

# ***The Man and The Lion***

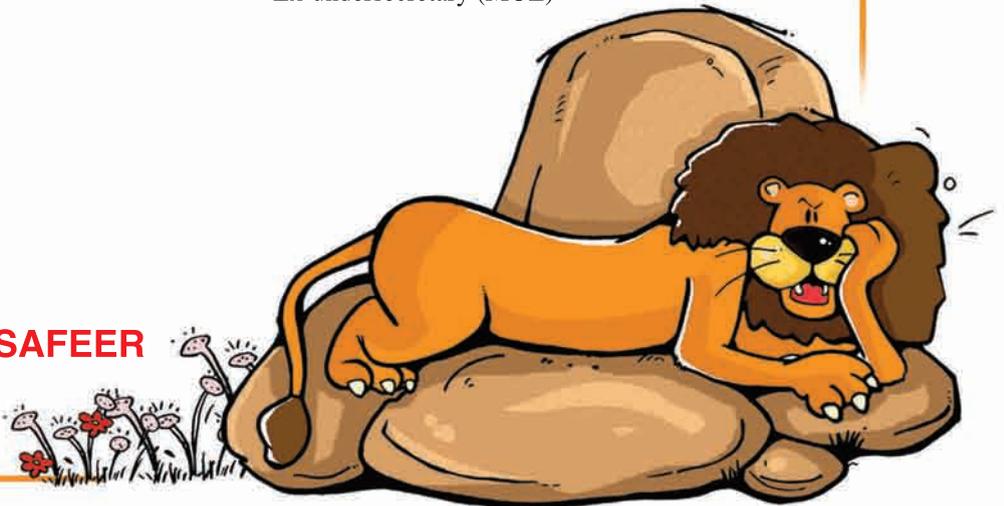
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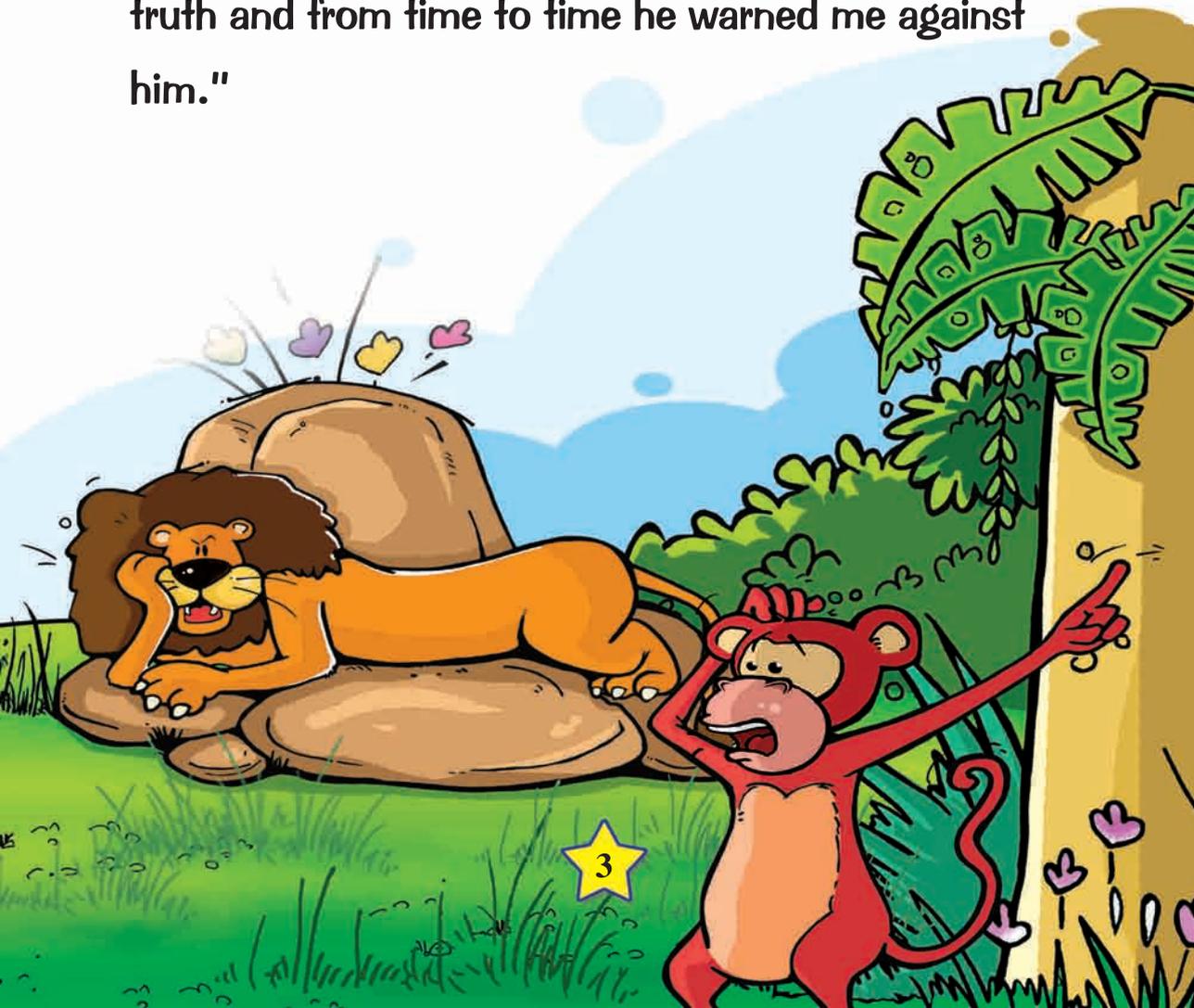
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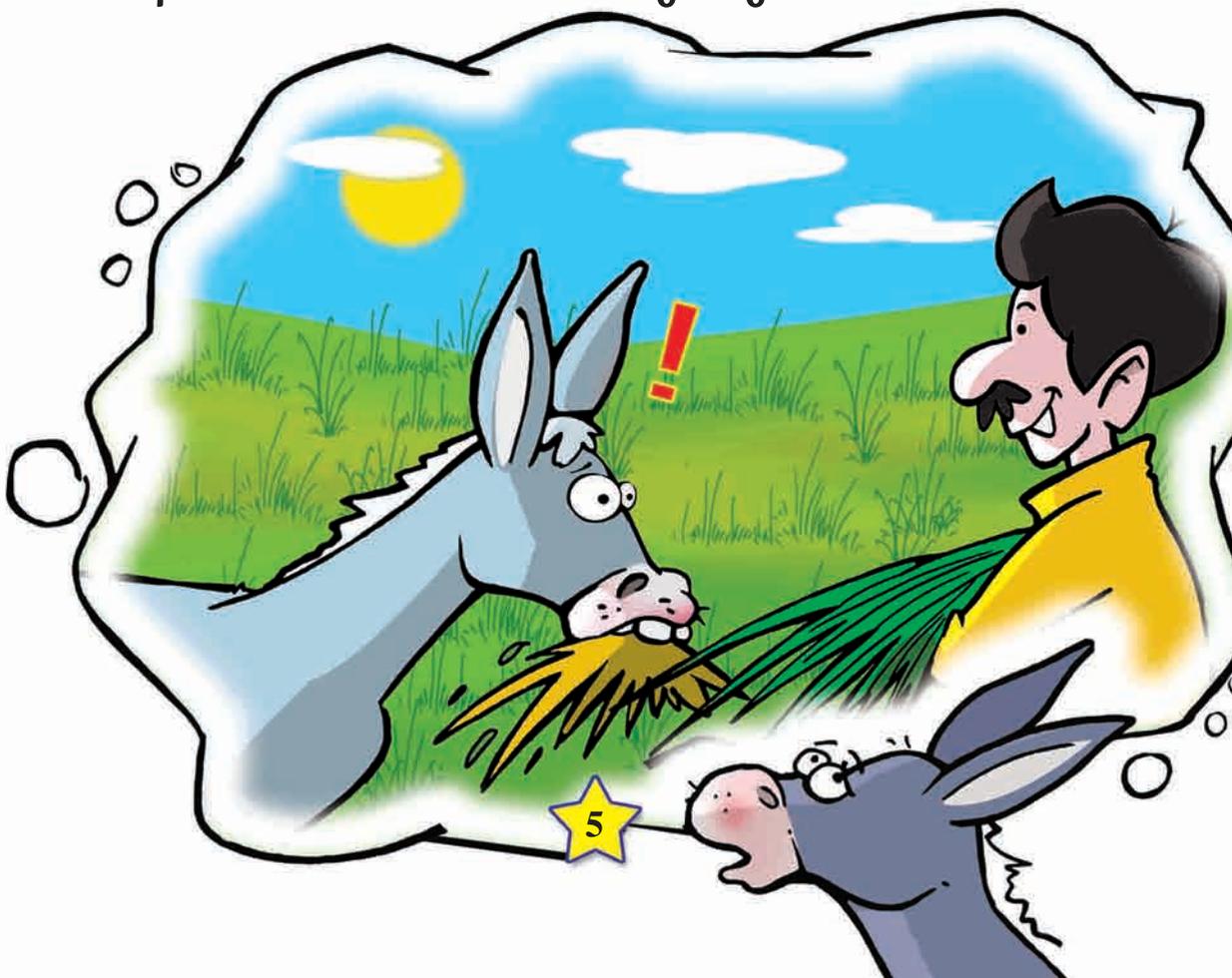
Young Lion never left his den without his father. Then one day while he was sitting lazily on his couch, his watchman the monkey came running in shouting, "My lord, Man has captured your father the King of Beasts and has locked him up in a cage !" Young Lion flew into a rage saying, "I will avenge my father and tear that man into pieces; my father spoke the truth and from time to time he warned me against him."





Young Lion set off down the road. Presently he saw a donkey racing toward him. When he asked him, "What's wrong ?", the donkey replied, "I heard that Man is coming along this road." Young Lion was amazed. "How can you be afraid of Man when you have powerful legs, with which you could kill him ?" The donkey answered , "You don't know him, my lord."

The donkey went on, "He tricked my father, who was the wisest of the donkeys; Man came upon my father one day while he was eating and said to him, 'Why do you tire your neck out like that ? Did you know that when you bow to the ground, all the blood rushes to your head and swells it up and ruins your vision?' Then Man proposed that he would feed my father while he was standing. He promised to do this every day."





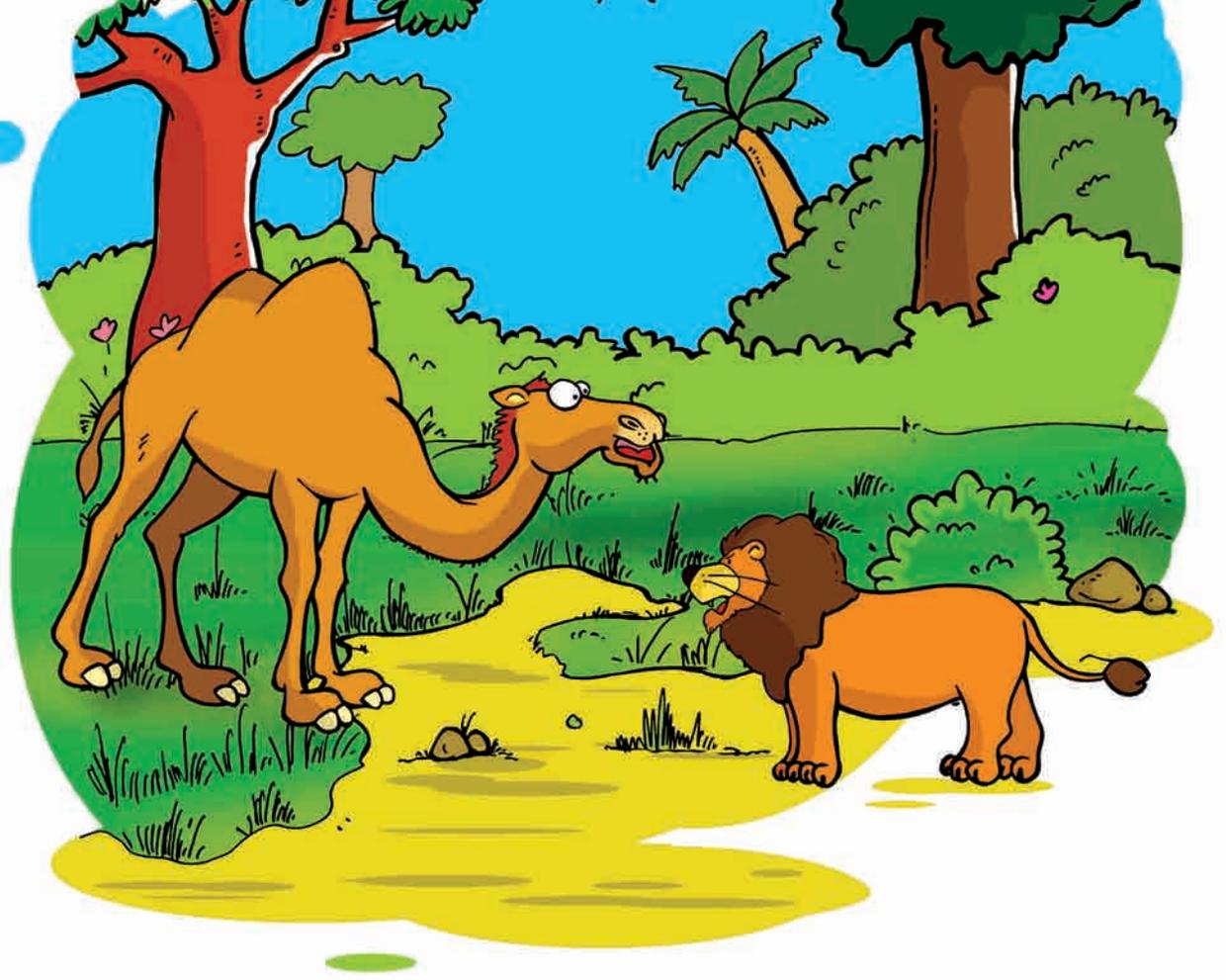
The donkey finished his tale saying, "But the next day Man excused himself from feeding my father, claiming he was tired. But then he came up with a solution: if my father would carry him on his back, Man could feed him as he rode. My father agreed, even though we donkeys regard carrying things on our back as something shameful. Man put a saddle on my father's back, tied it around his middle with a girth, and put a bit in his mouth, and proceeded to steer him with the bridle. My father carried Man's unbearable weight for the rest of his days. I beg you, young prince, if you meet Man, rid us of him at once." With that, Young Lion, flew into an even greater rage, and promised the donkey, "He will curse and blame the day he meets me! I will avenge your father, friend donkey."



Young Lion continued on his journey. Soon he saw a horse hurrying along the road. "Are you Man?" Young Lion challenged him. The horse answered, "No, lord, I am a horse fleeing from Man." Young Lion was even more surprised than before and said, "You too are afraid, even though I can see that you are stronger and faster than he?"

The horse answered, "How can I hope to subdue him when he subdued my mother, who was stronger, faster and smarter than I ? He deceived and tricked her with sweet things to eat, and then he bridled her, shod her with iron horseshoes, and put a saddle on her back, with stirrups hanging from it. Then he would spur her in her ribs to make her obey. I beg you, young prince, rid us of him."

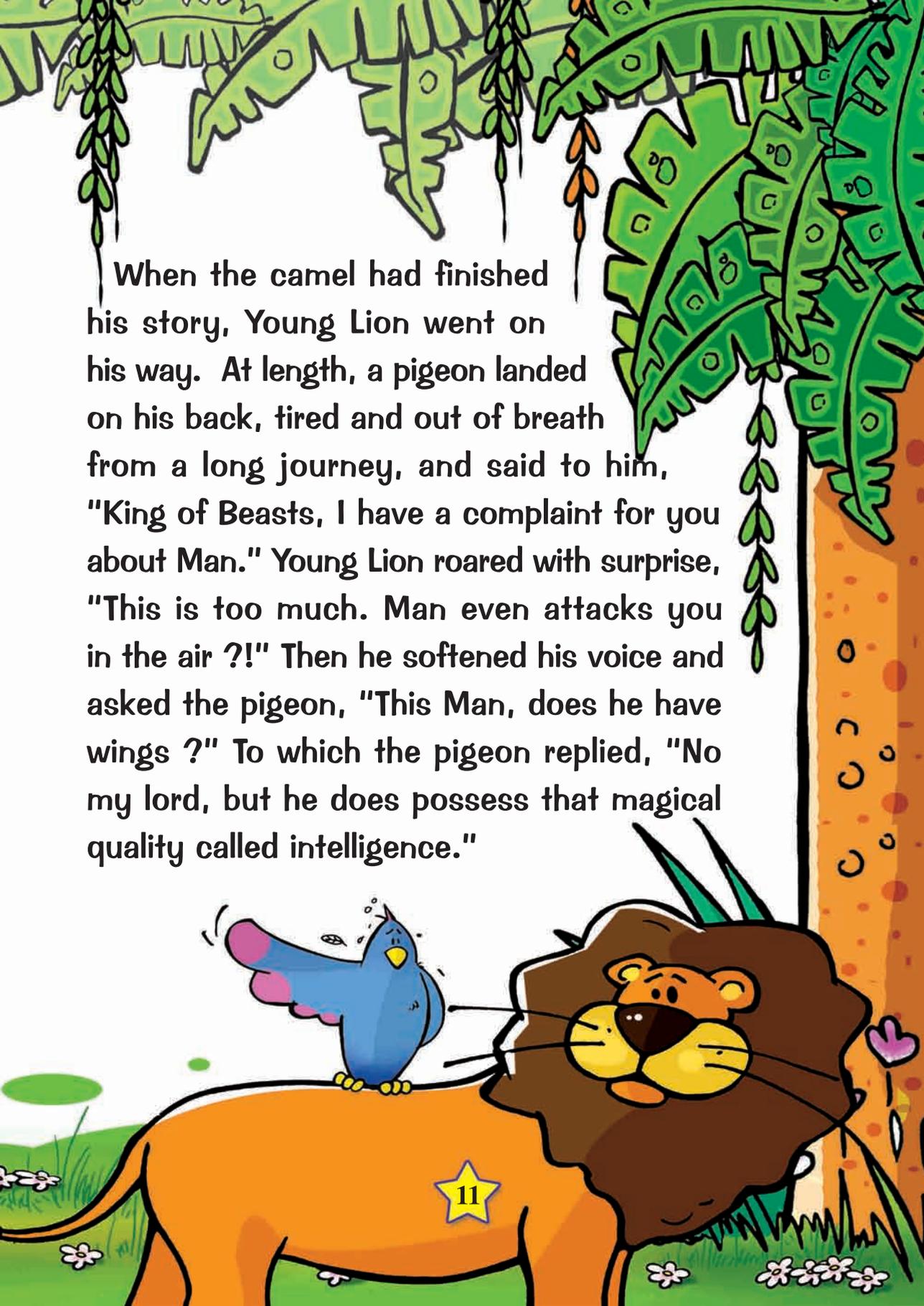




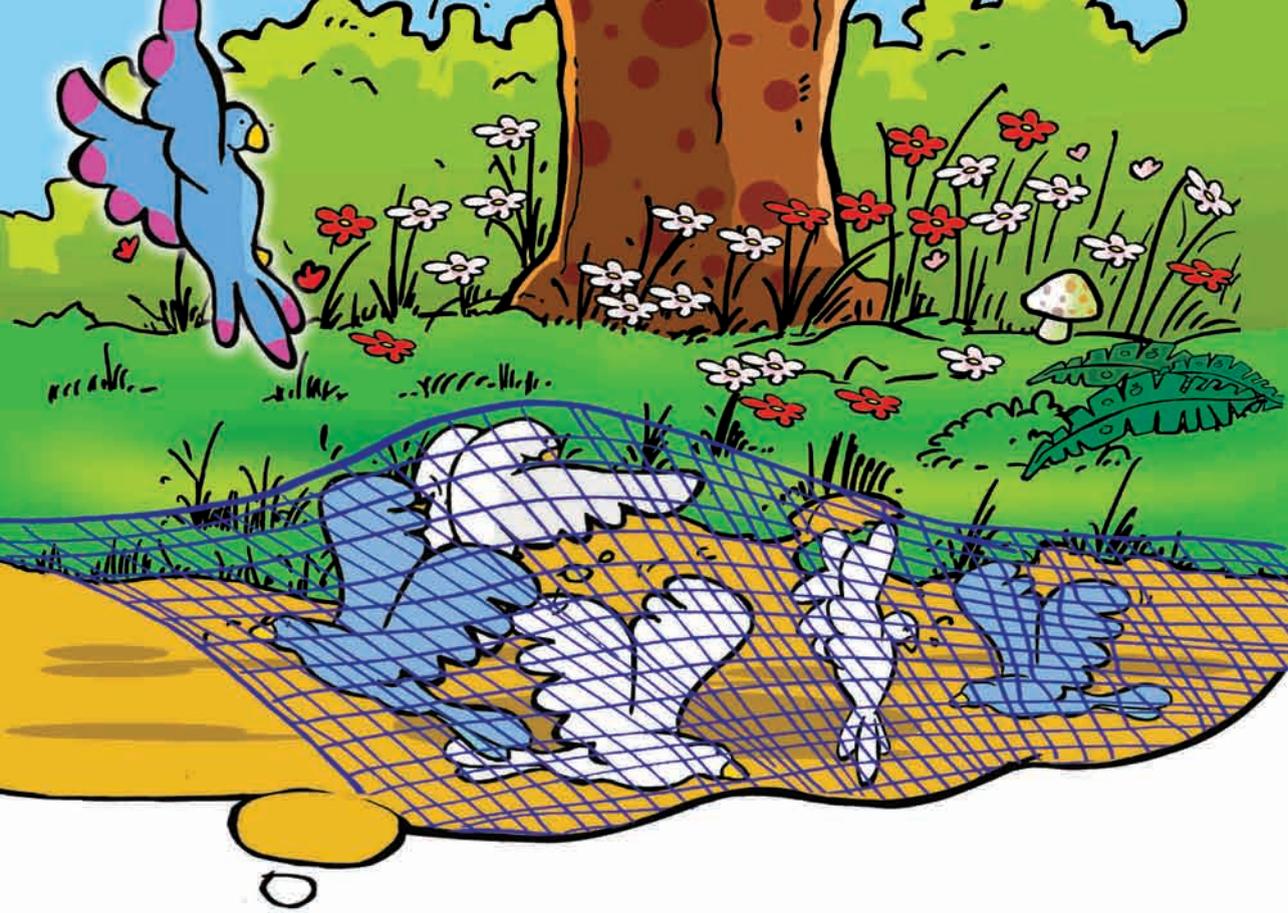
Young Lion continued on his journey thinking. He saw a camel coming from afar. Young Lion jumped in front of him with his fangs bared, saying, "You must be Man; I am going to kill you!" The camel replied quickly, "No, my lord, I am a camel, fleeing from Man." Young Lion answered, "You too, who are so tall and powerfully built!? How strange!"

The camel answered sadly, "Yes, young prince, nothing will stop Man except death. I watched him trick my cousin, telling him that he knew the secret to increase his strength, which he would tell him. So he asked my cousin to bend his ear close; when my cousin knelt down to bring his ear close, Man put a ring in his nose, a rope around his neck and handed him over to his youngest son to lead him; then he laded him with heavy loads and now he uses him for all of his work. If you meet Man, avenge us, young lord."





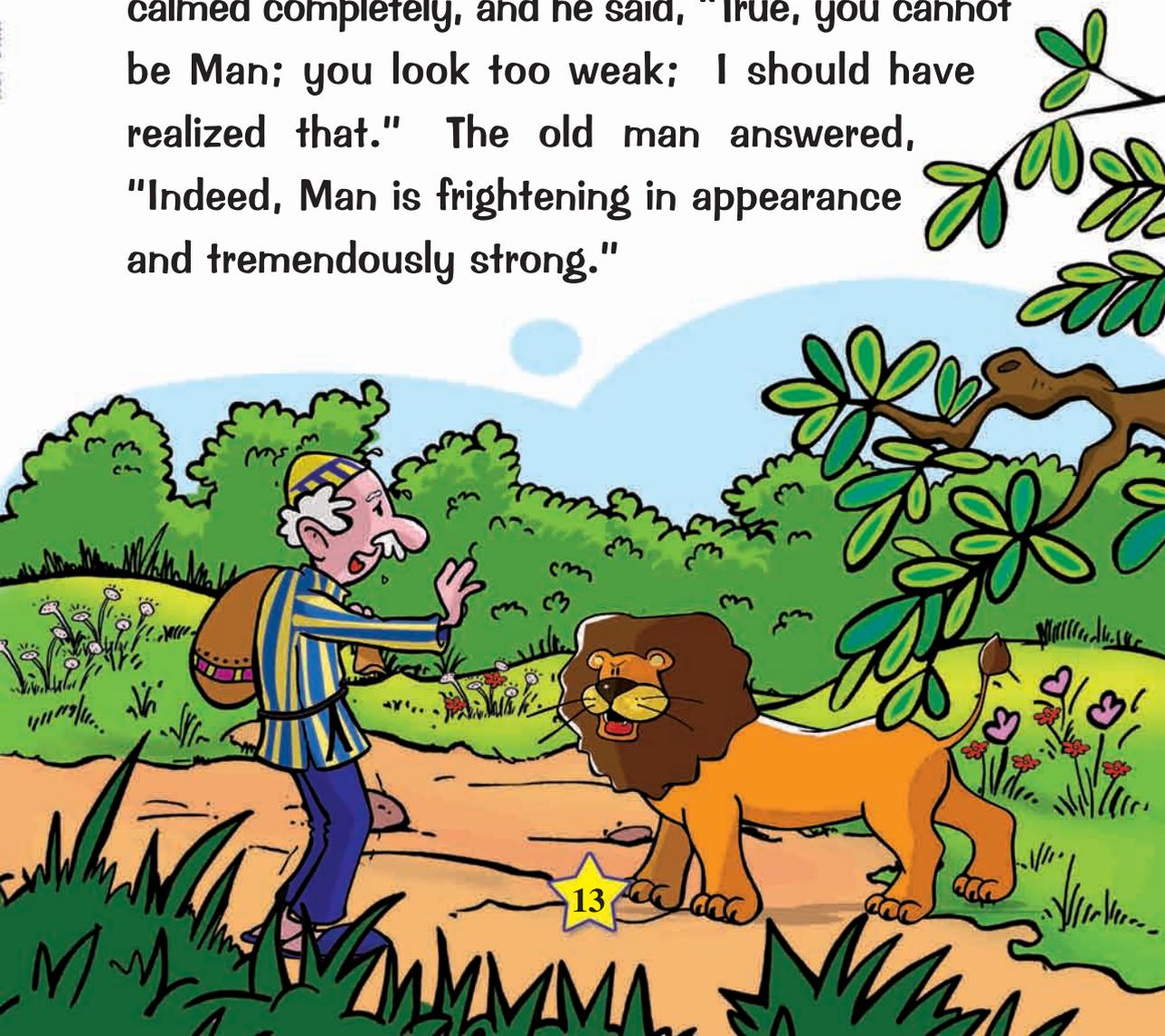
When the camel had finished his story, Young Lion went on his way. At length, a pigeon landed on his back, tired and out of breath from a long journey, and said to him, "King of Beasts, I have a complaint for you about Man." Young Lion roared with surprise, "This is too much. Man even attacks you in the air ?!" Then he softened his voice and asked the pigeon, "This Man, does he have wings ?" To which the pigeon replied, "No my lord, but he does possess that magical quality called intelligence."



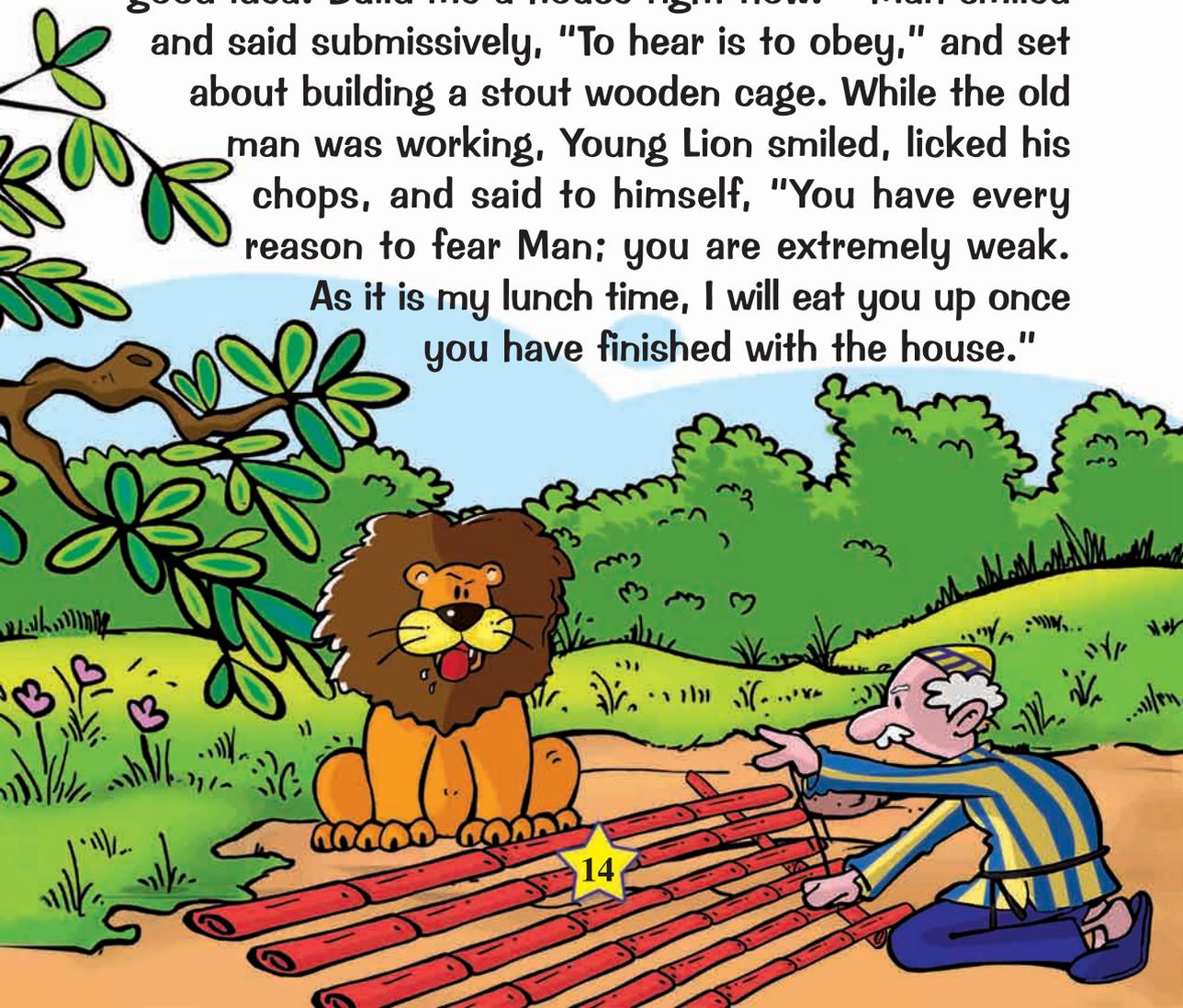
"He spent several days feeding us grain. On the first day, he left the grain and went away. On the following day, he left it close to him and sat down.

On the third day he sat closer to the grain, and when some of us alighted to gather the grain, he would not let us approach. So we all made a rush for the grain, and at the same instance, he threw a net over us. I was the only one to escape to complain to you."

At that, Young Lion was seized with terrible rage. When he had recovered somewhat, and his vision cleared, he found an old man in front of him, carrying a sack, and making his feeble way along. Young Lion rushed at him threatening, and said harshly, "Are you Man?" The old man answered weakly, "I am a human being, my lord." Young Lion's rage calmed completely, and he said, "True, you cannot be Man; you look too weak; I should have realized that." The old man answered, "Indeed, Man is frightening in appearance and tremendously strong."



Young Lion began to show signs of fear, and he asked the man hesitantly, "Really? Is he a savage? Have you ever seen him?" The old man answered, "Only from afar. He is extremely violent." Young Lion became more afraid, and he asked, trying to control his voice, "But tell me, human being, where are you going?" The old man answered, "I am going into the forest to collect wood. I am a carpenter by trade; I build houses to protect creatures from the elements. Young Lion stared off in thought for a while, and then said, "That is a good idea. Build me a house right now." Man smiled and said submissively, "To hear is to obey," and set about building a stout wooden cage. While the old man was working, Young Lion smiled, licked his chops, and said to himself, "You have every reason to fear Man; you are extremely weak. As it is my lunch time, I will eat you up once you have finished with the house."





The old man finished the sides and roof of the cage, fastened them together stoutly and set them up firmly in place. Then he fashioned a good, solid door and put it in place. When it was finished, he said to Young Lion, pointing to the door, "That's that. Why don't you step inside, my lord, so we can see if it is large enough for you or not ?"

Young Lion went inside and set about examining the cage until he heard the sound of the door closing behind him. He spun around to face the old man, who said to him as he fastened the door shut, "Now, my lord, I will introduce myself to you: I am Man."

The lion set up a tremendous roar. And the old man looked heavenward and raised his hands in praise, saying "Praise be to Thee, O Lord, because You have distinguished me from the animals by giving me intelligence, by which I have delivered myself."

