

## LITTLE STORIES FOR LITTLE PEOPLE

### THE SEA CAPTAINS

By JUANITA MILLER

TWO little boys, Norberto and Carlos, had been playing sea captain all morning and now it was nearly noon. The wide sea where they sailed their ships was a pool in which goldfish had once lived. Its rocky shores were surrounded by the grass of a sunny lawn. Norberto and Carlos each had a fine new boat with a splendid white sail and a slender mast.

Norberto's ship had just brought a load of logs from Rosebush Jungle to the port of Biggest Rock, and Carlos had brought rose-petal tea leaves from China Shore. That was the nice thing about Fish-Pool Sea; they could pretend that it touched on all lands and all the interesting places of which they had heard.

"What are you playing?" called a little voice which was not a sailor's voice.

"Oh, we're playing sea captain," Norberto answered patiently, for girls didn't know much about such games!

Maria sat down on one of the big rocks beside Fish-Pool Sea and watched the two boats.

"May I hold a boat string for a little while?" she asked.

"A girl can't steer a ship!" Carlos answered, moving the string so as to pilot his ship toward the dock where it was to be unloaded.

"I'd be very careful!" Maria said.

"But I'm bringing a leopard across the ocean, and girls can't take care of leopards." Carlos pulled the string very gently so that the strange cargo would not slide off into the pool.

Maria leaned over the edge of the water and said, "Leopards! I don't see

any leopard. There aren't any leopards around here."

Maria was only a little girl, and she did not know about capturing leopards in Rosebush Jungle.

Norberto pointed to Carlos' boat and shouted, "It's turning over! Quick, Carlos! Your leopard is getting away!"

Maria began to laugh.

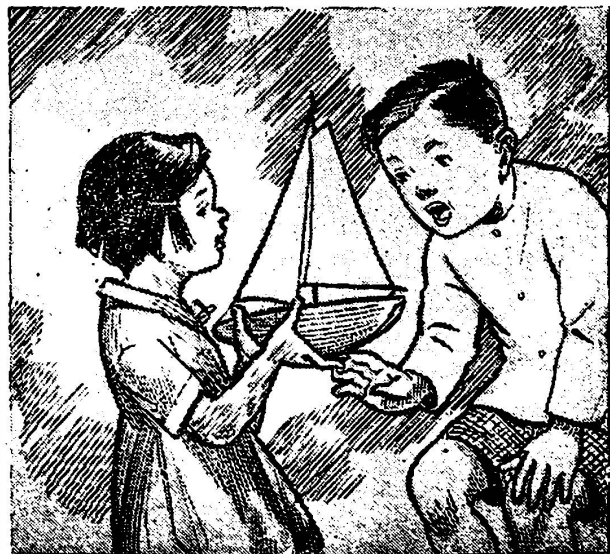
"Oh, oh!" she said. "A little spotted beetle! Who ever heard of a beetle leopard!"

The leopard was rescued and the ship was set up straight again, but something was wrong with it. The leopard crawled away toward the jungle, but the two boys did not notice. They were too busy examining the wrecked ship.

"Oh!" said Carlos sadly. "My new boat! The sail is all torn."

It looked as though Captain Carlos

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*The torn sail had been neatly mended.*

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would not be able to put to sea again until the sail could be repaired.

The boys were glad to hear Mother call that lunch was ready, and they left the boats on Biggest Rock while they went in to eat. When they had gone, Maria went home to lunch, too.

After lunch the boys came back to Fish-Pool Sea. Norberto's boat lay where he had left it, but Carlos' boat was gone.

"Now where can it be?" Carlos exclaimed. "I know I left it here beside your boat, Norberto."

Just then Maria's head came bobbing along the other side of the hedge, and she ran through the gate with Carlos' boat in her hand. She handed it to Carlos with a smile.

The torn sail had been neatly mended and sewed safely to the mast. A new string replaced the worn one which had been tied to the front of the boat.

Carlos sounded very pleased as he asked, "Who fixed it?"

"I did," said Maria. "Mother showed me how."

Carlos held the little boat in his hand for several moments and then he spoke.

"I think a sea captain should always have a good

## LION HUNTERS

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of blood, and could not make a powerful attack.

The men attacked again and again, and after a battle of half an hour the great lion lay dead in the high, dry grass. Now the warriors danced and sang their song of victory around the great animal's carcass. They swung their spears and shields above their heads, tramped the ground

sail mender on his ship. Just think what might happen if the sails should get torn out in the middle of the ocean!"

"Yes," said Norberto, "I think so, too. I wonder where we could find a good sail mender to play sea captain with us."

"Could I be a sail mender and sail with you, Captain?" Maria asked.

"Yes!" replied Captain Carlos. "And you may steer the ship, too."

"You may sail with me, too," said Captain Norberto, "and steer my ship as often as you wish."

Three happy little faces were reflected in the waters of Fish-Pool Sea, while three happy children played the new game of sea captains and sail mender.

—Adapted from "The In-structor."

with their feet, and screamed insults at the lion with high-pitched voices.

The dance lasted for half an hour. Then the warriors placed the lion's body on their shields and carried it above their heads toward their village.

Outside the village the women received their warriors with songs and shouts. They carried the dead *simba* to the center of the village where the natives formed a circle about the body. The great lion was skinned and the mane was given to the chief. The young warrior who had defended himself so courageously under his shield was given the lion's heart.

That night those villagers were happy. Their cattle herds were not threatened, and the roaring of *simba* would not disturb their sleep. They would have peace until another *simba* would find his way to the cattle herds of the Masai warriors of Tanganyika.

## REVIEW

1. What is the English word for *zimba*?
2. Where is Tanganyika?
3. How were the East African warriors planning to kill the lion?