# WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD

When we decided to go to Africa, our friends warned us that it could be dangerous. Halina and I listened to them, but we went to Africa anyway.

One of the places we visited was Ngorongoro Crater in Tanzania. This huge volcanic crater is about two million years old. It is a place shared by the Masai people and thousands of wild animals.

We came to the Crater Lodge by minibus.

Our room was in a building about 60 metres away from the lodge, where the meals were served. We left our backpacks in our room and set off walking across the lodge grounds.

It was very dark. We could see the lights of the lodge ahead, but there was no moon, and the stars were hidden by clouds. There were no fences at all. The animals of Africa were free to go in and out of the crater whenever they liked.

"What if a lion decides to go out for a stroll tonight?" I said to Halina, half joking. "What if it's as hungry as we are?"

By now our eyes were used to the darkness, so we walked a little faster, heading for the lights of the lodge. Then we stopped. On the path ahead, we saw large, dark, moving shapes.

But they weren't lions, only buffalo. Their heads were down, and they were tearing at clumps of grass. I waved my arms at them, and they moved out of our way.

After we had eaten, we walked back to our room.

The next morning, we looked out of the window but we saw no sign of any animals. What we did notice was a warning on the table in our room which, in our hurry, we'd missed the night before. It told visitors to be extremely careful of the wild animals that regularly roamed the lodge grounds, especially at night. What about buffalo? we wondered. We asked a local man at the lodge. "Buffalo?" he said. "They are one of Africa's most dangerous animals when their way is blocked. Never upset a buffalo! You would have no chance at all of running fast enough to get away from it."

And I'd treated them as if they'd been as harmless as a flock of New Zealand sheep! A shiver went down my back. Halina let out her breath very slowly. We had proved the truth of the old saying "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread".

**By Bill Nagelkerke**