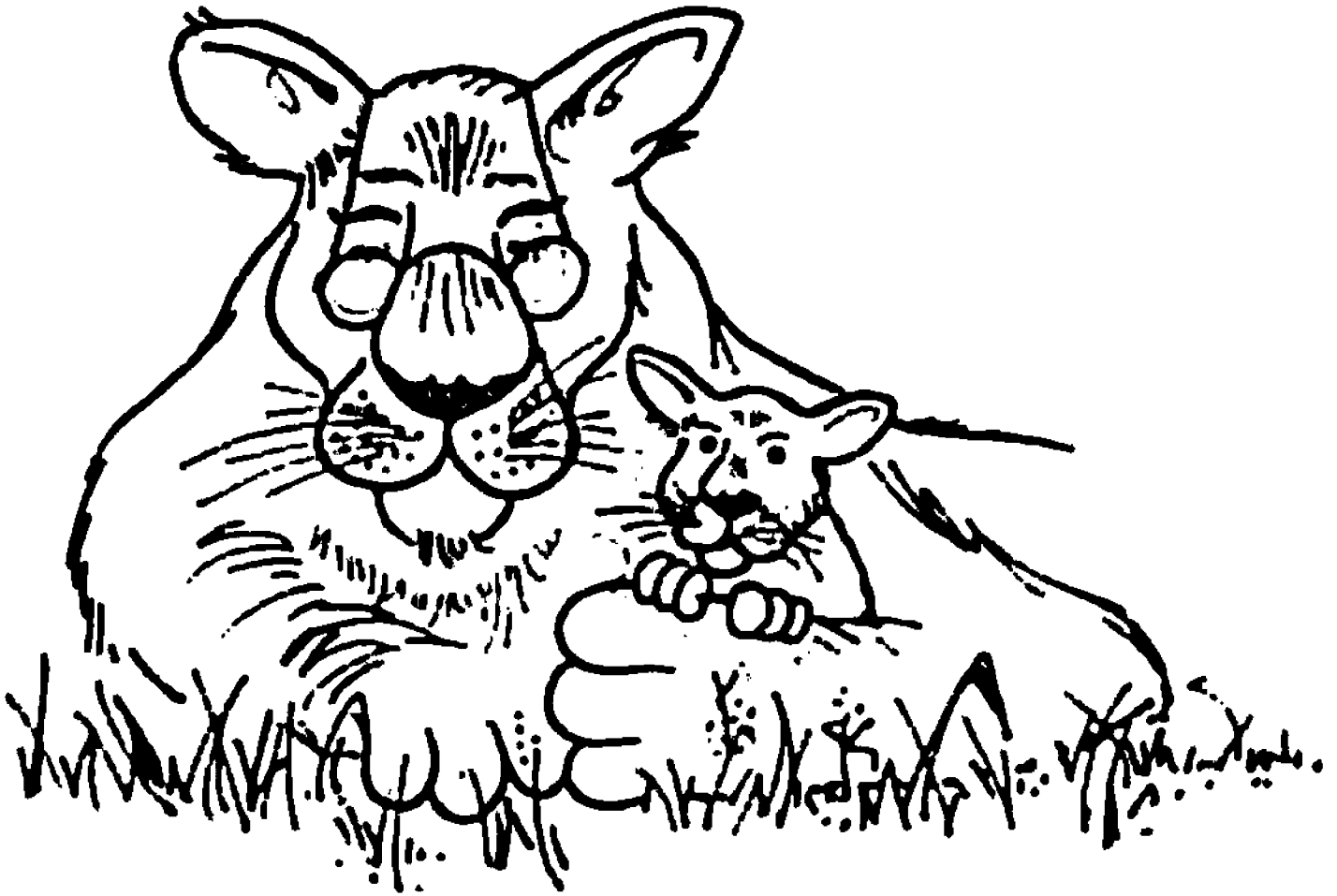


The Lioness



“WHEN YOUR SON IS A *LION*, ONE SON IS ENOUGH!”

The Lioness

Adapted from the fables of AESOP

The beasts of the forest, the little, the great
Once met on a certain historical date
To argue the question, each one with the other,
Which of them all was the Forest's Best Mother.
"Just look at *my* babies!" spoke up Mrs. Bear.
"Never was ever so perfect a pair!"
"Chubby and Tubby," I proudly proclaim,
"Are the top of the crop in four-legged fame!"
The crickets and beetles applauded her words,
And so did a number of listening birds.
"Your babies," they twittered, "are cunning indeed."
"You're a *very* good mother!" the chorus agreed.
A jealous old leopard, then claiming her due,
Said, "I have *four* babies, while she has but *two*!"
"How bright are their eyes and how pleasing their spots!"
"Two babies are stingy. Four babies are lots."
A perky young robin then puffed out his chest.
"I have to admit that I'm greatly impressed!"
"Me too!" chirped a whippoorwill, thrilled to the core,
"Two babies are nice—but four babies are more!"
Mrs. Rabbit looked scornful. "Four babies? Pooh, pooh!"
"I, if you please, have *at least* twenty-two!"
"(Though I probably have a far greater amount—
Twenty-two is as high as I know how to count!)"
Respectful astonishment stirred in the thicket.
"*Twenty-two babies!*" sang sparrow and cricket.

'T'was then that a lioness raised her great head.
"Quantity bores me!" she languidly said.
Pride filled her voice, though her tone was still gruff,
"When your son is s *lion*, one son is enough!"



I HAVE *FOUR* BABIES, WHILE SHE HAS BUT *TWO*!

Questions About the Poem

Check the right answer.

1. The animals argued about who was
 a. king of the jungle.
 b. the laziest.
 c. the best mother.
2. Mrs. Bear thought Chubby and Tubby were
 a. playing too rough.
 b. a perfect pair.
 c. good little bears.
3. Mrs. Rabbit said she had at least
 a. twenty-two babies.
 b. ten babies.
 c. a hundred babies.
4. The birds thought Mrs. Bear was
 a. too grouchy.
 b. a very good mother.
 c. always bragging.
5. "Date" rhymes with
 a. take.
 b. tail.
 c. great.

Special question: Was the lioness jealous of the animals with big families? Why or why not?