



## KASPA “The Lion Man”

C.T. Stoneham took the feral child legend back to Africa. Published in hardcover in 1931, **The Lion’s Way** tells the story of Kaspas Starke, a four-year-old boy who survives a native massacre and is found by the lioness Kali, who has just lost her cubs. Maternal instinct takes over and she adopts the lad and raises him as her own. Even overlooking the similarity in names (Kala/ Kali), the first part of the story is a virtual retelling of "Tarzan of the Apes," with a pride of lions substituted for ERB’s ape tribe. It’s done leisurely and in fine detail; Stoneham was an Englishman who spent 20 years in Canada and East Africa before doing the book and his familiarity with the locales evokes a genuinely compelling account of Kaspas’s adventures. The account of his life among the lions and his growth to manhood is fairly believable and the hardships surrounding such an existence are not ignored.

As a young man, Kaspas is discovered by one Martin Sefton, a young government official who succeeds in reuniting the lion-man with his relatives, who live in Canada. It turns out that he is heir to a vast fortune and the middle part of the book deals convincingly with Sefton’s and the relatives’ efforts to civilize their find. Kaspas is described as a blond-haired giant, more lion than human, who moves in a gliding slouch and speaks in low rumbling tones. His eyes are a tawny hazel color and flame bestially when he is aroused. Confounding the efforts to tame him, he insists in roaming the northern forests in a swimsuit and rescues two brother lions from circus confinement. Among the people he encounters is the

vivacious Madeline Moore, a young society woman who has lost her fortune. Kaspas experiences human love but Martin Sefton himself is enamored of Madeline and many trials ensue for the three. The ending, wherein Kaspas renounces his inheritance and returns to lion country and is pursued by Madeline, Sefton, and others less solicitous of his welfare, is pure melodrama but overall Stoneham does a first-rate job of depicting a man out of place in both worlds.

A sequel, **Kaspas the Lion Man**, was published in 1933 by Methuen and is extremely hard to find today. Instead of following the beaten path, Stoneham throws his readers a curve -- Kaspas does not end up with Madeline after all. Due to legal problems at the end of the first book, Kaspas is sentenced to five years in prison. He escapes while being transported and seeing Madeline again, this time as a hunted fugitive, urges her not to wait for him--she later marries Martin Sefton. Then it’s back to Africa for more intrigue and adventures among the lions. Kaspas’s true love turns out to be Eve Linton, the niece of Loudan Grant, who was Sefton’s government superior in the first book. That one was successful enough that Hollywood came calling and Paramount’s "King of the Jungle" starring Buster Crabbe and Frances Dee was released in 1933. **The Lion’s Way** was originally published by Hutchinson in London and by Stokes and Grosset and Dunlap (photoplay edition) over here. It was reprinted, though edited, in **Famous Fantastic Mysteries** in October 1948.

A 3rd KASPA manuscript was discovered, and published as a serial in Pulpdom Online #14, 15 and 16: titled KASPA AND THE CAVES OF DOOM,

Several short stories have been published:

KASPA: RETURN TO KARGIA, Pulpdom O #18.

KASPA AND THE LION GODDESS, Pulpdom O #21

KASPA: TREK INTO TIRAMBITAR, Pulpdom #99

KASPA IN CHAINS, Pulpdom #100.