

And from that time forth I enjoyed lessons from my mother.

Our home was in a forest, but every day was spent on the plain just outside. Here we were gambolling and playing one day, when a trampling of horses was heard. Immediately my mother pricked up her ears, snuffed up the air, popped me quickly into her pouch, and hopped away her fastest.

"What is it, Mother?" I asked, breathlessly.

"A man with a stick, dear!"

"Oh, Mother! But we can easily outhop a man with a little stick. Is that quite all?"

"It's a stick that sends out fire, and kills one. Something stinging comes with the fire! Sh! You mustn't talk, dear."

On we rushed for hours, it seemed. A dreadful fear grew up in my heart, though I tried my best to choke it. What should I do if mother were killed? Oh, it was too awful to think of! Mother's breath came and went in short pants now, and I knew she was finding it hard. Without my extra weight she might have some chance.

Oh, drop me, Mother. Drop me, and go on! I can hide; you can't."

"Never! Oh, Never!"

"But there is quite a safe place behind that rock! No one would ever look there!"

I could tell that mother hesitated, and after a little more persuasion she left me, promising to come back very, very soon, and receiving in return a promise that I should remain there.

A little while I waited, then a man arrived at my rock. I remembered a sensation of great fear, being lifted up amid surprised ejaculations, and all else faded (here the writer begs to inquire whether kangaroos do faint). Afterwards came a feeling of rocking motion, which went on and on.

When I recovered my senses once more, I was in a basket (poor substitute for a pouch), and being tended by a woman who fed me with some civilised, mannish sort of food. At this place I stayed for a day, and found life very unsatisfactory. I endeavoured to speak to the cat, but she, haughty prig, turned her back, tossed her head and walked away. I essayed to make friends with the cows, who, however, turned up their wet noses on hearing that my mother was the dearest creature alive. The bull made an enemy of me at first sight, so that I longed to escape, and greatly wished myself back in the bush. Then I suddenly remembered my jumping lessons.