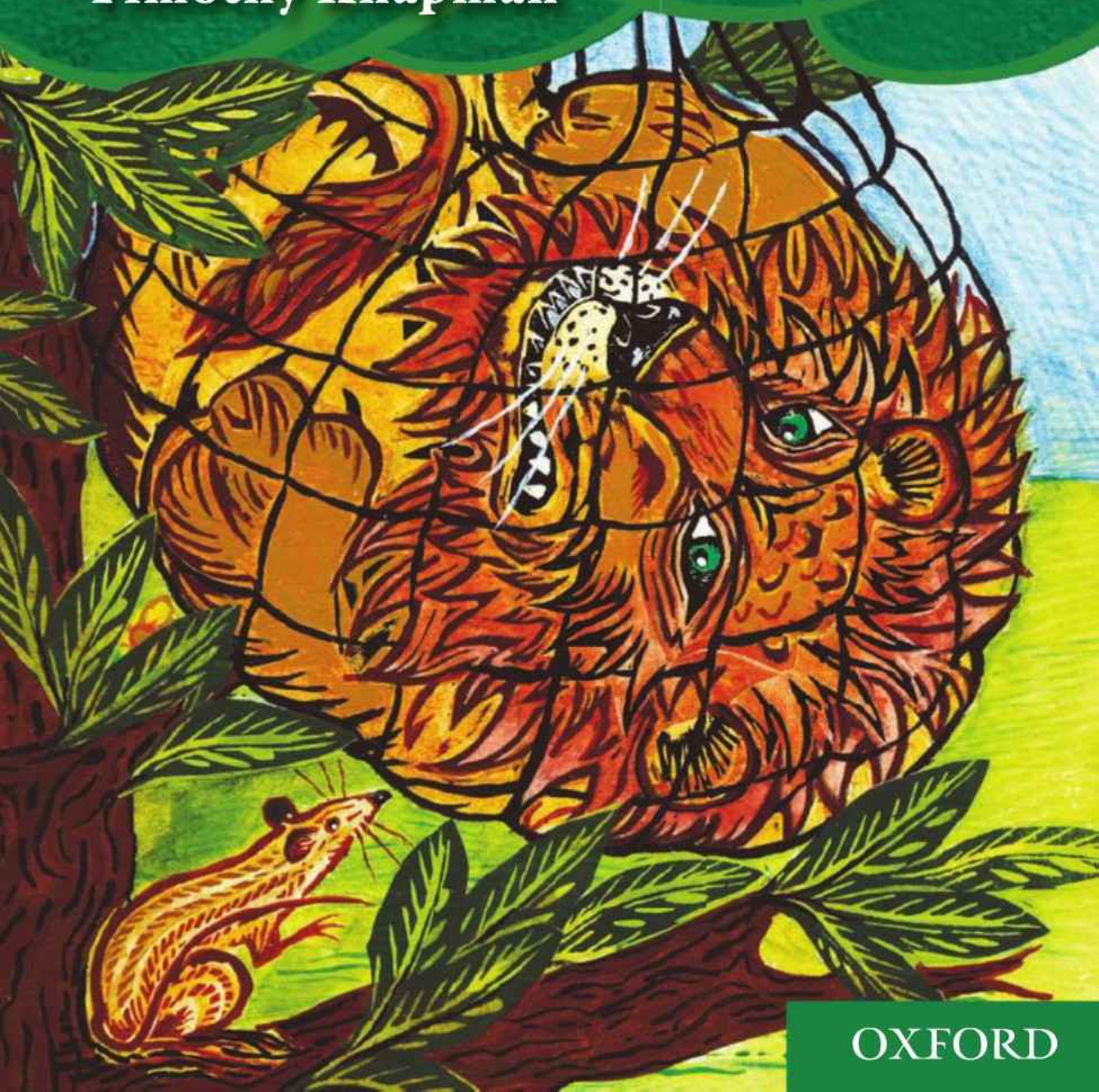


TreeTops

Fables from Africa

Timothy Knapman



OXFORD



About this book

This book tells five fables that feature animal tricksters. They all originate from Africa.

Talking points

- Look at the front cover and read the title together. Ask your child what they know about fables. Ask them to suggest what sort of stories these might be.
- Read the story titles together. Look through the first story at the pictures and talk about what is happening. Find the characters of Tortoise and Baboon in the illustrations and their names in the text on page 3. Repeat the activity with the remaining stories

During reading

- Read page 6, ask your child why Giraffe would find the food easy to eat.
- On page 21, encourage your child to read the Lion's words with expression.
- Read page 38 together. Discuss whether the elders made the right decision. Why?

After reading

- Talk together about what happened in each story. Ask your child which story they enjoyed most.
- Talk about the morals in the stories. Explain that these stories come from a long time ago and talk about how relevant the morals are today.

Fables from Africa

Timothy Knapman

Illustrated by
Linda Selby
Hannah Firmin

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The Upside-down Lion

A fable from West Africa



One fine day the Warthogs were walking amongst some trees.

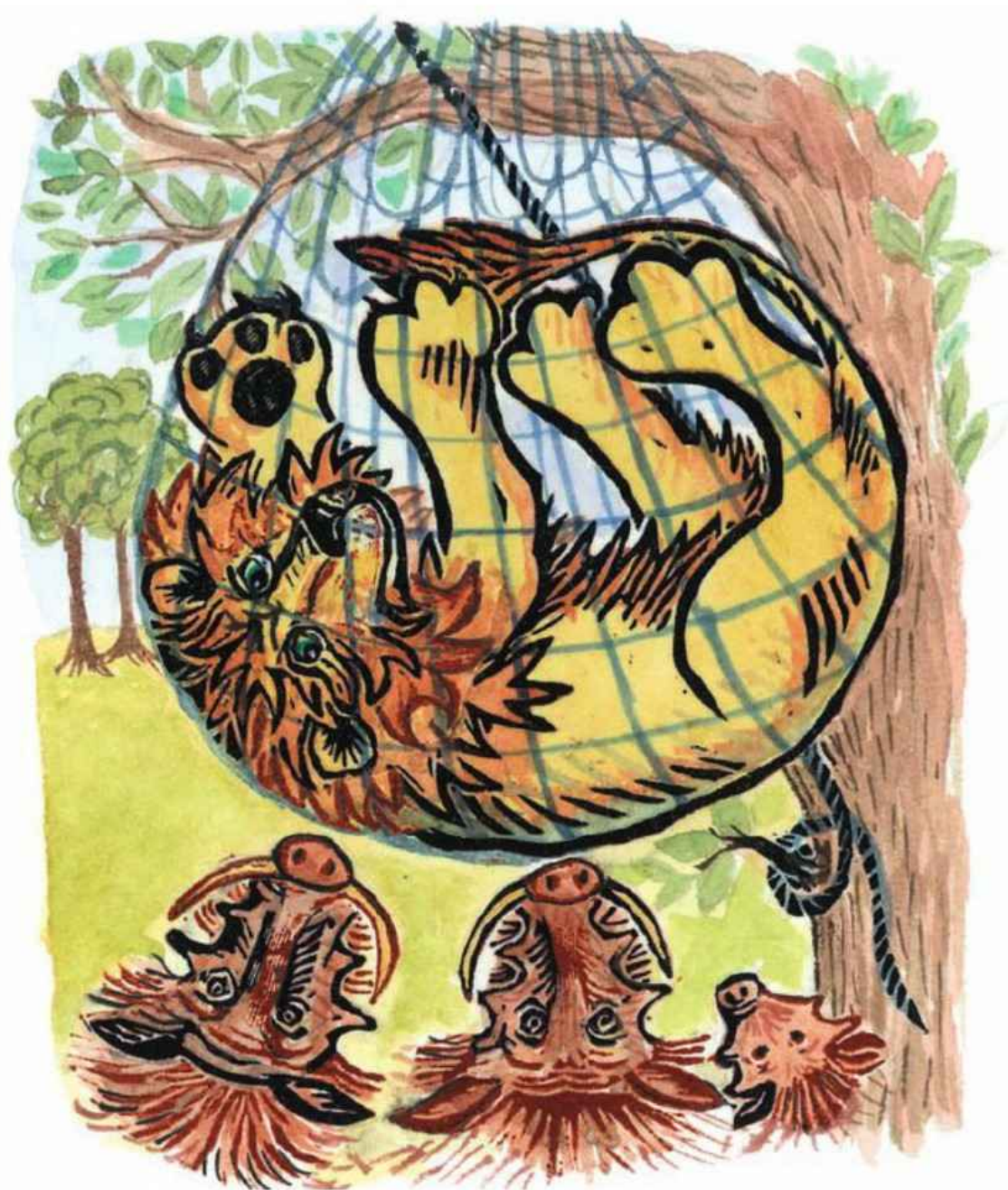
‘Remember,’ said Mr Warthog, ‘this is a dangerous place. Always stick to the paths and never go off exploring things that don’t concern you.’

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth than a terrible noise filled the forest.

‘Baby Warthog, I’ve warned you before,’ said Mrs Warthog. ‘Say “pardon” when you burp!’

‘That wasn’t me,’ said Baby Warthog. ‘It was that lion up there!’

Sure enough, a lion was hanging upside down from the tree above them. He had been caught in a trap.





‘Please,’ said Lion, ‘let me down. I’ve been up here for three days and I think I’ve gone peculiar.’

‘How silly do you think we are?’ said Mr Warthog. ‘If we let you down, you’ll eat us!’

‘I promise I won’t!’ pleaded Lion. ‘I’m so weak from lack of food I’m as harmless as a kitten.’

So the Warthogs undid the trap and set Lion free.

‘Thank you so much,’ said Lion. ‘Dear Mr Warthog, sweet Mrs Warthog and lovely, delicious, good-enough-to-eat Baby Warthog, I am so grateful, I could just gobble you up!’

Mrs Warthog didn’t like the sound of that. She didn’t like the way Lion was looking at Baby Warthog and licking his lips either.





So, very quickly, she said, 'How on earth did you get caught in this trap?'

'I was just wandering along, minding my own business,' said Lion, 'when I put my paw here,' and Lion put his paw back into the trap to show them. 'Then the rope went tight, and the next thing I knew I was hanging upside down from that tree.'

‘Like this?’ said Mrs Warthog, and she pulled hard so that the rope went tight and Lion was once again hanging upside down from the tree.



‘What did you do that for?’ said Lion.

‘My family and I set you free,’ said Mrs Warthog, ‘and you were going to thank us by eating Baby Warthog here! What an ungrateful scoundrel you are.’

The Warthogs turned their backs and walked away with their noses in the air.

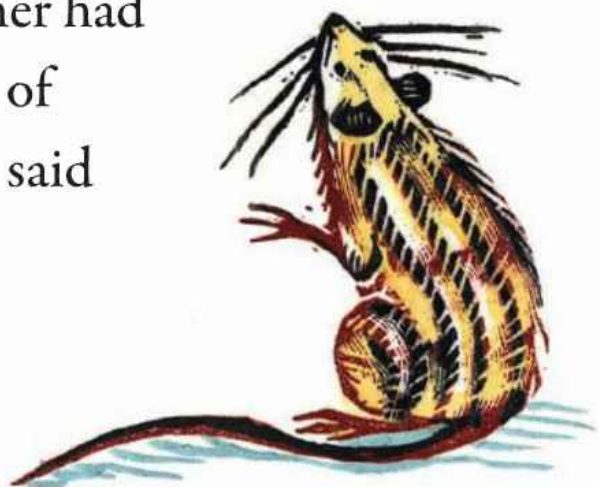




Lion hung upside down like that for another three days until Grass Mouse came by.

‘Excuse me,’ said Lion, who was now so weak from lack of food that his voice was just a whisper. ‘Would you please be kind enough to help me down? I promise I won’t hurt you.’

Grass Mouse’s mother had told him to steer clear of lions, but she had also said that he should always help fellow creatures in trouble.



‘All right then,’ said Grass Mouse. He scampered up the tree and with his sharp front teeth he gnawed through the rope that was holding Lion.



‘Thank you so much,’ said Lion when he was back on solid ground.

Lion wasn’t going to make the same mistake twice, so instead of thinking about eating Grass Mouse, he promised to help him whenever he was in trouble.



Moral of the tale

Always be grateful when people help you.

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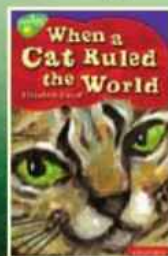
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