

Lion a sourpuss

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building, out came the disobedient tooth, over two inches long."

After the deed was done, Pompei's wound was dressed and he was allowed to rest until the evening performance. It was hoped that he would have recovered sufficiently to go on, since he did not have an understudy.

It should be noted here that *The Lion's Bride* was not an immortal literary effort. The article in the *Telephone* gives the readers a glimpse of the plot; "The beautiful bride was captured in the forest and ready to be destroyed in the cage by the ferocious animal, but Pompei was mad, and roared and charged and would not leave the corridor of the cage to make the attack. Blank shots were fired in his face; he was prodded and threatened until the audience was alarmed unless the enraged animal should by accident break from captivity. His lionship would not forget the tooth-extracting a few hours before, and refused to turn the trap door that

replaced LaFayette in the cage, who then throws aside the robe that covers him and saves the frightened bride from destruction."

Had any of the audience felt cheated, the *Telephone* made allowances for Pompei. "Last night he was again a bad actor, but when it is known how the tooth came out only a few hours before, the disappointed audience will be sympathetic."

The newspaper does not note whether any of the spectators asked for their money back. Perhaps the remote possibility that the unhappy lion would escape was considered quite thrilling enough.

After the performance, however, Pompei was not permitted to return to his cage for the night. LaFayette, fearing that the lion could get out of the habit of performing, prodded him with irons and fired blanks in his face until he got it right. LaFayette later told a *Telephone* reporter that "he always made it a rule to compel the beast to do his act, before he quit, for once the animal knew it had the mastery, its value as a performer ends."