

Crocodile staggered to his feet. He saw Madge smiling. It was his turn to experience the addition of insult to injury.

"Baal you catch-um that horse," the girl cried. "You gif it me bridle."

Crocodile gave one ugly look into her eyes, muttered a deep imprecation in his own tongue, and sprang at the girl. He seized her round the waist with his sinewy arms and swung her off her feet as though to dash her to the ground. Then Parker took a hand.

A well-placed left under the jaw, and right on the lower ribs, caused Crocodile's arms to lose their tension for a moment. Madge, angry but self-possessed, freed herself and stood back.

Crocodile, his eyes glistening beneath his low, scowling brows, his white teeth showing as his lips parted in his gasps, his ugly nostrils quivering, stood facing Parker, with vicious intent showing in every feature. The Cockney trooper, with one quick glance into Madge's face, squared up to his coloured foe, his weight thrown forward ready for a back spring, his arms ready to fight or wrestle, and his eyes alert for either a blow, a trip, a grip or a kick.

The black's eyes blinked for a second, then he rushed in and closed with his enemy. Backwards and forwards they staggered, now one, now the other gaining a slight advantage. While it was strength for strength, the match was fairly even, too even, indeed, for the black, who saw that he would have to outwit his adversary in some way. His quick eye caught sight over Parker's shoulder