

Lion meets his match

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“Let’s hunt together!” said Lion to Little Jackal. “If we catch a small buck, you can have it – but if we catch a big one, it’s mine.”

“Fine!” said Little Jackal.

As it happened, the first animal they killed was a large eland. Lion was delighted. “I’ll carry on hunting,” he said. “You go and call my children to fetch this meat and take it to my home.”



“Fine!” said Little Jackal again, but as soon as Lion left, he went and called his own children instead. “Lion thinks I’m a fool!” laughed Little Jackal. “Why should I feed his children while my own are starving?”

Lion caught nothing else. A few hours later, he arrived home, tired and hungry. “Where’s the meat?” he asked Lioness, licking his chops.

“What meat?” she replied coldly.

Lion was furious. “Didn’t Little Jackal tell the children to fetch some meat?” he growled.

“No,” said Lioness, “he certainly didn’t! We’re still hungry!”



Angrily, Lion stormed off to Little Jackal's house, but the jackals lived on top of a high rock, and the only way to get up there was by rope.

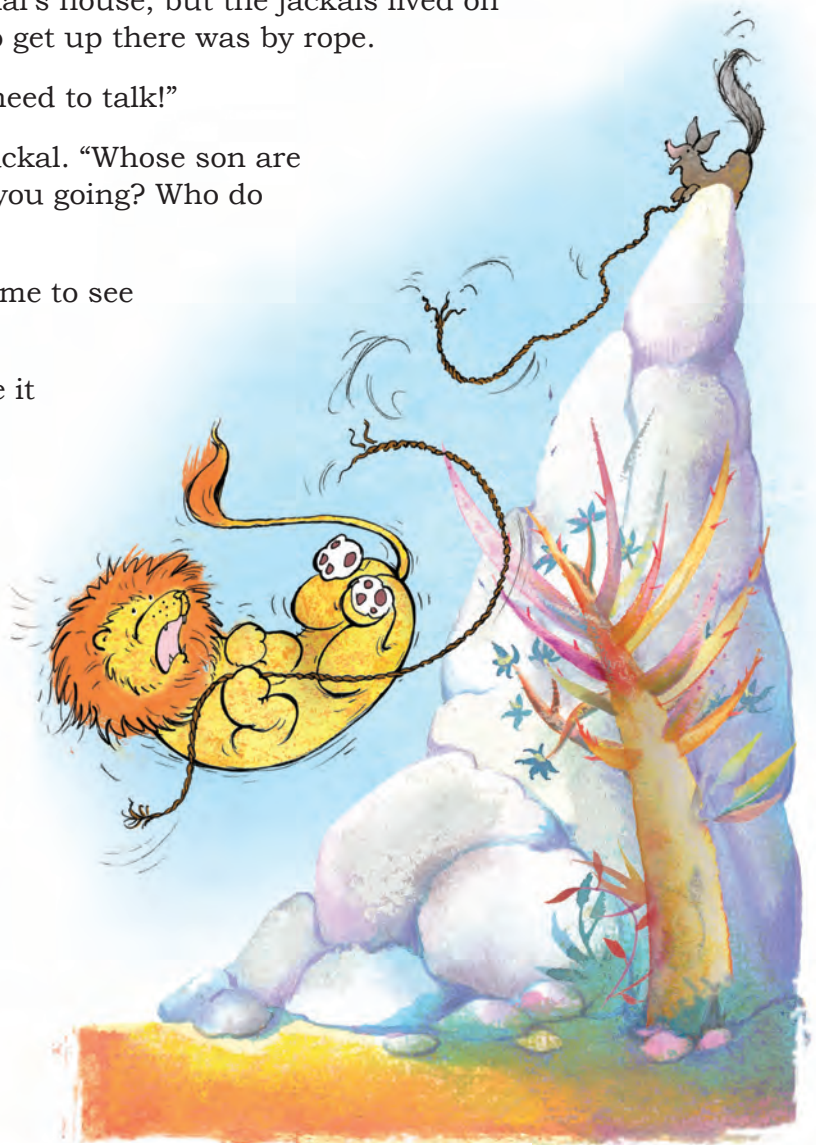
"Hey, Little Jackal!" roared Lion. "We need to talk!"

"What's your name?" shouted Little Jackal. "Whose son are you? Where are you from? Where are you going? Who do you want? Why do you want him?"

Lion felt confused, but replied, "I've come to see you. Let down the rope!"

"All right!" shouted Little Jackal. "Here it comes!" But the rope he let down was made of mouse skins, and when Lion had climbed only a little way up, it broke. *Thump!* Down fell Lion. Furiously, he slunk away, while Little Jackal screamed with laughter.

Luckily Lion was a patient creature. "We all need to drink," he said grimly, and off he went down to the river to wait for Little Jackal. But when the tricky jackal finally arrived at the water's edge, he saw Lion and immediately ran away. Lion rushed after him, but Little Jackal disappeared into a hole under a tree. Lion shot out his huge paw. Too late! All he caught was the jackal's tail.



"Lion, Lion," wheedled Little Jackal, "that's not my tail, it's a root! Try bashing it with a stone, and see if any blood comes out!"

So Lion let go of the tail, and went to find a stone. Immediately, Little Jackal squeezed himself further into the hole, yanking his tail in after him. When Lion returned and saw it was gone, he hid behind a rock and waited.



Some hours passed before Little Jackal cautiously peered out of the hole. He couldn't see Lion, but guessed he might be nearby. To make sure, he shouted, "Ho, I see you, my master, although you are hiding!"

Lion said nothing. He tensed his body, ready to pounce. But Little Jackal whooshed out of the hole so suddenly that Lion was left behind. The cunning jackal had escaped once again!

It took weeks, but Lion was good at waiting. One day, he managed to corner Little Jackal between two rocks. He was about to spring, when Little Jackal whispered, "Quiet! Can't you see that bushbuck over there? I'm glad you've come to help me! Just stay here while I run round the rock and drive him towards you."

Poor Lion! He froze – and Little Jackal ran away again.

Another week went by. Little Jackal knew that Lion was to meet with all the animals with horns. "I think I'll go to that meeting!" said Little Jackal. "I feel like some fun!"

So Little Jackal stole some wax from a beehive, and made himself a beautiful pair of horns. "What a good disguise!" he smirked when he arrived at the meeting. "Nobody knows it's me!"

But Little Jackal made one mistake – he sat next to the fire. He grew too comfortable there and dozed off. Soon his false horns grew softer and softer. Finally they melted and dripped into a waxy puddle on the ground.

"Look!" shouted Wildebeest suddenly. "It's Little Jackal!"

"Catch him!" roared Lion, but the noise woke Little Jackal and he quickly hid under an overhanging rock. "Help!" he screamed. "This rock is falling on me!"

"He's mine now!" laughed Lion, turning to grab a pole to prop up the rock so he could catch Little Jackal. Oh dear! As he turned, Little Jackal darted off, chortling loudly. He had fooled Lion once again!

