



SpindleWorks 



A short story by Leo Schoof, Kelmscott, Western Australia

## Picnic at Serpentine Falls



The Serpentine Falls are situated in Western Australia about 60 Kilometres from Perth, the Capital City of WA. It is a lovely and peaceful place where many visitors go for a walk through the bush or to watch the waterfall. The rushing sound of the water is a majestic sight. On this particular Saturday afternoon there were many families enjoying the scenery. Some had brought eskies full of food and drink and were quietly having their lunch. Everything was peaceful and it was a joy to be there and admire the beauty of God's creation. Nearby some kangaroos together with their joeys were grazing.

Over the years these kangaroos had become quite accustomed to the many visitors and had become very tame. The grass was nice and green after the winter rains and so there was plenty to eat for the kangaroos. The Johnston family from Byford had also taken some



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time off to explore the wonders of this beautiful spot in Serpentine. On the way into the park they had to pay an entrance fee. But, of course, they did that willingly. That entrance fee goes towards the maintenance of the park. It is a truly lovely park and in the spring time there are many wildflowers to admire, such as Donkey Orchids, Cow slips and many other varieties. God's creation is absolutely amazing in its variety and colourful array of the many flowers.

During the summer many visitors go there for a swim. The water is very deep, though, and because it is so deep it is also quite cold. This is quite refreshing in the summer time but too cold in the winter.

"Dad, they say it is very deep here, but how deep is this little lake?" Lisa, the eldest daughter, asked.



"Nobody actually knows how deep it really is", her Dad responded. "I remember when we went for a swim here with the Youth Club quite a few years ago and one of the fellows lost his false teeth. All of us immediately started diving as deep as we possibly could and everyone said that they could not reach the bottom. As you will understand, nobody managed to find those teeth. So they all gave up the search. Then this fellow held up his hand and he had his teeth in his hand. He had tricked everybody. His teeth were not lost at all." They all had a good chuckle over this.



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There were quite a few grey kangaroos that day and Anna wondered how many kangaroos there are in Australia. So she asked her Dad because fathers know nearly everything.



“Dad, how many kangaroos are there in Australia?”, Anna asked. Dad answered: “I read some time ago that there are between 50 to 60 million kangaroos in Australia and that is apparently twice as many as there are cattle”.

“Wow, that’s a lot of kangaroos”, Winston, the three year old boy in the family said. He had no idea what a million was, but that didn’t matter. He understood it must be a real lot.

“I wonder if there are any rabbits around here”, asked Lisa.

“I have no idea”, Dad answered her. “But I do remember seeing some at a friend’s place not so long ago. One night I had to get something out of the car. So I went outside with my torch hoping I would spot some of these little wallabies, small kangaroos, they also have around this area. Sadly I did not see any wallabies but I was very lucky to spot some rabbits. Three of these little creatures were peacefully nibbling the grass on the front lawn until I disturbed the peace. All three of them quickly hid in the shrubs and sat very, very



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still. Two large rabbits also hopped away from the torchlight and fled to the next door neighbour's lawn.

But these large rabbits had left one of their babies behind. My heart bled for this unprotected little thing and I quietly said a few not so nice things under my breath about the parents of this deserted bunny. This beautiful little thing sat there so peacefully with not a care in the world. It sat very still and perhaps it was hoping I wouldn't discover it. So I carefully, on tippy toes, approached this cute fluffy little thing armed with my powerful torch. It remained very, very still naturally expecting me not to spot it. And of course I had just about blinded it with the torchlight so it had difficulty focusing. But it remained very quiet and still waiting to see what I would do. I was so sure it wanted to be touched and stroked. It was such a lovely and cute little thing and I just couldn't resist the urge to bend over and gently touch its soft fur.

And then.....just as I carefully bent over to touch it I remembered seeing this little concrete garden ornament when I arrived there earlier that day.

I was so embarrassed with myself that I didn't even tell anyone about it.





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Then, as Dad was talking,.....the peace and quiet was suddenly disturbed by some rowdy and boisterous young men, who arrived in several cars. Some of them came on Harley-Davidson motorbikes, which made a terrific noise. It even frightened the little children, who quickly came running towards their parents. The kangaroos also fled in terror.

Then Anna, who was quite shocked by this terrible behaviour asked her Dad: “Dad, why do these people behave so rudely and selfishly?”

“I think it is”, responded Dad, “Because they only care about themselves. They think the world owes them something. They have never learned to respect others and to put others first. They are selfish and live without God and without His commandments. They don’t respect God’s beautiful creation and don’t even care about the beautiful flowers and animals the Lord has created.”

“That’s right”, Mum said: “They don’t love the Lord, and perhaps they have never heard about the Lord.”

The three year old Winston quickly reacted to his Mum’s comments: “I love the Lord.”

“Yes, we know, darling”, Mum said. And she was very thankful for Winston’s happy remark. How good the Lord is, she thought. “Well it is time, I think, to get our picnic basket from the car. You must all be getting very hungry by now”, Mum said.

“I know I am starving”, Dad said. Lisa helped Dad getting all the stuff from the car. Mum spread a blanket on which she placed all the food and drink, and soon they were all seated quietly on the grass. Dad thanked the Lord for the enjoyable time they were having and asked a blessing over the food. As they had their first bite a gentleman,



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who was sitting on a bench nearby walked over to them and said: “I am so pleased to see that there are still families around, who say grace before they have their meal. I think that is beautiful”. “Yes, we always do that”, Dad answered, “and so we should”. After that short conversation the man walked back to his seat with a contented expression on his face. After the meal Mum handed out some lovely yummy strawberries as a desert. When the meal was over Dad gave thanks to the Lord and after that they all went for a bushwalk.



The track was a bit rough in places but all went well. Even young Winston’s little legs managed to keep up with the rest of the family. Winston was a very inquisitive little boy and he did not miss much. He pointed out all the beautiful flowers. He turned over each rock which was not too heavy and suddenly he called out: “Dad, look at this animal. What is it?”

The whole family came over to where Winston had spotted this creature. “Oh, that’s a scorpion”, Dad said. “They are very dangerous

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and can give you a nasty sting with their tail”.



“They have a pair of pincers on their long arms and apparently they have very bad eyesight”, Dad said.

“You know everything, Dad”, Winston exclaimed.

They walked for quite a while. The track went uphill and the view towards the coast was wonderful. However, they decided not to go all the way to the top to save Winston’s little legs. When they came back to the picnic area they noticed that the noisy bikies had left already. Just as well, they all thought. They only disturb the peace with their noisy motorbikes and their loud voices.

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After the long walk they all felt like a refreshing drink. So Dad got the esky out of the car again and Mum poured them all a lovely drink.

“Dad and Mum, look at that”, Winston screamed. They all looked in the direction he was pointing and there on the grass was a young joey which seemed to be in distress. Its mother was frantically and nervously hopping around her joey in an effort to help the poor thing. The young joey was rolling around on the grass obviously in stress and agony.

“What’s wrong with that joey, Dad”, asked Anna.

“I have no idea”, answered Dad, “but obviously it is in need of some help and I wonder if the mother will let us get close enough to help it. Let’s go and see”.





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When they all came closer it was obvious that the mother did not like them to come too close. She became quite agitated and also frightened. But something had to be done about the little joey. They couldn't just leave it for that wouldn't be right. It might even die. But, unfortunately, they couldn't work out what was wrong with the joey. Then Anna, who had carefully walked a bit closer to the joey noticed a small thing hanging out of the joey's mouth.

"Look, what's that hanging out of its mouth?", she called out.

Both girls came closer to the joey, but the mother kangaroo did not like that at all. So they quickly backed off again. But what now? Something just had to be done. Everyone could see that the joey was choking on something and without help it would definitely die. So while the girls carefully came closer and closer to the Joey Dad made sure that the mother stayed out of the way. The poor mother kangaroo was so frightened because she could not understand that the two girls were only trying to help her baby. She thought they were going to hurt it.

Both girls knelt on the grass as close as possible to the joey and Lisa suddenly said: "Look, it has some plastic hanging out of its mouth. No wonder it can't breathe. Let's see what we can do about it".

So Anna very carefully opened the Joey's mouth while Lisa ever so carefully tried to get hold of whatever it was that was sticking out of the joey's mouth. But when she had just about got a good grip on it the mother kangaroo raced past her Dad and that gave her such a fright that she jumped back. Both girls were getting quite scared by now for a mother kangaroo can be quite dangerous. They have very strong nails on their front legs which are capable of hurting people quite badly.



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“We must try again”, Lisa said, “Because it won’t be long and this joey will be dead.

So while Dad again tried to keep the mother kangaroo at a distance the girls made another effort. This time Lisa managed to get a good grip on the slippery piece of plastic, for that is what it was. And after a quick jerk she got it out of the joey’s mouth. And immediately the joey took a deep breath and after a little while she even managed to raise its head a little. And after some time she tried to get up on its legs. In the meantime its mother quickly came forward as Dad could not stop it any longer. She nudged its joey and after a while it got up and when it gained enough strength both mother and joey quickly disappeared into the bush. In the meantime all the other visitors in the park had all gathered around and gave a loud applause not only to the girls but also because everyone was so very happy that the joey was saved. It was very close, though.

The Park Ranger, who lived close by, also came over to see what was going on. When he saw what had happened he was so happy and thanked the family wholeheartedly. “We would have lost this joey”, he said. “If you had not helped it and got this plastic out of its mouth It would have choked to death. I can get so angry with these people, who leave their rubbish around. Some of them are so careless and irresponsible, particularly these bikies. They just don’t care about anything. They come here quite often and smash their empty beer bottles against the rocks and then people and animals cut themselves on the broken glass. And the kangaroos also hurt themselves, not only on broken glass but also on other litter. Even balloons can be quite dangerous when parts of them are swallowed.



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We always have much cleaning up to do after these bikies have been. And you know what, they don't even pay an entrance fee".

The ranger explained how important it is to keep the park, and particularly the picnic area clean. "The broken glass and pieces of plastic bags are so dangerous for all the animals", he said.

Then he asked the children if they had ever heard of the RSPCA and then went on to tell them that the RSPCA gets about 7000 phone calls a year about animals that are hurt by litter such as broken glass, empty cans and plastic. Yes, littering costs many lives each year".

The ranger asked for their name and address because he wanted to send them a letter of thanks and appreciation.

So Dad gave him all the details. Then it was time to go home and they said goodbye to the ranger. They quickly put all the stuff back in the car. All the three children helped. On the way home Dad reminded the children how important it is to respect God's creation and not to spoil it with throwing litter out of a car window or leaving it behind on a picnic area for others to clean up.

"We also need to respect God's creatures, great and small", he reminded them. "It's great that we could save that little joey".

After a couple of weeks there was an envelope in the mail addressed to the Johnston family. It was from the Department of Parks and Wildlife. It was a thank you letter for saving the little joey. It made them all very happy and thankful.



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“Now remember”, said Dad, “That we don’t do these things to get a nice thank you letter. We do it because we know that is what the Lord would expect from us”.

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**J**esus first

**O**thers then others

**Y**ou you last

*That gives JOY*