

## The Lion and the Mouse

Deep in the jungle there lived a lion and a mouse. The mouse kept out of the lion's way and the lion, well, he hadn't even noticed that the mouse was there. One morning however, scurrying through the undergrowth, the mouse ran too close to the dozing lion. Never one to ignore a passing snack, the lion lazily raised a great paw and brought it down on the mouse. The mouse was terrified! The great paw had her pinned to the ground and she could hear the rasping sound of a great tongue licking enormous lips. Though terrified, she thought fast.

'Please let me go!' she squeaked. 'You are the king of the jungle. Surely someone as magnificent as you will have mercy on a poor small mouse.' The lion chuckled. He wasn't usually merciful, but he did rather like being called magnificent. 'If you let me go,' the mouse continued, 'maybe one day I will be able to repay your kindness.' The lion laughed out loud at the idea of ever needing the help of a mouse, but he had enjoyed being called magnificent and he had to admire the bravery of the little creature in speaking to him at all. He lifted his great paw and the mouse sped away.

Some days later Lion fell asleep under a tree and woke to find himself caught fast in a hunter's net. Desperate to escape before the hunter returned for him, he tore at the net with his claws. He twisted and turned and tried to bite the ropes but no matter what he did he could not escape. He thrashed and struggled but the net merely tightened, and Lion could see no way out. He lay down in despair and prepared himself for his fate.

Luckily the noise he had made had brought the mouse to see what was happening. Peering round the tree, she saw the giant beast caught fast in the net. Scuttling nearer, she set to work with her sharp teeth. She nibbled and tore and tore and nibbled until she had nibbled a hole big enough for the lion to push his head through, to squeeze his powerful shoulders through, and to shake his huge haunches through. He was free!

Lion paid Mouse no more attention than he had before, and Mouse still kept out of Lion's way. But Mouse never forgot that Lion had let her go, and Lion never forgot that Mouse had set him free.