

The Lion Who Wanted to Zoom

- THERE was once a lion who coveted an eagle's wings. So he sent a message to the eagle asking him to call, and when the eagle came to the lion's den the lion said, "I will trade you my mane for your wings." "Keep talking, brother," said the eagle. "Without my wings I could no longer fly." "So what?" said the lion. "I can't fly now, but that doesn't keep me from being king of beasts. I became king of beasts on account of my magnificent mane." "All right," said the eagle, "but give me your mane first." "Just approach a little nearer," said the lion, "so that I can hand it to you." The eagle came closer and the lion clapped a huge paw on him, pinning him to the ground. "Come across with those wings!" he snarled.
- 10 So the lion took the eagle's wings but kept his own mane. The eagle was very despondent for a while and then he had an idea. "I bet you can't fly off the top of that great rock yonder," said the eagle. "Who, me?" said the lion, and he walked to the top of the rock and took off. His weight was too great for the eagle's wings to support, and besides he did not know how to fly, never having tried it before. So he crashed at the foot of the rock and burst into flames. The eagle
- 15 gle hastily climbed down to him and regained his wings and took off the lion's mane, which he put about his own neck and shoulders. Flying back to the rocky nest where he lived with his mate, he decided to have some fun with her. So, covered with the lion's mane, he poked his head into the nest and in a deep, awful voice said "Harrrrooo!" His mate, who was very nervous anyway, grabbed a pistol from a bureau drawer and shot him dead, thinking he was a lion.
- 20 *Moral: Never allow a nervous female to have access to a pistol, no matter what you're wearing.*

By James Thurber

Vocabulary: to zoom: 'to rise sharply, to fly quickly upward'; to covet: 'to want very much to have'; to call: *here*: 'to visit'; on account of: 'because of'; paw: 'an animal's foot or hand'; come across with ... = '*komm rüber mit ...*'; to snarl: 'to make a low angry sound'; despondent: 'without hope'.

Questions:

1. Summarize the story.
2. What made the eagle agree to the lion's suggestion?
3. What trick did the eagle use to get back his wings?
4. What is unusual about the ending?