

# **DOES A GUN MAKE YOU STRONG?**

A West African tale

Adapted by Carole L. Cooney

**Setting:** The large meadow in the jungle

**Characters:**  
Narrator  
Chimpanzee  
Deer  
Leopard  
Bushback  
Elephant  
Man

**Narrator:** One day, the animals came together to the jungle meadow for a contest to see who was the strongest.

**Chimp:** (monkey chatter) I am the strongest! Just look at my arms!

**Deer:** (little grunts) Look at my legs! I am the strongest!

**Leopard:** (growl) Have you ever seen claws like mine? I am the strongest!

**Bushback:** (snort) Those claws are no match for my long horns! I am the strongest!

**Elephant:** (elephant roar) Even though I move slowly, my size means I'm strongest!

**Narrator:** All of the animals waited for one more animal to come. Finally, Man came running into the circle.

**Man:** (flexing his muscles) I AM THE STRONGEST! LOOK AT MY STRENGTH!

**Narrator:** Why was Man late? He had brought a gun into the jungle and hid it in the bushes. Elephant stepped forward.

**Elephant:** Sit down, Man! We are all here so we can show each other our strengths. This will prove who is the strongest. Let us start with Chimpanzee.

**Chimp:** I shall start by climbing that tall tree, bend it over and tying it in a knot! (looking at the animals) Can YOU do that? No! I am the strongest!

**Deer:** (leaping up) Watch me run three miles into the forest and back.

**Narrator:** All the animals watched and were amazed.

**Deer:** See how fast and strong I am. I am not even out of breath! Can YOU do that? No! I am the strongest!

**Narrator:** All the animals watched and were amazed.

**Leopard:** (stretching up his mighty claws) I shall dig in the earth. Watch how fast the dirt flies! Can YOU do that? No! I am the strongest!

**Narrator:** All the animals watched and were amazed.

**Bushbuck:** That cannot match what I can do with my strong horns. Watch me plow the meadow and make a road! Can YOU do that? No! I am the strongest!

**Narrator:** All the animals watched and were amazed.

**Elephant:** (roar) You are all weaklings! Watch as I just lean on this tall grove of trees. Look at them fall over! Can YOU do that? No! I am the strongest!

**Narrator:** All the animals watched and were amazed.

**Man:** I can do more powerful things than all of you! Just watch as I climb to the top of the palm tree! Here! Catch these palm nuts.

**Narrator:** The animals watched BUT THEY WERE NOT AMAZED.

**Man:** (angrily) What! You don't think that was a show of STRENGTH?

**Narrator:** Suddenly, Man ran into the bush and grabbed his gun.

**Man:** (pointing the gun at Elephant) Now I'll show you real STRENGTH!

**Narrator:** Man pulled the trigger and shot Elephant. Elephant fell over dead.

**Man:** (YELLING) NOW WASN'T THAT STRENGTH?

**Narrator:** The animals did not answer because they ran into the jungle. Man stood in the meadow all alone. Deep in the jungle, the animals gathered together.

**Chimp:** (monkey chatter) I was so frightened I climbed up the tallest tree.

**Deer:** (grunts) Did you see what Man did?

**Leopard:** (growl) Yes. Is using a gun the way to prove Man's strength?

**Bushbuck:** (snort) I would not call it strength at all!

**Chimp:** What would you call it?

**Bushbuck:** I would call it DEATH.

**Narrator:** That day the animals learned that Man could not tell the difference between strength and death.