



The Lion and The Mouse

Retold by Pamela Chanko

Once upon a time, a tiny mouse was scampering through the jungle when he saw a sleeping lion. “What fun!” thought the mouse, as he climbed up on the lion’s nose. Then the little mouse skipped to the top of the lion’s head, ran across its back, and slid down its tail. The mouse was just about to climb back up and do it all again, when he heard a loud roar.

“You woke me up!” yelled the lion, catching the little mouse between its gigantic claws.

“I’m sorry!” said the mouse, who had never been so scared in his life. “If you let me go, I promise that I will return the favor! I will help you whenever you need me.”

“Ha! Ha! Ha!” the lion laughed. “*I need you?* What could a tiny creature like you ever do for a mighty animal like me? Will you help me hunt? Will you help me roar? Will you help me rule the jungle? Ha! Ha! Ha!” The lion had not had such a good laugh in a long time. “Very well, then,” he told the mouse. “I will let you go, if only because you are so funny!”

“One day you’ll be glad you did,” said the mouse. “You’ll see.” And he scurried away as the lion began to giggle again.

Some time later, the mouse was once again making his way through the jungle when he heard a familiar roar. But this time the roar sounded more frightened than angry. “It’s my friend, the lion!” thought the little mouse. “He must be in trouble!” And he ran through the jungle, following the sound of the lion’s cries.

At last, the mouse came upon the lion and saw that it was caught in a trap made of rope. The rope was thick, and tied in knots so that there was no way for the lion to get free. “I told you I would help you whenever you needed me,” said the mouse, “and now I will keep my promise.”

“But how?” the lion wailed. “What can you possibly do for me? You are too little to help me. You’d better go before someone sets a trap for you, too.”

“I’m not going anywhere,” said the mouse. “I always keep my promises. And there’s no such thing as being too little to help someone else. You’ll see.”

With that, the little mouse set to work. With his tiny, sharp teeth, he gnawed and he nibbled at the thick rope. And at last, with a *snap*, the rope broke! The lion was free!

The lion was so grateful that it caught the mouse in its paws again. But this time, it was to give the mouse a huge hug! “I’m sorry for laughing at you,” said the lion. “You were right. You may be little, but you saved my life!”

The tiny mouse smiled up at the huge lion. “Always remember this,” he said. “You don’t have to be big to make a big difference!”

The End

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think the lion laughed at the idea that the mouse could help him?
- What lesson does the lion learn by the end of the story?
- The mouse says, “You don’t have to be big to make a big difference.” Do you agree? Why?
- Do you think kids can make a difference in other people’s lives, like the mouse did for the lion? Explain.