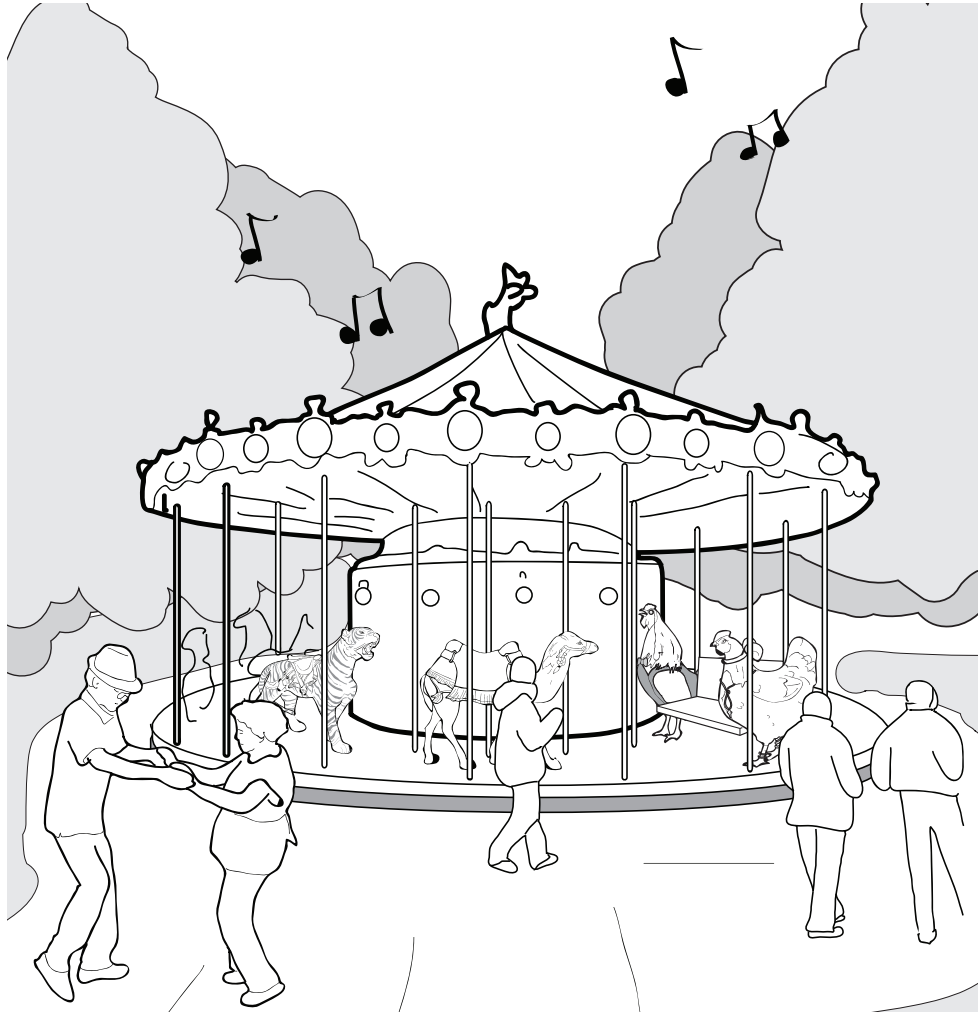


Instructions: Read the story and be prepared to answer questions at the end.

The Cat And The Carousel



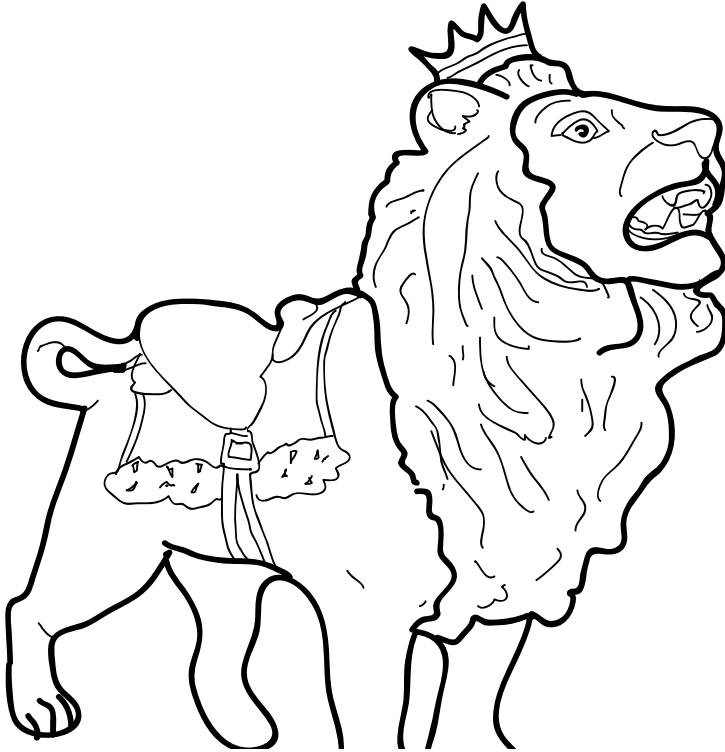
The magnificent carousel stood in the middle of the park. It was red, blue, green, and purple. It played wonderful, happy music that called the carefree children to come ride and explore its animals.

There was a huge lion, an elephant, a tiger, a tall giraffe, a zebra with stripes, an ostrich, a camel, a hen, and a rooster.

Sometimes the smallest children were afraid of the lion because his mouth was open wide and his great teeth stood out as though he had just let out a huge roar. He was the largest and most extraordinary looking animal on the merry-go-round.

"He is the king of the carousel," someone said, and everyone agreed.

The children who loved the lion best were eager to ride him. He was so big that even grownups needed help to climb up on his saddle. And what a saddle it was, with its bold orange and turquoise stripes outlined in gold. The noble lion was the only animal whose saddle blanket had gold.



A few children preferred the elephant because it did not go up and down, only around, while others wanted to ride on the hen and rooster or the tiger. Everyone, big and little, had a favorite animal they liked to ride.

When the carousel started, its music could be heard all over the park. People tapped their feet or danced as the happy sounds came rolling out of the large brass pipes located in the middle of the carousel.

Elephant's place was near the edge of the merry-go-round. He was large, too, and gray and pink. His trunk went high up in the air and then curled down as though he were getting a drink.

Tiger, whose place was in front of Elephant, was long and sleek with a coat of black and orange stripes. His saddle was sturdy, painted with a rare design of symbols from ancient Africa.

Giraffe was the tallest of all. He stood near the center of the carousel, next to the music pipes. His big smile and modest coat of tan, brown, and black made Giraffe look elegant. His saddle was painted like a rainbow mural with brilliant colors.

Miss Hen and Mr. Rooster stood side by side with a seat between them for weary parents to rest. Miss Hen was white with black speckles. Mr. Rooster was black with red and green feathers on his head and under his beak was a red wattle.

Camel was plain and brown all over, but he had the most attractive saddle of

all. Its colorful design was filled with all kinds of shapes. His saddle blanket looked just like a rug that might have come from a faraway land.

The zealous zebra with his considerable black and white stripes was the first resident of the carousel. The ostrich, with its long sleek neck, stood next to the zebra as they glided around the merry-go-round with the other animals.

When the carousel started moving, the animals made quite a sight, like a flat rainbow that went around and around, turning in a circle on the ground.

One afternoon, just before closing time, the carousel was taking children for the last ride of the day when the music stopped. Not a sound came from the brass pipes.

The children were very disappointed. It was beginning to get dark, and the people began leaving the park. The caretaker hurried to find out what was wrong. He looked at the pipes and rollers, but he could find nothing to fix. So he closed the park, saying to himself, "I must make a note to have the pipes looked at tomorrow."

At night when the park was closed and no one was around, the carousel animals would talk. Tiger was almost always the first. He was usually in a bad mood and needed something to complain about.

Now the animals had a good life on the merry-go-round. They were never hungry like real-life animals, and they didn't feel heat or cold because they were statues.

So that night when Tiger growled, "Why don't I have as much gold on my saddle as you do, Lion? I am just as powerful a cat as you are. In fact, I am more beautiful than you because I have stripes." Lion, who was accustomed to Tiger's complaints, did not usually bother to argue with him, but tonight he answered impatiently.

"Yes, Tiger, you are a powerful cat; I have never said you were not, have I? I cannot help that they made me bigger than you."

This was the same old complaint, and it was boring. So he did not remind Tiger that a lion was considered to be the king of the jungle, because Lion was worried about why the music had stopped. At the same time that he was answering Tiger, Lion was also thinking to himself, "Why does Tiger have to be such a complainer?"

"If we were real, we could have a contest to see who is the most powerful,

but we are not real. We are just statues made of wood. No, I do not know why my saddle is so big or why it has more gold than yours, but I am sure that the only reason I have more gold on my saddle is because my saddle is bigger, not because I am better than you." Lion wondered how long he would have to go on to please Tiger. It kept life on the carousel from being pleasant when Tiger had nothing to do but complain.

Elephant, who was usually in a happy mood, groaned, "I have heard the same complaint from you so many times, Tiger, that tonight I just don't want to hear it again. I am losing my patience with you. Anyway, we have much more important things to be concerned about than how much gold is on your saddle."

"What else is so important?" snapped Tiger.

"Why, the music, of course! We are all worried about the music." He was about to say something else when a loud "Meow!" echoed through the night, then another and another.

"Whatever is that sound?" asked Giraffe. "It seems awfully close to me, and I don't like it."

The sky was particularly dark that night except for the pale light from the moon when it shined through the clouds. In the dark the animals could see nothing at all.

"Meow, meow," the sounds got louder and louder. "I am an animal, a real cat. I am lost, and I'm stuck."

"Stuck? You are stuck? Where are you stuck? We hear you but we can't see you."

Suddenly, there were scurrying and awful screeching sounds of cat claws scratching on metal. It made the animals shiver. They all wished they were alive so they could run away from the horrible clawing and scratching noises.

"Meow, meow, meow...." The mewling sounds got farther and farther away until the noise stopped altogether.

Just then, the moon came from behind a cloud and lit up the sky. "Oh, my gosh!" Giraffe said. His place on the carousel was next to the center where the music pipes were, and his neck was so long that he could easily see over the top of the pipes.

"What is it? What's happened?" the other animals asked.

"Why, that noise is coming from a kitty, a poor little kitty, and it has fallen

and is at the bottom of the biggest music pipe."

"Is it hurt?" asked Lion.

"Can't it crawl out?" asked Camel.

"What can we do?" asked Elephant.

No one answered. No one knew.

After a long silence, Lion said, "Then we must think. Let's all think together. How can we help that poor kitty?"

"That's right, we'll have to help the kitten ourselves. The caretaker is not here to take care of this," said Zebra.

"Then it is up to us to solve this problem. Let's think out loud," said Mr. Rooster.

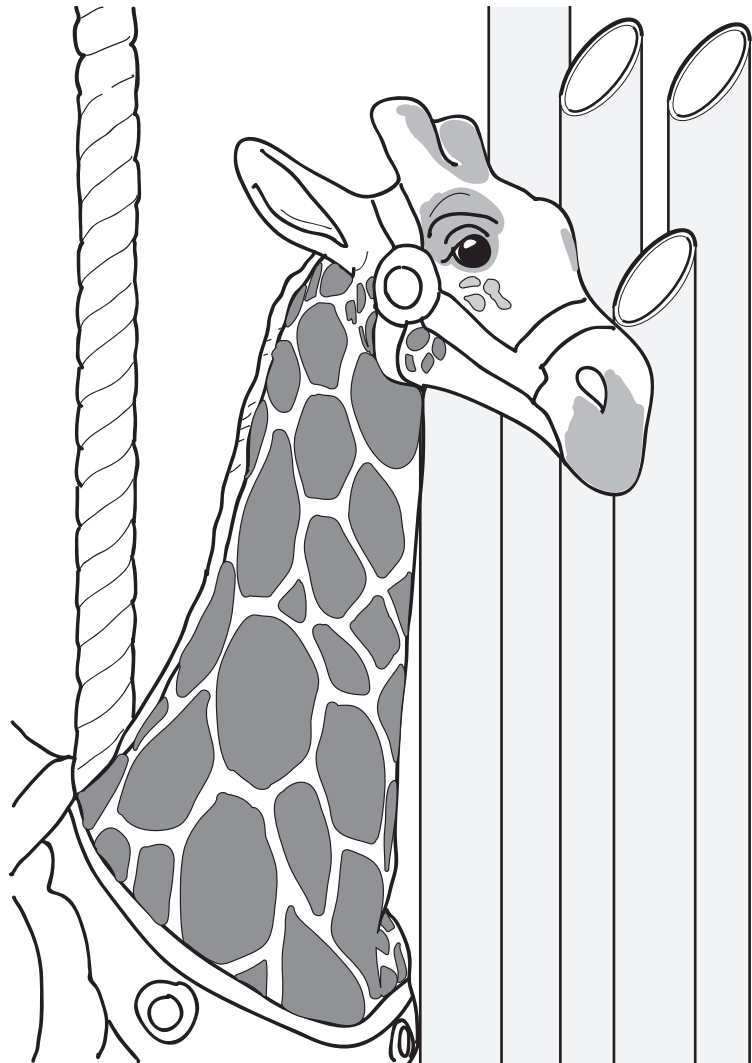
So they thought and thought and thought. No one said a word, not even Tiger, who for once was not complaining. The moon rose higher in the sky. The higher the moon got overhead, the more it lit up the park. All was quiet except for the sounds of soft mewling coming from the brass pipes where the kitten lay crying.

"Poor little kitten. It is scared," said Ostrich, "I know what it is like to be afraid."

"Shhh, little kitten, don't be scared. We are trying to think of a way to help you," Lion said.

The animals sat quietly, thinking.

"I've been thinking," said Elephant, "If I could just be real, just for ten minutes, I could help."



"Well, you're not real," said Tiger.

"What could you do, Elephant, if you were real and not a statue?" asked Mr. Rooster, ignoring Tiger's cruel remark.

"Oh, I would fill my trunk with lots of water, put it down the pipe to fill it, and the kitty would float right to the top."

"Aaargh," groaned Tiger, "Kitties are cats like me, and we hate water; you might drown the poor little thing."

"If I were real," said Lion, "I could push against the pipes with all my strength until they fell over and Kitten could climb out."

Miss Hen had been worriedly clucking to herself all through the conversation and now she was really concerned. "Cluck, cluck, cluck. But what if the pipes fell on Kitten? There must be a better way!"

Just then the moon went behind the tall trees that lined the park. The sky became dark, so dark the animals couldn't even see the pipes. And the park became very quiet because all the mewling and crying had stopped.

Then, suddenly, breaking the silence, an awful scratching on metal sound came from the big pipe. The sounds got louder and louder, making horrible, eerie, piercing noises. Again the animals shuddered at the sounds.

Then just as suddenly, it was quiet again. The animals looked at each other wondering what had happened. Was the kitty hurt? Had it fallen asleep? They hadn't heard the sound of claws on brass for quite a while.

The moon came out from behind the trees and bathed the carousel in moonlight. They all heard a soft purring sound at the same time, and there, sitting on the Giraffe's saddle was Kitty, licking her paws slowly and carefully.

"How did you get out?" asked Elephant.

"Yes, how?" asked all the other animals.

"Well," answered Kitty, "When the moon went behind the trees, it got very, very dark, and when it did, I could see very clearly where I was, because real cats see much better in the dark. I saw some pieces of rope hanging down inside the brass pipe, so I grabbed the rope and climbed out and here I am!"

All the animals were happy, even Tiger. He was happy the kitten was safe and for one whole week he did not complain about anything at all. Of course, when the caretaker came to turn on the carousel the next morning, the music played

beautifully as usual. He never knew why the music had stopped or why it now played. But the animals knew. Now most every night in the park you will find Kitty curled up on Giraffe's saddle, talking with the carousel animals.



Instructions: Answer these questions about the story using complete sentences.

QUESTIONS

1. How many animals are on the carousel?

2. Who is the king of the carousel?

3. When the music started, what did the people in the park do?

4. What animal's saddle had the rare design of symbols from ancient Africa?

5. What disappointed the children on the last ride of the day?

6. What do the carousel animals do at night when the park is closed and no one is around?

7. Who is the biggest complainer?

8. What was the strange sound heard during the night?

9. Where was the strange sound coming from?

10. The animals needed to solve a problem. What was the problem?

11. What did Elephant wish he could do?

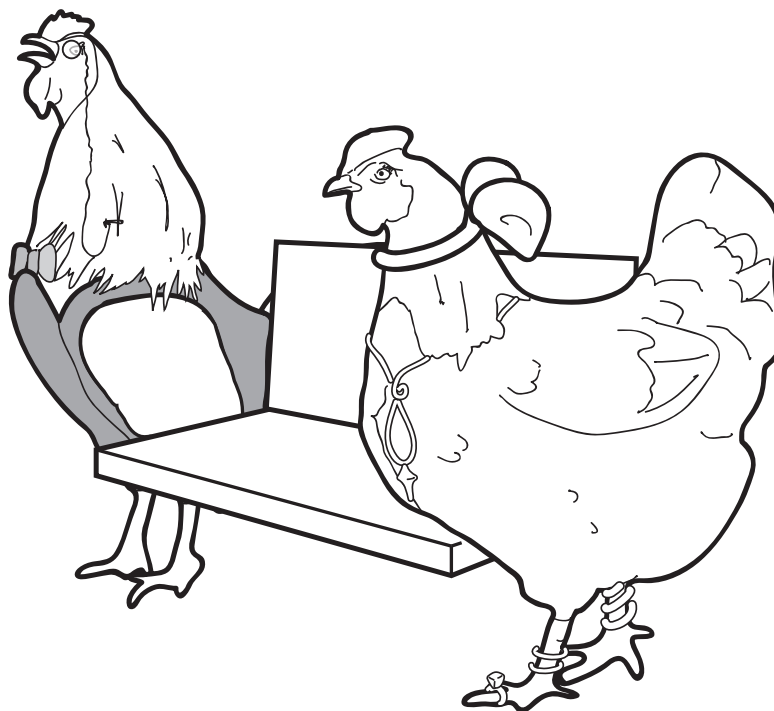
12. Did Elephant have a good suggestion? Why or why not?

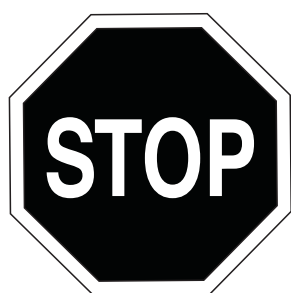
13. What was Lion's suggestion?

14. Did Lion have a good suggestion? Why or why not?

15. What helped Kitty escape?

16. Each night what does Kitty do?





VOCABULARY LIST

Instructions: Below is a list of vocabulary words from the story. They are in bold, and their definitions follow. Print the vocabulary word in the space provided. Make sure to study the definitions so you can remember the meanings.

Print

magnificent - splendid; grand

carefree - free of worries and responsibilities

explore - to investigate; examine

extraordinary - highly exceptional; remarkable

eager - showing great interest

noble - showing high moral character

bold - courageous; fearless

preferred - to choose because of desire

located - the position of something

sturdy - showing great strength

rare - not occurring often

symbols - something that represents something else

complain - to express feelings of pain or dissatisfaction

Instructions: Below is a list of vocabulary words from the story. They are in bold, and their definitions follow. Print the vocabulary word in the space provided. Make sure to study the definitions so you can remember the meanings.

Print

ancient - very old

modest - moderate in size

elegant - tastefully beautiful

mural - a very large picture put onto a wall

brilliant - full of light; shining

weary - tired; worn out

wattle- a fleshy fold of skin hanging from a bird's neck

attractive - pleasing to the eye or mind; charming

considerable - large in amount or extent

resident - one who lives the same place for a long time

glide - to move in a smooth, effortless manner

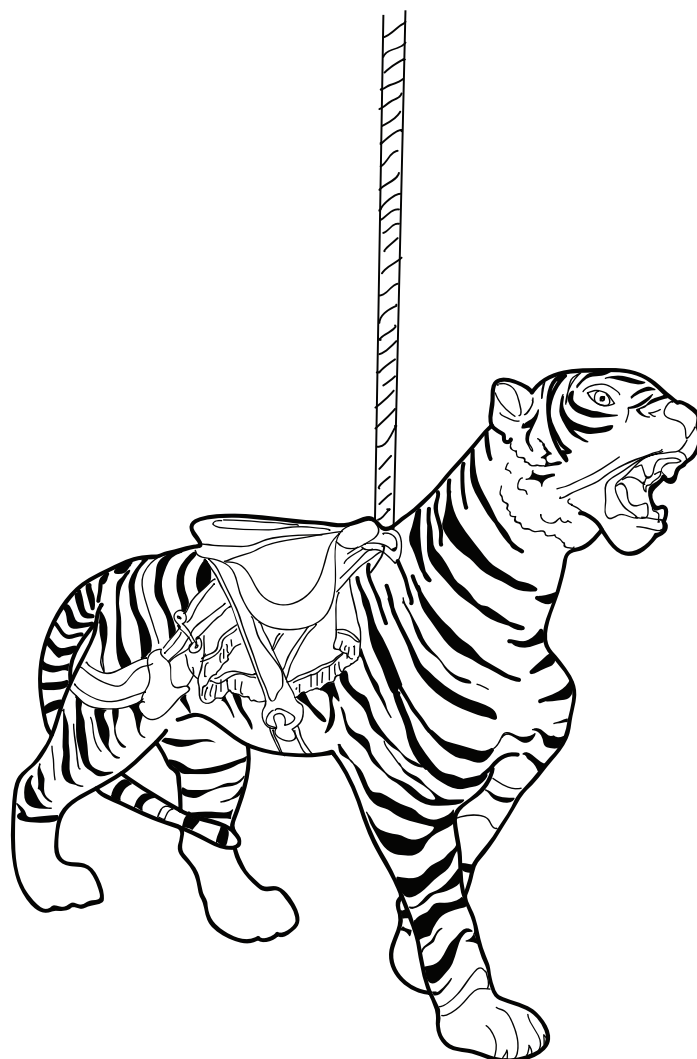
Instructions: Below are sentences about the story. Fill in the blanks using the list of words found at the bottom of the page. Cross off each word once it has been used.

1. Lion is described as the most _____ animal on the carousel because of his great size and _____ saddle.
2. Lion was considered to be the King of the Carousel and of _____ character.
3. The _____ children were always very _____ to ride and _____ the _____ carousel.
4. Tiger is from Africa, where you can find _____ designs of _____ on his saddle.
5. Giraffe's saddle looked like a _____ because of its _____ colors.
6. Miss Hen and Mr. Rooster provide a _____ seat for _____ parents to rest.
7. Because of its colorful design and variety of shapes, Camel's saddle was the most _____ of all.
8. Ostrich _____ around the merry-go-round next to Zebra, who was the first _____ of the carousel.
9. Lion wanted to know why Tiger always had to _____ about everything.
10. Some children _____ to ride Elephant, who was _____ near the edge of the merry-go-round.
11. Standing tall and proud, Giraffe looked _____ with his _____ coat of tan, brown, and black.
12. There was a _____ amount of excitement when Kitty escaped from the music pipes.

symbols	mural	noble	eager	carefree	explore	modest	considerable
complain	extraordinary	attractive	brilliant	sturdy	weary	preferred	
located	glided	resident	bold	magnificent	rare	ancient	elegant

Coloring Fun

Color Ostrich and Tiger to match their descriptions in the story.



Coloring Fun

Color Camel to match his description in the story.

