

# How Five Animals Agreed to Stay in the Same House

## A Folktale from South Sudan

Once upon a time there were animals with different behaviors who agreed to stay together. They were the snake, the cat, the leopard, the lion, and the hyena. All of these animals agreed to stay in the same house.

When they agreed this, they said to one another, "We are going to set rules that will guide us when we are here." Each of them told the rest what he wanted and what he didn't want to be done by the others in order to stay peacefully.

The snake started and said, "I don't feel comfortable when my skin is touched".

The cat said, "I like making noise and touching others when moving around."

The leopard said, "I don't like noise or to be looked directly in the eye".

The hyena said, "I always move at night and I want the house to remain open all the time."

And finally the lion said what he didn't want too.

None of them complained about the difficulties they would all face when they entered their new house and they began to live together.

One day the hyena went out at night because most of his work is done at night. Later he returned after being chased from where he had gone to look for food. He entered the room and, upon arrival, he stepped on the skin of the snake. The snake was very annoyed and said. "I told you that I don't want to be touched!"

All of them were shouting, and the leopard said, "I told you that I don't want noise. Why are you shouting?!" and the leopard started to fight them. While fighting they all stepped on the body of the snake. The snake was annoyed too, and because of this he bit them and killed them all.

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*Note: The story giver was Gatloth Gai for South Sudan: "I am one of the youth of the Nuer who still has the folktales in my mind because I like them. . . . This story I heard from one of the elderly men in a place called Dariang in the year 1989. I was still young at that time, so we were in the cattle camp. That old man was really a historian and could tell very many histories in the late evening after eating, as we waited for sleep to come."*

# A Long Walk to Water Book Club Activity: Fixing a Folktale

## Description of Activity

Read a folktale, identify missing ideas, and add new sentences to improve the story.

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## Learning Goal

By the end of this activity, you will be able to:

- Find what is missing or unclear in a story.
  - Add your own sentences to make the story complete.
  - Share and compare your ideas with classmates.
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## Step 1: Read the Story *How Five Animals Agreed to Stay in the Same House*

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## Step 2: Find the Problems

Answer the questions below:

1. Which animal gives no rules at the beginning? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. At the end of the story, which animals do not respond? \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
- .....

## Step 3: Add the Missing Ideas / Sentences

Write new sentences to fix the story. Be creative, but stay true to the animals' characters.

1. **The Lion's Rule:** "The lion said, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_."
2. **The Cat's Response at the End:** "The cat \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_."
3. **The Lion's Response at the End:** "The lion \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_."