

Lady Lion Tamer Tries in Vain to Prevent Man's Suicide in Lion's Den

NUERNBERG, Germany (UP)—A 28-year old lady lion tamer today how she tried in vain to save a young man who walked deliberately to his death in a lion's den at the zoo.

Miss Margarethe Storch leaped into the cage of four lions aroused by the taste of the man's blood while Caesar the Lion carried him in his jaws—as if he were a doll.

Josef Hajek, 21, jumped over the protective fence at the Nuernberg Zoo, waded neck-high through a moat and walked into the midst of the lions.

Miss Storch recalled events at the lions' enclosure at the zoo: "First I heard the screams, especially the shrill-pitched cry of a woman."

"I entered the den from the attendants' door in the rear. There, Caesar the Lion carried this man in his jaws—as if he were a doll. "I approached the four lions, slamming together two metal shields to scare them off. But they would not frighten.

"The young man lay on the ground among the beasts, and I shouted 'Follow me, get out, get out through this door!'

"Then he suddenly stumbled to his feet and stood. Then he fell. "One of our biggest lions—Caesar—attacked. He bit the man in the neck. The man quivered, but he did not move again.

"I crept to within six feet of the body, carrying the shields in my left hand and a large wooden club in my right. Another lion circled carefully to surround me. I backed out and pushed the alarm.

"Police came then. They fired pistol bullets into the air. But the beasts remained by Hajek, squatting on him or near him—each animal nervously eyeing the other lest he make off with the prey. It is a habit of the beasts."

Zoo Director Alfred Seitz said Hajek had bicycled from his home at Carolsburg and had run through the gates of the zoo pushing the bicycle beside him although bicycles are forbidden in the grounds.

Then he pedaled quickly to the lions' den, rested the bike alongside the wall and sprang over the barrier into the den.

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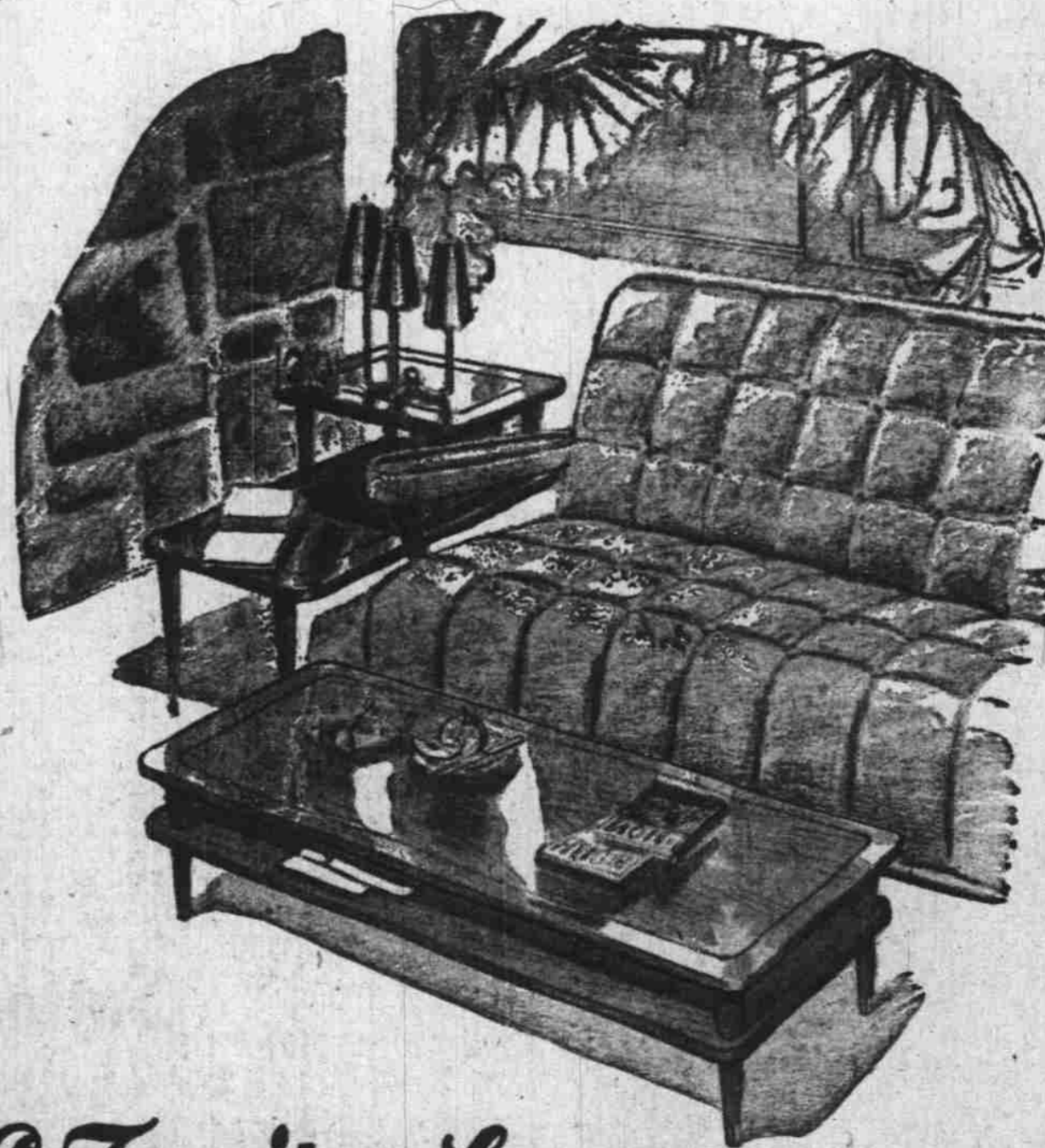
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