

MORE GRIM FAIRY TALES

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DEEP, deep in the forest lived Hyena. Hyena was very wise and Hyena was very crafty.

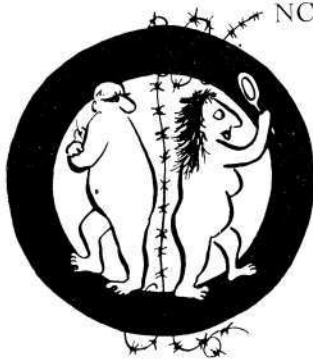
One day as he sauntered through the forest, he spied a lion cub on the forest path, and his first thought was to fall upon it and eat it. Being very wise and very crafty though, he merely seized it and ran back to his lair. There, he determined to train Lion to obey him, for besides being very wise and very crafty, he was also very kind-hearted and realized how lucky Lion would be to have him for a master.

As Lion grew up, the arrangement proved excellent, for Lion would kill the meal and Hyena would eat most of it, thus saving Lion from indigestion. Whenever Lion got any great ideas as to who was who, Hyena very properly tweaked his tail and reminded him that all his good fortune and his freedom from indigestion were due to the self-sacrifice of Hyena. This puzzled Lion rather, for he was a trifle slow on the uptake in such matters, but he took it for granted that it must be right.

One day, however, unworthy thoughts came to Lion, after he had overheard Hyena talking to Mrs. Hyena. The good lady had suggested that Hyena ought to treat Lion better. "Really," she said, "Lion cannot really enjoy sleeping on the mud at the river bank where you chain him, and now that you've put him on a diet of bananas, he may get dangerous." "Nonsense," said Hyena, "You don't know Lion like I do; give him an inch and he'll take an ell. He likes to be treated firmly." Mrs. Hyena was still very doubtful about this, and thought that all the hyena population would feel a great deal safer if Lion were given a comfortable bed and just enough meat to keep him happy. Of course, she would not suggest anything so unthinkable as giving Lion his freedom, for she knew that that

would not be good for Lion. After careful consideration, she reckoned it would not be good for Hyena either. Neither of them thought of asking Lion what he thought, but then of course, lions don't have thoughts, and if they do they are probably silly ones.

Lion began to think that hyenas were very nasty, but he was quite wrong. He soon found out how nice they were—much nicer than bananas.



ONCE upon a time there was a Kingdom of Ethnaria, but all was not well, for it was discovered that the great virtues of the people, such as pride, selfishness, arrogance, hatred and greed, were in danger of being watered down or even lost altogether, through indiscriminate marriage and association.

As a first step, it was decreed that all long-nosed people should be kept separate from their less endowed fellows, as the nation was in danger of losing the ability to look down its nose. Again, the long-sighted members of the community were to be kept free from association with the short-sighted, the tall from the short, the blue-eyed from the brown-eyed, the hairy from the glabrous, the freckled from the clear, the bow-legged from the bandy, the left-handed from the right-handed, and the stout from the thin.

Step by step the policy was enforced. Each group had its separate area, and although there were some attempts made to evade the law, marriage between the groups was kept to a minimum, while the King had emblazoned on his coat of arms the legend, "Divided we stand; united we fall."

The only thing that remained to be done in order to perfect the system, was to separate the male from the female. In spite of pessimistic warnings that this would result in the death of the nation, it was agreed by the King, in consultation with the Monarch, that those who criticized the plan were just agitators, and that if the ship should go down, it would do so with its colours flying.

Once upon a time there was a Kingdom of Ethnaria.

IN the dim and distant days when morals weren't all they are to-day, there lived a robber called Nathaniel.

One bright noontide, Nathaniel strolled into a garden in the High Street of Myopia on his regular round of business, and the citizens of this worthy town gathered at the fence to see how he would set to work. As he approached the door, a fierce-looking dog leapt at his throat, causing him to pause in his stride to break every bone in the beast's body.

Undismayed and heroic in defeat, the valiant hound snapped at the heels of anyone who attempted to interfere, proclaiming that his only was the right to be watchdog. He had watched the robber come in, and nobody else was going to watch him come out.

So touched was Nathaniel by this display of heroism that he offered the beast the chance to come into partnership with him. Melted to tears by such magnanimity, the dog accepted, and so long as his life lasted (which wasn't very long), he fed out of a silver dish; for Nathaniel always kept plenty of silver around—it was one of his whims.

Right to the end of his life, the dog never let Nathaniel out of his sight, and when he died a lamented death, this epitaph was inscribed above his remains:

“Here lies Nat's lackey
Devout to the end;
He found out the knack, he
Turned foe into friend.
Now who will be watchdog?
Who faithful will be?
Who, tell me now, who
Will be faithful as he?”

