

The Attackers: Shepherd Leaders: Amos: Capstick on Lions; Kyrie of Amos's Requiem for the Northern Kingdom, Amos 1:2; The Lord Thunders from Jerusalem: The 1st Cycle Begins: Pastures Suffer Drought & Carmel becomes Parched; Idolatry Has Metastasized in the Souls of the People

56. Peter Hathaway Capstick's chapter "Lion," in his book *Death in the Log Grass*, includes this recounting of his and his gunbearer being attacked by a man-eating lion:

In a life of professional hunting one is never short of potential close calls. With most big game, especially the dangerous varieties, one slip can be enough to spend the rest of your life on crutches, if you're lucky, or place you or sundry recovered parts thereof in a nice, aromatic pine box. Of course, many individual animals stand out in one's mind or nightmares as having been particularly challenging or having come extra-close to redecorating you. One of the hairiest experiences I have had was with the Chabunkwa lion, a man-eater with nine kills when my gunbearer Silent and I began to hunt him in the Luangwa [lü-än'-wä] Valley. We came within waltzing distance of becoming still two more victims. (p. 33)

My mind went over the lion charges I had met before: the quick jerking of the tail tuft, the paralyzing roar, and the low, incredibly fast rush, bringing white teeth in the center of bristling mane closer in a blur of speed. If we jumped him and he charged us, it would be from such close quarters that there would be time for only one shot, if that. Charging lions have been known to cover a hundred yards in just over three seconds. That's a very long charge, longer than I have ever seen in our thick central African hunting grounds. In tangles like this, a long charge would be twenty-five to thirty yards, which gives you some idea of the time left to shoot.

Ahead of me, Silent stiffened and solidified into an ebony statue. He held his crouch with his head cocked for almost a minute, watching something off to the left of the spoor. The wild thought raced through my skull that if the lion came now, the rifle would be too slippery to hold, since my palms were sweating heavily. What the hell was Silent looking at, anyway? (p. 42)

Moving a quarter of an inch at a time, he began to back away from the bush toward me. I could see the tightness of his knuckles on the knobby, thornwood shaft of the spear. After ten yards of retreat, he pantomimed that a woman's hand was lying just off the trail and that he could smell the lion. The soft breeze brought me the same unmistakable odor of a house cat on a humid day. Tensely I drew in a very deep breath and started forward, my rifle low on my hip. I was wishing I had listened to mother and become an accountant or a haberdasher as I slipped into a duck-walk and inched ahead.

I was certain the lion could not miss the thump-crash of my heart as it jammed into the bottom of my throat in a choking lump, my mouth full of copper sulphate. I could almost feel his eyes on me, watching for the opportunity that would bring him flashing onto me. (pp. 42-43)

I lifted my foot to slide it slowly forward and heard a tiny noise just off my right elbow. In a reflex motion, I spun around and slammed the sides of the barrels against the flank of the lion, who was in midair, close enough to shake hands with. His head was already past the muzzles, too close to shoot, looking like a hairy pickle barred full of teeth. He seemed to hang in the air while my numbed brain screeched SHOOT! As he smashed into me, seemingly in slow motion, the right barrel fired, perhaps from a conscious trigger pull, perhaps from impact, I'll never know. The slug fortunately caught him below the ribs and bulled through his lower guts at a shallow but damaging angle, the muzzle blast scorching his shoulder.

I was flattened, rolling in the dirt, the rifle spinning away. I stiffened against the feel of long fangs that would be along presently, burying themselves in my shoulder or neck, and thought about how nice and quick it would probably be. Writing this, I find it difficult to describe the almost dreamy sense of complacency I felt, almost drugged.

A shout penetrated this haze. It was a hollow, senseless howl that I recognized as Silent. Good, old Silent, trying to draw the lion off me, armed with nothing but a spear. The cat, standing over me, growling horribly, seemed confused, then bounded back to attack Silent. He ran forward, spear leveled. I tried to yell to him but the words wouldn't come. (p. 43)

In a single bound, the great cat cuffed the spear aside and smashed the Awiza to the ground, pinning him with the weight of his 450-pound, steel sinewed body the way a dog holds a juicy bone. Despite my own shock, I can still close my eyes and see, as if in Super Vistavision, Silent trying to shove his hand into the lion's mouth to buy time for me to recover the rifle and kill him. He was still giving the same, meaningless shout as I shook off my numbness and scrambled to my feet, ripping away branches like a mad man searching for the gun. If only the bloody Zambians would let a hunter carry sidearms! Something gleamed on the dark earth, which I recognized as Silent's spear, the shaft broken halfway. I grabbed it and ran over to the lion from behind, the cat still chewing thoughtfully on Silent's arm. The old man, in shock, appeared to be smiling. (p. 43–44)

I measured the lion. Holding the blade low with both hands, I thrust it with every ounce of my strength into his neck, feeling the keen blade slice through meat and gristle with surprising ease. I heard and felt the metal hit bone and stop. The cat gave a horrible roar and released Silent as I wrenched the spear free, the long point bright with blood. A pulsing fountain burst from the wound in a tall throbbing geyser as I thrust it back again, working it with all the strength of my arms. As if brain-shot he instantly collapsed as the edge of the blade found and severed the spinal chord [sic], killing him at once. Except for muscular ripples up and down his flanks, he never moved again. The Chabunkwa man-eater was dead.

Ripping off my belt, I placed a tourniquet on Silent's tattered arm. Except for the arm and some claw marks on his chest, he seemed to be unhurt. I took the little plastic bottle of sulfathiazole from my pocket and worked it deeply into his wounds, amazed that the wrist did not seem broken, although the lion's teeth had badly mangled the area. He never made a sound as I tended him, nor did I speak. I transported him in a fireman's carry to the water, where he had a long drink, and then I returned to find the rifle, wedged in a low bush. I went back and once more put the gunbearer across my shoulders and headed for the village.

Silent's injuries far from dampened the celebration of the Sengas [people from southeastern Zambia], a party of whom went back to collect our shirts and inspect the lion. As I left in the hunting car to take Silent to the small dispensary some seventy-five miles away, I warned the headman that if anyone so much as disturbed a whisker of the lion for *juju* [a charm or amulet], I would personally shoot him. I almost meant it, too. That lion was one trophy that Silent had earned. (p. 44)

The doctor examined Silent's wounds, bound him, and gave him a buttful of penicillin against likely infection from the layers of putrefied meat found under the lion's claws and on his teeth, then released him in my care. We were back at the Senga village in late afternoon, the brave little hunter grinning from the painkiller I had given him from my flask.¹ (pp. 44–45)

¹ Peter Hathaway Capstick, "Lion," in *Death in the Long Grass* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), 33, 42–45.
http://www.amazon.com/Death-Long-Grass-Peter-Capstick/dp/0312186134/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1340385740&sr=1-&keywords=death+in+the+long+grass

57. These descriptions of literal lions depict the swift justice when “the Lord, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, roars from Zion”: צִיּוֹן (*Siyyon*), the mountain top on which Jerusalem is built and the location of the temple of Solomon.
58. The next phrase is “and thunders from Jerusalem.” The two together place emphasis on the origin of the Lord’s execution of discipline on the Northern Kingdom. Jerusalem, situated on Mount Zion is the earthly base of operations for the God of Israel.
59. This is followed by a description of how the discipline is first administered, “and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn.”
60. The word “habitations” is the Hebrew noun נְאֻחַ (*na’ah*) and it refers to the shepherd’s pastures which are said to אָבַל (*’aval*): “mourn.”
61. This turns out to be an idiom for drought. There is no place for their sheep to graze because the grass mourns. Drought causes the grasses of the field to bend over and lie flat as if they were in mourning for the country on which they are planted.
62. The phrase should read, “the pastures of the shepherds shall suffer drought.” This indicates the initial cycle of national discipline which includes loss of agricultural prosperity.
63. God controls the weather which is delegated down to weather angels. Good weather prospers an agricultural operation while bad weather hampers it.
64. What is tritely referred to as “mother nature” is really the justice of God either transferring benefits and blessings or cursing and discipline to a client nation.
65. Nature is utilized by God to either curse or bless. Nature is not the active agent; God is. Nature responds to divine will whether men do so or not.
66. The verse concludes with “and the summit of Carmel dries up.” The word “summit” is the noun רוֹשׁ (*ro’sh*): and makes reference to the promontory called כַּרְמֶל (*Karmel*): “fruitful land.”
67. This promontory is a significant area in the Northern Kingdom and the nation’s prosperity may be measured by whether *Karmel’s* agricultural production flourishes or languishes.

Carmel. A beautifully wooded mountain range running for about 13 miles in a south-easterly direction from the promontory which drops on the shore of the Mediterranean near Haifa \hī-fa\, at the southern extremity of the plain of Acre \ā-ker\, to the height of *el-Mahrakah* which overlooks the plain of Esdraelon \ēs-drā-ē-lōn\). ... there is a gradual ascent until the greatest height is reached at 1,742 feet. The mountain still justifies its name, “the garden with fruit trees.” ... to the south and west the mountain falls away to the sea and the plain in a series of long, fertile valleys. There are a few springs of good water; but the main supply is furnished by the winter rains, which are caught and stored in great cisterns. Oak and pine, myrtle and honeysuckle, box and laurel flourish; the sheen of fruitful olives fills many a hollow; and in the time of flowers Carmel is beautiful in a garment of many colors. In the figurative language of Scripture it appears as the symbol of beauty (Song of Solomon 7:5), of fruitfulness (Isaiah 35:2), of majesty (Jeremiah 46:18), of prosperous and happy life (Jeremiah 50:19). The languishing of Carmel betokens the vengeance of God upon the land (Nahum 1:4); and her decay, utter desolation (Amos 1:2; Isaiah 33:9).²

68. Here is the expanded translation of the verse which presents the Kyrie of Amos’s requiem:

Amos 1:2 - And he said, “The Lord, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem; and the pastures of the shepherds shall mourn, [אָבַל (*’aval*): **suffer drought**] and the summit of Carmel shall be parched. (EXT)

69. The time between the ministry of Amos and the fifth cycle imposed by Shalmaneser III and the Assyrian army was forty years.
70. Principle of grace: The Lord is patient with client nations.
71. Principle of justice: “Everyone who has been given much, much will be required” (Luke 12:48b).
72. Once the Lord has extended His grace to a “crooked and perverse generation” (Philippians 2:15b), His wrath falls with swiftness and power.
73. The double emphasis on the fact the Lord strikes from Jerusalem is a key to the severity of Amos: God will tolerate many things but He draws the line on idolatry.
74. The Northern Kingdom was involved in false worship at a false temple, administered by a false priesthood toward false gods.
75. Paul summarizes the divine attitude toward client nation Israel in Romans 11:22.

² W. Ewing, “Carmel,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 1:579.