. It was understood by those who were disinclined to work when it is foul weather; they asked others to bring for them. So it is said in answer to a man who says, "O, bring for me," one says when he refuses him, "The hyrax went without a tail because he sent for it. So-and-so, do not ask me to fetch for you." So he who asks goes away. He acts thus that when he returns without it he may not ask many questions, saying, "How is it then that you have not brought it for me, since I asked you to do so?" He answers him by the hyrax.