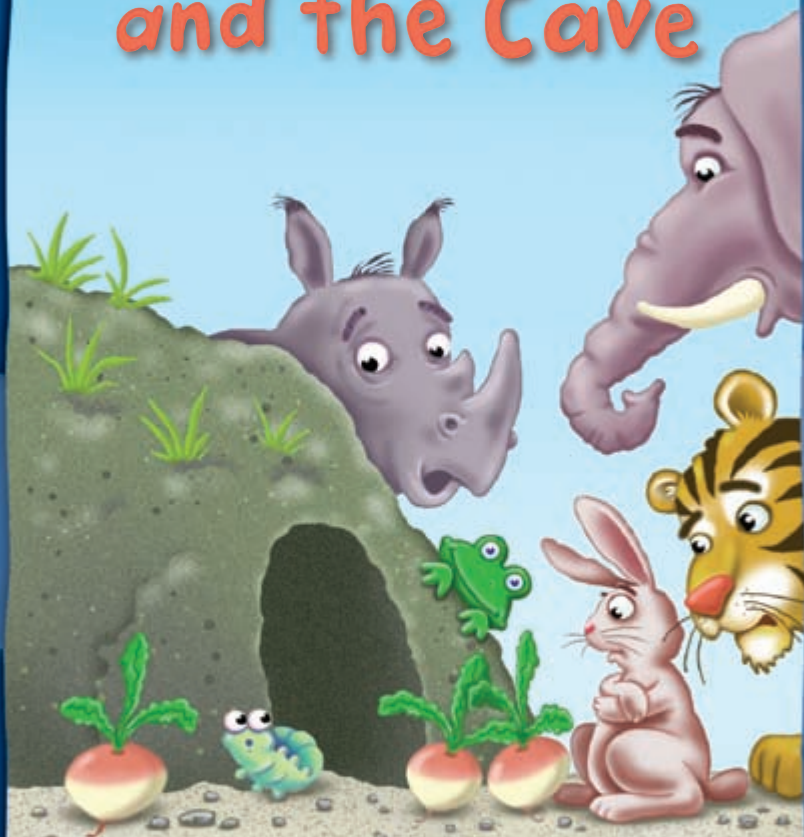


# The Caterpillar and the Cave



retold by Linda Lundberg  
illustrated by Nathan Y. Jarvis

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## A Masai Folktale



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One day Rabbit went out to get a turnip for lunch. On the way, he met his granddaughter.

“What do you have in the bag?” she asked.

“Turnips,” said Rabbit. “I grew them myself! They are planted there.”



While Rabbit was away, a  
caterpillar crept inside his cave.  
Caterpillar made himself at home.

“I think I will make this my new  
home,” he said.



Soon Rabbit came home. He found some marks on the ground going into his house.

“Who is in my house?” he called.

Caterpillar cried out, “It is I, the one who crushes rhinos into the ground! I trample elephants into dust!”



Rabbit hopped away and hid behind a large rock.

“Oh dear,” he cried. “I am so small. What can I do with someone who crushes rhinos and tramples elephants?”





Soon a tiger walked by. Rabbit jumped out from behind the rock.

“Please help me, mighty Tiger!” he cried. “There is someone in my house. Please talk to him and make him leave,” said Rabbit.





“Do not worry, little Rabbit,” said Tiger. “I will get your house back!”

Tiger and Rabbit went back to Rabbit’s house. Tiger showed his big teeth. He pounded on the door.

“Who is in the house of my friend, the Rabbit?” he growled.



“It is I, the one who crushes rhinos into the ground! I trample elephants into dust!” cried out the little caterpillar.

“Oh my,” said Tiger. “Elephants and rhinos are much bigger than I am! What could this animal do to me?”



Next, Rabbit went to find the rhino.  
“Mighty Rhino, please help me!”  
cried Rabbit.

“I am the greatest of beasts!” said  
Rhino. “I will help you, little Rabbit.”

They marched back to Rabbit’s  
house.



When Rhino asked who was inside, Caterpillar said, “It is I, the one who crushes rhinos into the ground! I trample elephants into dust!”

“Oh my! He must be very strong!” said Rhino. He thundered away, leaving Rabbit behind.



Next, Rabbit went to find the elephant. “Mighty Elephant, please help me!” cried Rabbit.

“No one is more enormous than I am!” said Elephant. “I will help you, little Rabbit!” Back to Rabbit’s cave they marched.



“Who is in the house of my friend?” shouted Elephant. Caterpillar yelled out the same thing he told Tiger and Rhino.

“Oh my!” said Elephant, “I do not wish to be trampled into dust!” Away he ran, leaving Rabbit alone.





Next, Rabbit asked a passing frog to help. Caterpillar again said the same thing.

Frog shouted, "I am the one who crushes those who crush rhinos! I trample those who trample elephants!"





“Oh my!” said Caterpillar. “I am only a small animal.” He crept out the back door of Rabbit’s house.



The animals that had tried to help Rabbit were near the back of the cave. They saw Caterpillar sneaking out.

“You!” they all cried.



“I would never dream of living in that house!” said Caterpillar. “The animals around here are much too loud!” Away he went.

All of the animals had a good laugh. “This is too funny!” they said. “But the joke was on us!”

# Think and Respond

- 1 Where does Caterpillar make himself at home?
- 2 Who comes to help Rabbit first? Who is last to help?
- 3 How do the animals try to help Rabbit?
- 4 Why do you think the animals laugh at the end?
- 5 What does Frog do to help Rabbit that the other animals do not do?
- 6 Would you have helped Rabbit? Tell why or why not.



**Make a Poster** Choose one of the animals in the story. Find out more about the animal. Show what you learned in a poster.



**School-Home Connection** What do you think the message of this folktale is? Discuss it with a family member.