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Opening extract from

Julius Zebra Rumble with the Romans!

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Dedicated to Alex Milway,
for his zealous encouragement.

Special thanks to Lizzie and Jack, the best
editor and designer I could ever wish for.

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CHAPTER ONE

LAKE OF DOOM

Life on the dusty, shrubby African plains wasn't all fun and games for Julius (i.e. eating grass all day). Every Wednesday, much to his disgust, his mum would drag him and his (very annoying, stupid) brother, Brutus, to the lake.

Julius HATED the lake …

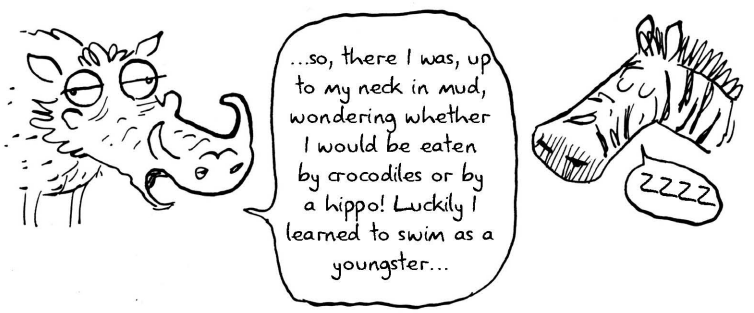


with a PASSION!

He thought all the animals **STANK!**



And that they were SOOO BORING!



Not to mention his fear of being eaten at every turn…



On the other hand, Julius's brother, Brutus, *loved* the lake!



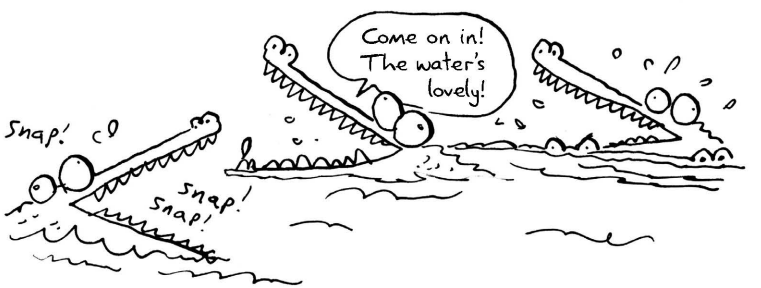
And nothing annoyed Julius more than his big, show-off brother.

So, one week, Julius came up with a nifty plan to try and get out of going. "Look, Mum, I've found this little puddle. It'll do me just fine!" he said.



"No!" scolded his mum. "You'll come to the lake just like everyone else."

"But what about all those crocodiles…"



"You'd have to be very old or stupid for one of *those* to catch you," she said.

"What about those ferocious lions, then?" Julius protested.



"Bah! You're more likely to be hit by a flaming rock from the sky than get caught by one of those lazy beasts!"

"But that's ridiculous," said Julius. "I know plenty of zebras who have been eaten by lions. That has to be the stupidest thing I've ever heard!"





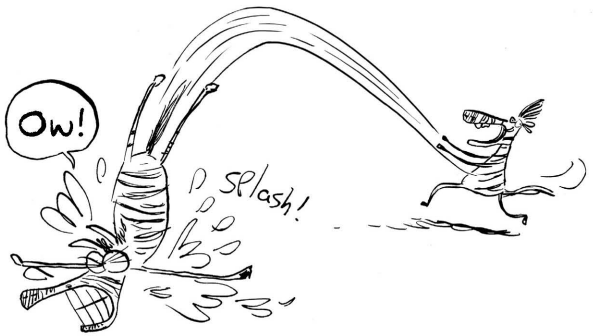
"Now, get to the lake this instant, or a lion with big teeth will be the least of your worries!"

Just as Julius was nursing his bruised bottom, Brutus strutted up to him. "Come on, bruv. The lake is brilliant! Far more exciting than your silly puddle."

And before Julius could do anything about it, Brutus grabbed him by the front hooves and spun him round.



"Can you do amazing, backward somersaults into your puddle like we do at the lake? Let's find out!"



"Nope, thought not! Come on, nincompoop – last one there is a warthog!"

And with that, Brutus pranced off with the rest of the herd.

