

Filmtexte – Englische Version

Lazy Lion

When the first clouds appeared above the hot African plain, Lazy Lion roared, "The big rain is coming. I will need a roof to keep me dry. And since I am the king of the beasts, I will order a fine house to be built."

So he went to the ants and ordered, "Build me a house. A big house!" The ants built a palace of towers and turrets and chimneys and spires. But Lazy Lion was too big to fit through the door. "I won't live in the earth", said Lion crossly.

So he went to the weaverbirds and ordered, "Build me a house". A big house!" The weaverbirds built a nest of grasses and palm-leaves and soft fluffy seeds, and it hung from the branch of a thorn tree. But Lazy Lion was too heavy to reach the door. "I won't live up a tree", said Lion crossly.

So he went to the ant-bears and ordered, "Build me a house. A big house!" The ant-bears dug a huge hole with many rooms and caverns and tunnels and caves. But it was damp and so dark that Lion couldn't see anything. "I won't live underground", said Lion crossly.

So he went to honey badger and ordered, "Build me a house. A big house!" Honey badger found a hollow tree stump and ate all the bees and all the honeycomb inside it, and cleaned it as clean as cleaned. And Lion climbed inside. But his head stuck out of the hole at one end, and his tail stuck out of the hole at the other end. "I won't live in a tree stump", said Lion crossly.

So he went to crocodile and ordered, "Build me a house. A big house!" Crocodile found a cave in the riverbank and swept it with his tail. And Lion walked in and went to sleep. But in the night the cave filled up with water from the river. "I won't live in the water", said Lion crossly.

By now Lazy Lion was very, very cross And the sky was absolutely full of big black clouds. So Lion called all the animals together. "You must all build me a house", he ordered. "A very, very big ..."

But just as he said the words "very, very big", there was a flash of lightning in the sky, and a bumbling of thunder, and suddenly the big rain poured down everywhere.

The ant-bears rushed underground. Honey badger trundled off to his tree stump, and crocodile waddled into his cave. The ants marched off down their hole. The weaverbirds flapped to their nest. But, sitting in the rain in the middle of the African plain, was Lion.

"He is so very difficult to please", said crocodile, snick-snacking his teeth.

And to this day Lion has not found a house to live in. So he just wanders the African plain, on sunny days and cloudy days, and even in the big rains.

Lions in the Savannah

We call them the kings of the animal world. In our eyes lions are majestic, strong and dangerous, but quite friendly when they greet each other in a pride. Their home is the African savannah, where many kinds of animals live: plant eaters, like the antelopes, and beasts of prey, like the lions.

An antelope has just given birth to a baby. After a few minutes it is able to stand up and suck milk from its mother.

Just a few kilometres away, hidden in a hole under some bushes, a lioness and her new-born cubs. They are three, and they're far more helpless than the antelope kid. They're still not able to see well. To get to their mother's milk, the cubs have to feel their way to the teats. It will take ten days before they can walk at all.

An hour has gone by. The antelope kid has had enough to drink. It can now follow its mother without any difficulty. The female antelope looks attentively around her.

The mother of the lion cubs is on the prowl. She must find food for herself and her cubs. Hidden in the tall grass, she lies in wait only a few meters away from the antelopes. A short sprint - the antelopes flee in all directions. The lioness gives up. It's really not easy to catch prey. The antelopes are simply too fast.

Even the slower wart-hogs, who live here, can get away, if they see the lioness early enough. Only an unexpected attack can be successful. A zebra walks off easily enough and the gnus move on in large herds. These animals are always on the move. Gnus are fast and very watchful. But when they start to graze, a lion's surprise attack could pay off.

And once again, it turns out well - for the gnus.

Five weeks later. The lion cubs leave their hiding-place with their mother. Now they join the other young lions, protected by the pride. - But why are the lion cubs here all the same size? - A new male lion has taken over this pride and he's killed all the babies he could find. The lionesses can only become pregnant again without their earlier offspring. Then, after a time, cubs are born, fathered by the new Pasha. Many lion cubs are thin. If the lionesses don't find enough to eat, there isn't enough milk for the cubs.

It's now the rainy season in the savannah. The heavy rains can be dangerous for the lion cubs. They cool out very quickly. The plant eaters find plenty to eat. Fresh grass is growing everywhere, which makes the animals stronger and even faster.

In the morning light the antelopes are especially on the look-out. The lions are on the hunt - and their competitors, the other beasts of prey.

Here a hungry cheetah lies in wait. And a leopard creeps up. But no! A rival chases him off. In the meantime the swift cheetah is almost there. He's chasing down an antelope buck. Got him! Lured by the hunting, a jackal sneaks up. But in the end it's a hyena who eats up the cheetah's prey.

A group of lions have brought down a buffalo calf. And now they are being attacked by the angry buffalo herd. And other animals are already there again to snatch some bits from the lion's prey. But the lions are very strong in a group, and they're not going to surrender their booty as easily as that.

Two-and-a-half years later. One of the male lion cubs is fully grown. The pasha of the pride now sees him as a new rival. His threatening behaviour is clear: It's time for the young lion to go. It will be difficult to survive on his own. Perhaps he can join up with another group of young lions and take over a pride in five or six years. As the new pasha, he won't have any sympathy for the younger lions either.

Maybe he'll go off together with a single lioness and profit from her hunting ability. She's left her pride with her cubs, because there wasn't enough food to go around. Then they're like wandering nomads.

Now there should be enough food for the young ones, but they are not quite safe. The young lion isn't from their own pride. Therefore he doesn't show much sympathy for them.

The rainy season is coming to an end. In a few weeks the dry season begins and there'll be no fresh grass for a few months. Before that happens the gnus herd together and then move on to new grazing grounds.

The lions don't follow the plant eaters. They stay in their own territory. Soon there will be hardly any prey in the dried out region. Some wart-hogs still find roots in the ground. They hang around and cool off in the remaining mud-holes. Not enough food for two lionesses, who are struggling to survive near their home territory.

All lions from the grasslands are now going hungry.

We call them the kings of the animal world. Yet their lives are more in danger than the plant-eaters, their prey. When the gnus, the zebras and the antelopes return with the next rainy season, they will only be awaited by those few lions, who have survived the drought in the savannah.