

Androcles and the Lion

In Rome, many centuries ago, there lived a poor slave whose name was Androcles. His master was a cruel man and so unkind to him that one day Androcles ran away.

He hid himself in a wild wood for many days. There was no food to be found and so Androcles became weak and sick, so much so that he thought he would die. He crept into a cave and fell asleep.

After a while a great noise woke him up. A lion had come into the cave and was roaring loudly. Androcles was badly frightened, for he felt sure the beast would kill him. However, he soon saw that the beast was not angry, but that he limped as though his foot hurt him.

Then Androcles wasn't afraid any more. He lifted the lion's paw from the ground and saw there was a long sharp thorn sticking into it. He gave the thorn a strong quick pull and out it came. The lion was much relieved and very grateful. He jumped about like a dog and licked the hands and feet of his new friend.

Androcles was not at all afraid after this and when night came the lion and Androcles slept side by side.

For a long time the lion brought food to Androcles every day and the two became such good friends that Androcles found his new life a very happy one.

One day soldiers were passing through the wood. They captured Androcles and dragged him back to Rome.

It was the law at that time that any slave who ran away from his master should be made to fight a hungry lion. So a fierce lion was shut up in a cage for a while and a time was set for a fight. Thousands of people gathered to see Androcles fight the lion, but when the lion rushed into the arena Androcles gave a cry of gladness, not fear, for the lion was his old friend. The people expected to see him killed. Instead they saw him hugging a lion who lay down at his feet. Androcles said, "I am a man, but no man has befriended me. This lion is my brother." They were then set free and lived together for many happy years.

Questions:

1. Are you a good mixer?
2. Can the expression on your face win a friend?
3. Is it easy to be friendly with someone who shows off?
"show all meekness to all men." *Bahá'u'lláh*
4. Can you keep a secret?
"Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbour." *Bahá'u'lláh*
5. Who should we choose as friends?
"When a man turns his face to God he finds sunshine everywhere. All men are his brothers." *'Abdu'l-Bahá*
"Have for friends those whose soul is beautiful; go with men whose soul is good."
Dhammapada
6. Why should we be careful about choosing our friends?
"O My Son! The company of the ungodly increaseth sorrow, whilst fellowship with the righteous cleanseth the rust from off the heart." *Bahá'u'lláh*
7. Why should we not quarrel with each other?
"O ye beloved of the Lord! In this sacred Dispensation, conflict and contention are in no wise permitted. Every aggressor deprives himself of God's grace." *'Abdu'l-Bahá*