Keeping Up With Cheetah
For Azan, who always laughs at my jokes.
Well, almost.
L.C.

To my young granddaughter, with love.
J.A.

Keeping Up With Cheetah

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दोस्त और दूरी के पीछे की कुतुबी बदलत आते थे।
असल में, कुतुबी गुलाम का और दूरी के पीछे का वस्त्र गुलाम और हंसता - एक घृणही खूबसूरत नहीं होती।
कुतुबी जमाना मजे करने नहीं होते हैं, पर दूरी के पीछे सोचता था कि वे मजेवाद थे।
और हालांकि वे दोस्ते इसलिए अच्छे दोस्त थे।

Cheetah and Hippopotamus loved telling jokes.
Actually, Cheetah told the jokes. Hippopotamus just listened and laughed - a deep, bellows laugh.
The jokes weren’t very funny, but Hippopotamus thought they were.
And that’s why they were such good friends.
“उसी की कही दिशा चढ़े.” चेहरा क्यों तो रायात।
“अगर तुम से समय क्षय नहीं भर सके, तुम तो समय
अक्षुदुक्का नहीं सुन घरोंगे।”

“Come on Hipposaurus,” Cheetah would
shout impatiently. “If you can’t keep up
with me, you won’t hear my new joke.”

But one thing about Hipposaurus
annoyed Cheetah - Hipposaurus
couldn’t run very fast.

पर भीतर दिशारंग चढ़े की एक कठिन तो निर्माता
श्च - दिशारंग चढ़े अभाव तथा नहीं टॉप
करता था।
And he knew he still couldn't keep up with Cheetah.
Ostrich could – very nearly, anyway, Cheetah thought how clever he was to have made such a good new friend.

"Would you like to hear my new joke, Ostrich?" he asked.

"No thank you," said Ostrich. "I don’t like jokes. Let’s run some more."
Cheetah had run enough for one day. He wanted to tell jokes. So he made friends with Giraffe instead. Now Hippopotamus was even more determined to run as fast as Cheetah.

So he hid and watched as Giraffe and Cheetah galloped by. Giraffe’s long legs flew out in front and Cheetah bowed his tail from side to side to keep his balance.
Then Hippopotamus tried to do the same,
It wasn’t easy.

Hippopotamus fell down with a CRASH!
It would be a long time before he could keep up with Cheetah.
Giraffe could — very nearly, anyway.

“Would you like to hear my new joke, Giraffe?” Cheetah asked.

“Pardon?” said Giraffe. “I can’t hear you from up here.”

“What’s the good of a friend who doesn’t even listen to your jokes?” thought Cheetah crossly.
And he made friends with Kyena instead.
When Hippopotamus saw this, he felt hot and bothered.
There was only one thing that would make him feel better.

A good, long, deep, muddy wallow.
Hippopotamus loved wallowing. The deeper, the muddier, the more he enjoyed it. But he hadn’t had a wallow for a long time, because Cheetah said it was dirty.
"Well," thought Hipposotamus, "I can do what I like." And he dived into the river—SPLOOSH! It felt wonderful.

As he lay there, he thought how silly he'd been. He couldn't run fast, but he could swim. And although he was sad to lose a friend, he knew that he would never be able to keep up with Cheetah.
Hyena could - very nearly, anyway. Cheetah was very pleased.
“Knock knock,” said Cheetah.
“Hi-lee-lee-lee!” said Hyena.

“You’re supposed to say, “Who’s there?” snapped Cheetah. “What’s the point of telling my new joke, if you laugh before I get to the funny bit?”
“HAR-ER-ER-ER-ER!” screamed Hyena.
Then Cheetah realised that what he really needed was a different sort of friend. He could run by himself, but telling jokes was only fun if someone listened - and only laughed at the funny bits. Where could he find a friend like that?

He already had one! Cheetah ran to the shady tree but Hippopotamus wasn’t there. As Cheetah walked slowly away, he thought how silly he had been to lose such a good friend.
Suddenly he saw a pair of eyes watching him from the river.

"Knock-knock," said Cheetah.
"Who's there?" said Hippopotamus.
"Leetah, of course!" said Cheetah.

And Hippopotamus laughed and laughed.