

SACT EDUCATIONAL COMIC BOOK ON THE PLIGHT OF LIONS



# Vusa the Lion

## GUARDIAN

Revised edition 2024



STORY WRITTEN AND CREATED BY  
SARAH MATTHIAS

ILLUSTRATED BY DESMOND LANGKILDE

THIS PUBLICATION SPONSORED BY:



## Publishers Note: Southern African Conservation Trust



I would like to thank everyone who helped in the creation of Vusa the Lion Guardian, in particular, the Briandez Legacy Trust, for sponsoring the full costs of this latest revised comic edition. With only ±24,000 wild lions still surviving in protected areas, we realized that the education of future conservationists on the decline of wild lion populations in Africa is an important issue. I thank WILDCRU/ OXFORD UNIVERSITY for their input and the many hours of lion research undertaken by our trustee,

SARAH MATTHIAS, who so aptly converted our thoughts into a story for children and briefed our illustrator, DES LANGKILDE, who breathed life into our story with imagery for this publication.

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## Note from the Creative Team



Having travelled widely with Brian Courtenay in South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe and spent hours watching lions with him, it was a great privilege to be asked to write this edition of Vusa the

Lion Guardian comic. During my travels with Brian, I have watched lions playing, hunting, killing and feeding and above all sleeping in the shade. Brian is a mine of fascinating info about lions, so I had a head start with my research. However, to convert this knowledge into an educational comic required a much more detailed study of the species. I am grateful to Dr Jess Isden, Coexistence Coordinator of Oxford University's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU) for her invaluable lion expertise and also her photographs of how to build a lion-proof kraal.

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Being an illustrator is like being a translator. My job is to turn written stories into visually entertaining graphics. But drawing for children is a whole different ball game. Why? Because kids brains are like play-

grounds under construction. Where grown-ups see mountains towering over trees and houses bigger than people, kids don't see things in perspective. They focus on what excites them. So, when kids draw, an ice cream cone may be bigger than a house because that's clearly more important. The other tricky part of being a visual translator is keeping a Childs' attention from bouncing around. That's where funny faces, silly situations, and human-like animal characters come into play. Make them giggle, and they'll be glued to the page, ready to see what happens next.

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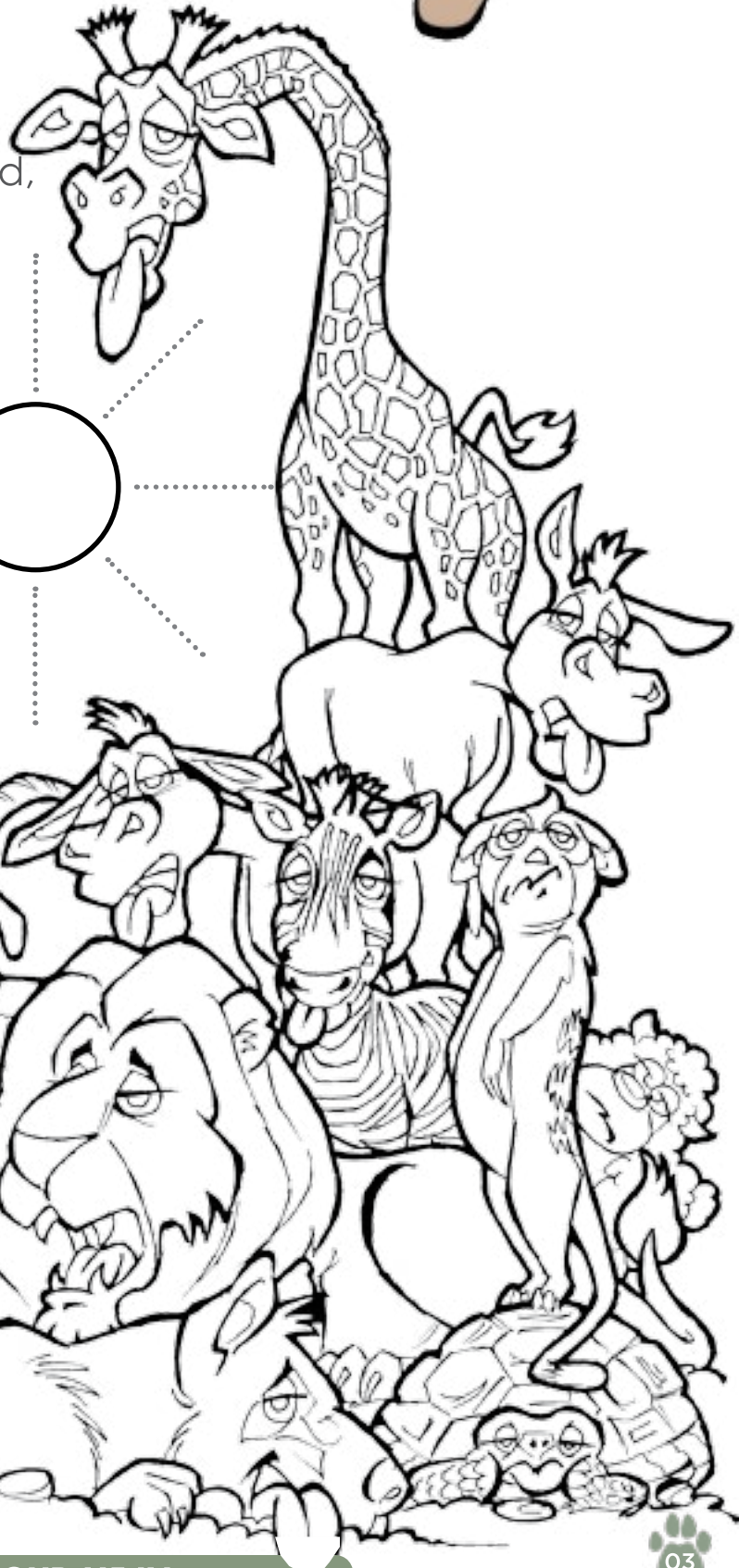
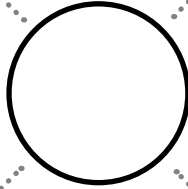
“ It is the rainy season where I live with my grandparents on the border of a National Park in southern Africa.

At least, it should be raining here by now. This year the rains have not arrived. I am very worried!

This should be the season when everything regrows, when crops begin to show above the ground, when calves are born and pans fill with water for our livestock.

Everyone is happy when the dry season is over. BUT THIS YEAR THEY ARE NOT!

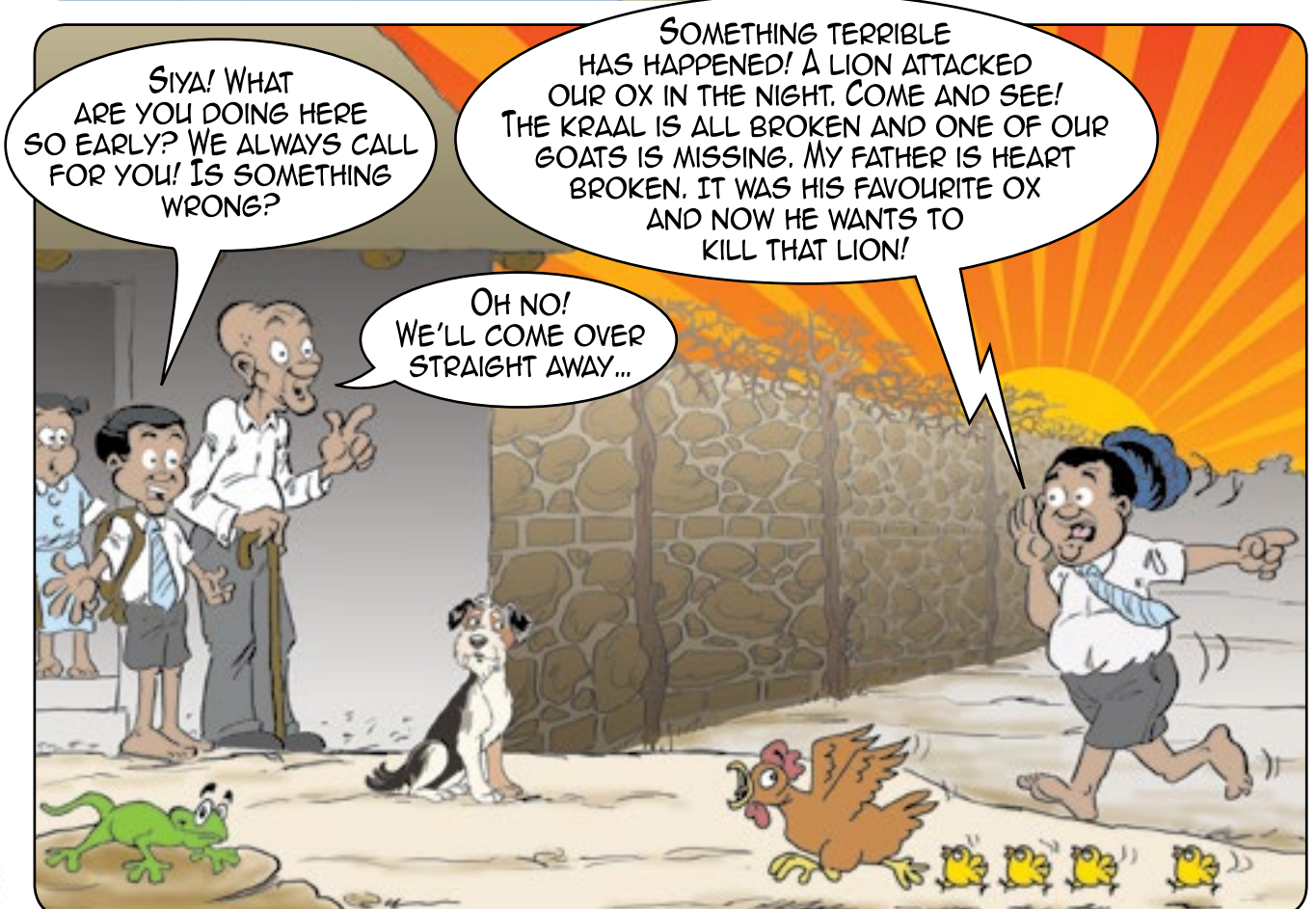
All our grass is brown and withered, the animals are thirsty, and if the rains don't come, we will lose many cattle. ”





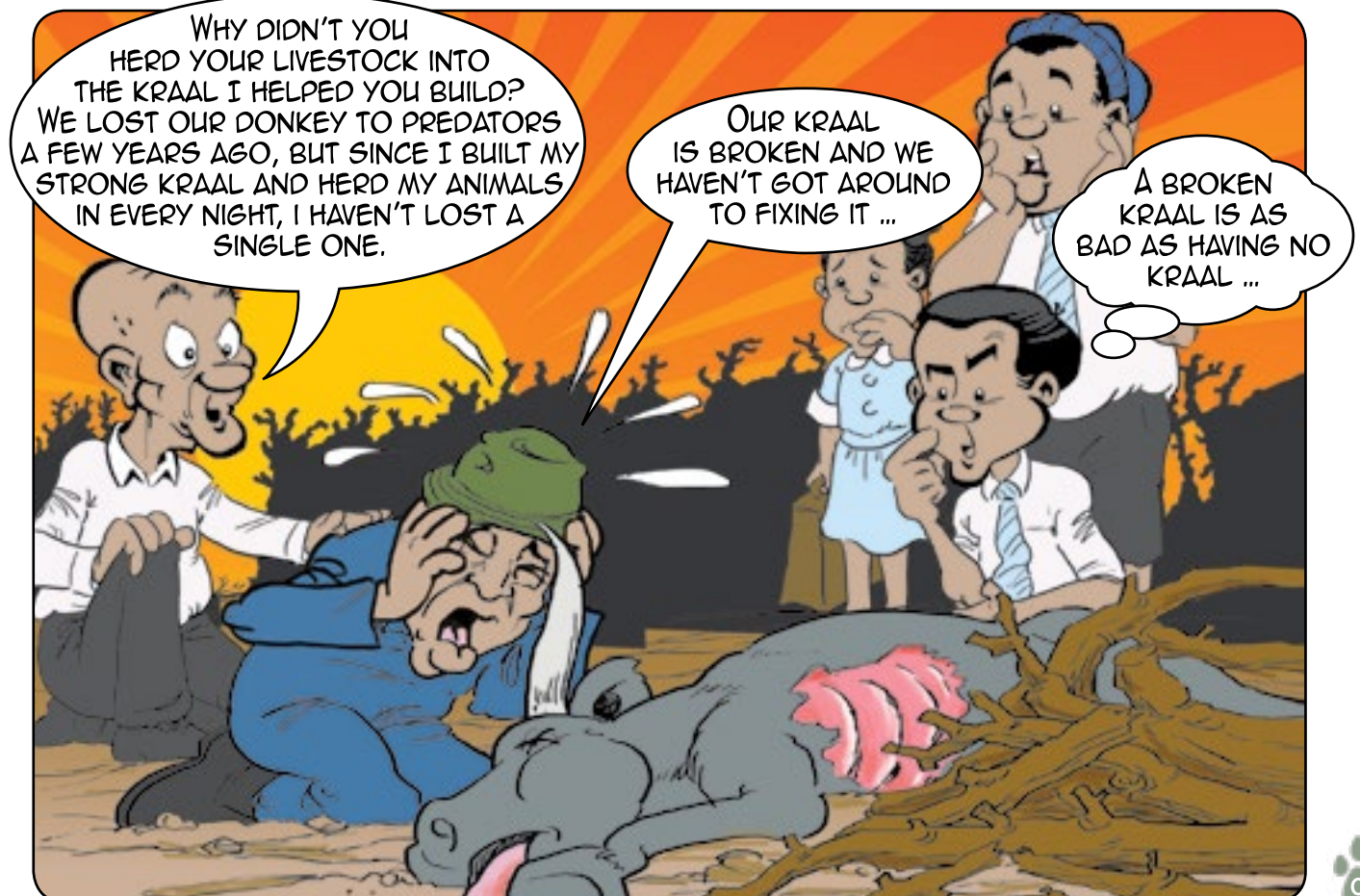
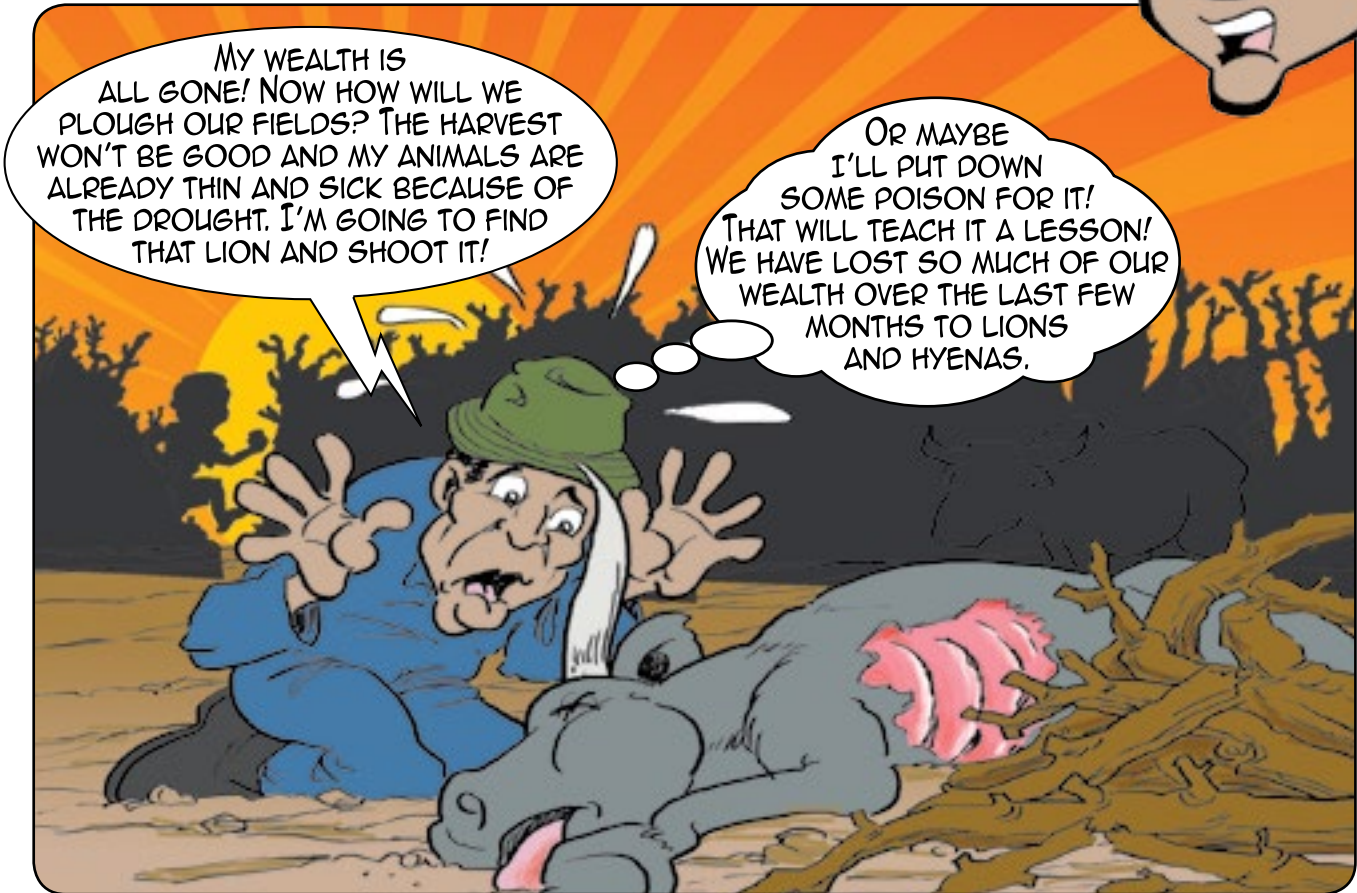


“ My grandfather, Babamkhulu, is a farmer. At weekends I help him herd his livestock, but today is a school day. I always walk to school with my little sister, Thandi, and my friend, Siya. He lives on the other side of our village near the bus stop. We call for him on our way to school. I love learning about all the wonderful animals we share our land with, because I want to be a wildlife researcher when I grow up. That’s why I mustn’t be late for school! ”





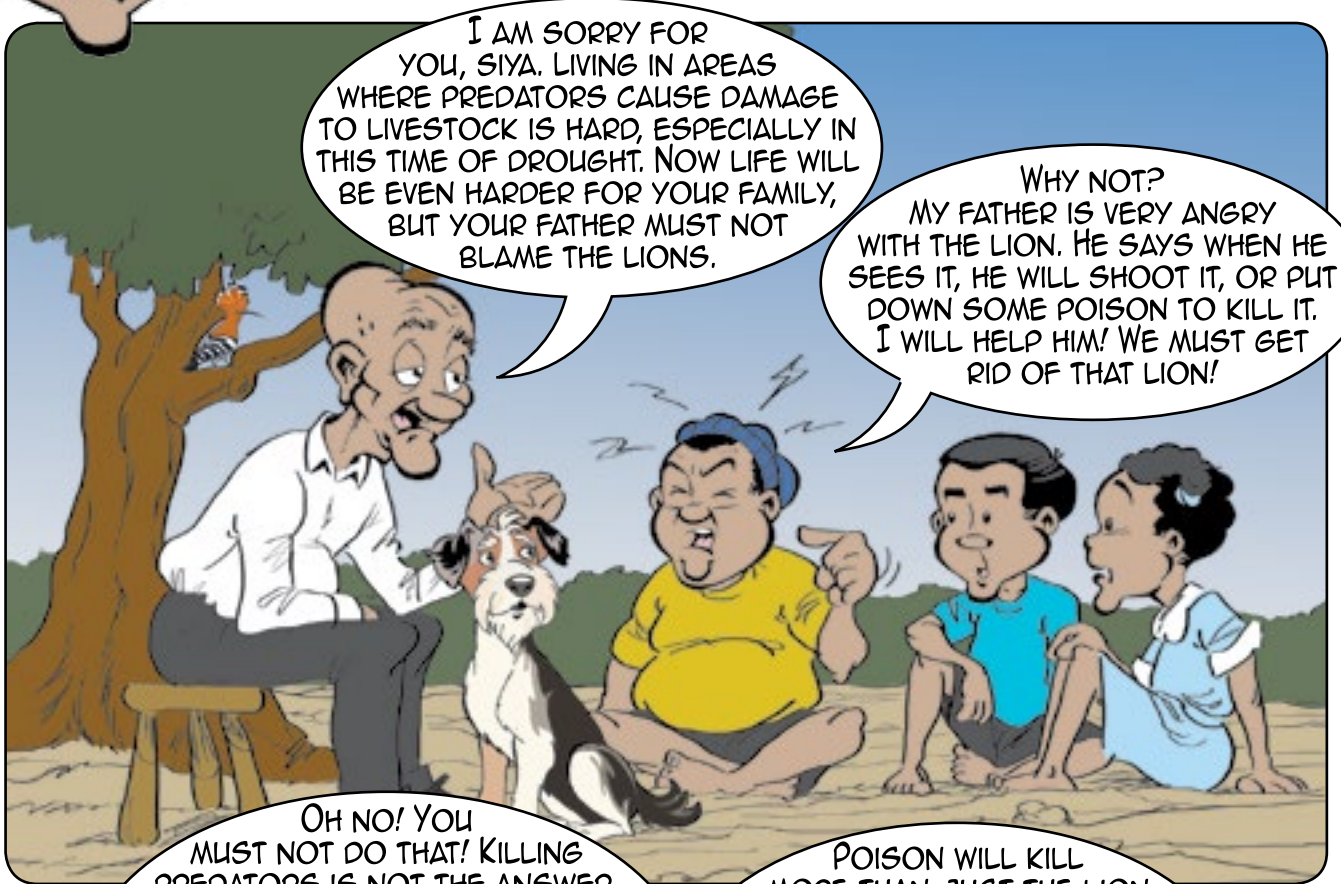
“ We were late for school that day because we all rushed off to help Siya and his father, Gabriel.”





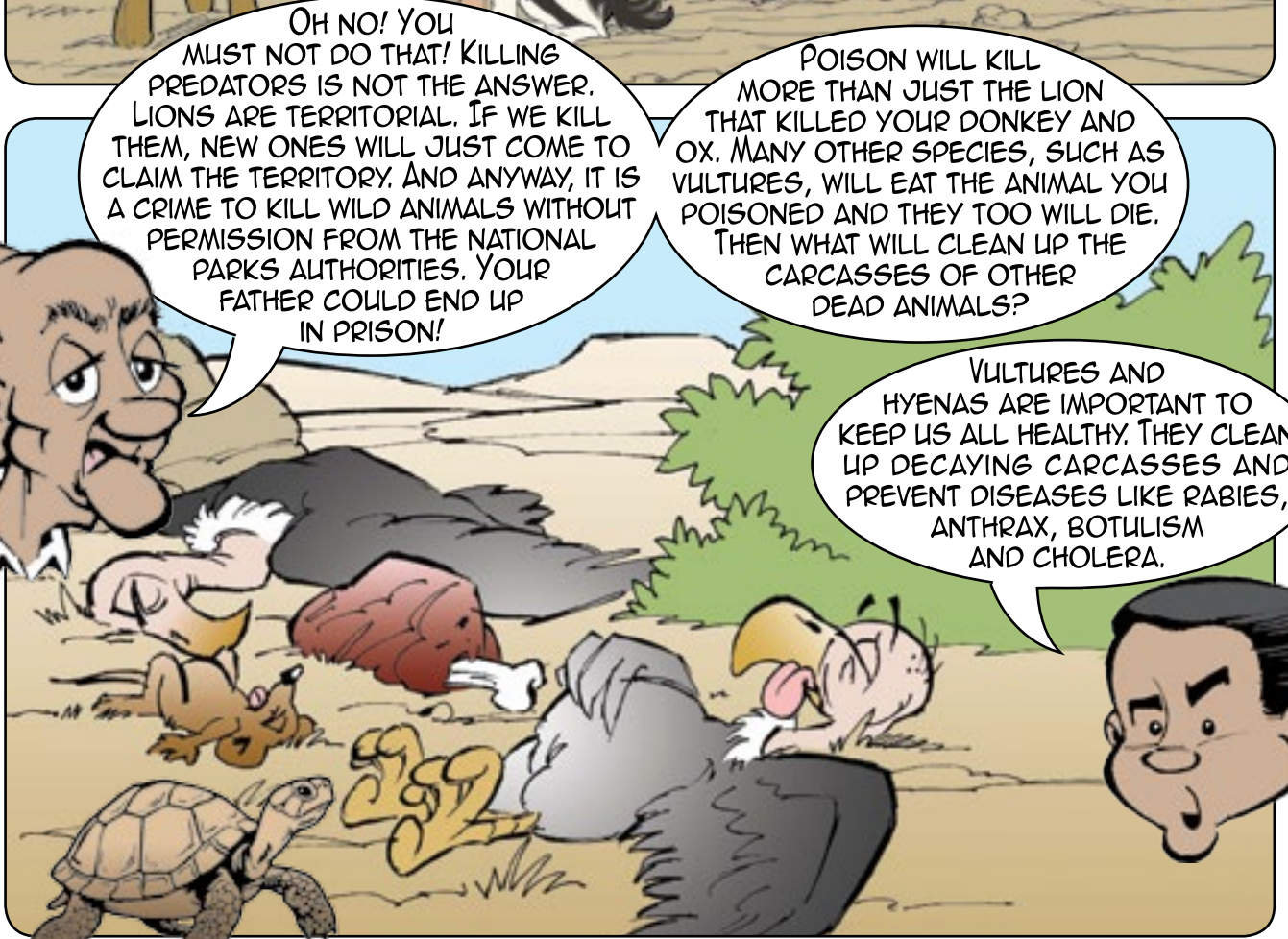


After school I took Siya home to talk to my Baba about what happened to his father's livestock in the night. My grandfather is very wise and kind and knows how to look after his animals. He always gives good advice. ”



I AM SORRY FOR YOU, SIYA. LIVING IN AREAS WHERE PREDATORS CAUSE DAMAGE TO LIVESTOCK IS HARD, ESPECIALLY IN THIS TIME OF DROUGHT. NOW LIFE WILL BE EVEN HARDER FOR YOUR FAMILY, BUT YOUR FATHER MUST NOT BLAME THE LIONS.

WHY NOT? MY FATHER IS VERY ANGRY WITH THE LION. HE SAYS WHEN HE SEES IT, HE WILL SHOOT IT, OR PUT DOWN SOME POISON TO KILL IT. I WILL HELP HIM! WE MUST GET RID OF THAT LION!



OH NO! YOU MUST NOT DO THAT! KILLING PREDATORS IS NOT THE ANSWER. LIONS ARE TERRITORIAL. IF WE KILL THEM, NEW ONES WILL JUST COME TO CLAIM THE TERRITORY. AND ANYWAY, IT IS A CRIME TO KILL WILD ANIMALS WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE NATIONAL PARKS AUTHORITIES. YOUR FATHER COULD END UP IN PRISON!

POISON WILL KILL MORE THAN JUST THE LION THAT KILLED YOUR DONKEY AND OX. MANY OTHER SPECIES, SUCH AS VULTURES, WILL EAT THE ANIMAL YOU POISONED AND THEY TOO WILL DIE. THEN WHAT WILL CLEAN UP THE CARCASSES OF OTHER DEAD ANIMALS?

VULTURES AND HYENAS ARE IMPORTANT TO KEEP US ALL HEALTHY. THEY CLEAN UP DECAYING CARCASSES AND PREVENT DISEASES LIKE RABIES, ANTHRAX, BOTULISM AND CHOLERA.



LIONS PREFER TO EAT WILD GAME LIKE ZEBRA, WILDEBEEST AND BUFFALO, BUT THEY NEED TO SURVIVE AND FEED THEIR YOUNG, JUST LIKE US. WHEN FARMERS LET THEIR LIVESTOCK ROAM AROUND THE VILLAGE, IT'S AN EASY MEAL FOR PREDATORS WHO DON'T KNOW WHEN THEIR NEXT MEAL WILL COME ALONG. IT'S UP TO FARMERS TO PROTECT THEIR LIVESTOCK FROM BEING KILLED.

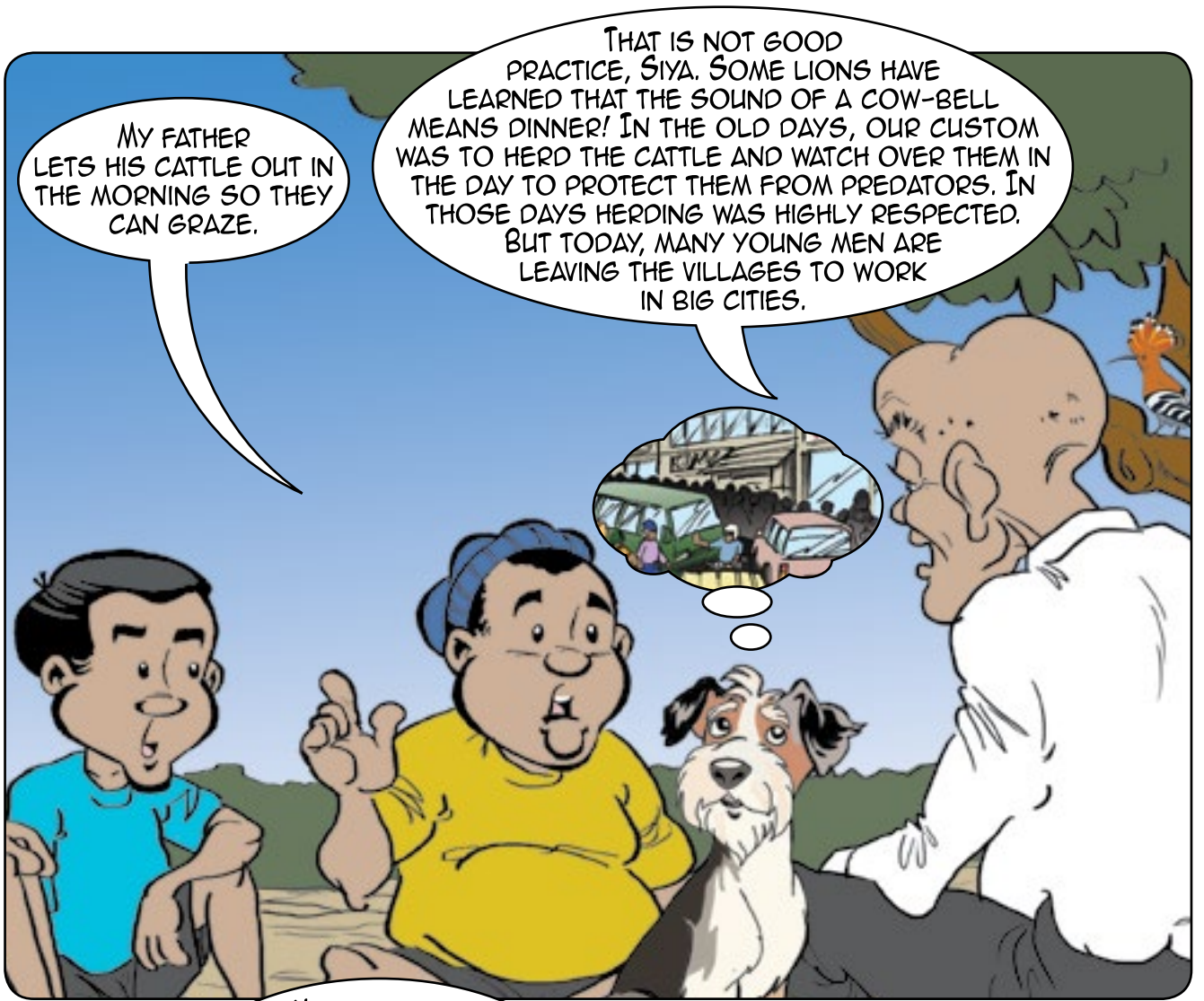
BUT WHAT CAN MY FATHER DO? YOU ARE SO WISE. CAN YOU HELP HIM?



YOUR FATHER MUST HERD HIS CATTLE INTO A WELL-BUILT KRAAL AT SUNSET. MOST LIVESTOCK ARE KILLED WHEN THEY ARE LEFT OUTSIDE AT NIGHT WHEN LIONS AND HYENAS ARE ACTIVE. THE LIVESTOCK SHOULD BE BROUGHT INTO THE KRAAL BEFORE SUNSET AND TAKEN OUT TO GRAZE AT AROUND DAWN. IF THEY ARE LEFT TO ROAM AROUND THE VILLAGE AT NIGHT, THEY ARE EASY PREY FOR HUNGRY LIONS AND HYENAS.







MY FATHER LETS HIS CATTLE OUT IN THE MORNING SO THEY CAN GRAZE.

THAT IS NOT GOOD PRACTICE, SIYA. SOME LIONS HAVE LEARNED THAT THE SOUND OF A COW-BELL MEANS DINNER! IN THE OLD DAYS, OUR CUSTOM WAS TO HERD THE CATTLE AND WATCH OVER THEM IN THE DAY TO PROTECT THEM FROM PREDATORS. IN THOSE DAYS HERDING WAS HIGHLY RESPECTED, BUT TODAY, MANY YOUNG MEN ARE LEAVING THE VILLAGES TO WORK IN BIG CITIES.

HERDERS ARE BRAVE AND HIGHLY-SKILLED MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY. THEY ARE THE BEST PROTECTION THERE IS FOR LIVESTOCK. THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE LAND AND BUSH SKILLS HAVE BEEN PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS. THE OLD WAYS ARE STILL THE BEST WAY.

PREDATORS ARE AFRAID OF HUMANS, ESPECIALLY IF THEY MAKE A LOT OF NOISE, LIKE SINGING, CLAPPING AND BANGING STICKS. OUR FARMERS HAVE ALL THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE NEEDED TO PROTECT THEMSELVES!



BANG-BANG

!?



“ Losing livestock is a serious blow for rural people like us, so my grandfather is cross. He helped Siya’s father to build his kraal, and now he has let it fall down and rot. But my grandfather is also kind and wise. He understands how Siya’s father feels. It’s often scary, living near a National Park alongside dangerous animals. He is going to help Siya’s father to protect his remaining livestock. ”



I'M GOING TO TAKE SIYA'S FATHER TO SEE SOME LION RESEARCHERS WHO ARE WORKING IN THE NATIONAL PARK. AS WELL AS STUDYING LIONS, THEY HELP LOCAL PEOPLE TO PROTECT THEIR LIVESTOCK AND CROPS AND LIVE IN HARMONY WITH ANIMALS. THEY HAVE LOTS OF GOOD IDEAS ABOUT BUILDING KRAALS.

CAN SIYA AND I COME WITH YOU, BABA? IT'S SATURDAY TOMORROW, SO WE DON'T HAVE SCHOOL.

OF COURSE! IT WILL BE USEFUL FOR SIYA TO SEE HOW IT IS DONE, SO HE CAN HELP HIS FATHER BUILD A STRONG KRAAL LIKE OURS!





WHEN I WAS YOUNG I HATED LIONS. ONE DAY, LIONS ATTACKED OUR ANIMALS AT NIGHT. I WAS SO AFRAID! I THOUGHT THEY WOULD COME INSIDE THE HOUSE AND ATTACK ME. BUT GROWING UP, I REALISED THAT ALL ANIMALS, BIG AND SMALL, HAVE A PLACE ON THE EARTH.

YES, BABAMKULLU. YOU LEARNED HOW IMPORTANT LIONS ARE TO OUR NATURAL WORLD AND HOW WE MUST PROTECT THEM. NOW YOU HAVE BUILT A STRONG KRAAL AT OUR HOME, OUR FAMILY SLEEPS WELL AT NIGHT.



THIS IS GABRIEL, THE FARMER I TOLD YOU ABOUT, AND THIS IS SIYA, HIS SON. GABRIEL, THIS IS AMOS. I TOLD GABRIEL THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ADVISE HIM HOW TO BUILD A STRONGER KRAAL.

OF COURSE! ANY FARMER KNOWS THAT LIVESTOCK ARE HARD TO PROTECT AT NIGHT, BUT LOSSES CAN BE REDUCED BY USING A FEW SIMPLE METHODS.

AS YOU WILL SEE, THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO BUILD A KRAAL. FARMERS WHO BUILD STRONG KRAALS HAVE LESS FEAR OF PREDATORS THAN THOSE WHO DON'T.





I BUILT MY KRAAL FROM TREES, STONES, BRICKS, AND THORNY ACACIA BRANCHES, SO PREDATORS CAN'T SEE INSIDE. THEY DON'T ATTACK WHAT THEY CAN'T SEE.

YOUR KRAAL IS A VERY STRONG ONE, BABA. YOU HAVEN'T LOST ANY LIVESTOCK TO PREDATORS FOR A FEW YEARS NOW. BY IMPROVING KRAALS AND TRAINING COMMUNITY MEMBERS, WE ARE ABLE TO CUT DOWN THE NUMBER OF REVENGE KILLINGS.

!?



FARMERS KILL THE LIONS WHO KILL THEIR LIVESTOCK BY SHOOTING OR POISONING THEM. BOTH SIDES LOSE OUT WHEN THIS HAPPENS BECAUSE PREDATORS ARE IMPORTANT TO KEEP NATURE IN BALANCE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY REVENGE KILLINGS?

LIONS KEEP THE NUMBERS OF WILD GRAZING ANIMALS DOWN SO OUR CATTLE HAVE GRASS TO EAT. SO YOU SEE, KILLING LIONS IS NOT THE ANSWER. IF PREDATORS DISAPPEARED, THE GRASSLANDS WOULD BECOME DESERT AND OUR LIVESTOCK WOULD STARVE.





PEOPLE AND PREDATORS CAN LIVE TOGETHER IN HARMONY IF PROPER MEASURES ARE TAKEN. KRAALS ARE ALSO KNOWN AS BOMAS, CAMPS OR STOCKADES, DEPENDING ON WHERE YOU LIVE. NOT EVERY DESIGN SUITS EVERYONE. WHEN POWERFUL PREDATORS SUCH AS LIONS LIVE IN YOUR AREA, YOU WILL NEED TO BUILD A STRONG, ROBUST KRAAL. YOU WILL NEED STRONG WALLS THAT ARE TWO TO THREE METRES TALL.



FIRST YOU WILL NEED TO COLLECT POLES FOR CONSTRUCTION. THICKER POLES SHOULD BE USED FOR THE UPRIGHT POSTS AND THESE SHOULD BE DUG INTO THE GROUND ABOUT 80 CM DEEP - THAT'S ABOUT THE DEPTH OF A SPADE UP TO THE HANDLE.



THEN YOU MUST CHOOSE THE RIGHT SPOT FOR THE KRAAL. YOU NEED A SHADY SPOT, BUT NOT TOO CLOSE TO TREES WHICH LIONS COULD USE TO JUMP INSIDE. KRAALS WORK BEST WHEN THEY ARE LOCATED NEAR SETTLEMENTS, IN AREAS WHERE THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE.







WHEN LIONS APPROACH, LIVESTOCK OFTEN PANIC AND BREAK OUT. YOU NEED TO BOLT IN SOME CROSS POLES, ESPECIALLY ON THE INSIDE GATE TO PREVENT LIVESTOCK PUSHING AND ESCAPING. THE CORNERS SHOULD BE REINFORCED WITH EXTRA SUPPORT POLES TOO. OUR KRAALS ARE DESIGNED TO KEEP PREDATORS OUT AND LIVESTOCK IN!







# "KNOW YOUR LIONS"

Lions are very important to our country, and especially to the people living in villages around National Parks and Conservation areas. Tourists love to see lions and by visiting our National Parks, they bring money into our country and local areas. This money creates jobs for our parents, family and friends and makes life better and happier for all of us. To help know your lions, here are 5 lion facts:



LIONS PREFER NATURAL PREY, INCLUDING BUFFALOES, ZEBRA, AND WILDEBEEST. THEY WILL EAT LIVESTOCK ONLY WHEN THEY ARE EASY FOR THEM TO HUNT.



LIONS ARE SOCIAL CATS. THEY LIVE IN GROUPS CALLED PRIDES. MALES PROTECT THEIR TERRITORY WHILE FEMALES DO MOST OF THE HUNTING.



YOUNG MALES LEAVE THE PRIDE WHEN THEY ARE AROUND 3 YEARS OLD AND ARE OFTEN THE ONES THAT CAUSE TROUBLE.



FEMALES STAY TOGETHER THEIR WHOLE LIVES, LIVING WITH THEIR MOTHERS, SISTERS, AUNTIES, AND GRANDMOTHERS.



LIONS ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR COUNTRY AS THEY ATTRACT TOURISTS, WHICH CREATES LOCAL JOBS AND MONEY FOR OUR PEOPLE.



Photo by Brian Courtenay





# "STAY SAFE AROUND LIONS"

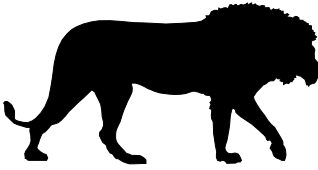





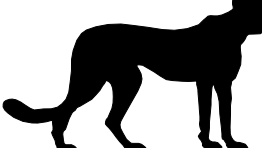





Lions and other predators can be dangerous! Always treat wild animals with respect and give them space. Do not chase or threaten them.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE A LION:

-  **STAY CALM!**  
Staying calm keeps you in control and avoids panic.
-  **STAY TOGETHER!**  
You are safer in a group, so try not to walk alone in the bush.
-  **SPEAK LOUDLY!**  
Talk to the lion loudly and sternly without shouting.
-  **CLAP YOUR HANDS!**  
If a lion charges, clap your hands to make noise.
-  **BACK OFF!**  
Move backwards away from the lion towards safety.
-  **DO NOT PANIC!**  
Think, stay calm and act smart.
-  **DO NOT RUN!**  
Running draws attention to you and may make the lion chase you.
-  **DO NOT TURN YOUR BACK!**  
Keep eye contact, but do not look directly at the lion's eyes as the lion will see this as a threat.
-  **DO NOT HIDE!**  
Look tall and strong without challenging or threatening the lion.
-  **DO NOT SCREAM!**  
Screaming and shouting may alarm the lion.

### KNOW YOUR LIVESTOCK PREDATORS:

PREDATOR	SPOOR	LIVESTOCK
		Cattle, donkeys, horses, goats, sheep.
<b>LION:</b>	Largest predator, social, hunt in groups or alone and mostly at night.	
		Young cattle & donkeys, foals, goats, and sheep.
<b>LEOPARD:</b>	Hunt alone, mostly at night. Good climbers. They often take prey up into trees.	
		Young cattle & donkeys, foals, goats, and sheep.
<b>HYENA:</b>	Powerful, strong sloped back. They hunt and scavenge alone or in groups.	
		Goats, sheep, & small calves.
<b>CHEETAH:</b>	Tall & sleek. Fast runner. Often hunt in daylight. Usually alone or in small groups.	
		Chicken, small goats & sheep.
<b>JACKAL:</b>	Hunter & scavenger of the dog family. Mostly hunt at night.	



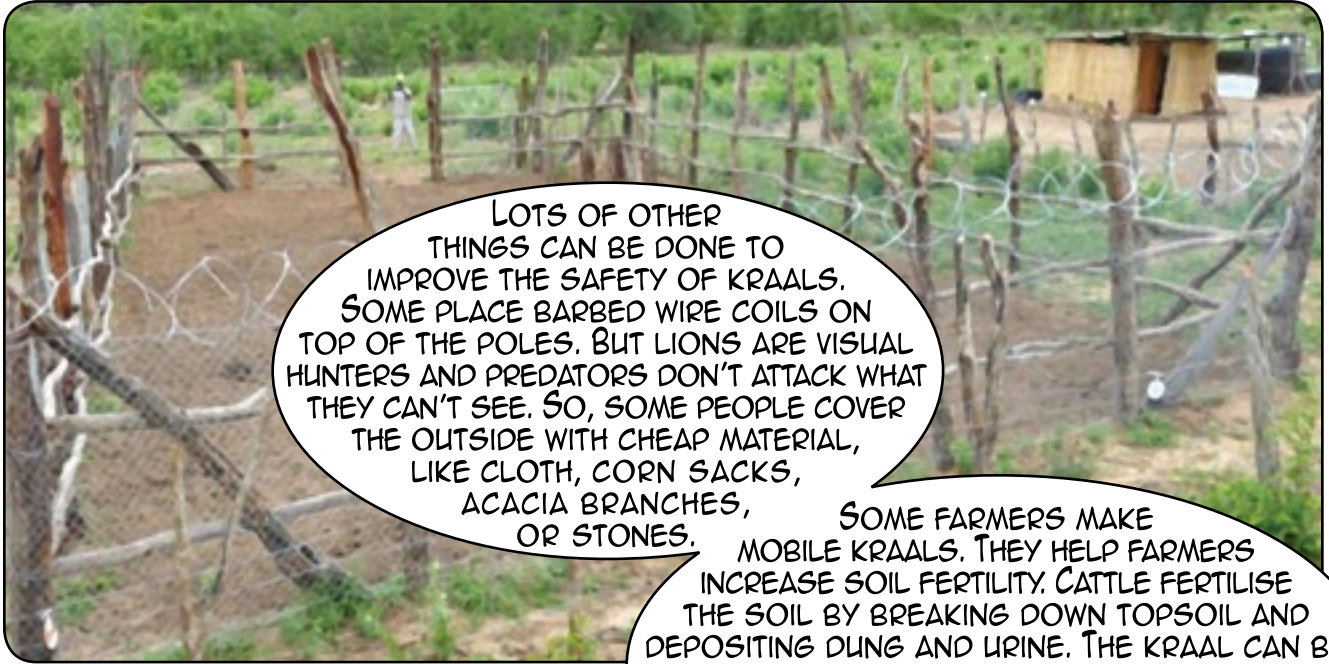


THE KRAAL IS BOLTED TOGETHER USING THREAD RODS TO MAKE IT VERY STRONG, THEN FOUR ROWS OF SECURE HIGH-STRAIN WIRE ARE ATTACHED TO THE STANDING POLES ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE KRAAL AND PULLED TIGHTLY.

FINALLY, DIAMOND MESH IS FIXED TO THE OUTSIDE OF THE FRAME.

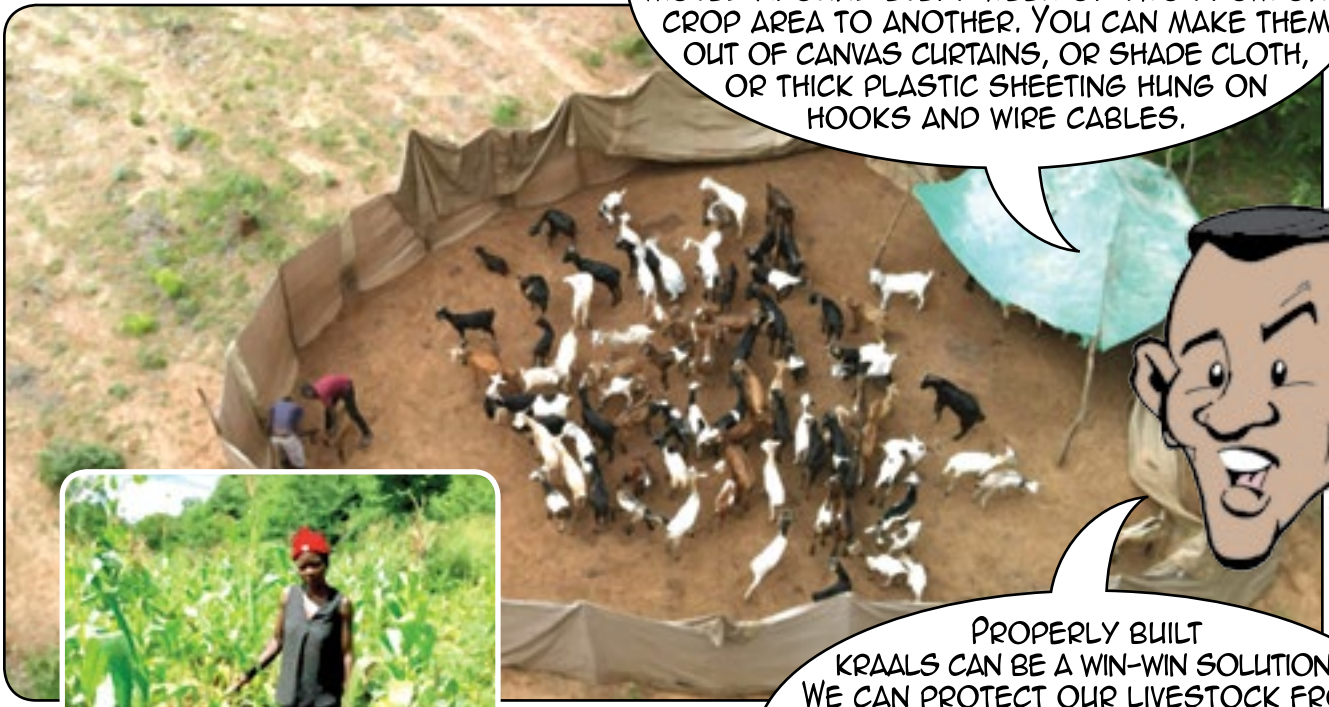






LOTS OF OTHER THINGS CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF KRAALS. SOME PLACE BARBED WIRE COILS ON TOP OF THE POLES. BUT LIONS ARE VISUAL HUNTERS AND PREDATORS DON'T ATTACK WHAT THEY CAN'T SEE. SO, SOME PEOPLE COVER THE OUTSIDE WITH CHEAP MATERIAL, LIKE CLOTH, CORN SACKS, ACACIA BRANCHES, OR STONES.

SOME FARMERS MAKE MOBILE KRAALS. THEY HELP FARMERS INCREASE SOIL FERTILITY. CATTLE FERTILISE THE SOIL BY BREAKING DOWN TOPSOIL AND DEPOSITING DUNG AND URINE. THE KRAAL CAN BE MOVED AROUND EVERY WEEK OR TWO FROM ONE CROP AREA TO ANOTHER. YOU CAN MAKE THEM OUT OF CANVAS CURTAINS, OR SHADE CLOTH, OR THICK PLASTIC SHEETING HUNG ON HOOKS AND WIRE CABLES.



Before kraal



After kraal

PROPERLY BUILT KRAALS CAN BE A WIN-WIN SOLUTION. WE CAN PROTECT OUR LIVESTOCK FROM ATTACK. THIS IMPROVES FARMERS' ATTITUDE TO LARGE CARNIVORES, SO WE CAN PREVENT THE KILLING OF WILDLIFE, SUCH AS LIONS. AND WE CAN ALL SLEEP SOUNDLY AT NIGHT!



AND LET'S NOT FORGET OUR DOGS! MANY FARMERS USE LIVESTOCK GUARDING DOGS TO PROTECT THEIR SHEEP AND GOATS. THEY ARE SPECIALLY TRAINED TO WALK WITH THE HERDS DURING THE DAY AND SLEEP IN THE KRAALS AT NIGHT.

SOME FARMERS USE SPECIAL BREEDS SUCH AS ANATOLIAN SHEPHERD DOGS, BUT OFTEN LOCAL STREET DOGS CAN BE JUST AS SUCCESSFUL. THEY'RE GOOD TEMPERED AND STRONG AND THEY ARE HAPPY IN LOCAL WEATHER CONDITIONS.



DOGS CAN SCARE OFF SMALLER PREDATORS SUCH AS CHEETAHS, HYENAS, CARACALS, AND WILD DOGS. THEIR MAIN ROLE IS TO WARN PEOPLE AND LIVESTOCK THAT DANGER IS NEAR. USUALLY THEIR BARK IS LOUD ENOUGH TO SCARE OFF SMALLER PREDATORS. DOGS ARE NOT SO EFFECTIVE AGAINST LIONS, SO THEY ARE NOT AS USEFUL AS DONKEYS FOR GUARDING CATTLE.





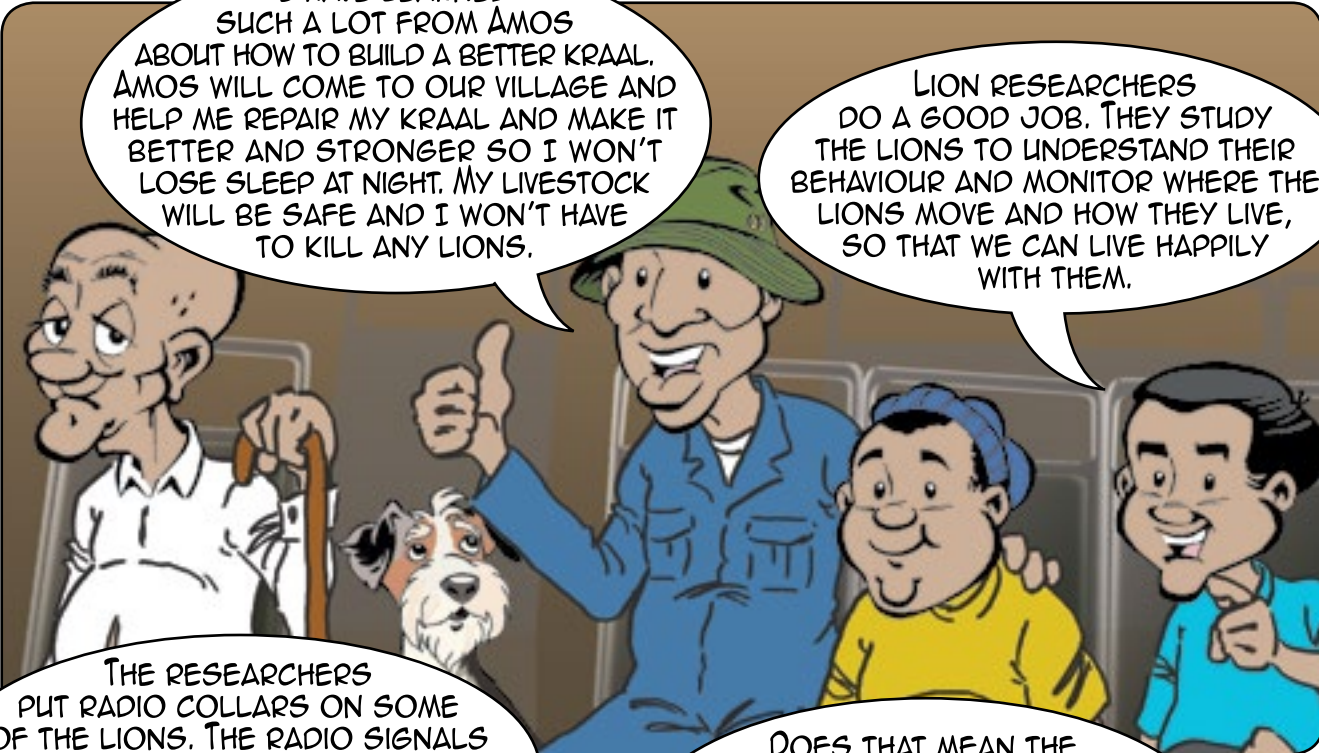
IT IS IMPORTANT TO VACCINATE YOUR DOGS AGAINST DISEASES, LIKE RABIES AND CANINE DISTEMPER, WHICH ARE HARMFUL TO PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE AND CAN BE PASSED ON TO LIONS. WE HAVE AN ANNUAL VACCINATION PROGRAM. VETS VISIT LOCAL VILLAGES TO GIVE ADVICE ON WORMING AND TREAT DOGS THAT ARE ILL. WE EDUCATE PEOPLE ON PROTECTION FROM VIRUSES THROUGH REGULAR VACCINATION.



DONKEYS ARE VERY GOOD GUARDIANS. THEY DON'T NEED TRAINING LIKE DOGS, AND THEY CAN PROTECT LIVESTOCK AGAINST EVEN LARGER CARNIVORES, SUCH AS LIONS. THEY ARE NATURALLY AGGRESSIVE TOWARDS PREDATORS, AND WILL BRAY, CHASE OR TRY TO KICK THEM. MANY FARMERS INCLUDE DONKEYS WHEN HERDING GOATS, SHEEP AND CATTLE.









I HAVE LEARNED SUCH A LOT FROM AMOS ABOUT HOW TO BUILD A BETTER KRAAL. AMOS WILL COME TO OUR VILLAGE AND HELP ME REPAIR MY KRAAL AND MAKE IT BETTER AND STRONGER SO I WON'T LOSE SLEEP AT NIGHT. MY LIVESTOCK WILL BE SAFE AND I WON'T HAVE TO KILL ANY LIONS.

LION RESEARCHERS DO A GOOD JOB. THEY STUDY THE LIONS TO UNDERSTAND THEIR BEHAVIOUR AND MONITOR WHERE THE LIONS MOVE AND HOW THEY LIVE, SO THAT WE CAN LIVE HAPPILY WITH THEM.



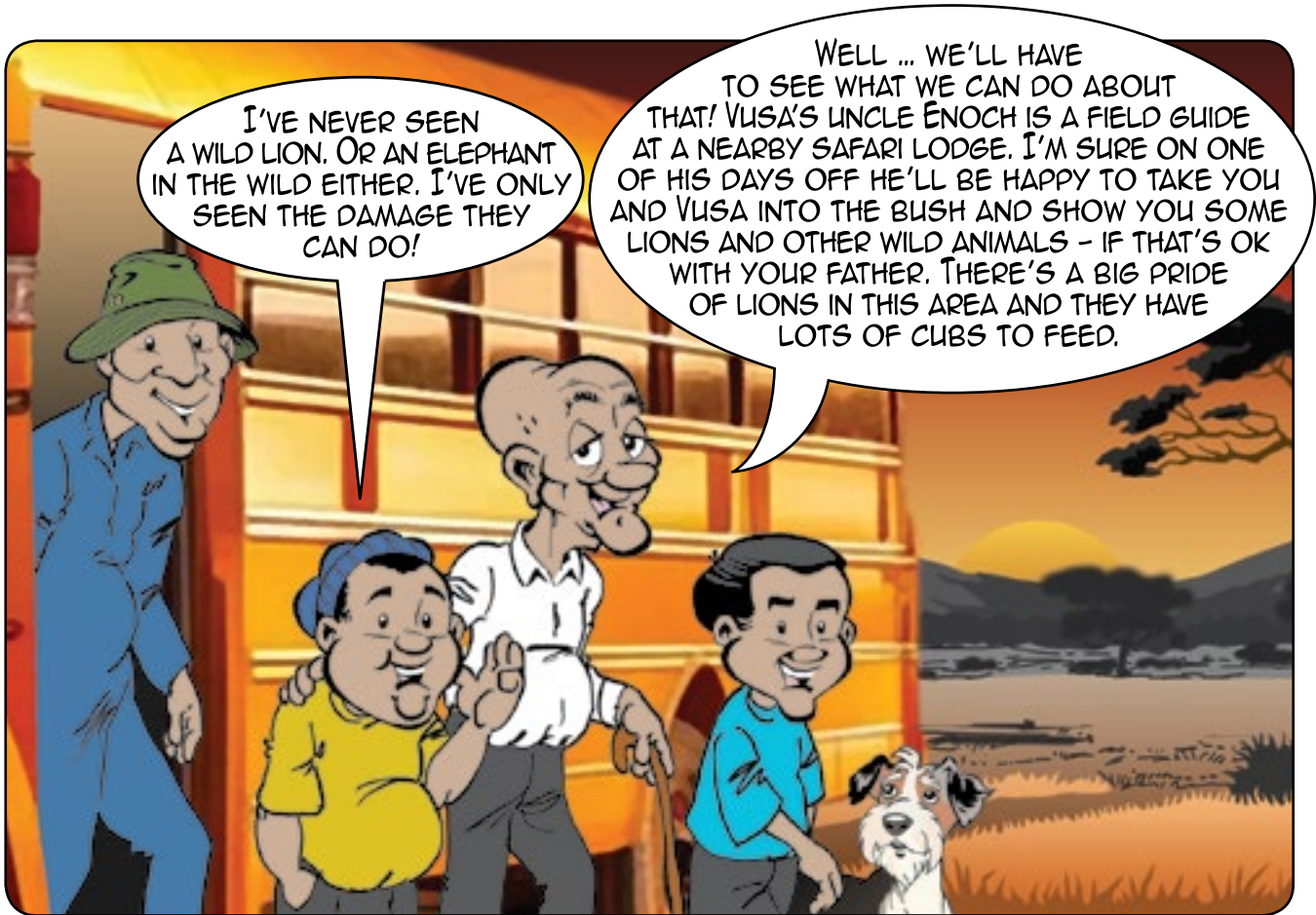
THE RESEARCHERS PUT RADIO COLLARS ON SOME OF THE LIONS. THE RADIO SIGNALS ARE SENT TO A COMPUTER, SO THE LIONS' MOVEMENTS CAN BE TRACKED. THIS HELPS THEM TO KNOW WHERE THE LIONS ARE.

DOES THAT MEAN THE RESEARCHERS CAN WARN THE COMMUNITY WHEN COLLARED LIONS MOVE OUT OF THE PARK? THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO OUR FARMERS AND REDUCE CONFLICT WITH PEOPLE.



THEY CAN DO THIS IN SOME PARTS OF AFRICA, AND THEN IT'S VERY HELPFUL. BUT COLLARING LIONS COSTS A LOT OF MONEY AND ISN'T POSSIBLE EVERYWHERE. ANYWAY, THEY CAN'T COLLAR ALL THE LIONS! LIKE AMOS TOLD US - FARMERS NEED TO CARE FOR THEIR LIVESTOCK THEMSELVES BY BUILDING STRONG KRAALS AND HERDING THEIR ANIMALS PROPERLY. THAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE.

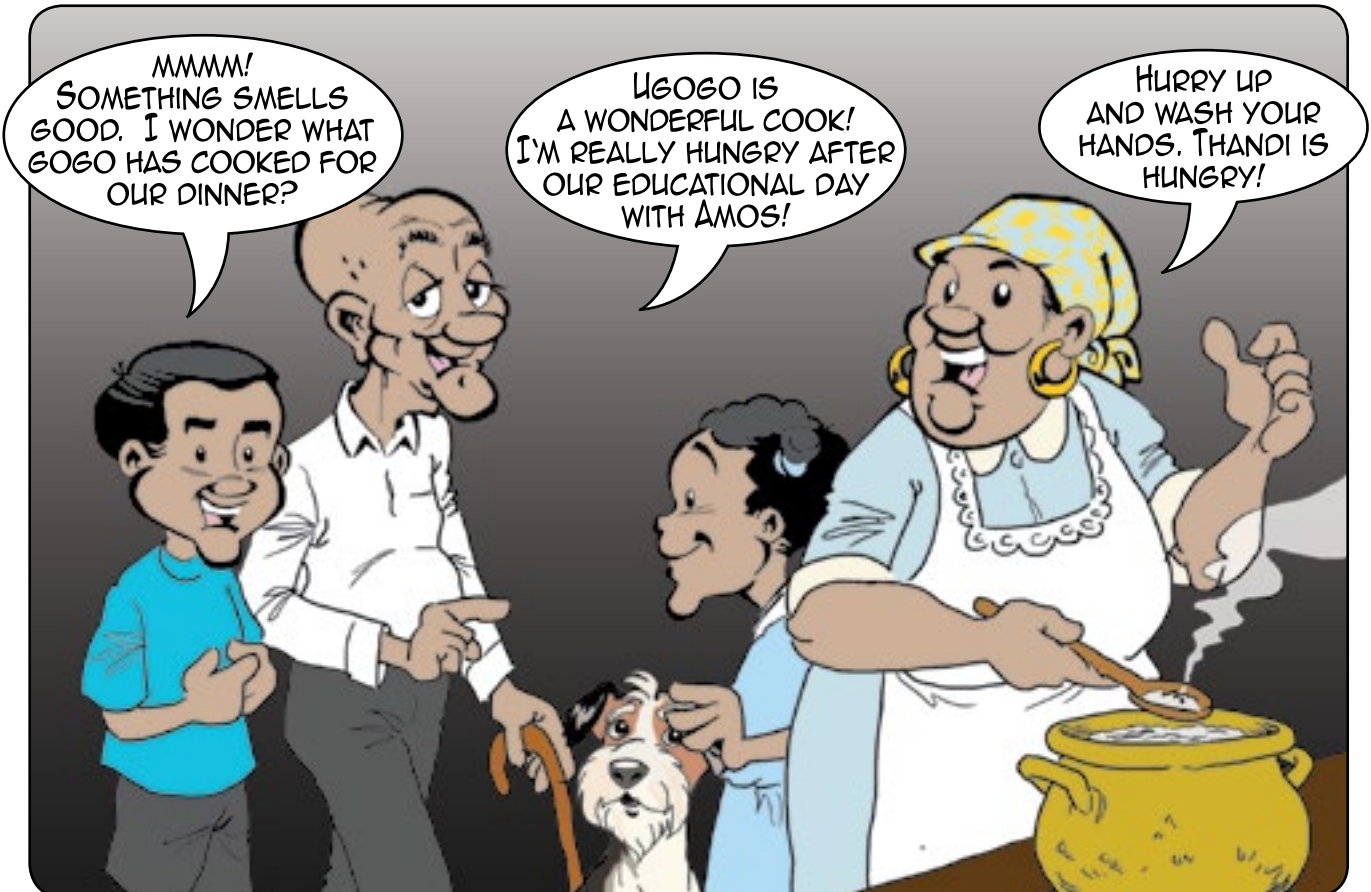




I'VE NEVER SEEN A WILD LION. OR AN ELEPHANT IN THE WILD EITHER. I'VE ONLY SEEN THE DAMAGE THEY CAN DO!

WELL ... WE'LL HAVE TO SEE WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT THAT! VUSA'S UNCLE ENOCH IS A FIELD GUIDE AT A NEARBY SAFARI LODGE. I'M SURE ON ONE OF HIS DAYS OFF HE'LL BE HAPPY TO TAKE YOU AND VUSA INTO THE BUSH AND SHOW YOU SOME LIONS AND OTHER WILD ANIMALS - IF THAT'S OK WITH YOUR FATHER. THERE'S A BIG PRIDE OF LIONS IN THIS AREA AND THEY HAVE LOTS OF CUBS TO FEED.

The sun is sinking in the sky as they leave the bus stop and Babamkhulu and Vusa return home for their evening meal.



MMMM!  
SOMETHING SMELLS GOOD. I WONDER WHAT GOGO HAS COOKED FOR OUR DINNER?

UGOGO IS A WONDERFUL COOK!  
I'M REALLY HUNGRY AFTER OUR EDUCATIONAL DAY WITH AMOS!

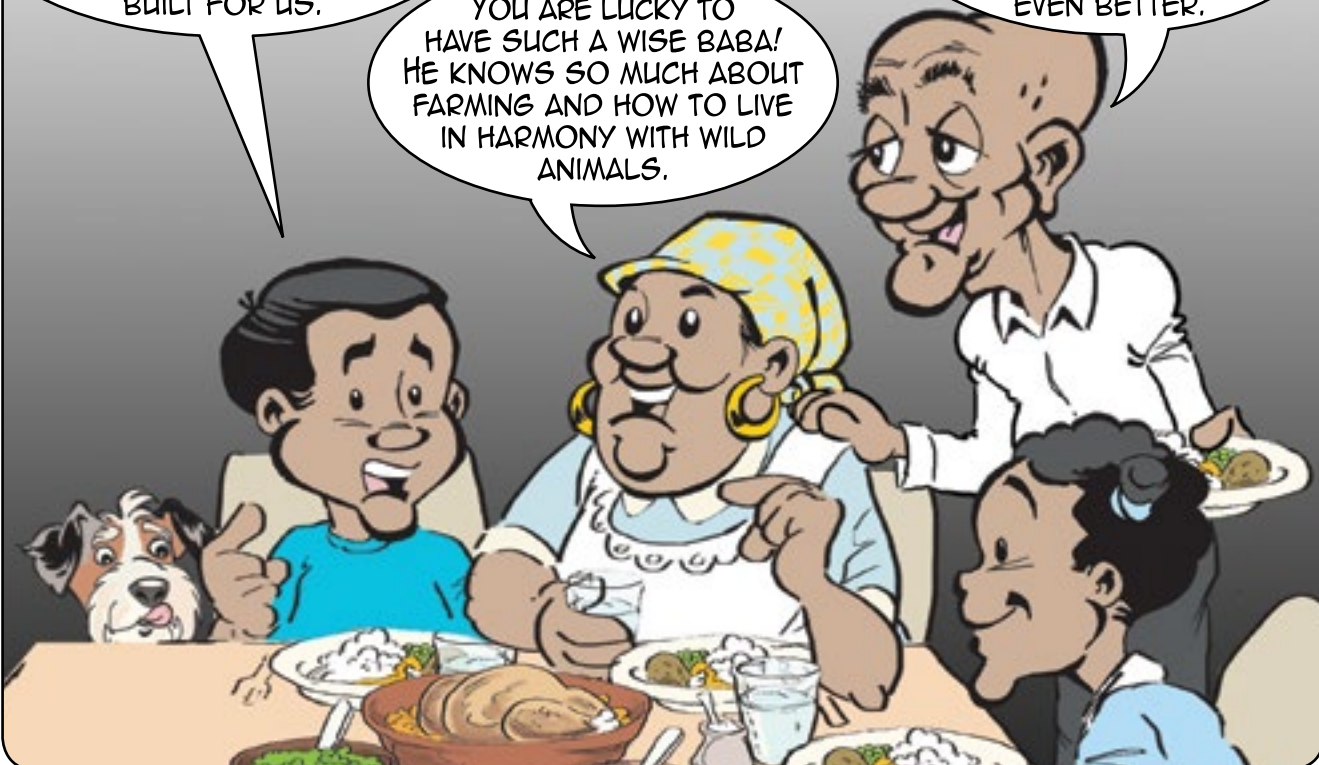
HURRY UP AND WASH YOUR HANDS. THANDI IS HUNGRY!



I HOPE SIYA'S FATHER WILL REPAIR HIS KRAAL NOW. WHEN I HEAR LIONS ROARING IN THE NIGHT I KNOW OUR LIVESTOCK IS SAFELY IN OUR STRONG KRAAL BABA HAS BUILT FOR US.

YOU ARE LUCKY TO HAVE SUCH A WISE BABA! HE KNOWS SO MUCH ABOUT FARMING AND HOW TO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH WILD ANIMALS.

THANK YOU, GOGO, BUT I ALSO LEARNED SOME USEFUL TIPS TODAY ABOUT HOW TO MAKE MY KRAAL STRONGER. TOMORROW I'M GOING TO MAKE IT EVEN BETTER.



BUT I'M NOT THE ONLY PERSON WITH SKILLS IN THIS FAMILY. YOUR GOGO IS A SKILLED FARMER AND A WONDERFUL COOK AS WELL!

AND A GREAT STORYTELLER TOO! PLEASE TELL US A STORY BEFORE WE GO TO BED ... MAYBE THAT ONE ABOUT THE LIONS ...

HMM! DO YOU MEAN THE STORY ABOUT WHY LIONS ROAR?

BUT LIONS HAVE ALWAYS ROARED, HAVEN'T THEY?

WELL ... NOT ACCORDING TO THIS OLD FOLKTALE ...





“ Long, long ago, lions did not roar as they do today. They were very quiet animals, with only a low growl when calling for their cubs. But one day, a lion met with an accident that changed everything.



It was a time of famine and all the animals were starving. Now, as you know, lions like to eat buffalo, wildebeest and zebra best, but on this day, they were SO hungry they'd have been happy to eat anything at all.

It was dusk and the lion's stomach was rumbling, when all of a sudden a porcupine came out of its burrow. Seeing a tasty snack, the lion pounced, but the porcupine was too quick for the lion. He put up his sharp quills ... and all the lion got for supper was a spiky mouthfull! ””







Some of the porcupine's quills were stuck deep in the lion's throat. He ran to ask Zebra to help him, but Zebra said 'No!' He ran to ask Buffalo, but Buffalo only bellowed. He ran to ask Wildebeest, but Wildebeest kicked up the dust and ran away. Because all the animals were afraid of the lion, nobody would help him pull the quills out of his throat!

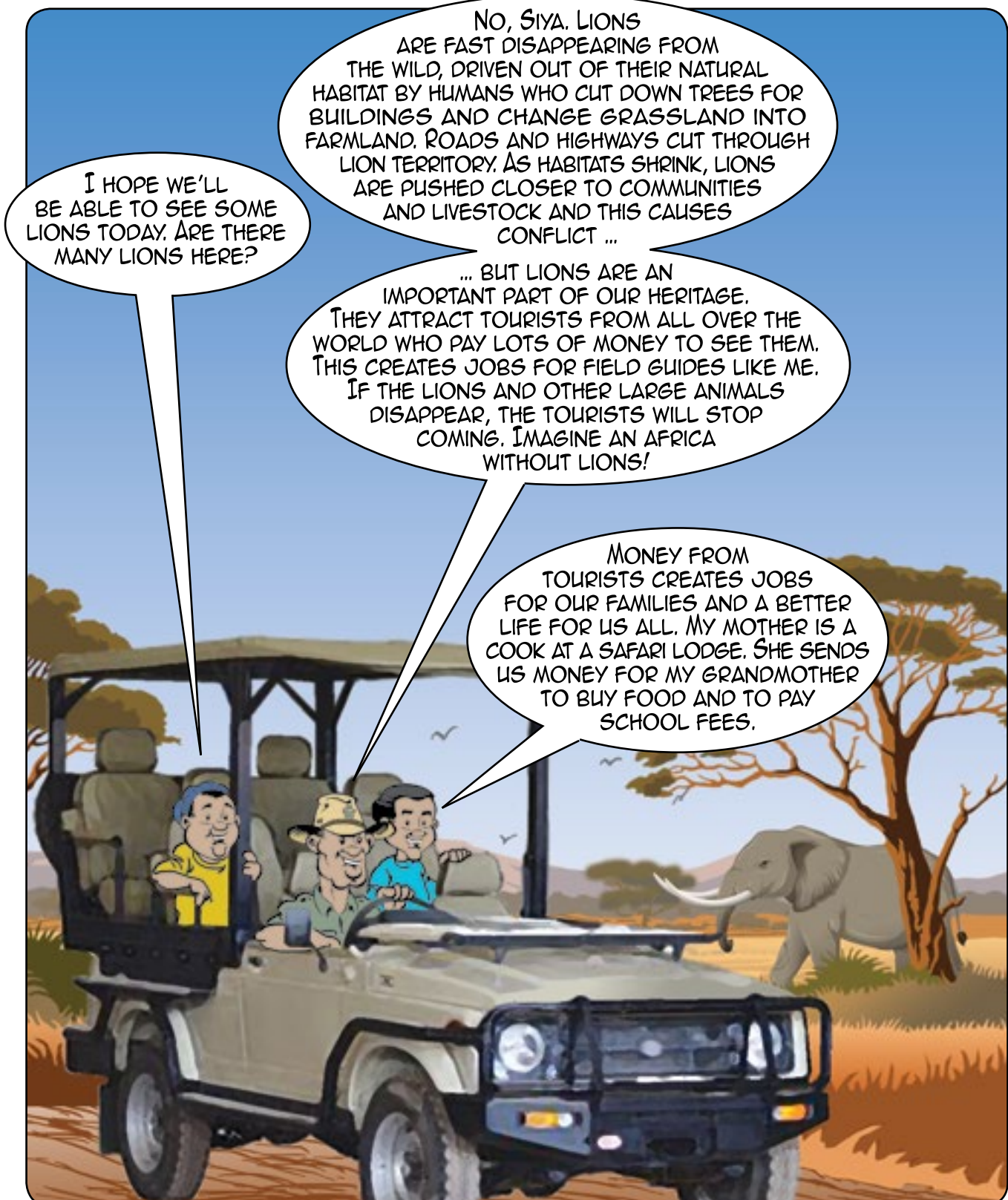
The poor lion couldn't eat. So, in desperation, he roared and roared and roared in pain! And as he roared, out popped the quills one by one and the lion could eat again! ””





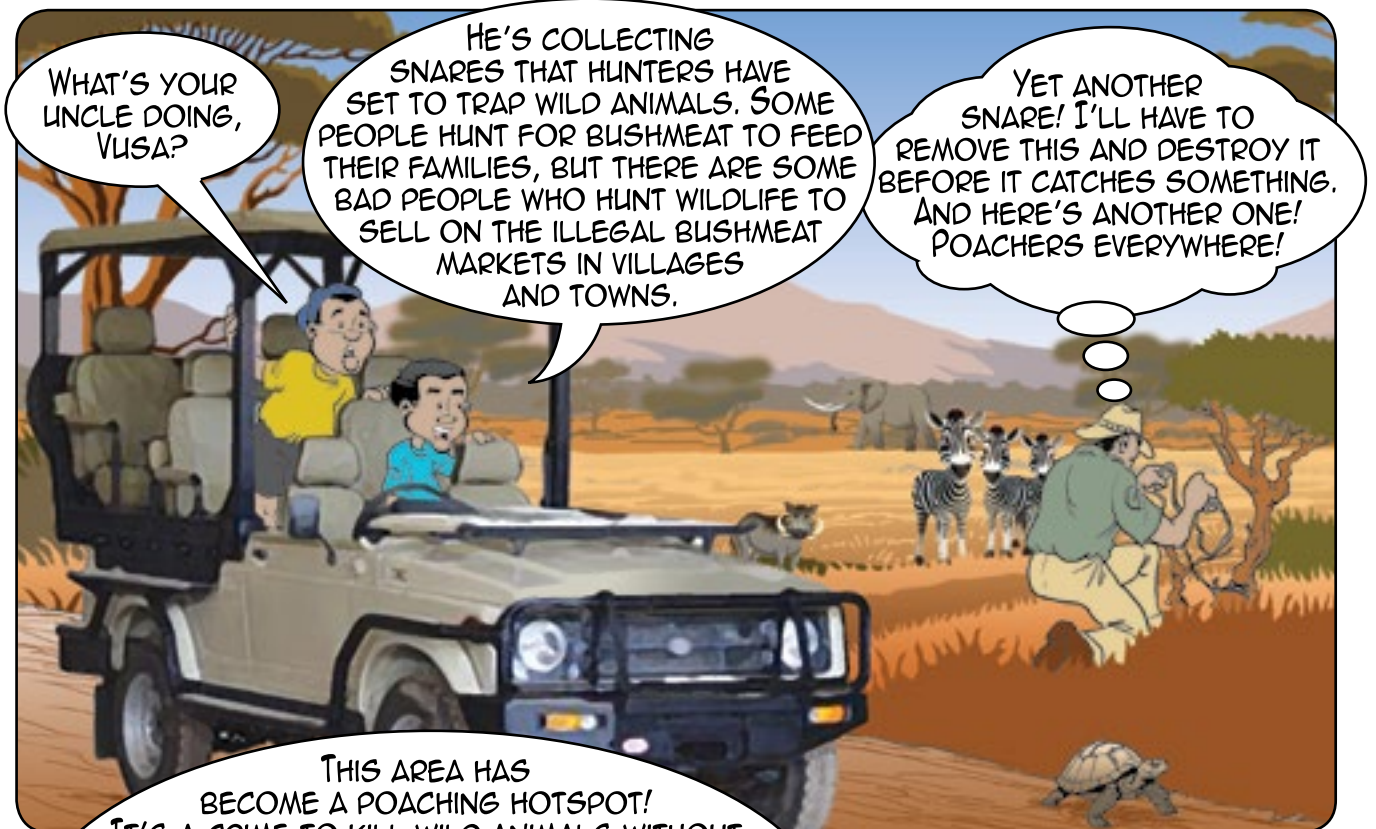
Early in the morning, Siya and I set out with Uncle Enoch for a trip into the bush to see some lions.

I have been into the bush with my uncle before, but for Siya this is his first time. Like many children living on the edge of National Parks, Siya has never seen wild lions or any of the other fascinating, shy animals with whom he shares his home.





Suddenly uncle Enoch stops the jeep with a frown. First, he checks carefully to see if it is safe, and then he climbs down to take a look.



THIS AREA HAS BECOME A POACHING HOTSPOT! IT'S A CRIME TO KILL WILD ANIMALS WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE NATIONAL PARKS, EVEN IF IT IS TO FEED YOUR FAMILY. THE LOCAL ANTI-POACHING TEAM CAUGHT A MAN A WHILE AGO WHO HAD SET TWELVE SNARES IN A ROW. HE ENDED UP IN PRISON! SETTING SNARES IS ALSO VERY DANGEROUS. SNARING CLOSE TO VILLAGES BRINGS PREDATORS TO OUR HOMES AND TO OUR LIVESTOCK.



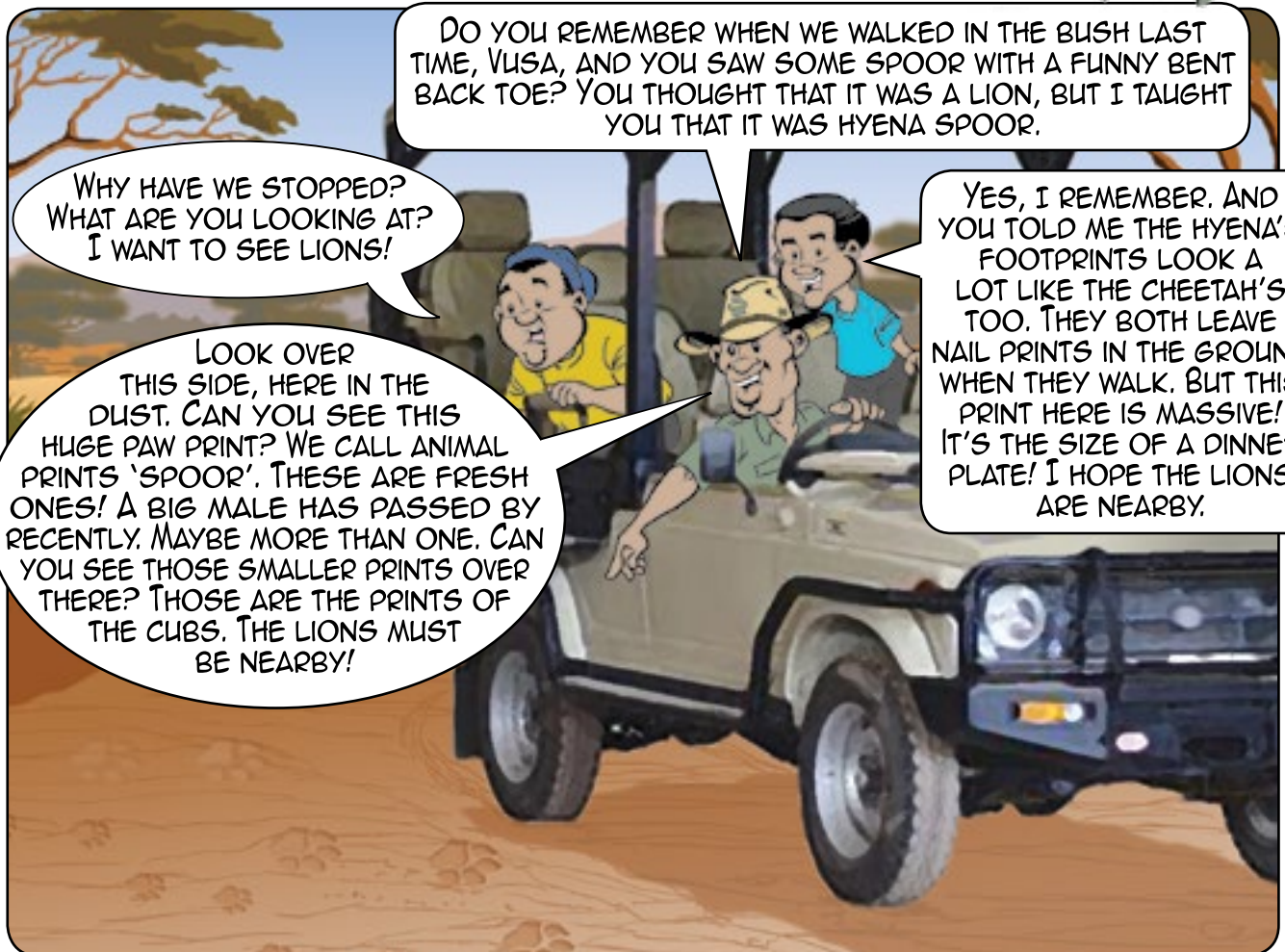
AND THERE'S ANOTHER REASON WE SHOULDN'T SET SNARES. IF WE POACH ALL OUR WILD PREY, THEN PREDATORS WILL BE FORCED TO ATTACK OUR KRAALS. LOTS OF PREY KEEPS LIONS WELL FED AND HEALTHY, AND AWAY FROM OUR LIVESTOCK!

WE MUST TELL OUR PEOPLE NOT TO SET SNARES, OR THERE WON'T BE ANY WILD ANIMALS LEFT ... AND THEN LIONS WILL GET INTO TROUBLE FOR KILLING OUR LIVESTOCK.





SNARING IS ALSO ONE OF THE DEADLIEST THREATS TO THE SURVIVAL OF SOME OF OUR MOST ENDANGERED ANIMALS LIKE LIONS, CHEETAHS AND AFRICAN WILD DOGS. MANY VULNERABLE ANIMALS GET CAUGHT ACCIDENTALLY AND DIE HORRIBLE DEATHS IN THE SNARES. LIONS ARE UNDER THREAT FROM HABITAT LOSS, FARMERS, TROPHY HUNTERS AND NOW POACHERS! THERE ARE SO MANY THREATS TO THEIR SURVIVAL!



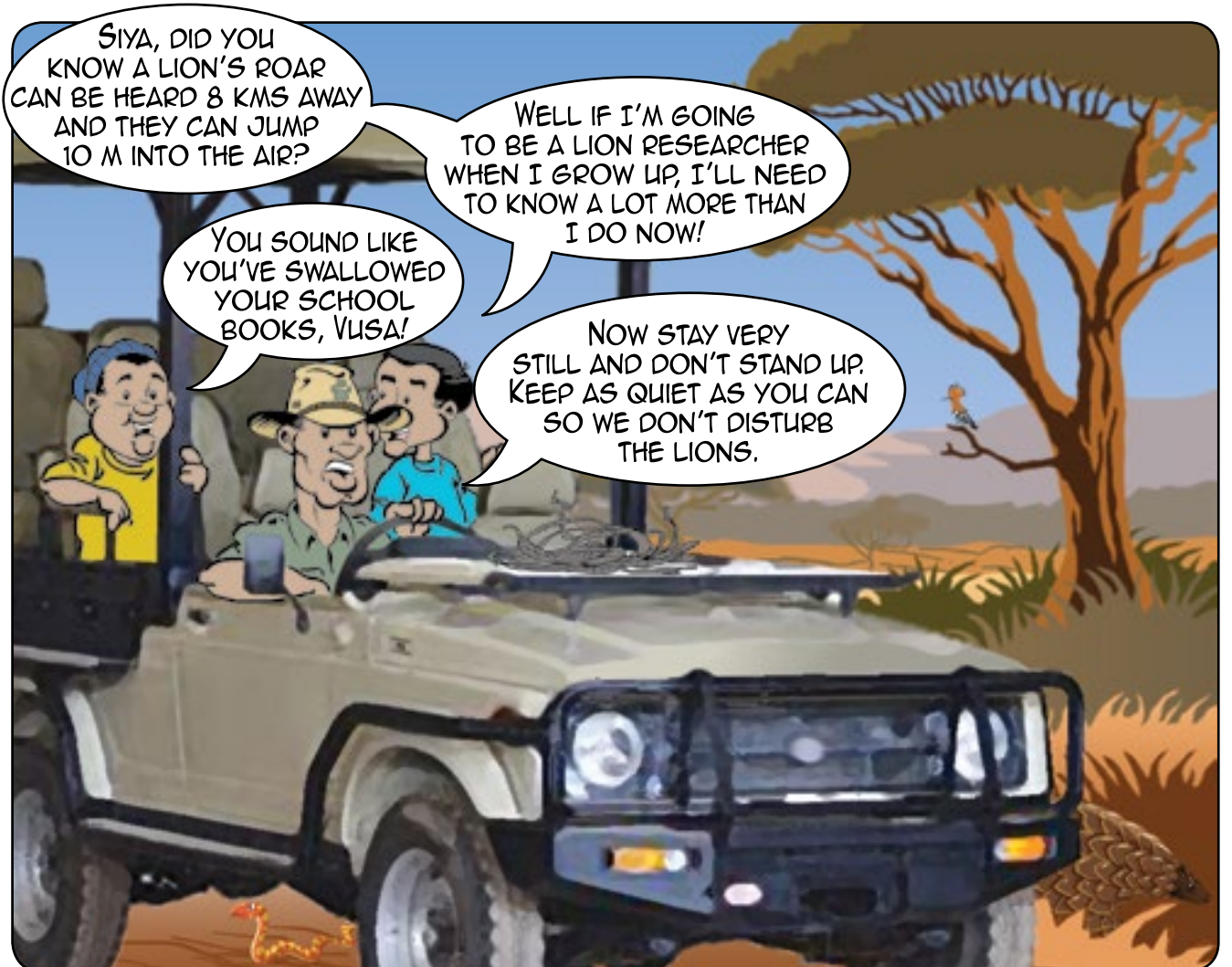
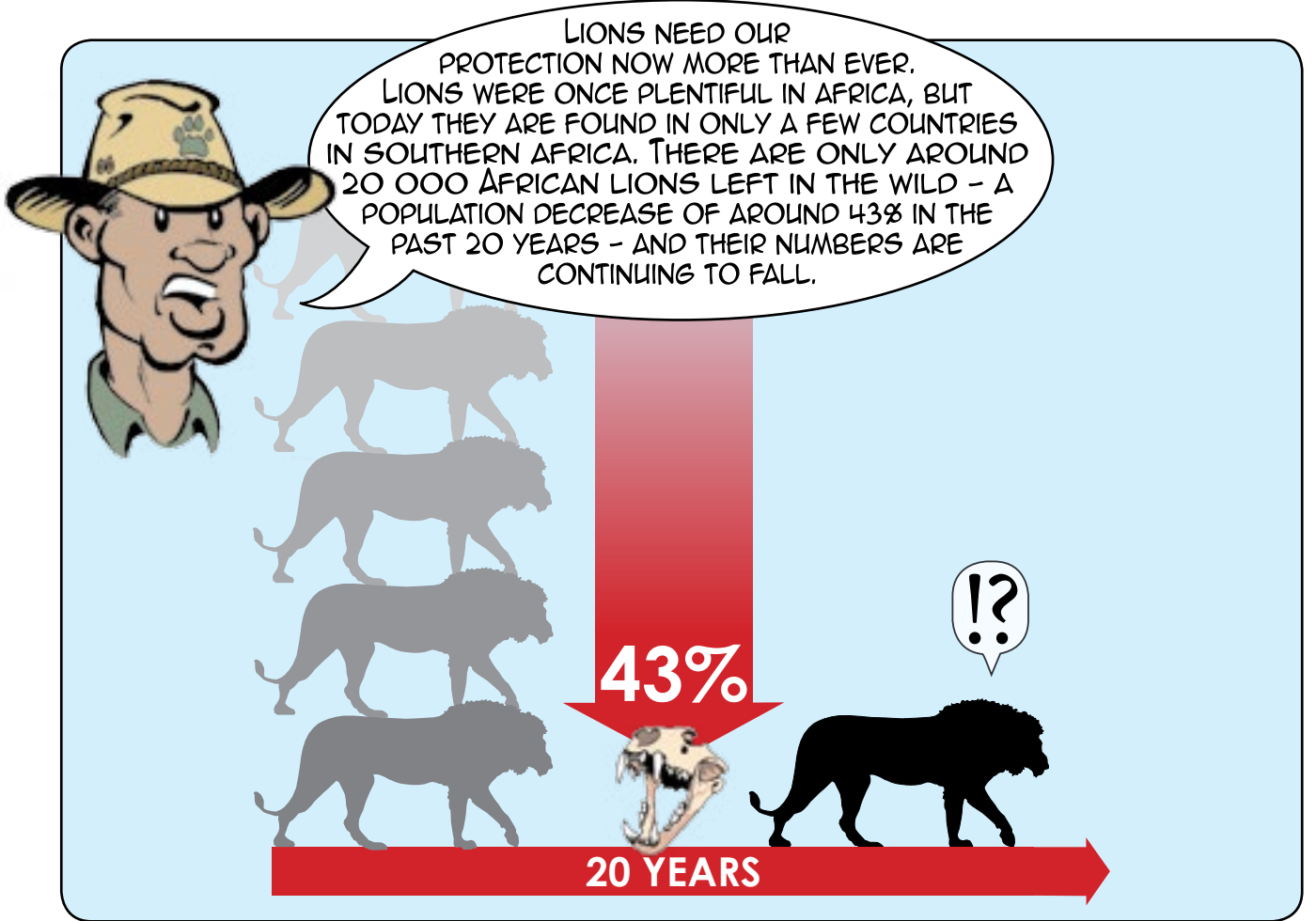
DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN WE WALKED IN THE BUSH LAST TIME, VUSA, AND YOU SAW SOME SPOOR WITH A FUNNY BENT BACK TOE? YOU THOUGHT THAT IT WAS A LION, BUT I TAUGHT YOU THAT IT WAS HYENA SPOOR.

WHY HAVE WE STOPPED? WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT? I WANT TO SEE LIONS!

LOOK OVER THIS SIDE, HERE IN THE DUST. CAN YOU SEE THIS HUGE PAW PRINT? WE CALL ANIMAL PRINTS 'SPOOR'. THESE ARE FRESH ONES! A BIG MALE HAS PASSED BY RECENTLY. MAYBE MORE THAN ONE. CAN YOU SEE THOSE SMALLER PRINTS OVER THERE? THOSE ARE THE PRINTS OF THE CUBS. THE LIONS MUST BE NEARBY!

YES, I REMEMBER. AND YOU TOLD ME THE HYENA'S FOOTPRINTS LOOK A LOT LIKE THE CHEETAH'S TOO. THEY BOTH LEAVE NAIL PRINTS IN THE GROUND WHEN THEY WALK. BUT THIS PRINT HERE IS MASSIVE! IT'S THE SIZE OF A DINNER PLATE! I HOPE THE LIONS ARE NEARBY.










SIT DOWN, SIYA! THE LIONS MIGHT LOOK PEACEFUL, BUT ALWAYS REMEMBER, LIONS CAN BE DANGEROUS. ALWAYS TREAT WILD ANIMALS WITH RESPECT AND GIVE THEM SPACE.


THEY ARE THE SECOND LARGEST IN THE CAT FAMILY, AFTER TIGERS. UNCLE ENOCH TAUGHT ME THAT A MALE LION WEIGHS AROUND 190 KGS. THAT'S OVER SIX OF YOU, SIYA!

YOU SAY LIONS ARE DANGEROUS, BUT THESE ARE RESTING. THEY LOOK LAZY TO ME!


LIONS CAN SLEEP FOR 20 HOURS A DAY TO SAVE ENERGY FOR THEIR NEXT HUNT AND THEY NEED TO EAT ABOUT 5 KG OF MEAT A DAY. THAT MEANS THEY NEED TO KILL ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK, DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF THE PRIDE.



LOOK AT THE CUBS PLAYING TOGETHER! THEY DON'T NEED SLEEP. I'D LOVE TO GET OUT AND CUDDLE THEM!




CUBS COPY THEIR PARENTS WHEN THEY PLAY. THEY RUN, STALK, CROUCH, WRESTLE AND POUNCE ON EACH OTHER TO DEVELOP SKILLS THEY'LL NEED LATER IN LIFE. THEY'RE SOCIAL CATS TOO, WHO LIVE TOGETHER IN GROUPS CALLED PRIDES. THE MALES WILL LEAVE THE PRIDE WHEN THEY ARE AROUND THREE YEARS OLD BUT THE FEMALES WILL STAY TOGETHER FOR THEIR WHOLE LIVES.



UNCLE ENOCH HAS A STORY ABOUT WHEN HE WAS A HERD BOY AND MET A LION. PLEASE TELL SIYA THE STORY, UNCLE.





WHEN I WAS A  
YOUNG MAN, I USED TO HERD MY  
FATHER'S GOATS. I CARRIED A STOUT STICK,  
BUT I'D NEVER HAD ANY TROUBLE FROM LIONS  
BEFORE. ONE DAY WHEN I WAS HERDING THE GOATS,  
I SAW A SLIGHT MOVEMENT IN THE KNEE-HIGH GRASS ...  
IT WAS AN ENORMOUS LION! ITS PADDED FEET  
HAD MADE BARELY A SOUND ON THE SOFT  
SAND. I HADN'T HEARD A THING!

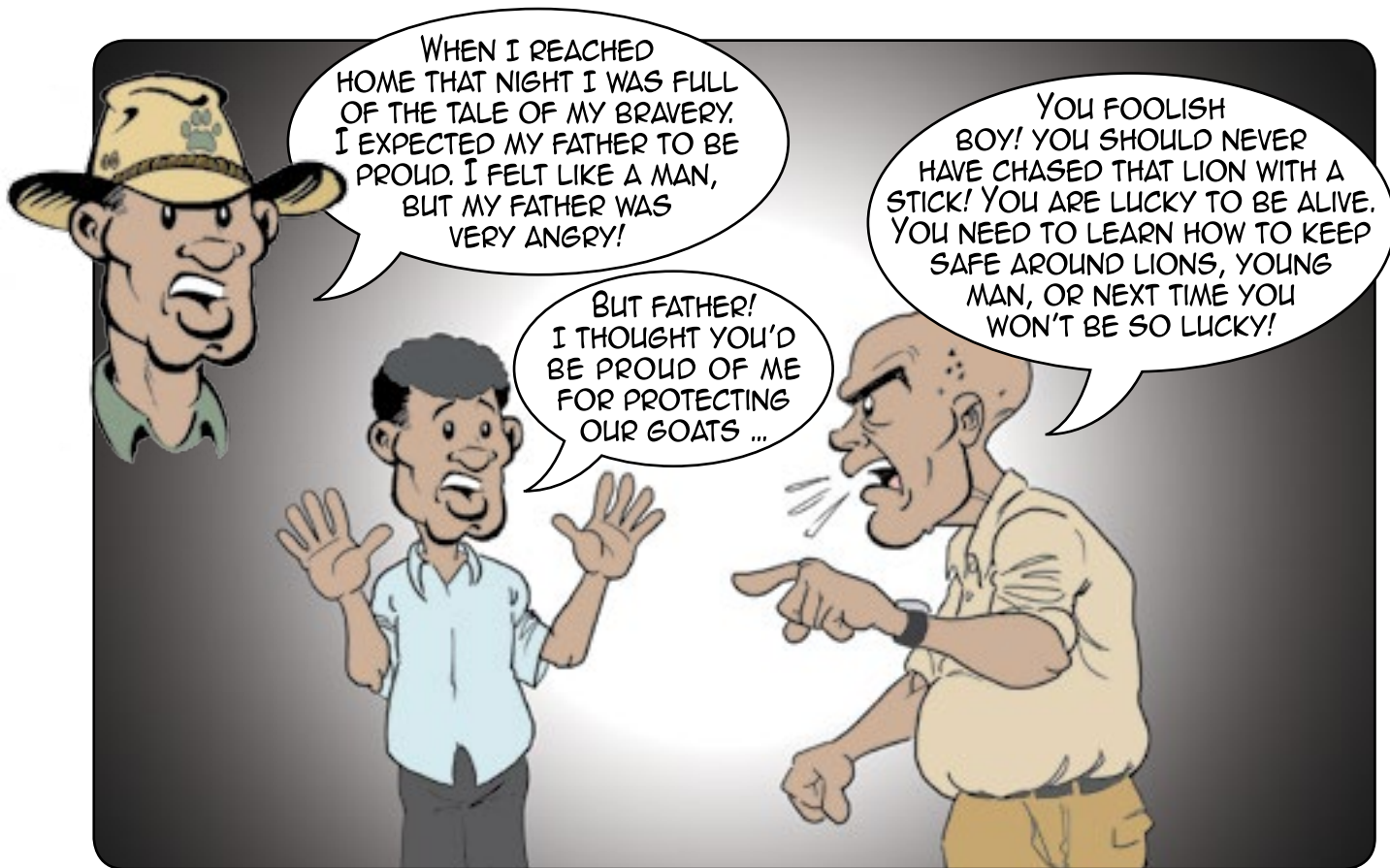
OH NO!

WHAT DID YOU DO?



I SCREAMED AND  
RAN AFTER IT WITH MY STICK TRYING TO  
CHASE IT OFF, BUT SUDDENLY IT STOPPED AND  
STOOD ITS GROUND. I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO  
MEET MY ANCESTORS ... THEN JUST AS SUDDENLY  
IT TURNED TAIL AND RAN OFF INTO THE BUSH.  
I WAS SCARED AND BADLY SHAKEN ...  
BUT I WAS VERY PROUD  
OF MYSELF!





WHEN I REACHED HOME THAT NIGHT I WAS FULL OF THE TALE OF MY BRAVERY. I EXPECTED MY FATHER TO BE PROUD. I FELT LIKE A MAN, BUT MY FATHER WAS VERY ANGRY!

BUT FATHER! I THOUGHT YOU'D BE PROUD OF ME FOR PROTECTING OUR GOATS ...

YOU FOOLISH BOY! YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE CHASED THAT LION WITH A STICK! YOU ARE LUCKY TO BE ALIVE. YOU NEED TO LEARN HOW TO KEEP SAFE AROUND LIONS, YOUNG MAN, OR NEXT TIME YOU WON'T BE SO LUCKY!

Everyone is hungry after their drive into the bush. They are happy to see Ugogo stirring her cooking pot to welcome the boys home.

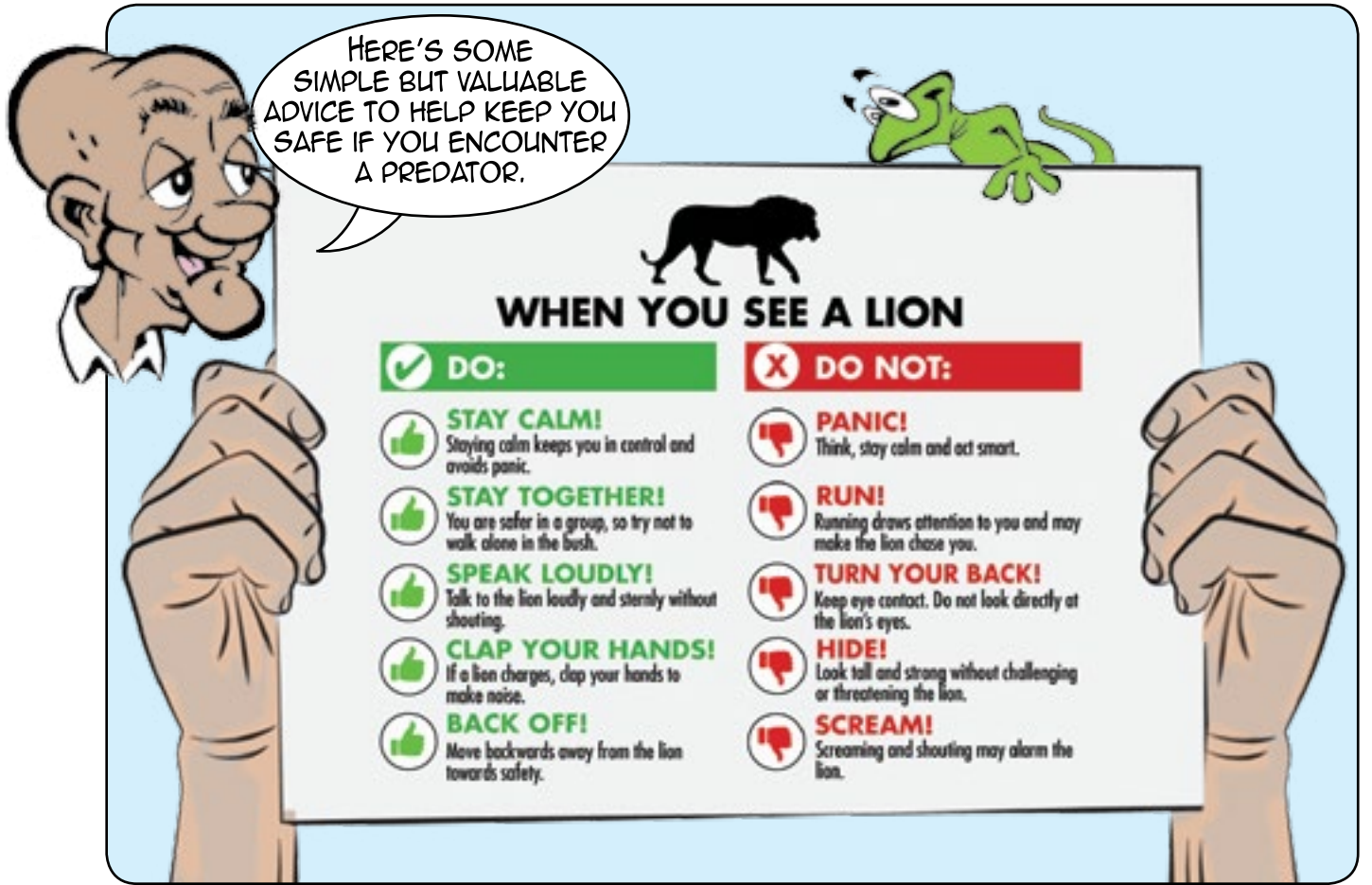
THANK YOU, ENOCH. THAT WAS A WONDERFUL DAY! I SAW MY FIRST WILD LIONS AND SOME GIRAFFE, ZEBRAS, AND EVEN A TORTOISE ...

CAREFUL, SIYA, IF YOU WANT TO BE A WILDLIFE RESEARCHER LIKE I DO, YOU'LL NEED TO GET UP EARLY AND NOT SLEEP LIKE THE LIONS!

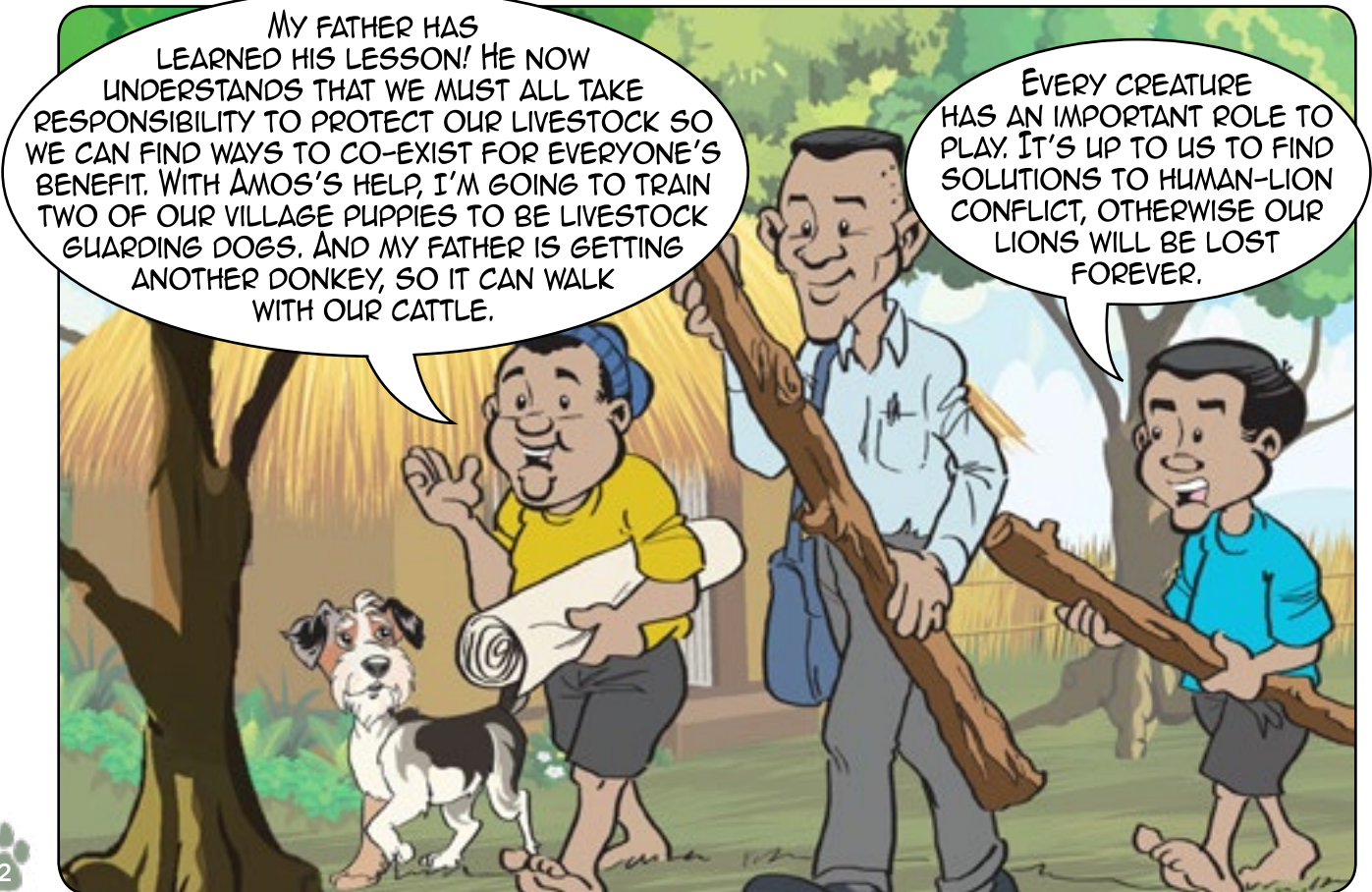
ON A MORE SERIOUS NOTE, BABAMKHULLU, I TOLD VUSA AND SIYA THAT YOU WOULD TELL THEM HOW TO KEEP SAFE AROUND LIONS. I REMEMBER YOU LECTURING ME WHEN I WAS A BOY, AND I'VE NEVER FORGOTTEN WHAT YOU TOLD ME!



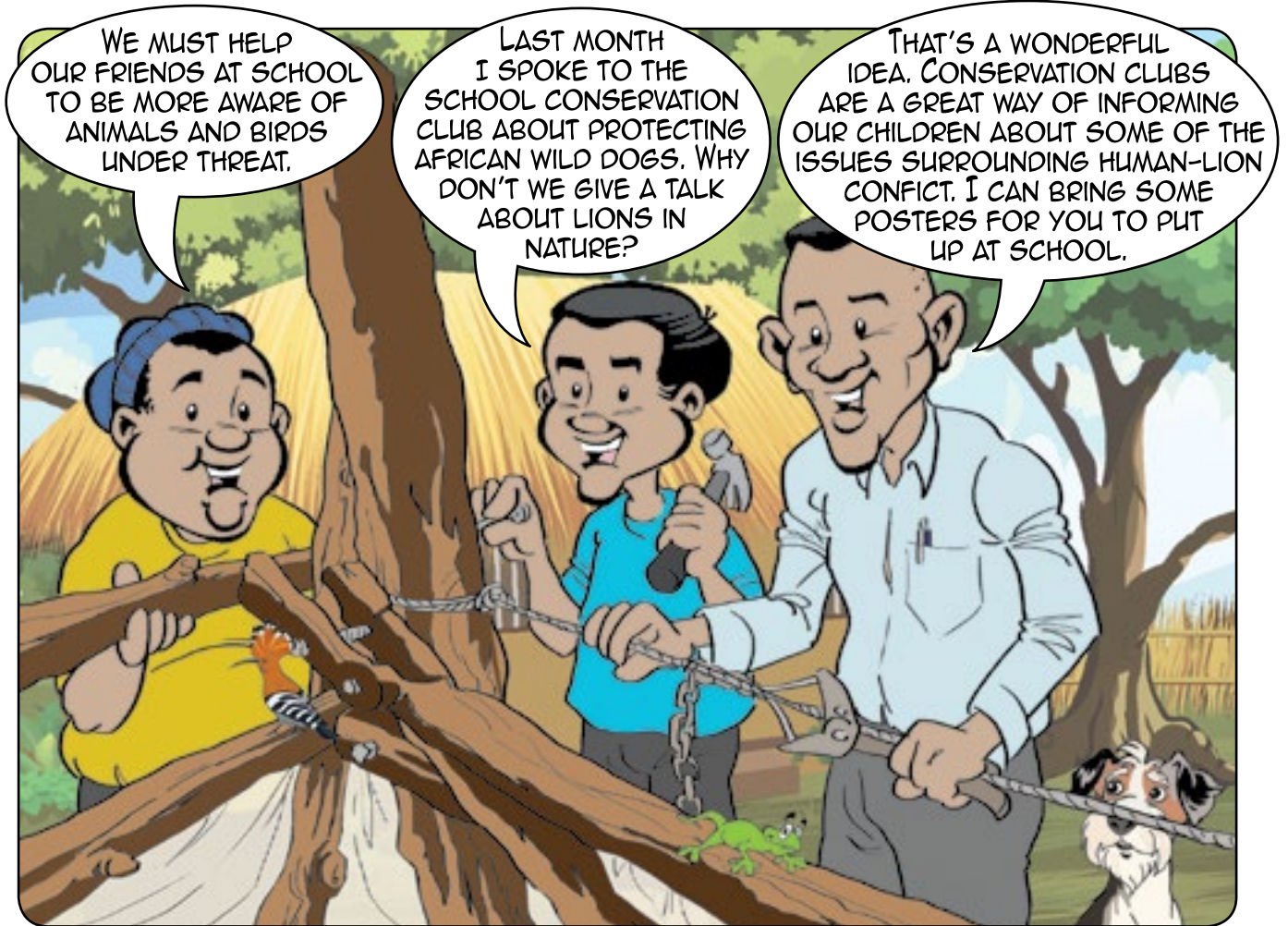




Amos has come to Vusa's village as he promised, to help Siya repair and improve his father's kraal.



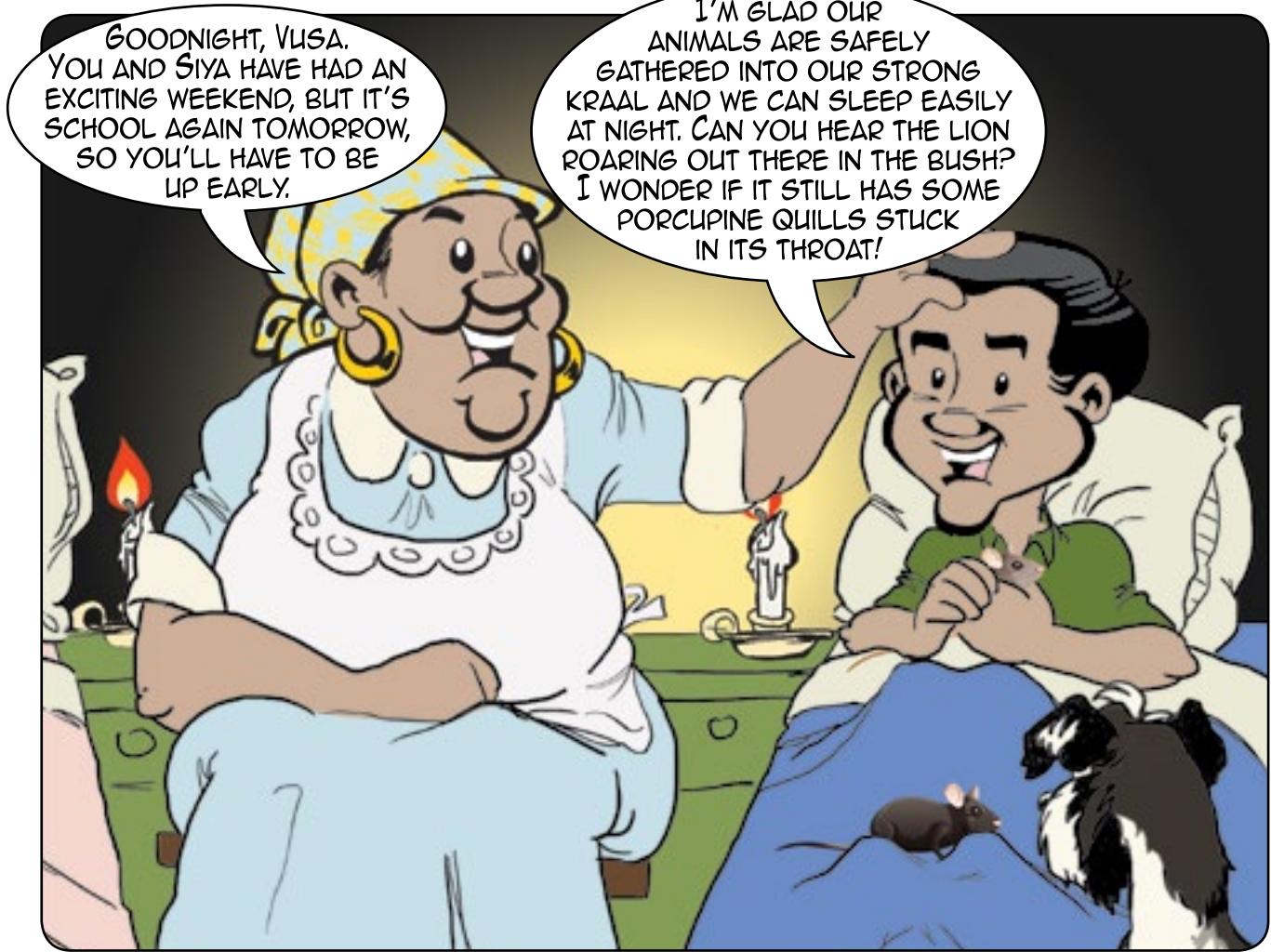




WE MUST HELP OUR FRIENDS AT SCHOOL TO BE MORE AWARE OF ANIMALS AND BIRDS UNDER THREAT.

LAST MONTH I SPOKE TO THE SCHOOL CONSERVATION CLUB ABOUT PROTECTING AFRICAN WILD DOGS. WHY DON'T WE GIVE A TALK ABOUT LIONS IN NATURE?

THAT'S A WONDERFUL IDEA. CONSERVATION CLUBS ARE A GREAT WAY OF INFORMING OUR CHILDREN ABOUT SOME OF THE ISSUES SURROUNDING HUMAN-LION CONFLICT. I CAN BRING SOME POSTERS FOR YOU TO PUT UP AT SCHOOL.

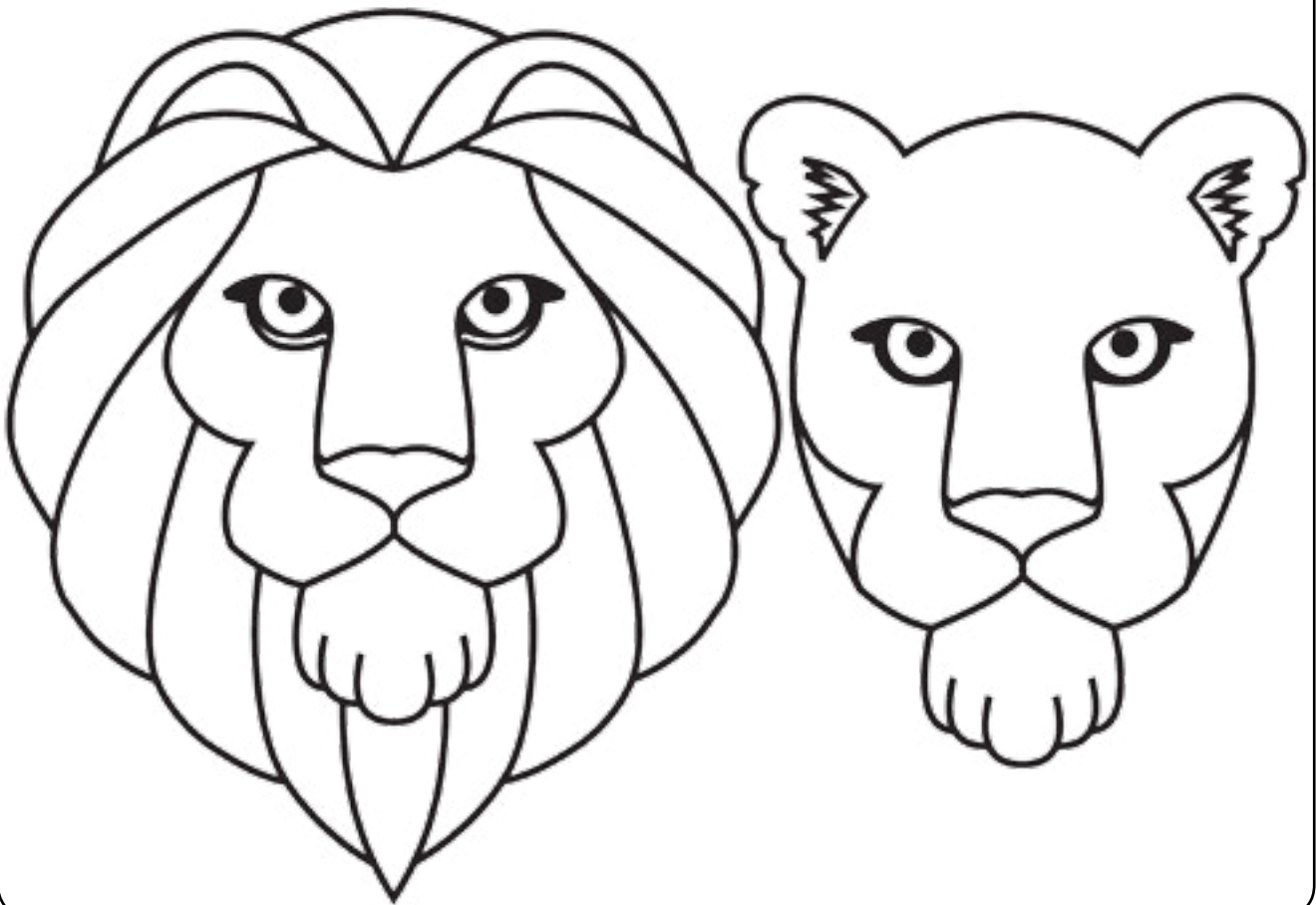


GOODNIGHT, VUSA. YOU AND SIYA HAVE HAD AN EXCITING WEEKEND, BUT IT'S SCHOOL AGAIN TOMORROW, SO YOU'LL HAVE TO BE UP EARLY.

I'M GLAD OUR ANIMALS ARE SAFELY GATHERED INTO OUR STRONG KRAAL AND WE CAN SLEEP EASILY AT NIGHT. CAN YOU HEAR THE LION ROARING OUT THERE IN THE BUSH? I WONDER IF IT STILL HAS SOME PORCUPINE QUILLS STUCK IN ITS THROAT!



## COLOUR ME IN



## CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWERS

**1** If you see a lion, you must:

- A. Run away
- B. Stay calm
- C. Clap your hands

**2** If you see a lion, you must not:

- A. Look directly into its eyes
- B. Call it kitty cat
- C. Turn your back on it

**3** The largest predator cat is a:

- A. Tiger
- B. Leopard
- C. Lion

**4** Lion populations decreased by:

- A. 90%
- B. 43%
- C. 10%

**5** Lions are under threat because of:

- A. Habitat loss
- B. Revenge killing
- C. Poaching snares

**6** Lions are important because:

- A. They attract tourists
- B. They look cute
- C. They control wildlife populations

**7** Lion collars help researchers to:

- A. Lead lions around
- B. Track lion movements
- C. Avoid human-animal conflict

**8** Trained guard dogs can:

- A. Protect livestock
- B. Chase away lions
- C. Play with goats

**9** Vaccinations can:

- A. Make animals sick
- B. Protect from viruses
- C. Keep animals healthy

**10** Properly built kraals can:

- A. Increase soil fertility
- B. Trap lions
- C. Protect livestock from attack

**11** Kraals are also known as:

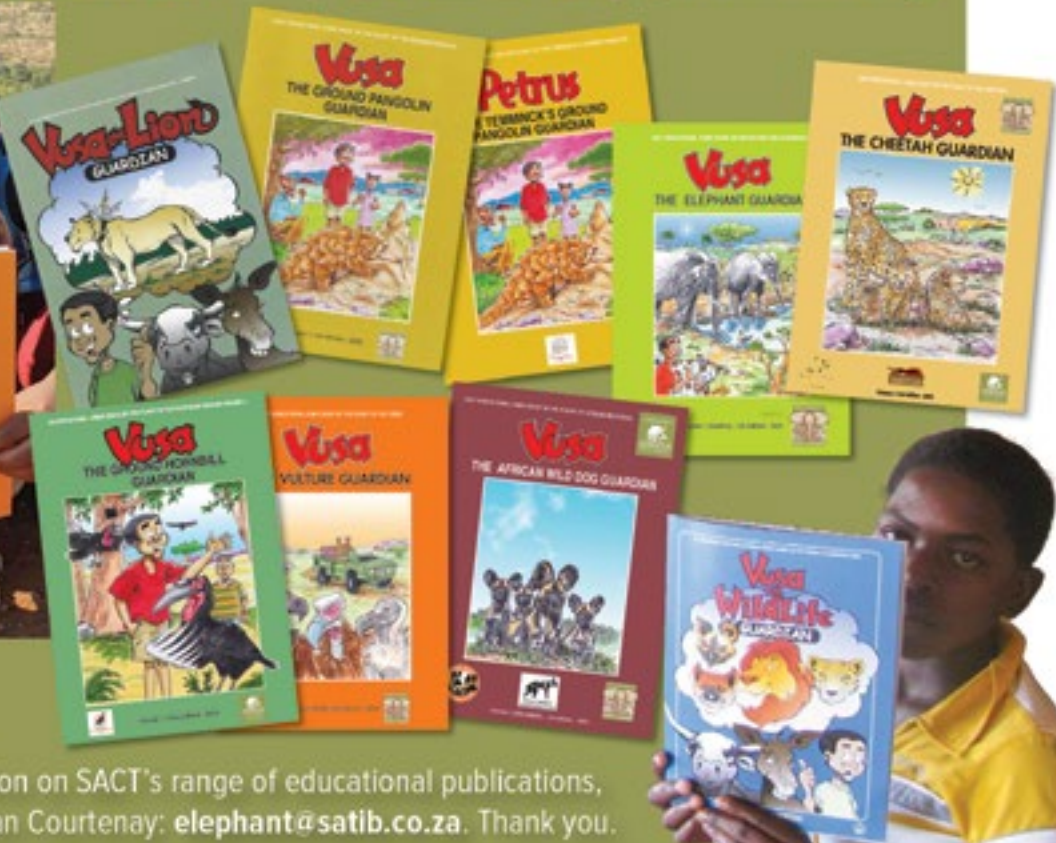
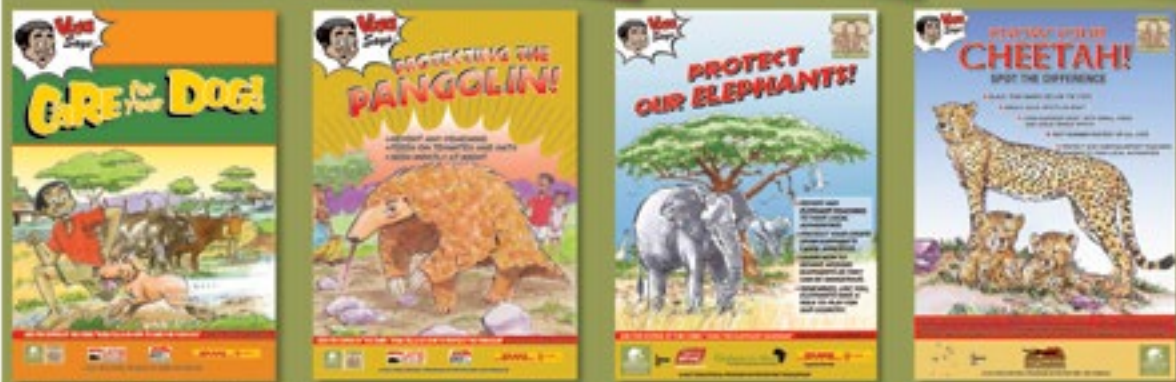
- A. Bomas
- B. Stockades
- C. Kennels

**12** A strong kraal should be:

- A. As high as my head
- B. Any height
- C. 2-3 metres tall



# Education today is the currency of tomorrow.



For more information on SACT's range of educational publications, please contact Brian Courtenay: [elephant@satib.co.za](mailto:elephant@satib.co.za). Thank you.





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