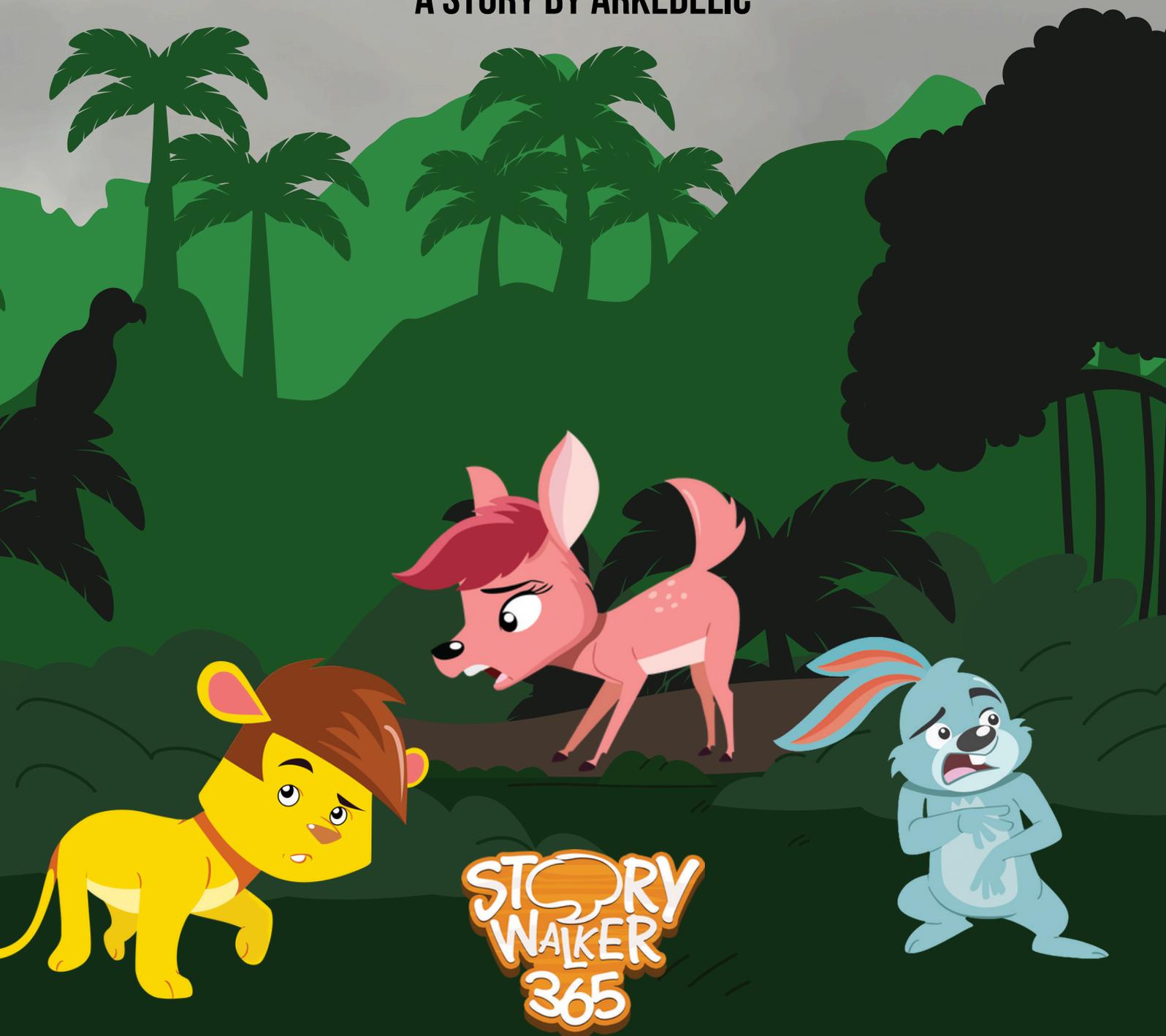


The Game of Shadows

A STORY BY ARKEDELIC



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The evening sun dripped gold across the treetops.

Tiara the bushbuck stamped her dainty hooves.

Thak-thak!

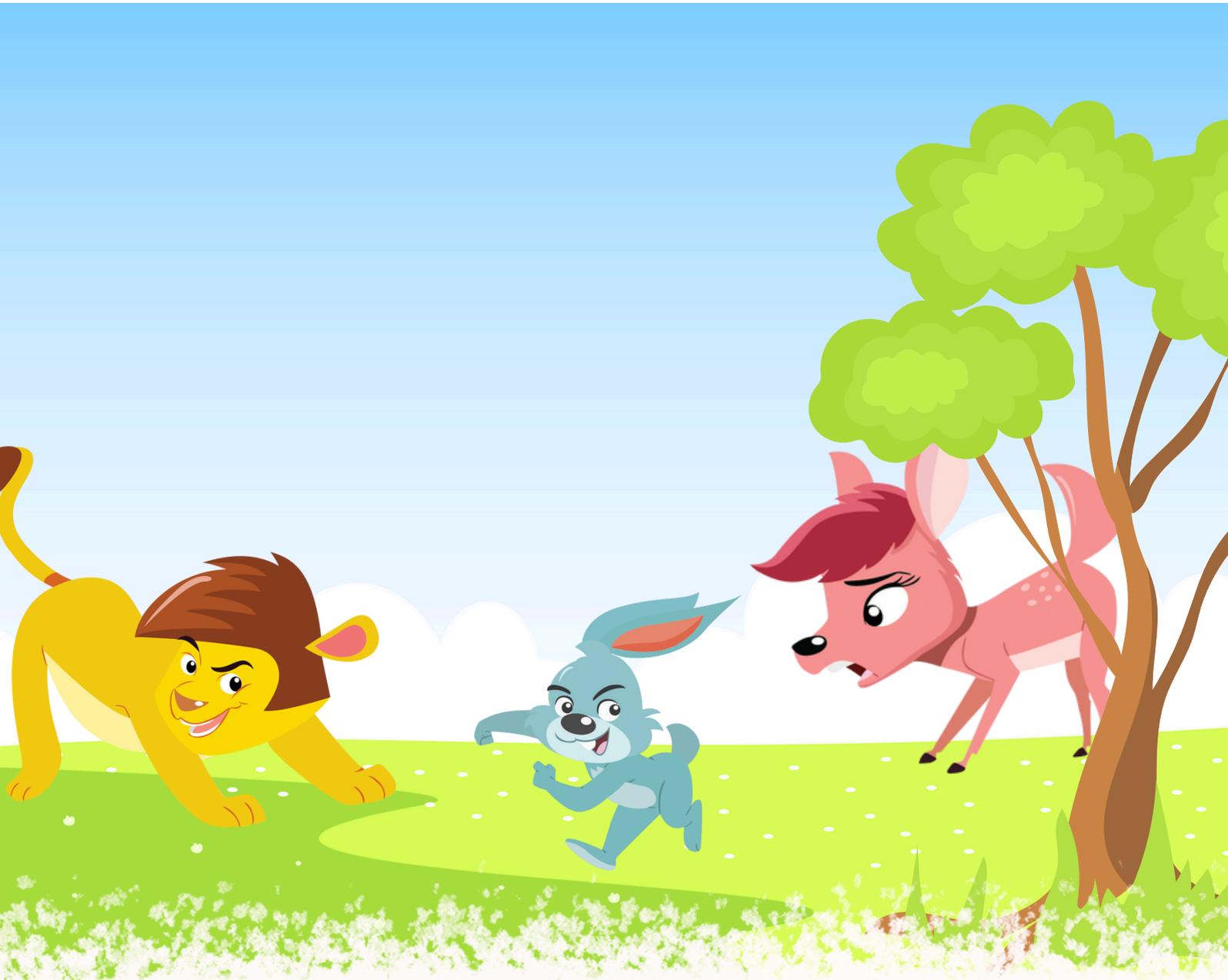
“Race to the far tree!” she called, tossing her head.

RJ the lion cub crouched low, tail flicking like a whip.

“This time, I’ll leave you all behind!”

Zip the hare twitched his nose. “Ha! You’ll be eating dust.”





Whoosh! They shot off. Tiara's legs bounded in long leaps. RJ thundered after her, puffing, huff-huff-huff!

Zip zipped past them both, his ears flapping wildly like sails in the wind.

“Wait up!” Tiara squealed, swerving to avoid a root.

RJ growled, “Not fair!” But Zip was already thumping the ground by the far tree.

Thud-thud!

“I won again!” Zip shouted, bouncing so high his ears nearly touched a branch.

RJ skidded to a stop, claws scraping the dirt.

His mane fluffed in annoyance. “You always win! Your legs are too springy.”

He plopped onto the ground with a sulky “Hmph.”

Tiara arrived last, panting hard. Her ears drooped. “If that silly root hadn’t tripped me...” She pawed the soil and looked away. “I hate losing.”

The joy of the race fizzled out like water poured on a fire.



Then the forest shadows began to stretch. Long, twisting arms of darkness crawled across the ground.

A branch's shadow turned into a giant claw. The path back looked like a maze of black rivers.

Zip's whiskers trembled. "Uh-oh. The way home looks...different."

RJ flicked his tail. "So what? I'm not helping. Zip can find the way. He's the winner."

Tiara stamped her hoof. "And I don't care. I lost anyway."



But when they turned this way and that,
the shadows tangled like nets, trapping their eyes.
The jungle felt bigger. And darker. And scarier.

“Guys...” Zip’s voice shrank.
“Maybe... maybe we need to work together.”
RJ’s ears twitched.

He didn’t like saying it, but his nose twitched too. Sniff-sniff.
“I can smell the stream. That’s our way.”



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Tiara lifted her head, ears flicking. Tck-tck.
“I hear water gurgling!
It’s that little trickle near the clearing.”

Zip narrowed his eyes. “And I can see where the shadows
thin out. That must be the path.”

They stood in silence for a moment. Then—
“Let’s do it,” said Tiara.
“Fine,” grumbled R.J.
“Go!” squeaked Zip.



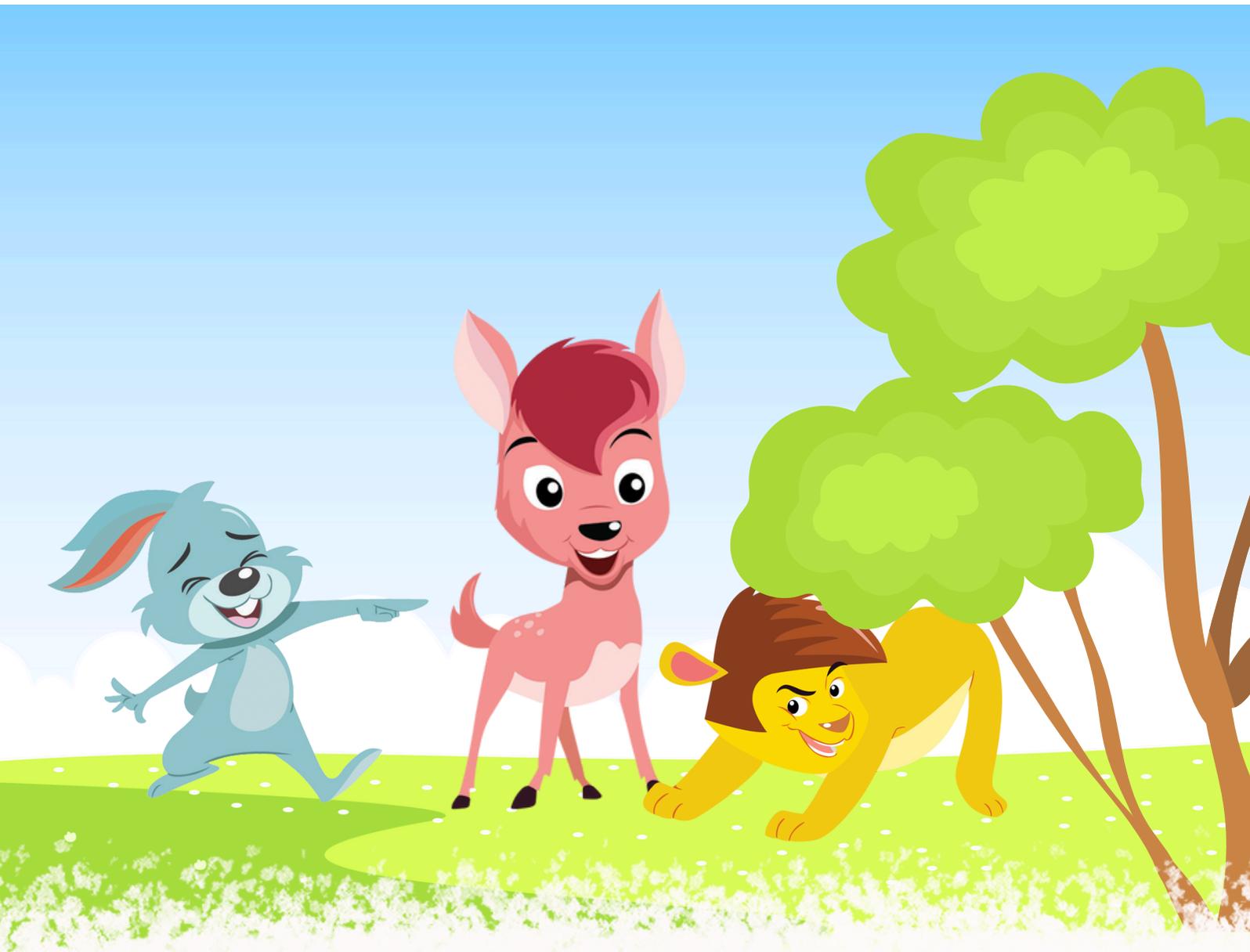
So they moved. RJ padded ahead, sniffing, snuff-snuff.

Tiara trotted beside, ears twitching like drums.

Zip bounded just far enough to spot the gaps in the dark.

Step by step, sound by sound, nose by nose, they slipped past the claw-like shadows and crooked trees.





And suddenly — there it was. The clearing.
The grass shining in silver moonlight.

They tumbled out together.

Tiara flopped down on her side with a dramatic sigh.

RJ rolled over and puffed like a king.

Zip fell flat on his back, his ears spread like mats.

After a moment of stillness, Tiara giggled.
“Losing doesn’t feel so bad when we reach home safe.”



RJ's whiskers twitched.
"Being jealous didn't help either."

Zip's nose wriggled.
"And being first isn't fun if my friends aren't smiling."

Above them, stars sprinkled the sky.
Below them, the shadows melted away.
And inside them, laughter bubbled up again.

— THE END —

ACTIVITY

The Shadow Trail Challenge

YOU'LL NEED:

- A torch or lamp (or sunlight through curtains)
- 3–4 small objects (like toys, blocks, or cups)
- A blindfold or scarf
- A safe space with enough room to walk a few steps

HOW TO DO IT:

1. Dim the room slightly so shadows appear on the floor or wall.
2. Place the objects around the space — these are the “forest obstacles.”
3. One child is blindfolded (the “walker”). Others are the Guides — one can only speak, one can only clap or make sound cues, and one can only point silently.

ACTIVITY

The Shadow Trail Challenge

4. The walker's goal: reach the torch or lamp safely, guided only by the teamwork of their friends' different signals.
5. After each round, switch roles so everyone gets to lead and listen in new ways.

What it builds:

This activity helps children discover that everyone's skill — seeing, hearing, or sensing — matters. It turns comparison into cooperation. Just like Tiara, RJ, and Zip in the story, they'll learn that no one wins alone; light comes when all voices, sounds, and sights work together.

5 FUN FACTS

About The Secrets of Shadows



Shadow Twins

A shadow is made when light is blocked by something solid. The darker the object and the brighter the light, the sharper the shadow looks. Imagine your shadow as your twin who only comes out when the light is shining!

Moving Shadows

When the Sun moves across the sky, your shadow changes size and direction. In the morning it's long, at noon it hides under your feet, and in the evening it stretches again.

Imagine chasing your own shadow all day — it never stands still!



No Light, No Shadow

Shadows disappear in the dark because they need light to exist. You can't have a shadow without something to block the light.

Imagine if shadows could glow — nighttime would look like a dance of soft ghosts!

5 FUN FACTS

About The Secrets of Shadows



Moon Shadows

The Moon also casts shadows, though they're very faint because moonlight is just sunlight bouncing off the Moon. Astronauts on the Moon saw their shadows sharper than ever because there's no air to blur them.

Imagine walking on the Moon and seeing a shadow darker than ink following every step!

Shadow Play Around the World

In some countries like Indonesia, India, and China, people tell stories using shadow puppets. Figures cut out of leather or paper are moved behind a lit screen to create dancing silhouettes. Imagine telling bedtime stories with nothing but light, hands, and a wall!



The Shadow Race

Complete the Story

Late one evening, two friends — Noor and Ravi — drew a finish line on the terrace and waited for the lights to flicker on. The plan: race their shadows across the wall!

At first, Noor’s shadow looked longer, and Ravi sulked. “Yours always wins!” he said. But when a passing cloud covered the light, both shadows vanished. The children froze, then laughed — the race couldn’t even begin without light.

They fetched another lamp, placed it lower, and tried again. This time their shadows stretched, twisted, and even overlapped to make a giant creature with four arms and two heads. They forgot all about winning.

What happens next?

- Do Noor and Ravi invent a new game where their shadows become stories instead of racers?
- Do they discover that teamwork makes even shadows more fun?
- Or does the wind blow out the light — leaving them to imagine where their shadows went?

*Go ahead and use your imagination
to complete the story.*



See you next Monday
with another interesting story!

Got feedback or a suggestion? We would love to hear it!
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