

AFRICAN TALES

How the Serval Got His Spots



An Ndebele Fable

In the beginning, Serval used to be the same tawny colour as lion, but he was much smaller and nowhere near as strong.



The other animals often teased him, calling him “Lion’s Little Cousin.”

Serval dreamed of having a magnificent coat like Leopard or Zebra. If he could not be big and strong, he could at least be handsome.



One day, when Serval was going about his daily hunt, he met Puff Adder.

“Oh, kind Serval,” pleaded Puff Adder, “I am feeling very ill and none of the other animals will help me.”



“No wonder!” exclaimed Serval. “You are such a nasty creature that all animals go in fear of you.

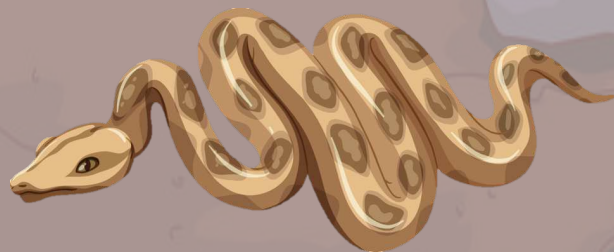
But because you are ill, I will help you just this once. But you must promise to keep your fangs to yourself!”



Puff Adder agreed willingly to be on his best behavior, so Serval took him home and looked after him.

It took a long time for Puff Adder to get better as he was indeed very ill.

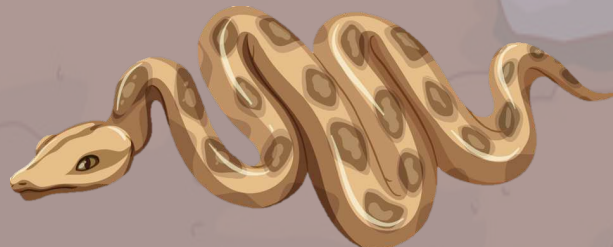
Thanks mainly to Serval's care and attention, he eventually recovered.



Before Puff Adder left, he thanked Serval for his kindness. To show his gratitude, he said, “I will give you anything within my power in return for your kindness.”

Serval replied, “There is nothing I would like more than a beautiful coat.”

“That I can do,” answered Puff Adder. “I will have to bite you, but do not fear that my poison will harm you. It will only be a very small amount.”



So Puff Adder bit Serval carefully. Though it made Serval feel a bit sick, he quickly recovered.

Soon his skin broke out in a rash and his tawny coat changed to a golden colour mottled with black spots.

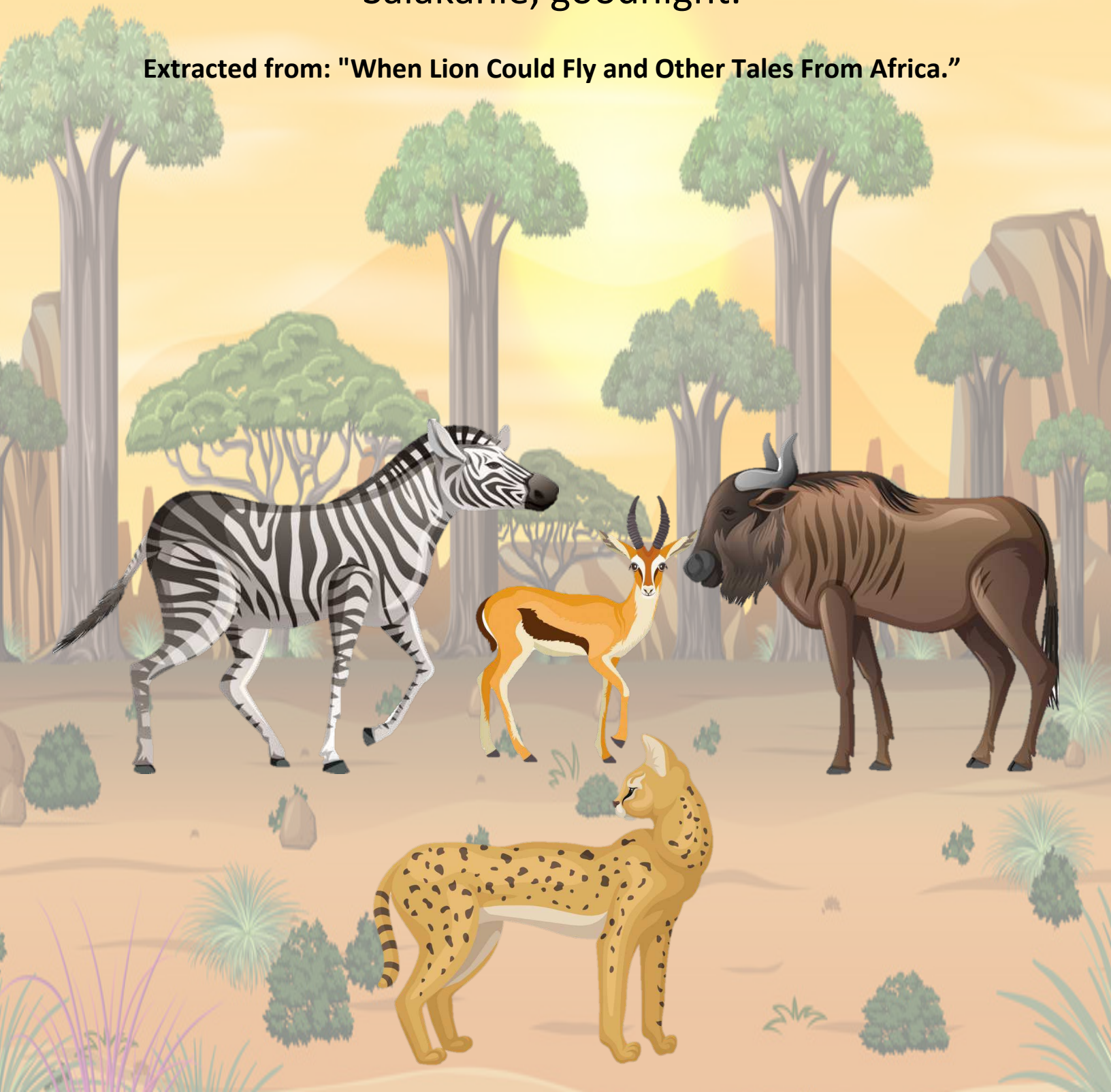


Serval was overjoyed; he was now one of the most handsome creatures in the bush.

As a sign of respect for each other, Puff Adder and Serval do not trouble each other to this day.

“Salakahle, goodnight.”

Extracted from: "When Lion Could Fly and Other Tales From Africa."



FUN FACTS

About Servals

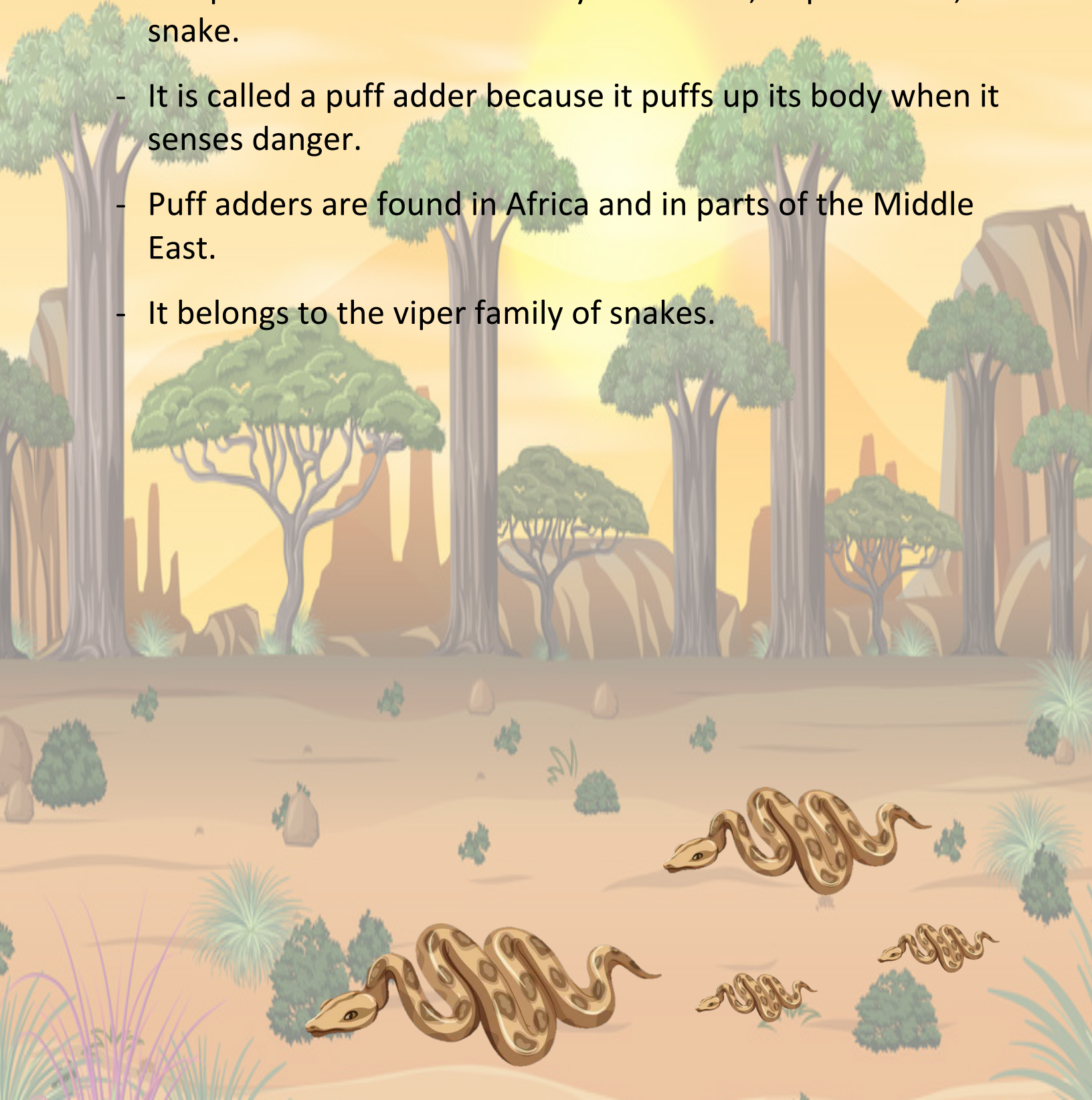
- Servals have the largest ears of any cat.
- Servals can purr.
- Servals are solitary except for mating and mothers with kittens.
- Servals are stalk-and-pounce hunters.
- They can live more than 20 years.



DID YOU KNOW

This About Puff Adders

- The puff adder is an extremely venomous, or poisonous, snake.
- It is called a puff adder because it puffs up its body when it senses danger.
- Puff adders are found in Africa and in parts of the Middle East.
- It belongs to the viper family of snakes.





THINK

DIGITAL ACADEMY

