**The Lion and the Beetle**

Once upon a time there was a lion. He was very proud and very vain.  He loved to walk around the savannah, roaring and growling whenever he saw his animal subjects - Giraffe or Hyena or Elephant or Gazelle or Ape - to show what a mighty Lion he was. "I am a Very Mighty King!" he roared.  And his subjects all bowed low before him.

One day, Lion looked into the mirror-like water of a lake.  He was struck by his own greatness.  What a beautiful and noble creature I am, he thought. "I am a Very Mighty King!" he roared.

Lion posed and walked in front of the glassy lake for hours, admiring his greatness. Finally, Lion said:  "I will show my devoted subjects that their leader is such a mighty King."

Lion put on his fancy robes, his jeweled crown, and all his gold and silver medals.  His clothes were very heavy, but they made him look mighty and grand. "I am a Very Mighty King!" he roared in delight.

Lion sent out a message to all his animal subjects - to Giraffe and Hyena and Elephant and Gazelle and Ape.  He sent messages to all the animals living on the savannah or in the jungle, inviting them to a meeting on the parade grounds in front of his palace, where they could admire him in his finery.

And so the animals came to see Lion; the Giraffe and the Hyena and the Elephant and the Gazelle and the Ape.  And many more animals came as well; from the stately Zebra in his black-and-white coat to the tiny Beetle, who was so little that he had to walk on the side of the road so the bigger animals would not step on him by accidents.

"I am small.  I am little.  People look down and can see me," sang the Beetle as he walked through the tall grass beside the road. "I am small.  I am little.  But inside, I'm tall as a tree!"

When the animals were assembled on the parade ground, there came a mighty trumpet blast from Elephant, and Lion came forth in all his grandeur. "I am a Very Mighty King!" he roared.

Lion walked proudly before his animal subjects.  The animals were awed by his splendor and bowed before him.  Lion walked through the rows of animals, roaring and growling to show how mighty he was. "I am a Very Mighty King!" he roared.

Then Lion saw the tiny Beetle, standing alone by the side of the road.  The Beetle was singing to himself as he watched the Lion.  "I am small. I am little. People look down and can see me," sang the Beetle as Lion strutted before his subjects. "I am small. I am little. But inside, I'm tall as a tree!"

Lion said to the Beetle:  "You, Beetle, bow before me!"

Beetle said:  "Your Royal Majesty, I know that I am small, but if you look at me closely, you will see that I am making a bow!"

Lion replied:  "Beetle, you are hard to see down there!  I am not sure that you are bowing to me."

Beetle said:  "Look at me closely.  I assure you that I am bowing."

Lion leaned over, peering down at the tiny Beetle.  His splendid robes, his jeweled crown and his many medals made him so top-heavy that Lion wobbled and swayed as he loomed over the tiny Beetle.  Then Lion lost his balance and fell onto his head!  His royal crown flied off, and Lion rolled over and over, down the steep hill, and fell into a ditch filled with muddy water.

All the animals laughed loudly when they saw the muddy Lion lay in the ditch. The frightened tiny Beetle scurried away. And the muddy Lion scurried away too.  He was not so very mighty, after all.