

The Stolen Chicks

Act 1

In the Forest

NARRATOR: This is a story from Africa, and it starts with a Mama Ostrich. Oh, wait! Here she comes now!

MAMA OSTRICH: Children! Children, where are you hiding? I gathered these delicious mangos for you!

NARRATOR: Then Mama Ostrich saw something that froze her heart.

MAMA OSTRICH: Lion tracks! Right next to the footprints of my two chicks! A lion must have stolen my babies! This is terrible – I must find them!

NARRATOR: Mama Ostrich quickly ran after the lion tracks. They led into the woods and ended at a cave. Mama Ostrich peaked into the opening and there she saw her two dear chicks – in the arms of Mama Lion!

MAMA OSTRICH: Mama Lion! What are you doing with my chicks? Give them back to me at once!

MAMA LION: What do you mean YOUR chicks? These are MY cubs, that's plain to see.

MAMA OSTRICH: That's not at all plain to see. Those are chicks – ostrich chicks. I'm an ostrich, and you're a lion!

MAMA LION: Is that so? Then you shouldn't have any trouble finding someone else who agrees with you, correct?

MAMA OSTRICH: ANY animal would agree with me!

MAMA LION: You think so, do you? Well, then. If you can find a single animal in this forest who will look me in the eye and tell me these are not my cubs, I will give them to you.

MAMA OSTRICH: Fine! I'll be back in no time!

MAMA LION: I wouldn't count on it.

Act 2

The Meeting

NARRATOR: Mama Ostrich ran from animal to animal in the woods, saying they must come to a very important meeting. And so the animals gathered together.

ANTELOPE: Zebra, do you know what this meeting is all about?

ZEBRA: I thought you knew.

ANTELOPE: I don't have a clue!

WARTHOG: Maybe Mama Ostrich is going to tell us she found a new grove of mango trees. She's good at that.

BABOON: Sweet! But here's something. I found a new patch of sweet potatoes not far from my place.

ZEBRA: No way!

WARTHOG: Where exactly? You must tell us!

MAMA OSTRICH: Quiet, everyone! Pay attention! I'm calling this meeting to order!

NARRATOR: Mama Ostrich told the animals about the terrible injustice that Mama Lion had committed. And she told them what Mama Lion said must happen before she would return her chicks.

MAMA OSTRICH: So you see, all I need is one of you to tell Mama Lion those babies are not her cubs. Tell her they are chicks – MY chicks!

ZEBRA: Uh, Mama Ostrich. Point of clarification. You're talking about Mama Lion?

ANTELOPE: The one who lives in the den? With the big loud roar?

MAMA OSTRICH: Of course! What other Mama Lion is there?

BABOON: Okay, let's get this straight. You're asking one of us to look Mama Lion in the eye and tell her the chicks are not hers.

WARTHOG: Good luck with that, Mama Ostrich!

ANTELOPE: Your babies had better learn how to roar!

MAMA OSTRICH: What? I can't believe this! What if those chicks were your very own babies? Won't any of you help me?

ZEBRA: Oh, I WOULD help you, Mama Ostrich. Really, I would. Totally.

ANTELOPE: Except for the Mama Lion part. That's the only thing.

ZEBRA: Will you look at that sun? It's naptime!

MAMA OSTRICH: Well, I never! I thought you were my friends. Mongoose, you haven't said a word. You have a reputation as the smartest animal in the jungle.

MONGOOSE: Maybe that's WHY I haven't said a word.

MAMA OSTRICH: Please! You know we can't let Mama Lion get away with this! Mongoose, you must try to think of something!

MONGOOSE: Oh, very well! Give me a minute.

NARRATOR: Mongoose paced and paced. From time to time, Mongoose said "Harumph." All of a sudden, Mongoose stopped.

MONGOOSE: Ah, HA!

MAMA OSTRICH: What?

MONGOOSE: It's simple, really. Do you know the ant-hill at the edge of the jungle?

MAMA OSTRICH: The one that's taller than I am?

MONGOOSE: Yep. Here's what to do. Dig one hole in front of the ant-hill and another hole behind it. Connect the two holes with a tunnel that runs under the ant-hill.

MAMA OSTRICH: What exactly is the point of that?

MONGOOSE: Just dig the two holes and the tunnel, Mama Ostrich! When it's done, tell Mama Lion there will be a meeting at the ant-hill at sunset tonight. And all of the rest of us must be there, too.

MAMA OSTRICH: You heard Mongoose, everyone! Everyone must attend tonight. Zebra, you're coming, right?

ZEBRA: Another meeting?

WARTHOG: That's two in one day!

ANTELOPE: I need a better work-life balance.

BABOON: Relax, everyone. I'll bring some of my new sweet potatoes.

ANTELOPE: Now you're talking!

ZEBRA: Where do we meet again, Mama Ostrich?

MAMA OSTRICH: At the ant-hill. Sunset. Tonight.

Act 3

The Ant-hill

NARRATOR: The sun was setting and only Mama Ostrich was at the ant-hill. Would the creatures back out on their promises? No, wait – here comes Mongoose!

MAMA OSTRICH: There you are, Mongoose. Thank goodness!

MONGOOSE: Tell me, did you dig the two holes and connect them with a tunnel as I asked?

MAMA OSTRICH: Yes. And I told Mama Lion about coming here tonight. But what does this whole thing have to do with getting back my chicks?

MONGOOSE: You'll see.

MAMA OSTRICH: What if no one comes?

MONGOOSE: They'll come.

MAMA OSTRICH: What if Mama Lion doesn't bring my chicks?

MONGOOSE: She'll bring them! Don't worry. Look! Here come the other animals.

ZEBRA: I hope this is worth it.

WARTHOG: I left my mud puddle for this?

ANTELOPE: I left my tall grasses for this!

ZEBRA: All day long, you do nothing but snack on tall grasses.

ANTELOPE: Look who's talking! I don't see you doing much else.

BABOON: Folks! Brought the sweet potatoes!

ANTELOPE: Wow, they look amazing!

WARTHOG: Let's dig in!

MONGOOSE: Hold on, everyone. Look over there!

NARRATOR: Mama Lion stepped out from behind a grove of trees. She held tight to the two baby chicks.

MAMA LION: So, Mama Ostrich! I see you gathered all your friends for this meeting. Now we will prove once and for all that these are MY cubs!

MAMA OSTRICH: They are NOT—!

MAMA LION: Quiet! Which one of you animals is going to look me in the eye and tell me these are not my cubs? Warthog, is it you?

WARTHOG: Um. I mean – their two little legs are cute like baby ostrich legs. They have long necks like baby ostrich necks—

MAMA LION: Exactly what are you saying, Warthog?

WARTHOG: Right. Well! They may look in some very SMALL ways like ostrich chicks. But without a doubt, they are – CUBS!

NARRATOR: Warthog backed up a few steps, and quickly sprinted away.

MAMA LION: Zebra, are YOU the one who's going to tell me these are not my cubs?

ZEBRA: Not today, is what I'm thinking. Or tomorrow. Yeah, not a happening thing. Gotta go!

NARRATOR: Zebra dashed off.

MAMA LION: Zebras can run fast. Though not as fast as a lion, if you know what I mean.

BABOON: Baboon here.

MAMA LION: I know who you are.

BABOON: How about a sweet potato?

MAMA LION: I prefer the taste of steak! And Antelope or Baboon are equally tasty, as I recall

BABOON and ANTELOPE: Out of here!

NARRATOR: In a wink, both Baboon and Antelope were gone.

MAMA LION: And then there were none. Well, Mama Ostrich, I win! From now on, stay away from my cubs or else!

MONGOOSE: Not so fast!

MAMA LION: What?

MONGOOSE: Down here!

MAMA LION: You little rodent! Why should I pay attention to you?

MONGOOSE: I live in the forest, too! Mama Lion, have you ever seen a mama with fur that had babies with feathers? Think of it! Lions have FUR! The babies have FEATHERS! They belong ... to the OSTRICH!

NARRATOR: At once, Mongoose jumped down the hole in front of the ant-hill, through the tunnel, up the hole in back, and scampered off to the tall bushes. Hidden by the tall ant-hill, Mama Lion saw nothing of this.

MAMA LION: I'll get you, Mongoose!

NARRATOR: Mama Lion pounced at the hole where Mongoose had jumped in. In doing so, she let go of the two ostrich chicks. They were free!

MAMA OSTRICH: Babies, come here! Quick!

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, Mama Lion paced and paced around the entrance hole.

MAMA LION: Mongoose, you rodent! You'll have to come back up sooner or later. I'll wait, no matter how long it takes!

NARRATOR: Yet Mongoose was already far away from there.

NARRATOR: Mama Ostrich sprinted home to safety, holding tightly to her two dear chicks. And Mama Lion was left pacing in front of the ant-hill for a very, very long time.

