

# No lion, no witch, but a wardrobe...

## Does this Lion Sands Game Reserve camp exist in an alternate universe?

**DAVID BATZOFIN**

AS our game drive vehicle entered the campsite, I thought for a moment that I had stepped into the pages of a novel by CS Lewis. Why? Because according to the sign we passed, we had arrived in Narnia,

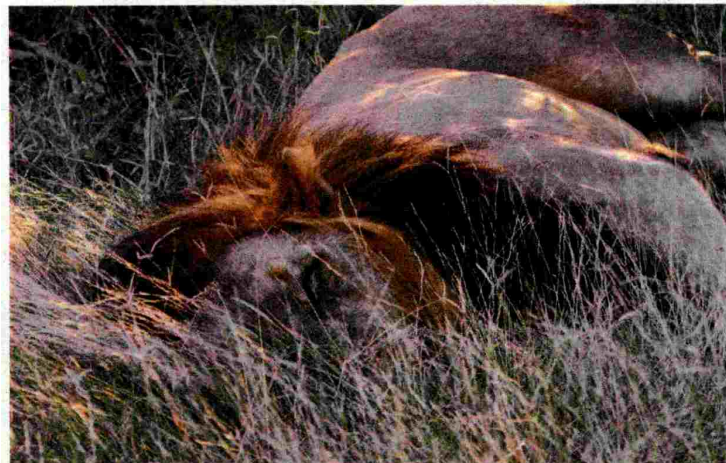
albeit in the Lion Sands Private Game Reserve, adjacent to the Kruger National Park. The signs of this being the case were everywhere.

Firstly, the shape of the thatched roofs of the main lodge building reminded me instantly of a witch's

hat. And when I mentioned this fact to the ranger, he agreed with me! Sadly, although I did spend time searching for the witch and her favourite mode of transport, I found neither. And even if I had found the latter, I am not certain that I could have convinced my wife to play the role of the former for a photograph...

Finding the local equivalent of the next part of the title was more difficult. We spent two days searching for a pride of lions whose spoor seemed to cause both our ranger and tracker endless problems. The excitement levels in the vehicle were directly linked to cries of "They are here!" to "They are close!", but they eventually faded altogether when both Jason and Emmanuel agreed that the pride had eluded our best attempts to locate them.

Eventually, however, we did find an example of the *last* part of the title, and as it turned out the easiest one to locate – sourcing a wardrobe does not require tracking skills.



**ASLAN ASLEEP.** The star of the show was conspicuous by his absence on this trip. *Picture: David Batzofin.*

So, where did we eventually locate the last piece of the puzzle? In the bathroom at the Tinyeleti Treehouse, where we spent a wonderful evening dining out and sleeping under the stars. Well, not *quite* under the stars as the enormous bed was surrounded by a mosquito net.

At least we were able to claim one of the three items mentioned in the title of the book. However, it was at this point that I realised that the whole exercise had been pointless, when it was pointed out to me that

I had misread the name of the camp on the way in. It was not "Narnia" but "Narina" ...

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**MISREAD.** This plain sign was mistaken for a portal into an imagined world. *Picture: David Batzofin.*