


Mouse even began to feel happy. While not totally convinced that Lion and Eagle would honour the ‘no eating the other competitors’ rule, they did seem to be obeying it for now, especially as they weren’t hungry anyway.



Better still, having an eagle and a lion either side of you was a highly effective deterrent to any other passing predators. He felt like a very small gangster boss flanked by the two biggest minders in history.

And waiting around was not a problem for a mouse. He often had to sit inside his tunnel for hours, waiting for a cat outside to get bored and go after something else, or for the sun to come out from behind a cloud so he could spot the shadow from a hawk overhead. Or, erm, an eagle.

Lion had no problem with waiting, either. In fact it was his favourite occupation. He could wait for



hours for a herd of Zebra or Wildebeest to edge unwarily within range - and then he would continue to watch and wait, the tip of his tail idly twitching, while his lionesses did the hard work for him.

But eagles hate sitting around. Eagle was forever fussing, forever hunting, or eating - or just worrying about something or other. Even when he slept, he did so with only half his brain at a time, the other half awake and alert. Sitting down in a desert for an unspecified time, with only a mouse that he wasn’t allowed to eat and a lion for company, was torture. He fretted. He bobbed his head up and down. He screeched and grumbled. He stood as high as he could, stretching his wings as if about to fly...

...and suddenly he was airborne. Only an inch or two, but in his impatience he had momentarily left the ground. Quickly, he stood back on terra firma with an expression that said ‘Airborne? Moi? You must be joking.’

