



Educational stories for children

YOUSSEF AND THE JUNGLE ANIMALS



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Thekra shook her sleeping brother Youssef by the shoulder. Softly and gently, she said, “Come on Youssef, wake up so we can play!”



Youssef opened his eyes, but spoke like someone sleeping. “Where’s the elephant?” he said. “Where’s the crocodile? Where’s the gazelle?”



Thekra was astonished. She laughed and said, “What are you saying, Youssef? There are no elephants, crocodiles, or gazelles here!”



“They were here, I was just with them,” Youssef insisted. “I was with them, riding on the back of the lion!”



Thekra looked at her brother with interest. “You were riding on the back of a lion?” “Yes,” said Youssef, “I was making the rounds of the jungle on the back of the lion.”



It was saying to the birds and animals, ‘Don’t be afraid, come and greet my friend Youssef who rescued me!’” Thekra was amazed. “You rescued the lion, Youssef?”



“Yes, I saved him,” Youssef said. “I found him trapped in a net sobbing. ‘Please Youssef, rescue me,’ he said.”



“And what did you do?” asked Thekra. “I got the big scissors,” Youssef said, “and started cutting...”



Thekra cut him off. “The big scissors? Where did you get those? Children aren’t allowed to use them because we could cut our hands!”



“I found them in my pocket,” Youssef said. Thekra placed her hand in Youssef’s pocket and said, “There’s nothing in your pocket!”



“They were in my pocket,” Youssef said, “and I cut the strings of the net with them. I cut and cut until the lion was freed.”



“And weren’t you afraid of the lion?” Thekra asked. “No, I wasn’t scared,” Youssef said. “The lion told me, ‘You’re my friend, Youssef.’”



Then the lion sat down and said, 'Come on, climb onto my back and off we go! I'll take you to the jungle and introduce you to all the birds and animals.'"

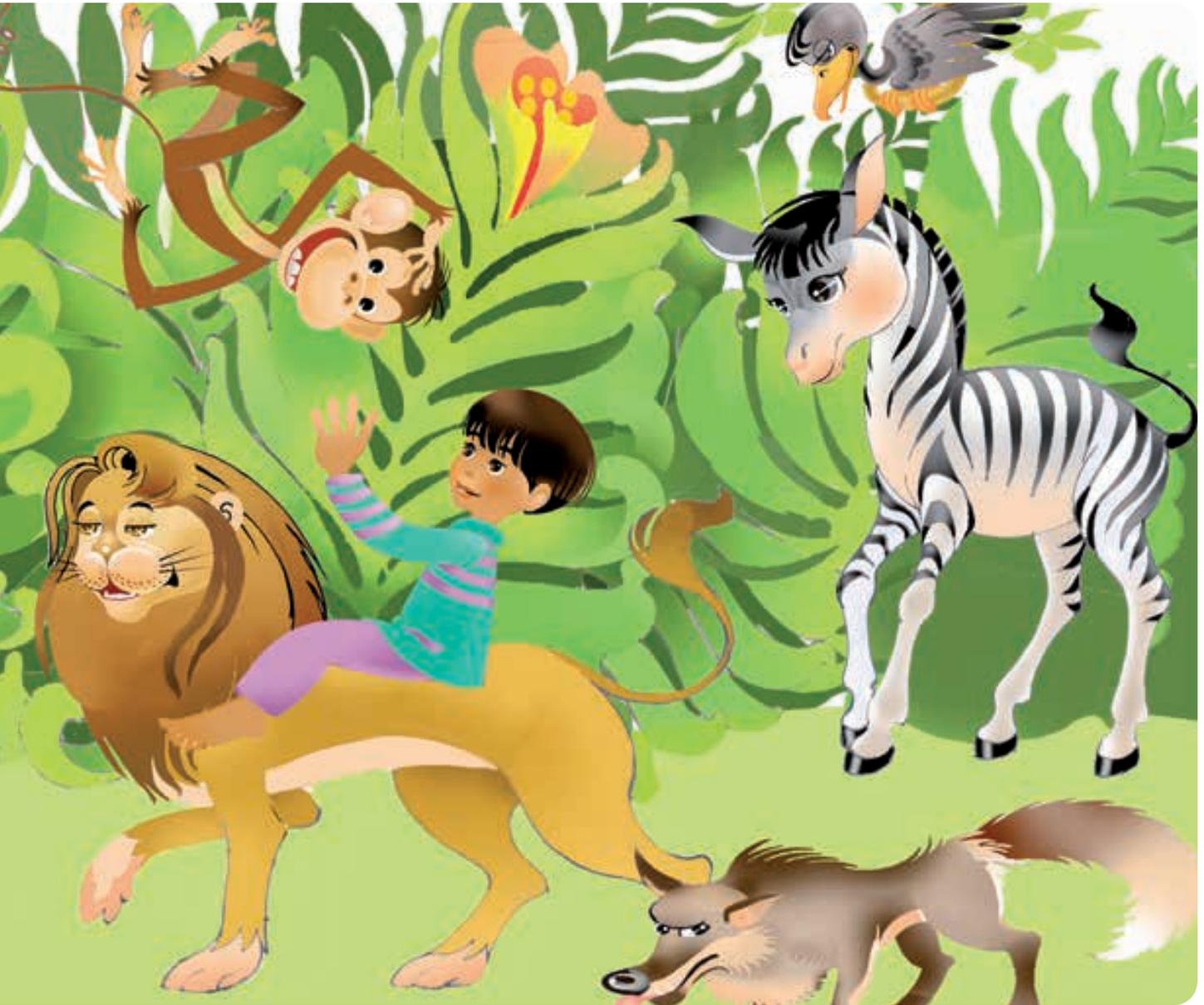


In wonderment, Thekra asked, “And did you go with him to the jungle?”
“Yes,” Youssef said, “I went with him, and when the birds and animals saw me, they were afraid of me and ran away!”



Thekra laughed and said, “Were they afraid of you or the lion?”

“No, they were afraid of me,” Youssef said.



“They were looking at me as they ran off, and the lion called to them and said, ‘Don’t be afraid, come greet my friend Youssef!’

They returned and stood in a line, greeting me one by one:



The tiger, the fox, the wolf, the elephant, the giraffe, the gazelle, the squirrel, the monkey, the crocodile, the wild buffalo, the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus, the zebra, the hyena, the falcon,



the eagle, the parrot, the owl, the raven, the ostrich, the lizard, the snake...”



“All those birds and animals?” said Thekra. “And what did they say to you?”



“I didn’t hear anything,” Youssef said. “The lion suddenly stood up and I fell to the ground, and I don’t know what happened after that!”



Thekra laughed and said, “What happened is that you woke up from your dream!” Youssef laughed, too, and said, “It was a lovely dream. I want to go back to sleep so that I can dream it again.”



“No, that’s enough!” Thekra cried. “Come on, get up, or I’ll have this lion eat you!”



She threw her toy lion at Youssef, who jumped out of bed laughing as he ran towards the bathroom.