

The Lion and the Rattlesnake

by Ambrose Bierce

A Man having found a Lion in his path undertook to subdue him by the power of the human eye; and near by was a Rattlesnake engaged in fascinating a small bird.

"How are you getting on, brother?" the Man called out to the other reptile, without removing his eyes from those of the Lion.

"Admirably," replied the serpent. "My success is assured; my victim draws nearer and nearer in spite of her efforts."

"And mine," said the Man, "draws nearer and nearer in spite of mine. Are you sure it is all right?"

"If you don't think so," the reptile replied as well as he then could, with his mouth full of bird, "you better give it up."

A half-hour later, the Lion, thoughtfully picking his teeth with his claws, told the Rattlesnake that he had never in all his varied experience in being subdued, seen a subduer try so earnestly to give it up. "But," he added, with a wide, significant smile, "I looked him into countenance."