

## CARELESS AND THE HUNGRY LIONS

Careless knew that he would have to be careful. The Malatooba National Park was known as a dangerous place. The five-year drought, the worst ever to hit the park, had seized the land like a giant hand and squeezed the last drop of water out of it. What a change! A fertile region once full of wild animals, where it had been so easy for lions to fill their bellies that they had grown fat and lazy, had turned into a desert. The lions were thin and hungry now, very hungry. But they had become much better hunters. They had to in order to survive. They now did most of their hunting at night.

Aware of the danger, Careless had chosen a campsite near a large tree. If any lions did come around in the night, he and Linda Lou could find safety in the tree. Of course, he had installed his famous Lion Alarm, which gave out a loud warning signal if any of the big cats came near the tent.

Careless was sure they were safe, but Linda Lou didn't share his confidence. She had asked him several times to keep on driving instead of making camp. 'We're safer in our tent than we would be in the Jeep,' Careless said. 'They would hear the Jeep and come after it. Besides, I'm very tired, too tired to drive any further.' So they settled down for the night. Within a few minutes Careless was sound asleep, but Linda was wide awake, her eyes wide open with fear, her ears listening to the sounds of the desert.

Just before the alarm went off she turned to Careless and poked him. 'There's something out there!' she cried. Careless woke up just as the alarm sounded. He jumped up, grabbed Linda Lou and pulled her out of the tent. What they saw there made Linda gasp for breath. Their campsite was surrounded by a ring of lions!

'It's okay. Be cool. Just follow me to the tree. They won't attack if we don't make any quick movements,' Careless whispered. So they started moving slowly towards the tree. The lions watched them for a moment before attacking. They didn't seem to know about Careless's lion rules. Fortunately, Linda Lou was already in the tree. Unfortunately, Careless was still on the ground.

*Now rescue Careless!*

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