

# *African Adventures*

*by the same author*

KILLERS IN AFRICA

BY

ALEXANDER LAKE



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"I didn't shoot, Boggio," I said, and walked towards the lion. He was panting, muscles quivering. Horo and Twak ran up, grinning all over their faces. I said:

"I told you damned heathen not to bring poisoned arrows."

Then I put the muzzle of my rifle in the lion's ear and pulled the trigger. The big fellow collapsed, sighed and lay still.

Boggio stared at the dead lion, shoulders slumped, moustache drooping. I saw his hands trembling. He said:

"A magnificent charge and it go poop! I think at first that you shoot. Why he swoon?"

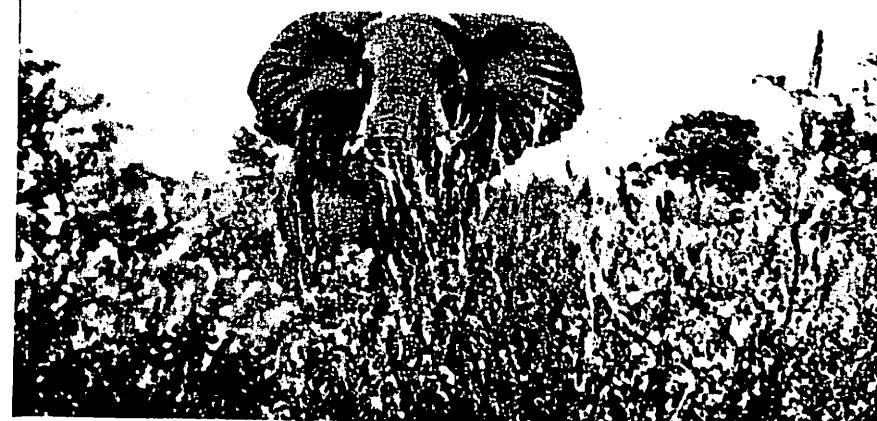
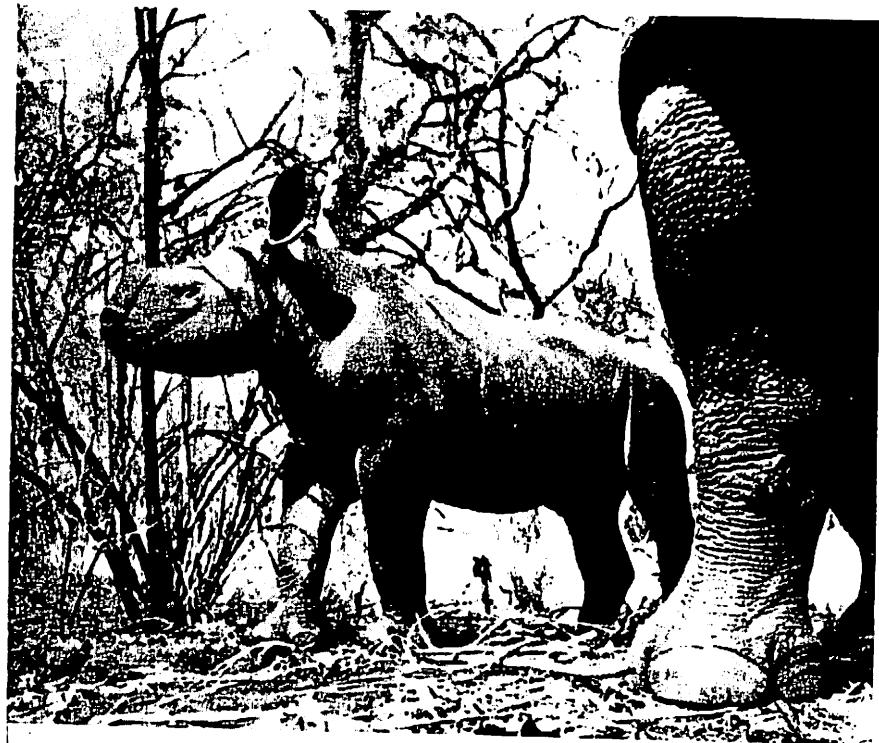
"The arrow was a poisoned one. Watch." I pulled the arrow from the lion's rump and shoved the tip into a pool of blood that still welled from the head wound. The blood began to foam and bubble. "That's what happens in the veins," I said. "When the foaming blood reaches the heart—*caput*."

"He was beautiful, *Signor*," Boggio said.

And I suddenly understood, as I watched the little man pick up his camera and begin walking towards our camp site, how desperately he wanted to get an outstanding sequence. He'd probably been pushed around all his life. Success with the lions would do something for his soul.

During the next three weeks we must have scouted fifty males. All were hopeless. A couple of females—always more courageous than their consorts, made half-hearted rushes at us. Boggio got some good stuff, but nothing that would suit *Il Duce*'s requirements. The weather grew warm. Grass rose from ankle to knee height. Game of all kinds swarmed into the valley, and lions, vultures and hyenas lived on the fat of the land.

Then one afternoon as we circled a banyan tree we came on a family of five—a big male, two females and two cubs. The male, except for a lighter-coloured mane, seemed a replica of the big one who'd died so ignobly.



Above: An extremely rare picture of a month-old rhino standing beside his mother's foreleg.

Below: A picture by Arthur Aylcough of the elephant attacked by Ubusuku (see chapter 6).

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brushed past me. It was the ostrich bouncing around in terror. A spread-winged jump landed him between George and Fazai as the Arab's rifle barked. The ostrich toppled over and lay kicking.

George's yell ripped the night. He rushed Fazai, staggered as the rifle exploded, then grabbed the gun, jerked it from Fazai's hand and jabbed as with a bayonet. Fazai shuffled backwards. George followed and pushed the toe of the butt upwards against Fazai's jaw, then brought the barrel down on top of the Arab's head. I heard the skull crack. Fazai was dead.

George went after Achmed. That poor devil moved so fast that he was six jumps away before George got fairly started. George hurled the rifle. It wrapped round Achmed's legs and he went down in a heap. Instantly, George was on top of him. One punch and Achmed was all through. Four months later, he was hanged.

I blacked out. When I came to, George had bandaged my thigh and was working on Long-One and Thick-One. Both were in bad shape.

"Did you bring in Coelho, George?" I asked.

George grinned. "I bringing him in the hut. He is paining, but only in his fingers."

One by one all the huts caught fire, but ours was the last to go. George helped us to the river and made us comfortable on the sand. Kaputo and his followers turned up towards dawn and took over our care. When certain that Fazai was dead, Kaputo was so happy that he started to cry. It was one of the few times I've seen a native in tears.

I slept until afternoon and, when I wakened, was told that men had been sent to get Silva and that Long-One and Thick-One would live. I said to George:

"You were putting up a good battle all along, George, but suddenly you seemed to go nuts. What happened?"



Above: A Miki Carter picture of a charging rhino.  
Below: Skinners cutting zebra steaks, said to be the world's tastiest meat.

## NIGHTMARES IN THE JUNGLE

**I**F YOU READ AFRICAN hunting articles you've probably seen pictures of Bos, a bull buffalo; Archie, a greater koodoo; and Percy, a big, male rhino. Magnificent animals with near-record horns—the three of them have been dead for more than thirty years. Today their carcasses are papier-maché, covered with their own hides, but they're still magnificent animals—papier-maché or not.

The animals have made a fortune for their owner, an East Indian, of Nairobi (formerly of Dar-es-Salaam), who, at the rate of \$25 per photograph, permits "hunters" to pose beside the "trophies".

Bos, Archie and Percy have near-perfect heads. The animals have not changed their poses since they were stuffed. Archie rests his nose on the ground, his beautiful, fifty-six-inch horns pointing up. Bos lies with neck stretched out, his horns spread a full fifty-five inches. Percy lies in practically the same position as Bos, his twenty-nine-inch front horn sweeping aloft like a curved dagger.

Bos, Archie and Percy have been killed a hundred different ways in a hundred different magazine articles by a hundred different writers. Bos seems to have always been "red-eyed with hate". Poor Percy, whose original death was from a single .257 bullet through a temple, shows up in stories as an "insane

### *Nightmares in the Jungle*

monstrosity intent on murder". Archie usually "slashed at me with horns that could tear the bowels from an elephant".

Actually, all three animals were killed in 1920 by Nicobar Jones, who shot Bos while the buffalo was peacefully chewing his cud beneath a thorn tree; Archie, as he stood motionless on a hillside, staring up-wind; and Percy as he voided dung in a tiny clearing in the brush.

I've a fondness for bar-room hunter-writers. They're harmless fellows, smart enough to know they can pick up better hunting yarns in pubs than they can on the veldt. Many professional hunters are thirsty souls and, for a free drink, will lay the thrills on thick. Stories by pub-hunters are almost always over-written. Like this:

"The antelope was a beauty. He stood broadside to me, his marvellous horns piercing the blue sky. I raised my rifle, looked along the barrel, but couldn't keep the front sight still because of the wild thumping of my heart. Was I to toil for days through Africa's heat and dust to locate this magnificent beast, only to lose it because of overpowering excitement? God forbid! Exerting every bit of my willpower, I steadied the rifle and squeezed the trigger . . .!"

And he drops a one hundred and thirty pound bushbuck with fourteen-inch horns.

If he writes about fishing on the Thick, he says:

"I could tell he was a whopper by the way he rocketed the fly. No lipping the lure, but one wild, foaming rush, instant capture, and the lightning-like spurt for what the fish thought was the safety of the brush-lined river bank. Cautiously I felt the line, realized the hook was well-set, and began reeling in. I might just as well have set off a charge of dynamite under the rainbow-beauty, for he charged across the current like a speedboat gone mad, the tightly-angling line cutting a foaming fin on the water. Back and forth, back and forth, every moment