



Aesop's Fables

31. ANDROCLES AND THE LION

By Rob John

Once there was a slave called Androcles who belonged to a very cruel master. Androcles worked all day long in his master's fields and was never paid a single penny. He was always tired and hungry and one night Androcles decided to escape.

He waited until his master was fast asleep then he crept out of the house and silently made his way into the forest...and started running.

Androcles knew that if he was caught he'd be punished so he ran all night and in the morning he lay down to rest.

He'd just fallen asleep when he was woken by a terrible roaring sound.

Androcles jumped to his feet and standing right in front of him was a huge Lion. He was about to run away when he noticed the lion was holding out his paw and he wasn't really roaring...he was crying because a huge thorn was sticking out of his paw.

'Ouch! No wonder you're crying,' said Androcles to the Lion. 'I'd like to help you but if I come any closer you'll probably eat

me.'

But the Lion had such a sad look in its eye that before Androcles had time to think he'd stepped forward and pulled out the thorn.

The Lion opened his mouth and let out a terrible cry...and for a moment Androcles thought he was going to be eaten, but instead of biting Androcles the Lion gently licked his face.

Androcles fetched some water from a stream and washed the Lion's bleeding paw.

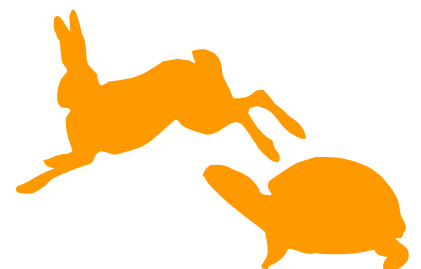
'You'll be alright now,' said Androcles.

The Lion licked Androcles one last time as if to say 'thank you' then limped off into the forest.

Then Androcles heard a voice: 'That's him. Quickly! Tie him up.'

Androcles knew that voice. It was his master. Six men grabbed Androcles and tied him up with ropes.

'Thought you would escape did you?' said the master. 'Nobody escapes from me.'





Now Androcles was in really big trouble.

The men took Androcles to the city and threw him in prison.

Next day a prison guard brought Androcles some food.

‘Do you hear that roaring Androcles? We haven’t fed that Lion since we caught him. But he’s going to have plenty to eat tomorrow when we put you in his cage.’

Next morning Androcles was taken to a huge arena like a football stadium. The Emperor and thousands of his people had come to see a man being eaten by a lion.

In the centre of the arena was a cage and in the cage was a huge, very hungry lion.

The crowd clapped and cheered as the guards pushed Androcles into the cage and slammed the door shut.

Everyone went very still as the Lion leapt towards Androcles. But then something odd happened. The Lion stopped and stood very still. He knew this man. He’d seen him somewhere before. Then he remembered the thorn that had stuck in his paw.

‘Are you going to eat me then old friend?’ said Androcles. But the Lion just purred and licked the slave’s face.

At first the crowd were angry. This wasn’t supposed to happen. They hadn’t paid

good money to see a lion lick a man’s face.

But the Emperor stood up and said, ‘This is the most amazing thing I’ve ever seen.’ And he started to clap...and the people thought, ‘If the Emperor’s clapping then maybe I should clap too.’

Soon clapping and cheering rang round the arena. Androcles was taken to the palace and when the Emperor heard the story of the Lion and the thorn he announced that both Androcles and the Lion should be given their freedom.

‘Androcles, you helped the Lion so the Lion helped you’ said the Emperor. ‘See how one good deed leads to another. You’re a free man now.’

Androcles and the Lion walked out of the city together; both free.