

The Snow Lion

A Chinese Tale



Written by Laurel B. Schunk
Illustrated by Patrick Campbell

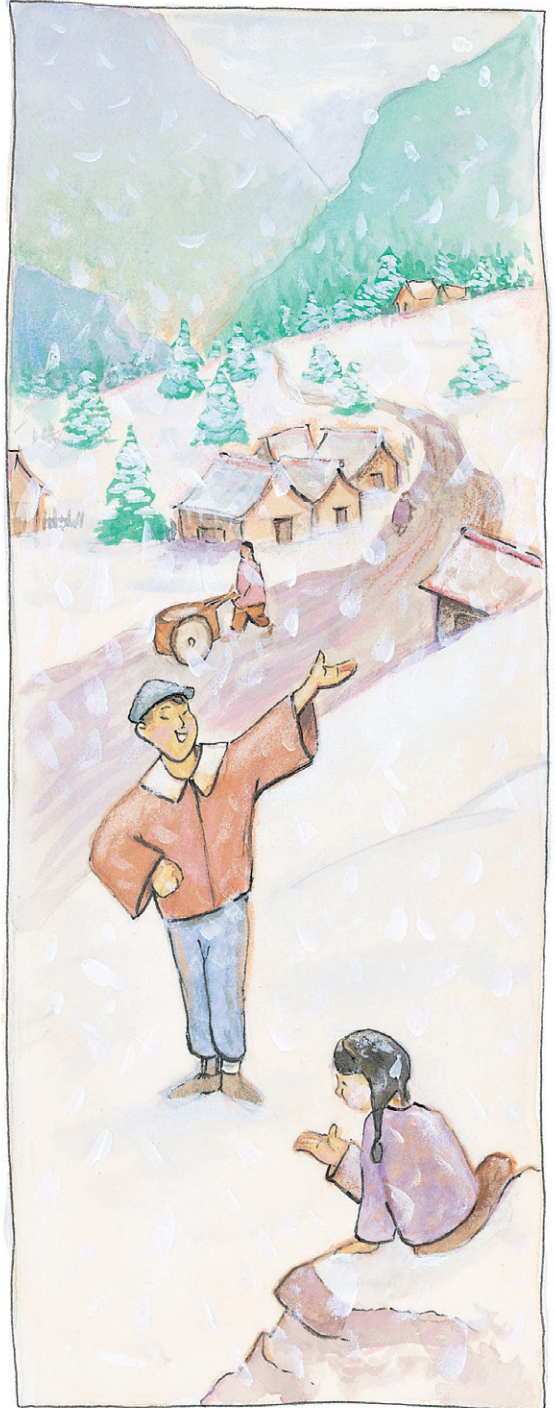


Mei and her brother, Fu,
lived in the mountains
of South China.

One night a heavy, wet snow
fell on their village.

They awoke at dawn
to the *swish* of snowflakes
against rice-paper windows.

Mei hopped up
and rolled her sleeping mat.
“Fu!” she called.
“A perfect snow!
Let’s build a snow lion!”
“I’ll build the best lion ever!”
Fu boasted.
“Don’t boast, Fu,”
Mei said softly.
“Boasting can cause bad things
to happen.”



Outside, Mei and Fu
rolled huge snowballs
to make their lion.

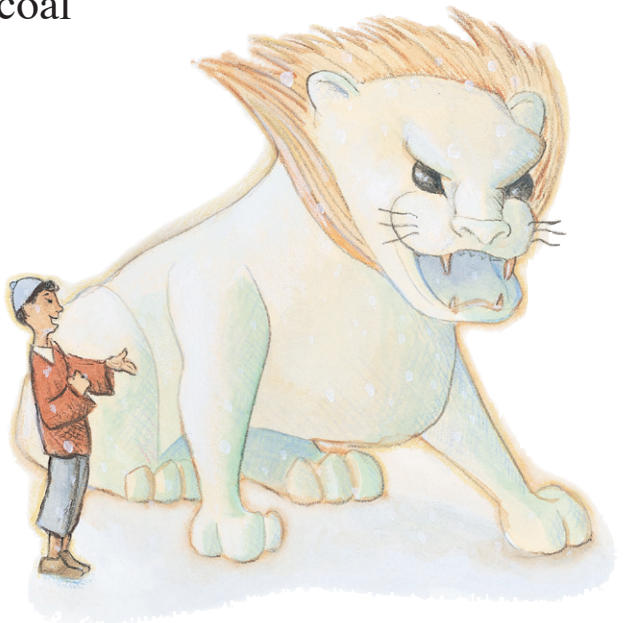


They used straw for his mane
and a broom for his tail.



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.

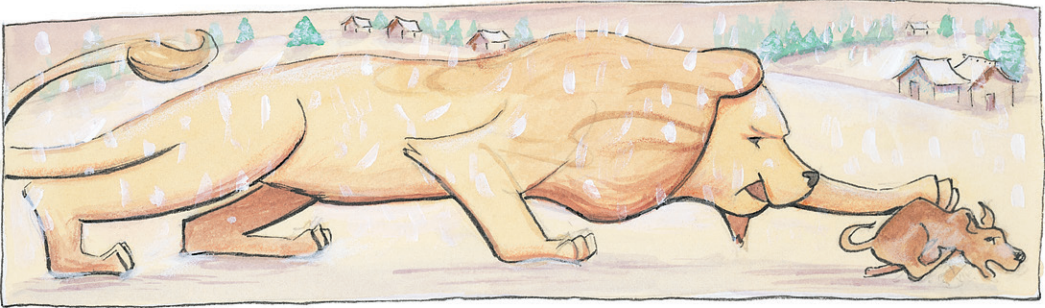
He ate the ruler—head first.



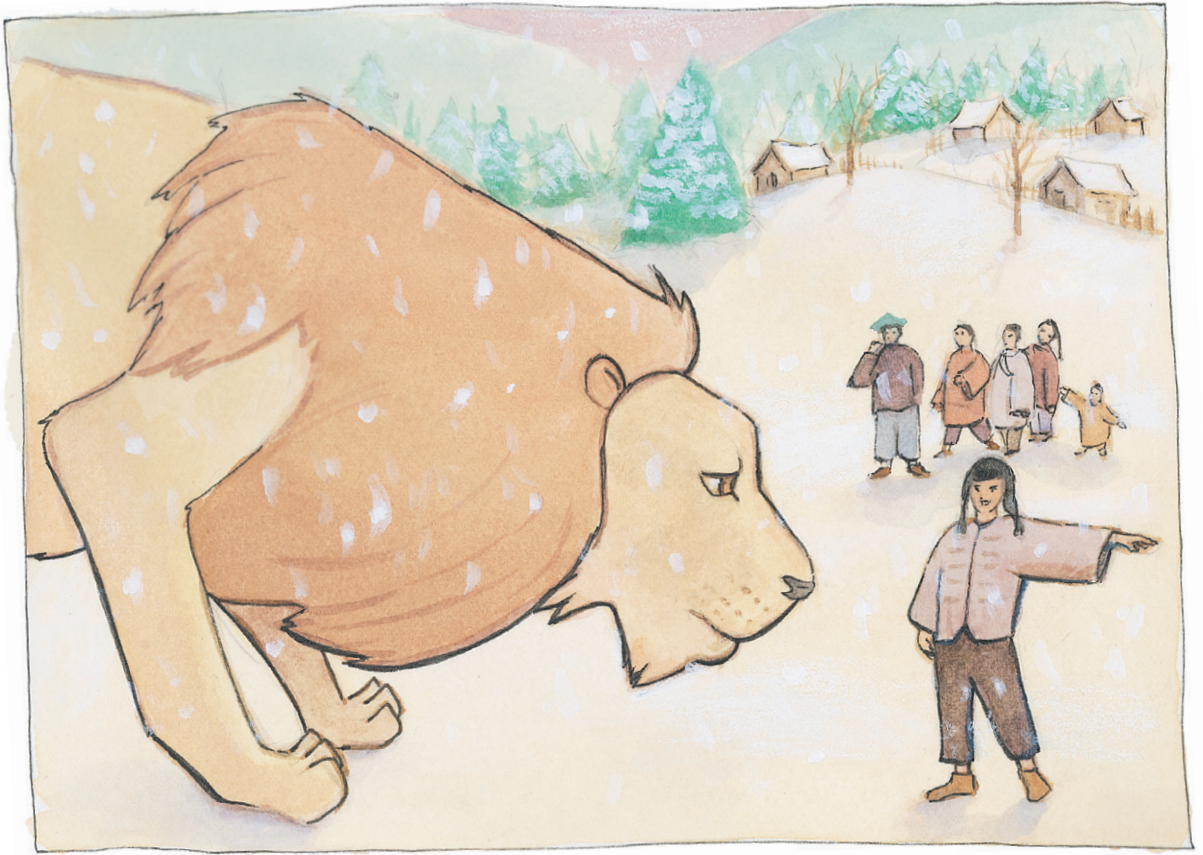
The villagers shouted. The dogs barked.
The noise made the lion angry.



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.

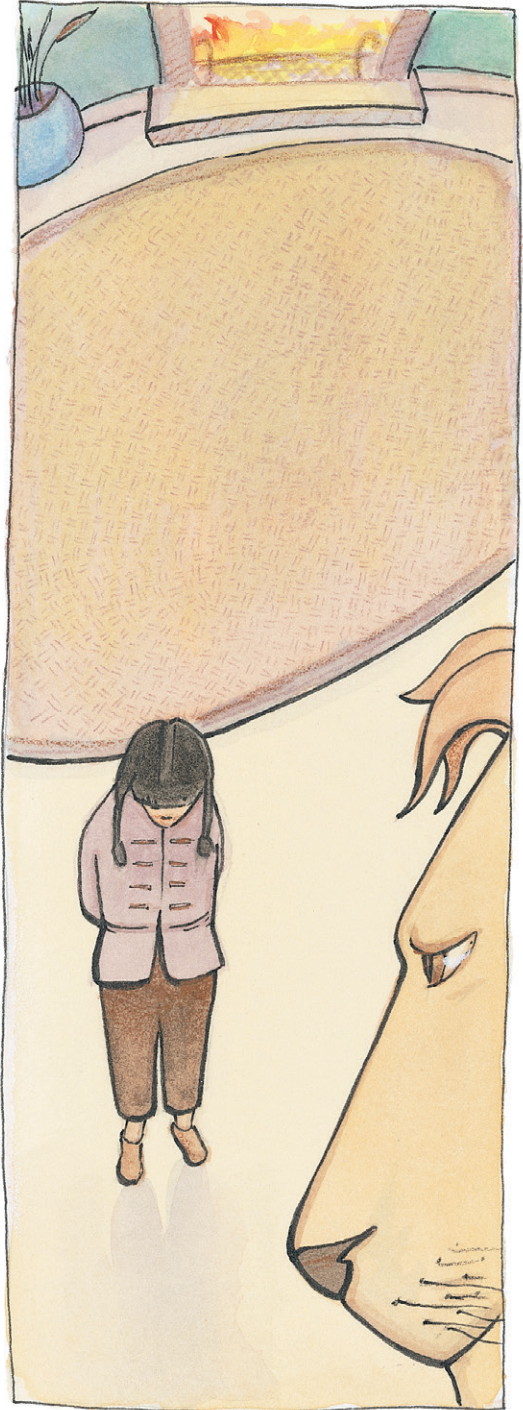
Then he roared loudly enough to shake the mountain.

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!

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