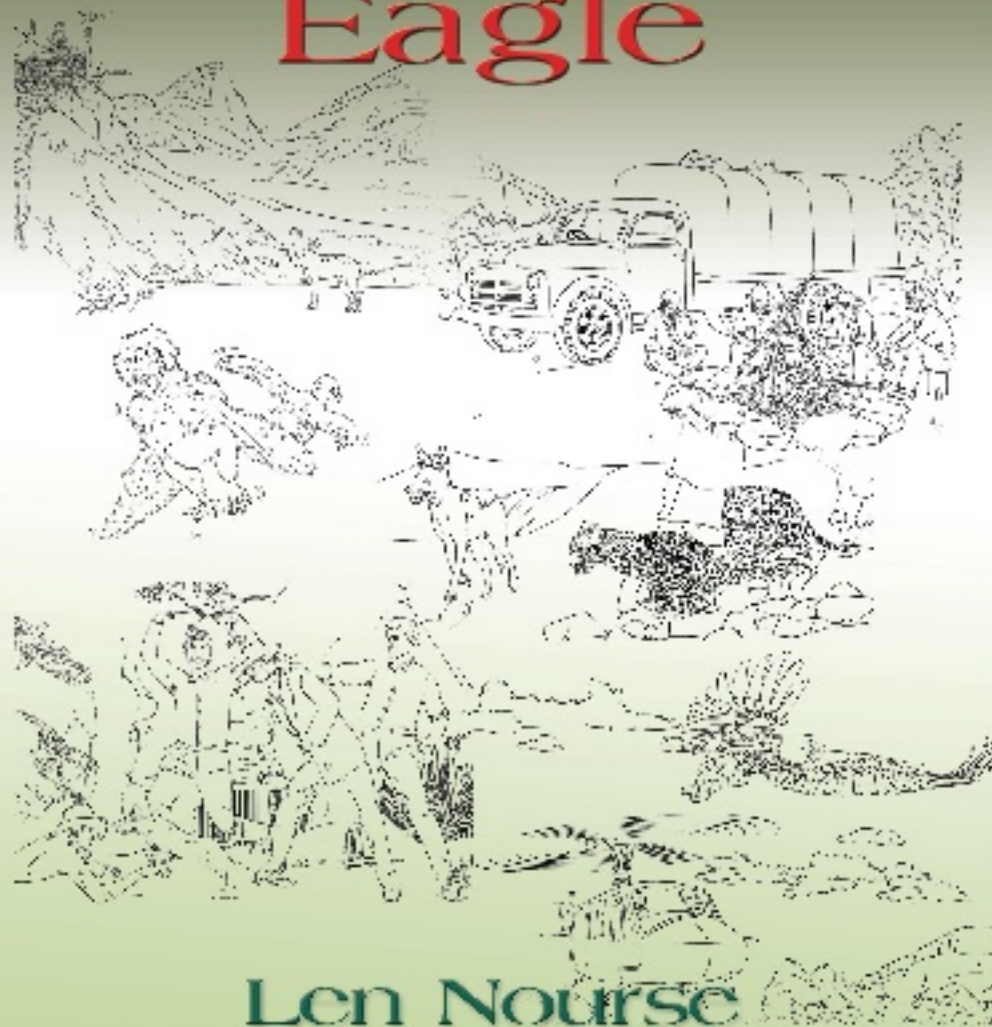


JP and his Animal Detectives

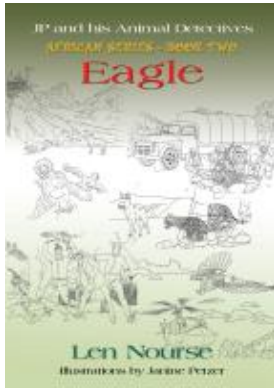
**AFRICAN SERIES - BOOK TWO**

# Eagle



**Len Nourse**

Illustrations by Janine Petzer



*JP, watching the play of Fish Eagles, thought such would be a welcome addition to his team. The opportunity arose through a request by the head of Lesotho police, Numu Letaba, to solve a crime of poaching of their wild life in his country. JP and Jakkals in an action packed adventure solved this crime. One episode is how they saved the lives of two Eaglets and one became his second lieutenant - Eagle.*

# **JP and His Animal Detectives – African Series – Book Two – Team Building – Eagle – Jackal’s First Job**

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# **Book 2 - JP and his Animal Detectives – African Series**

**Team Building - Eagle – Jackal's First Job**

**Len Nourse**

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First Edition

## **Jakkals lets you know who's who**

“Yap...it's me Jakkals, a jackal, speaking. Those who are my colleagues are able to understand what I say. This story is the second in the series of detective, Jaapie shortened to JP. When only a kid JP listened to the voices of animals and birds and found he was able to understand and speak to them. When older he joined the police force. When they found he had a way with dogs he was assigned to a special branch where the skills of dogs were most valuable. JP's colleague in this group was a dog named Bruno, an experienced Alsatian. Together they solved many crimes to do with drug dealing, pet theft and animal and bird poaching and smuggling. These crooks were put behind bars but as happens in human society crooks are released after some time in jail, even the bad ones. How silly of humans. Because of their skills JP and Bruno became the feared and hated enemy of these crooks. The ones they had put behind bars set out to kill them. Book 1 tells you of this thrilling, yet sad case, where Bruno was killed when saving JP's life.

JP named me Jakkals, the Afrikaans word for a jackal. Yes, then it seemed to me JP had no imagination, but I'll let you make your own decision as to this as our adventures unfold. I was, and still am a quick learner.

*JP and his Animal Detectives*

From then on I became JP's first lieutenant, a major player in our own private detective team.

JP insisted I visit my father and relatives to learn the ways and skills of jackals in the wild. As a team we mostly deal with crimes involving stealing and poaching of animals and birds. This is a continuation of our story of crime investigation.”

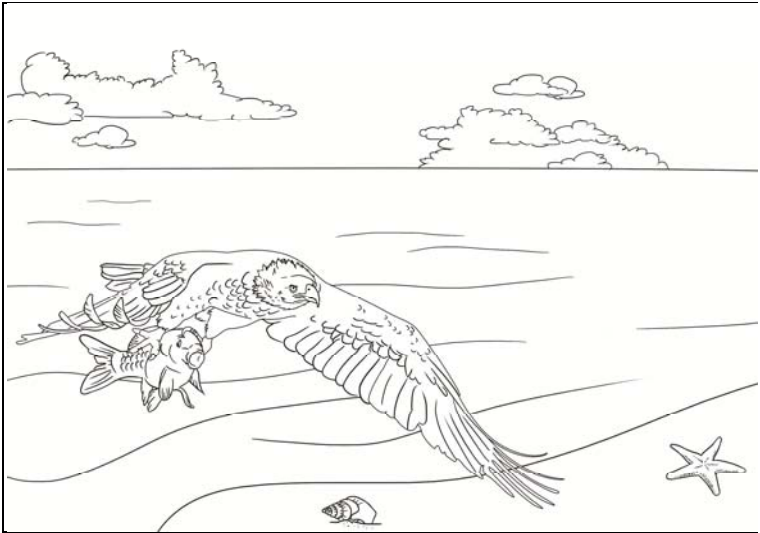
## **Learning Eagle's language**

Some while after he had released Jakkals into the wild, JP was sitting on his veranda overlooking the Indian Ocean. He was idly watching and listening to the voices of the various birds on the beach in front of him, as well as those flying over the ocean. He wondered if Jakkals would ever return because he could well do with him now in his new assignments. The Lesotho government and the Police Chief in Durban had problems they wanted sorted.

His friend Numa Letaba, head policeman of conservation in the Lesotho government, was having trouble with poachers in this mountainous country. Some poacher, or group, was catching the wild life, especially the majestic African Fish Eagle frequently seen around the rivers, lakes and coasts of Africa south of the Sahara.

JP was also wondering what other animals he could add to his team. Towards sunset he saw an African Fish Eagle swoop down from the sky, clutch a fish too heavy to lift into the air, drag it across the sea surface to the beach, and eat it. He listened to the voice of this bird, repeating its sounds as he heard them.

“I could do with such a bird in my team,” he said to himself. “What a scout it would be!”



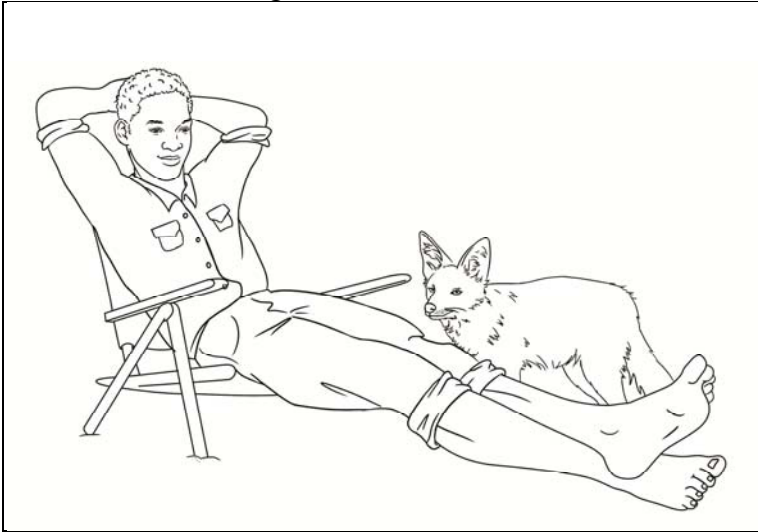
JP consulted his notes and learnt that the African Fish Eagle has two distinct calls. The female is always a smite larger. When near the nest its call is more of a ‘quock’ sound, and its voice a little shriller and less mellow than the male in tone. The call of this bird is so well-known and clear that it’s known as ‘the voice of Africa’ with its highly vocal WHOW-kayow-kwow.

On learning this JP continued listening to what the bird, who had been joined by another slightly smaller fish eagle, was saying as they devoured the fish. He carefully noted their actions as they tore pieces of the flesh off the



bone with each shriek of WHOW-kayow-kwow. They used a different tone when they set aside pieces that JP assumed were for their chicks.

Jakkals, pressing his wet nose into his JP's hand, woke JP out of his reverie with "Yap...Hello, I'm back. Telepathically I received a message that you need my help. Having run here I'm thirsty and hungry so you better have something for me to drink and eat!"



"Hello Jakkals. So good to see you, welcome back. What a magnificent animal you have grown to be."

“Yap...Thanks. Well, what about some food?”

“Yes, I’ll get you something nice. I’ve been thinking of you and hoping you’d be back because I need your help. The Lesotho government is having a problem with poaching of their wild life, especially eagles. The head of Lesotho police, Numa Letaba, has asked me to investigate. For this job I certainly could do with your keen senses. I trust that you have learnt to get around the wild in the dark because that’s when you probably will be working.”

“Yap...I like the compliment on my stature, but humph, you shouldn’t have any doubt because we Jackals are quick witted and quick learners – not like you humans. Bruno did tell me before he was shot, that you humans are slow to mature, and that human-wise you are still a young man. I received your thoughts from my den in the countryside, and gathered you’ll need my skills if you intend to go out in the darkness of the night to catch these villains. I’ve a family now, but we Jackals help one another when one member of a family is missing, so my wife will have assistance if needed.”

“Good, we leave for Lesotho tomorrow morning. Come into the kitchen and I’ll give you some food. I’ve lamb ribs that I know you’ll enjoy.”

“Yap...just what this jackal needs!”

“I’m off to bed now. Please wake me before dawn as it’ll take us nearly a day to get to my police friend, Numa Letaba. He lives in the Sehlabathebe National Park that is in the morning-shadow of the magnificent Drakensburg Mountains.”



## **The journey**

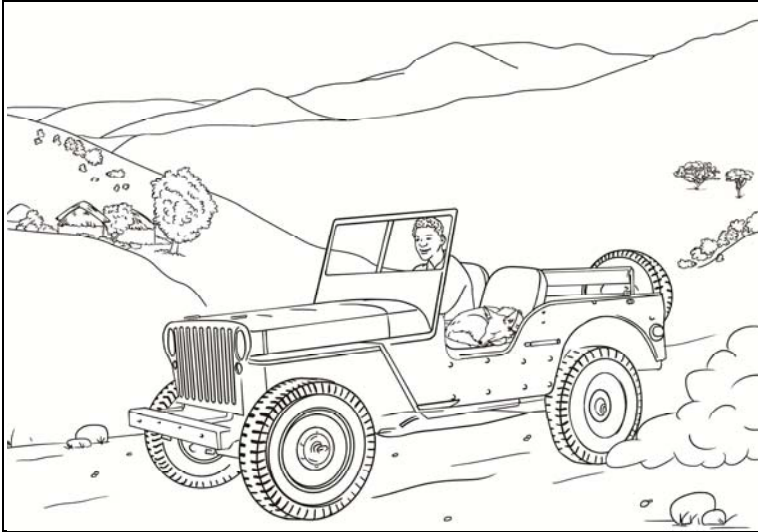
Lesotho is a small country of mountains surrounded by South Africa. The mighty Drakensburg Mountain range on the east border is the source of three of South Africa's biggest rivers. These are the Orange (Gariep) River that flows westward towards the Atlantic Ocean, but much of its water is caught in the Gariep Dam and mainly used for irrigation.

Another is the Vaal River that flows northwards and supplies the populated industrial Gauteng province with most of its water by way of the Vaal dam. The third river, the Tugela, flows through Natal-KwaZulu into the Indian Ocean, and is still largely untamed, except for the Woodstock Dam reservoir. In dry times water is pumped from this Dam over the mountain to supplement the deep Sterkfontein Dam reservoir on the Wilga River. This river flows into the Vaal Dam.



Jakkals, by nature slept all the way, but on this journey he also slept because he knew he'd need to be alert for the next few nights. He only woke up on hearing JP say, "Wake up Jakkals, we're almost there. After you've met Numa and I've gone to bed, I want you to go off into the night and investigate where nests of Fish Eagles are located along the river front. Do you think you could do that? May I please remind you that there will be leopards roaming in the night in that area, so please be careful."

“Yap... Are you still questioning my ability! Of course I will do that, it’s my job!”



As JP brought the jeep to a stop, Numa appeared outside the police cabin wearing his traditional and very smart police uniform made from goat skin.

“Yap...what a smart uniform he has. JP you could do with a uniform like that because goat skin is tough and would protect you far better than your kaki garb when scouting in the bush. I know what, we can keep the skins of the hares I catch for our meals on this case, they’re also

tough, and you could ask Numa's wife to make you a jacket and trousers out of these."

"So you're now my dresser too, Jakkals, but yes Numa's uniform is nice, so that's a very good idea."

"Hello Numa, I smell something nice coming from your kitchen so we must just be in time for supper."

"Yap...Hi Numa. Yup, that smells yummy; I hope you have enough for me!"

"Numa, this is Jakkals. He also says hello and is hoping some of that good smelling food is for him."

"You can talk to him! So the rumour that you talk to the animals is true. Hmm, tell him I also say 'hello'. Of course he can share in our meal."

"I needn't repeat that. You've already said 'hello'. He'll have understood what you've said."

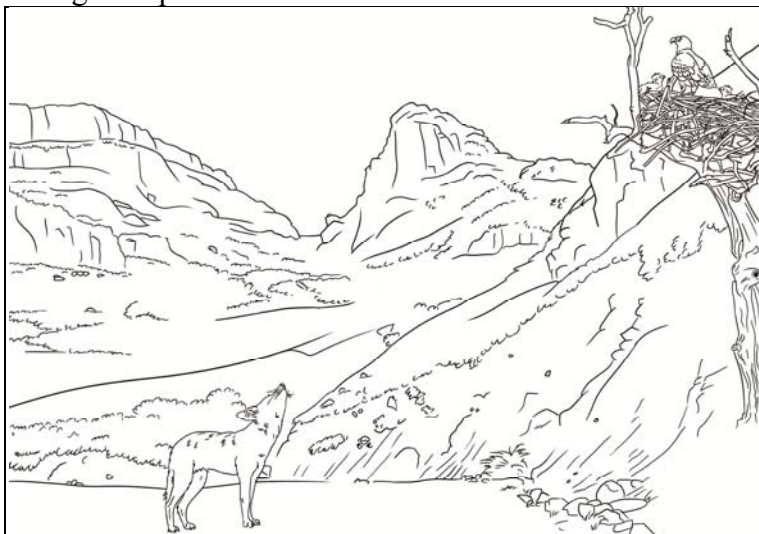
"What! A jackal can understand human language; it's hard to believe, but if you say so, and you can understand him I'll have to believe you. Since that's so I'm now even more pleased that I listened to my field staff to get you to come and help us with our problem," said Numa.

After a brief conversation with Numa discussing what needed to be done, JP said, "I need to go to bed now. Jakkals will wander off into the night investigating the Sehlabathebe National Park. He knows what to look for."



## Jackals' venture into the night

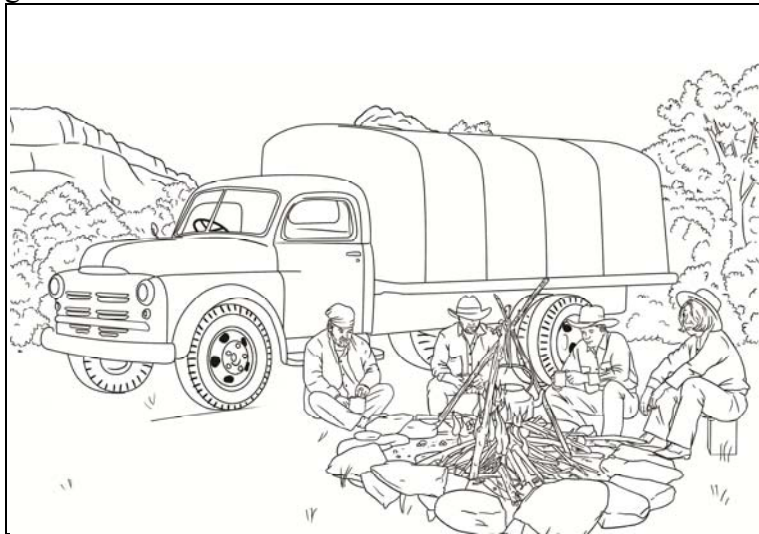
The night was dark, lit only by the stars as Jakkals made his way around the Park. Starlight was sufficient for him to see where he was going. It didn't take him long to traverse the park and note where the wildlife was sleeping. He found numerous fish eagles nesting high on the steep rock faces along the Tsedike creek that runs through the park.



He was on his way back in the early dawn when he heard ‘clank’, the noise of metal on metal. “Yap ... I

wonder what that is? I think I should investigate.” he said to himself.

“Yap... Hmm, I smell a fire.” Creeping closer he saw four men with rifles and nets seated around the fire boiling a kettle. A large truck was parked nearby. “The rifles and nets tell me they are up to mischief. I’d better get back to JP.”



“Yap.... Wake up JP, I’ve found what we’re looking for. I saw four men with rifles and nets sitting around a fire. A large truck is parked nearby on a side track about a thousand galloping strides off the main road

to Sehlabathebe, that small town in the park. Quick, hurry, come with me. You should've been up and awake a long time ago!"

JP, going to Numa's bedroom and shaking him said, "Numa, I'm sorry to wake you but I need to tell you that Jakkals has noted a possible problem at the creek, namely four men with rifles and nets. Keep your walkie talkie on so that if I need assistance I can contact you. You must please have your men ready to come and assist us at very short notice."

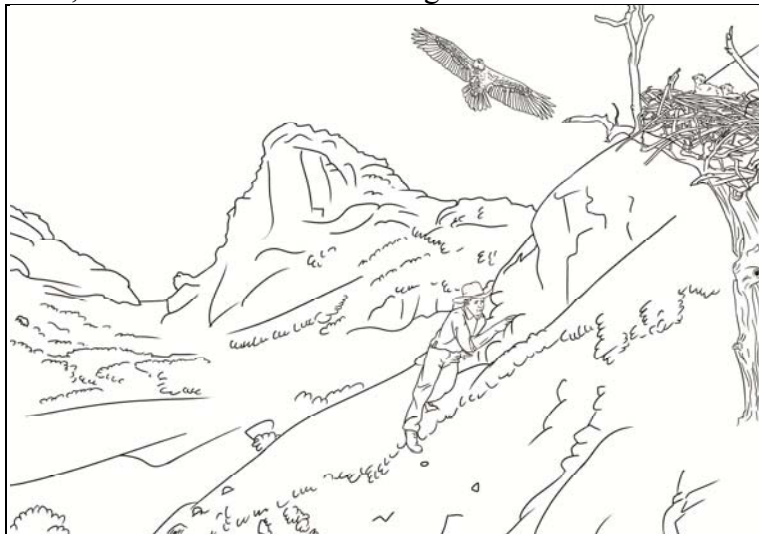
Remember this was also Jakkals' first big assignment as first lieutenant as a member of JP's team. In his excitement he yapped on and on, "Yap, yap ...Hurry JP we don't want them to get away - they looked mean. What are you looking for - no your hat's in the Jeep - yap, yap, yap...."

With that they made their way down to where the truck was parked. They found no one there! The men were gone.

"Yap...See, I said you were taking too long, they have gone."

"Don't fret Jakkals. The truck is still here so they must be somewhere close looking for eagle's nests. Quick, find their trail." Jakkals, though, was already on his way down towards the creek. JP speedily followed him. At the creek JP saw one man holding a net below the

cliff face above the creek, and two men with guns standing around looking up. A fourth was climbing the cliffs, and was close to a Fish Eagle's nest.



“Jakkals, run between the two men looking up and holding guns and cause a disturbance while I contact Numa for police support.”

“Yap.... Do you mean that? That’ll be fun.”

Off Jakkals went making as much noise as he could, and biting the two men on the calves and ankles of their legs. This happened just as the climber chased the mother Fish Eagle out of her nest. He then gathered the

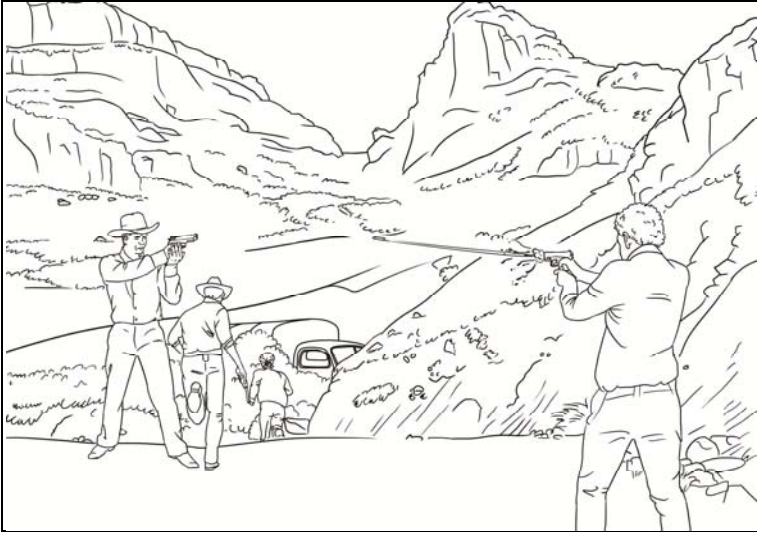
two chicks in his hand and tossed them down towards the man below holding the net. However, because of the disturbance by Jakkals, the gangster holding the net only caught one chick. The other one fell into brush on the side of the cliff's edge. There it was luckily held by branches just above the water.



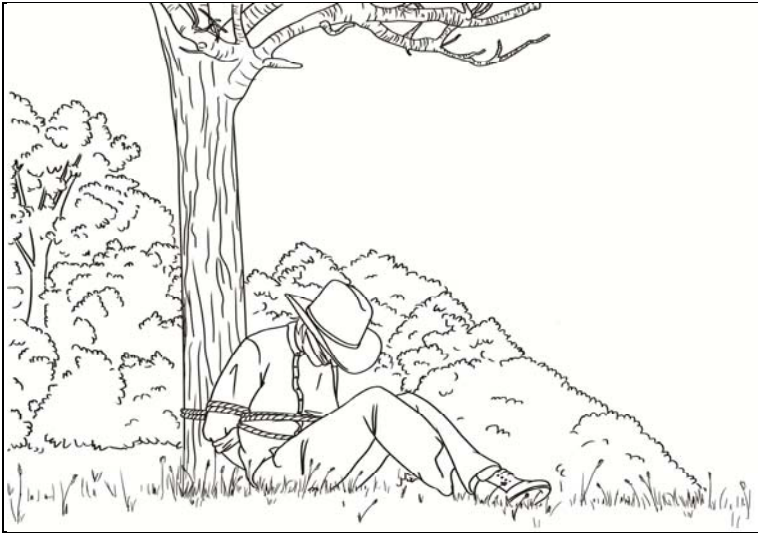
At the same time JP shouted to the men, “Drop your guns.”

The three gangsters ran off with the one chick and those with guns started firing at JP. Jakkals nipping at

their heels made their firing haphazard, and thus off target and completely missing JP.



On reaching the truck the three drove off in haste leaving the man up the cliff to fend for himself. With Jakkals nipping at the descending gangster's feet, JP soon overpowered the man once he was at the bottom. JP tied him to a tree deeper in the bush and out of sight, and gagged him.



Just then Numa arrived with the Sehlabathebe police, five in all. They had the three escaping crooks securely handcuffed in their van.

“I thought there were four of them. Where’s the fourth crook?” the head constable asked.

“He disappeared over the top of the cliff,” said JP. “Don’t worry about him, he’s insignificant. You probably have the leader with you, and you should be able to get all the information you want out of him and the others.”

JP barked to Jakkals in Jackal, “The head of this group can’t be with those three, or if he is, he can’t be

very smart to be so easily caught by the police. I don't think they will get much out of that scraggly bunch. I think we have the leader of this group tied up and hidden. We'll work on him later. In the meantime I'm sure you can think of a plan to extract information from him, because I'm sure he'll play dumb with me."

"Yap – Testing me are you JP, but I surely will, and will enjoy the opportunity."

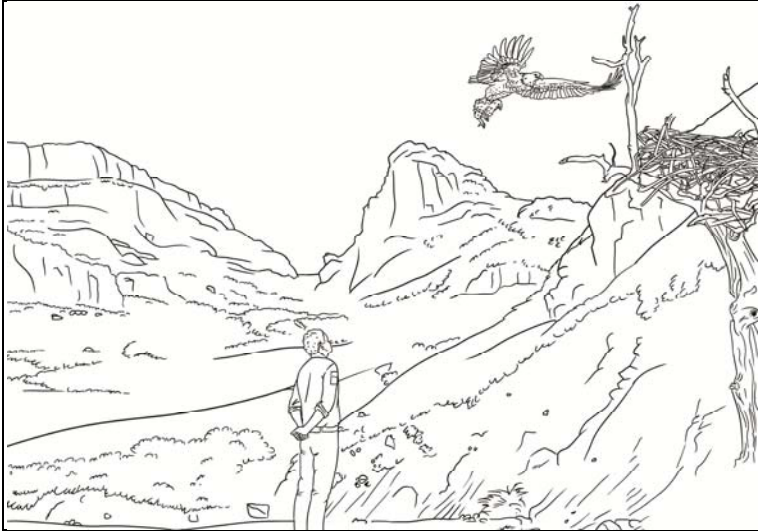
Again addressing the Police, JP said, "Do you have the eaglet with you? I'd like to replace it in its nest."

With that, the police handed the eaglet to JP. Numa, after hearing of the said insignificance of the fourth thug gave JP a wry smile, and drove off with the police. He knew that JP had a plan to deal with that thug.





Looking up JP screeched in Eagle, “Mrs Eagle I’m going to scale the cliff to replace the eaglet in its nest, so don’t be afraid I will do you no harm.”



"Quock... You, a human can talk to me! No need for you to come up, I'll fly down and fetch them."

"Them?" said JP

"Yap... Them is the right word JP, you must be blind. Didn't you see two eaglets dropping down the cliff's edge? The second one fell into that bush just above the water. It's probably badly hurt. I'll go and have a look."

Accepting the reproof by Jakkals in good faith, JP smilingly said, "OK, go and find it, but don't eat the bird. These birds are becoming rare. Later, you can go and

catch a hare for your meal, well maybe two; because we won't find much else to eat here that's tasty."

"Yap...So too are we jackals now rare with the farmers shooting us when we catch their lambs. You spoil my fun! Bruno told me you sometimes don't allow us animals our natural instincts."

"Bruno certainly told you a lot in the short time you knew him!" said JP with a smile.

With that Jakkals bounded off to find the second eaglet while the mother bird flew down to fetch her chicks – expecting two.

When JP handed the eaglet to its mother, she said: "WHOW-kayow-kwow...thank you for rescuing my baby boy, but there were two chicks. Where's the other, my daughter?"

"My first lieutenant, Jakkals, is looking for it in the bush."

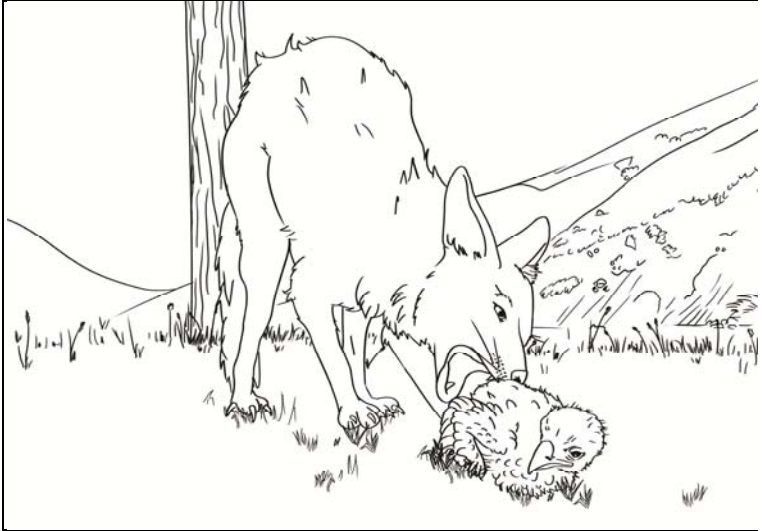
"WHOW-kayow-kwow....A jackal, goodness no, a Jackal will eat my daughter. But it's amazing that you can understand me and also can speak Eagle – that's good. She must live because these poachers have been doing a lot of stealing of our eaglets of late, and there are so few female eaglets still living here to carry on our species. Most of them have been stolen by these horrible humans, and then they shoot at us parents if we try to stop them. You humans are so cruel, obviously not you. You must be

a good human, because that other human poked at me with a stick to chase me off my nest. He then grabbed my two babies and threw them down the cliff. I thought they were dead.”

“Only a few of us humans are, as you say, that cruel. I’ve been contracted by the Lesotho National Park Board to find out who is responsible for the decline in the population of your species, as well as other animals and birds peculiar to this part of the country.”

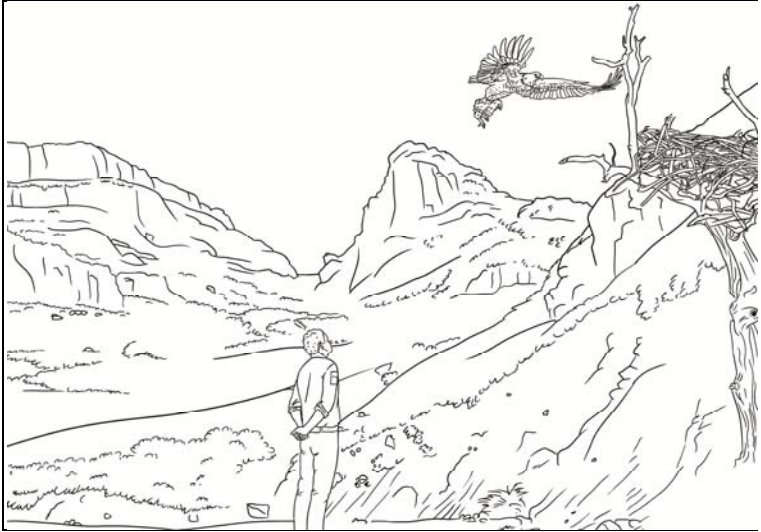
“WHOW-kayow-kwow....Well I can show you where some of us eagles, well eaglets, and other animals, like baboons, leopards and jackals, are being held in cages,” said Mrs Fish Eagle.

Just then they heard, “Yap...I’ve found the eaglet and it seems to be injured. It won’t live. Can’t I eat it now because I’m hungry?”



“Definitely not,” shouted JP. “Her mommy will fly to you and collect it after she has placed this eaglet in her nest. I’m sure she will give you a peppering should you harm her baby daughter.”

With that, mommy eagle took the first chick to her nest. She then flew to where Jakkals had the other eaglet, and took her up to the nest.



In the nest the mother inspected her daughter, and said to JP, “Your jackal might just as well have eaten this eaglet because it won’t survive in my nest. It has a wound in its chest where a stick penetrated. It’s hardly alive now, and infection will soon kill it.”

With that, the mommy eagle was about to pick up the chick in its beak and drop it back over the cliff’s edge, when JP shouted, “Please don’t, rather bring her back down and I’ll take her with me, and coax her back to health.”

Looking down at JP with scepticism, the mother eagle said “WHOW-kayow-kwow....OK, if you say you can, although it’s hard to believe. I’ll bring her down.”

After handing the eaglet to JP she said “WHOW-kayow-kwow ...Where are you sleeping tonight? I’ll wake you in the morning and show you where the caged eaglets and other animals are kept.”

JP replied, “Thank you. That would be helpful. I’m sleeping in a tent below this cliff.”

JP then started preparations to treat the eaglet when he heard, “Yap...Hey, you’ve forgotten something, namely that crook tied to a tree where you’ve hidden him. I’m eager to show you what I can do to make him tell you what you want to know about his gang, especially where the head of the organization is located.”

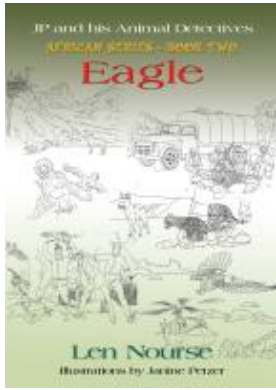
“Later Jakkals, I firstly want to cover the wound on this eaglet’s chest, and straighten its leg because I see it’s broken.”

On saying that, JP walked to the creek’s bank and dug into it until he found some good clay. He extracted some and kneaded it until it was nicely moist and pliable. The clay was flattened, a cotton handkerchief from his pocket was placed on the two sides of the flattened clay and this dressing placed over the chest wound and bound to the eaglet to keep it on. He then cut two stems for

splints from reeds growing on the side of the creek. He straightened the eaglet's legs and bound the splints to the broken leg. He placed the eaglet in a box and covered her with his jersey to keep her warm.







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