Mei and her brother, Fu, lived in the mountains of South China. One night a heavy, wet snow fell on their village. They awoke at dawn to the *swish* of snowflakes against rice-paper windows.
Outside, Mei and Fu rolled huge snowballs to make their lion.

They used straw for his mane and a broom for his tail.

Two pieces of coal made his eyes.

Thorns from a tree made his teeth and claws. “What a great lion I made!” Fu boasted again.
The huge snow lion blinked. He stretched and yawned, showing teeth as long and sharp as spears.

“He’s alive!” Fu cried.

“He’ll eat us!”

The big lion roared at Fu and gobbled him up.
Villagers came running.
Some laughed.
“Ha! That Fu was always boasting.
It serves him right!”
The village ruler began shouting
at the snow lion.
“Go away! Leave our village alone!”
The lion didn’t like yelling.
He ate the ruler—head first.
With a mighty roar, he gobbled up three villagers who had laughed at Fu.

The villagers shouted. The dogs barked.
The noise made the lion angry.

With a mighty roar, he gobbled up three villagers who had laughed at Fu.

Then he swallowed four yapping dogs.
As he ate, he grew larger.
Mei thought hard. What should she do?
Then she saw her grandmother.
She remembered her home and the warm fire there.
“Mr. Lion,” she said humbly. “You look tired. Please come home with me and rest.”
The snow lion roared again.
“I am tired,” he said.
Swinging his head and roaring, he followed Mei home.
The rest of the villagers laughed.
“Look! A small girl is leading the snow lion!”
The snow lion did not like that. He ate five of them.
Then he roared loudly enough to shake the mountain.
Mei opened the door to the house.
“Come in, noble sir, and rest,” she said.
“Then you may eat all the villagers you want.”
The snow lion entered. He looked right and left, searching for a trap. “You see, the fire is nice and bright. You may rest there,” Mei said politely. “Thank you, kind child,” the lion growled. “But remember, I will still eat you later if I get hungry.”
“I understand, noble sir,” said Mei.
“If you get hungry, I will be here.
We even have a cat you may eat for dessert.”
The cat hissed at that.
“I will guard your sleep,” Mei said.
“You need not fear me. I will not touch you.”
The snow lion settled by the fire.
“This is cozy,” he said in a sleepy voice.
Mei tried not to smile.
The snow lion was melting.
“Sleep, sleep, sleep,” she sang, like a lullaby.
The snow lion fell asleep.
He melted more and more.
Then Fu jumped out of the melting snow. One by one, the villagers hopped out. One by one, the dogs tumbled out. The very last to appear was the ruler.
The snow lion was all gone. The villagers scooped up the water. Then they all marched to the waterfall.

“We will throw away this water the lion came from,” said Mei. “We don’t want him to disturb our village again.”
“And Fu, there is one thing you must remember.”
“I know,” said Fu.
“No more boasting!”
Reading

Read-along books are designed to be enjoyed together and to foster a love of reading. These books help children build comprehension skills and learn new vocabulary. It is helpful to develop these skills in any language!