

Androcles and the lion

Long long ago, there was a slave named Androcles.

Androcles was treated badly by his cruel master. One day, Androcles escaped from his master and ran into the forest. After walking around the forest for ten hours, he was feeling very tired and thirsty.

Just then, he heard the sound of a lion behind a large rock. The lion was moaning, groaning and roaring terribly. As Androcles began to run away, he saw the lion coming towards him.

Instead of attacking him, it kept on moaning and groaning and looking at Androcles, who saw that the lion was holding out his right paw, which was covered with blood. Looking more closely at it, Androcles saw a great big splinter in his paw, which was the cause of all the lion's trouble.

Bravely, he took hold of the splinter and pulled it out of the lion's paw. The lion roared with pain when the splinter came out, but soon after found that the pain had gone!

The lion rubbed up against Androcles, and showed him that he knew, that he was truly thankful for being relieved from such pain.

One day, a number of soldiers came marching through the forest and found Androcles. They took him prisoner and brought him back to the town. He was put in front of the Emperor and condemned to death because he had escaped from his master.

Now it used to be the custom to throw murderers and other criminals to the lions, and on the appointed day he was led forth into the arena.

The Emperor of Rome was in the royal box that day and gave the signal for the lion to come out and attack Androcles. But when it came out of its cage and got near Androcles, what do you think it did? Instead of jumping upon him, it rubbed up against him, and stroked him with its paw.

It was of course the lion which Androcles had met in the forest. The Emperor called Androcles to him. So Androcles told the Emperor all that had happened to him and how the lion was showing gratitude for his having relieved it of the thorn. Thereupon, the emperor pardoned Androcles and ordered his master to set him free, while the lion was taken back into the forest and let loose to enjoy freedom once more.

