

## THE LION AND THE MOUSE

*A Fable*

ONE HOT DAY a big lion was sleeping in his den. He had been hunting all morning. Soon a prick on the soft part of his nose woke him up, but he only shook his head and went back to sleep.

Then he felt the prick again and this time it made him very angry. He put out his paw and found a mouse walking along his nose.

"Ha! So it was you, was it?" said the lion, as he took the little mouse in his big paw. "It is very rude of you to run over my nose when I am taking a nap. I shall take care that you do not do it again."

He was opening his mouth to eat the poor, little mouse, but just in time the little creature said, "Please do not eat me. I did not mean to wake you up. I was just taking a walk, but your nose was so slippery that I had to dig my claws into it a little to keep myself from falling. If you let me go this time, I will never do it again." The little mouse was shaking with fear.

"But you will never do it again, if I eat you," said the lion. "So I think it would be best to make sure of it in that way."

This made the little mouse more afraid than ever.

"Oh, please let me go," said the mouse.

"I am sure you are too kind to eat me. Some day I may be able to help you."

It made the lion laugh to think of a little mouse being able to help him, and he said, "Well, then, run along, but if I get you again, I shall eat you."

Without stopping to thank him the mouse ran off as fast as his little legs could take him.

A few days later the mouse was sitting in his home on the far side of the forest

when he heard a loud roar a long way off. He stood still on his hind legs, and put his head on one side so as to hear better. Soon the noise came again, but this time it was louder.

"Yes," said the little mouse, "I am sure that is the big lion that let me go a few days ago. I must go and see



what is the matter."

Off he ran at once, and found the lion in a net made of strong rope. The mouse gnawed the rope until he had made a hole large enough for the lion to crawl through. The lion thanked the mouse for his help and swore to be his friend for all the time.

### QUESTIONS

1. Why was the lion sleeping?
2. What do lions hunt?