

Ava and Duni

Once upon a time, there was a fierce lioness who lived in the African savannah. Her name was Ava and she was the chiefess of her pride. She was a great hunter but also often received gifts of food from other lions and lionesses who feared her. They would bring her peace after peace of antelope and zebra for her to gorge on. She was big and strong and weighed nearly twice as much as a normal lioness.



She had a young niece, the daughter of her sister. She was called Duni, and she was always up to mischief. When she was eight months old, Duni disappeared for three days. Ava and her sister searched high and low on the savannah for her. Eventually, in desperation, they went to the elephants. With their ancient wisdom, they might be able to help us, thought Ava. The lionesses approached the elephant herd cautiously and asked them, “Have you seen our Duni? We’ve lost her and we’re stricken with grief!” The elephants thought it was weird that the lionesses were talking to them – normally carnivores are not friendly to herbivores. But they felt sorry for them and decided to help them find their cub. They told the lionesses in their deep, slow voices, “Go to the baobab tree. At its height you will find your cub.”

The lionesses rushed to the baobab tree and scoured the top branches – and there she was! Little Duni had made a treehouse. What a relief!