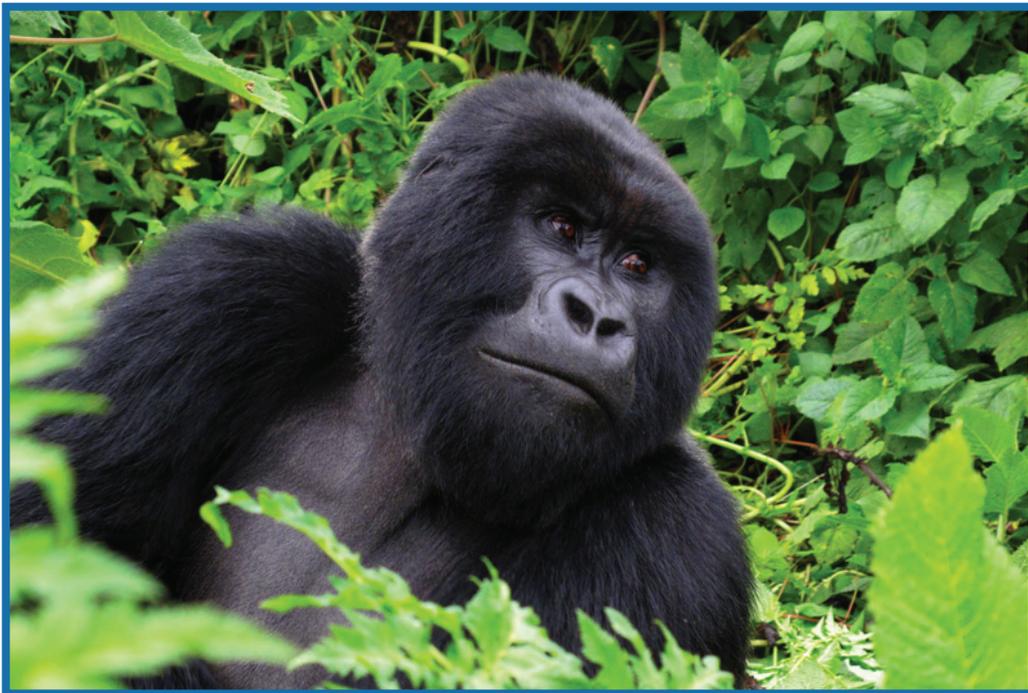


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SAMPLE



**Escape from Lizard Gap:
A Mountain Gorilla Story**

ActiveWild.com

Escape from Lizard Gap: A Mountain Gorilla Story

By Neil Harwood

Forest Pursuit

The morning mist had just started to clear from the valley. The plants glistened with dew, and behind me I could see the trail I had made through the damp grass. Green, tree-covered mountains stretched far into the distance in every direction. In the shade it was still cool, but soon the sun would rise over the mountains, and the valley would become hot and humid.

The other mountain gorillas in my troop were spread across the valley, searching for food. I had taken my usual path towards the forest. As a young male, I didn't have yet any responsibilities within the group. However, I would soon be old enough to be a sentry, and I liked to pretend that I already was. I peered into the trees, ready to warn the troop of any approaching danger.

I ate as I walked, plucking leaves and shoots from plants growing at the sides of the path. Well fed, and looking forward to a day playing with the other young gorillas, I became lost in my own thoughts. I dreamed that I was a silverback, and leader of my own troop.

I heard a noise from the bushes behind me. Before I could react, something hard hit me on the back of the head. I span round, and saw a small stone lying on the ground. Someone had thrown it at me!

I heard laughter coming from the bushes. Curious, and a little angry, I started walking towards the sound. If this was someone's idea of a joke, it wasn't very funny.

Another stone flew past my head. There was more laughter.

A voice came from the bushes. 'Oh dear, has Lutalo got a sore head? Poor Lutalo!'

I recognised the voice. It was Ocan, a gorilla from my troop. He and his brother

Mulumba seemed to take pleasure in making my life a misery.

Another stone hit me on the back, then more came flying from all directions. There were more than two attackers! I turned, and ran blindly into the trees to escape the ambush.

There were shouts from behind me and I could hear that the other gorillas had given chase. Without looking back, I ran even faster, ducking under branches and jumping over roots.

‘What’s up Lutalo? Don’t you like stones?’ shouted one of the pursuing gorillas.

It was Mulumba, who was big and stupid and every bit as mean as his brother.

I ran further into the forest. Risking a look back, I saw that there were six gorillas chasing me. Ocan and Mulumba were at the front. The others were younger gorillas whom I didn’t recognise.

Ocan and Mulumba were both older than me. Since joining the troop they had bullied me constantly. Although not quite fully grown, they thought that they were already adults, and enjoyed pushing me around and telling me what to do.

It didn’t help that their father was a silverback, and leader of the troop.

I felt a sharp pain on the side of my head; another stone had hit me. This wasn’t a game: if the stones were a little bigger I could be seriously hurt.

Table Rock

The trees were a blur of green as I sped between them. As I ran I came up with a plan. I changed direction, and headed towards Table Rock.

I was a fast runner, and a gap was opening up between me and my pursuers. That was good. For my plan to succeed, I needed a bit of time.

Finally I reached my destination. Table Rock was a tall, steep-sided mound of rock. It towered over the trees and I had to shield my eyes from the sun as I looked up at it.

End of sample.

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