



An Adventure with a Lion and a Crocodile

By R. E. Raspe

Some years before my beard announced approaching manhood, or, in other words, when I was neither man nor boy, but between both, I expressed in repeated conversations a strong desire of seeing the world, from which I was discouraged by my parents, though my father had been no inconsiderable traveller himself. A cousin by my mother's side took a liking to me, often said I was a fine forward youth, and was much inclined to gratify my curiosity. His eloquence had more effect than mine, for my father consented to my accompanying him in a voyage to the island of Ceylon, where his uncle had resided as governor many years.

We sailed from Amsterdam with despatches from their High Mightinesses the States of Holland, and in about six weeks we arrived at Ceylon, where we were received with great marks of friendship and true politeness.

After we had resided at Ceylon about a fortnight I accompanied one of the governor's brothers upon a shooting party.

Near the banks of a large piece of water, which had engaged my attention, I thought I heard a rustling noise behind; on turning about I was almost petrified (as who would not be?) at the sight of a lion, which was evidently approaching with the intention of satisfying his appetite with my poor carcass, and that without asking my consent.

What was to be done in this horrible dilemma? I had not even a moment for reflection; my piece was only charged with swan-shot, and I had no other about me. However, though I could have no idea of killing such an animal with that weak kind of ammunition, yet I had some hopes of frightening him by the report, and perhaps of wounding him also. I immediately let fly, without waiting till he was within reach; and the report did but enrage him, for he now quickened his pace and seemed to approach me full speed. I attempted to escape, but that only added (if

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an addition could be made) to my distress; for the moment I turned about I found a large crocodile, with his mouth extended almost ready to receive me. On my right hand was the piece of water before mentioned, and on my left a deep precipice, said to have, as I have since learned, a receptacle at the bottom for venomous creatures; in short, I gave myself up as lost, for the lion was now upon his hind legs, just in the act of seizing me. I fell involuntarily to the ground with fear, and, as it afterward appeared, he sprang over me. I lay some time in a situation which no language can describe, expecting to feel his teeth or talons in some part of me every moment. After waiting in this prostrate situation a few seconds, I heard a violent but unusual noise, differing from any sound that had ever before assailed my ears; nor is it at all to be wondered at, when I inform you from whence it proceeded.



After listening for some time, I ventured to raise my head and look round, when, to my unspeakable joy, I perceived the lion had, by the eagerness with which he sprang at me, jumped forward, as I fell, into the crocodile's mouth! which, as before observed, was wide open; the head of the one stuck in the throat of the other, and they were struggling to extricate themselves. I fortunately recollected my hunting knife which was by my side; with this instrument I severed the lion's head at one blow, and the body fell at my feet! I then, with the butt-end of my fowling-piece, rammed the head farther into the throat of the crocodile, and destroyed him, by suffocation, for he could neither gorge nor eject it.

Soon after I had thus gained a complete victory over my two powerful adversaries, my companion arrived in search of me; for finding I did not follow him into the wood, he returned, apprehending I had lost my way or met with some accident.

After mutual congratulations we measured the crocodile, which was just forty feet in length.

QUESTIONS: An Adventure with a Lion and a Crocodile

Circle the correct answer.

1. What kind of story is this?
 - A. realistic
 - B. tall tale
 - C. cautionary tale
 - D. coming of age story

2. How old is the narrator when this story takes place?
 - A. a boy
 - B. between a man and a boy
 - C. a man
 - D. an old man

3. What first frightens the narrator?
 - A. a partridge
 - B. a lion
 - C. a crocodile
 - D. a crocodile eating a lion

4. Describe the distressing situation in which the narrator found himself.

5. What allows the narrator to escape?
 - A. someone shoots the lion
 - B. the lion jumps over him into the crocodile's mouth
 - C. the crocodile attacks the lion
 - D. someone shoots the crocodile