

## Hare and the Hyena

Hare met Hyena a long time ago when there was a famine in certain parts of Africa. They were both hungry and they continued on the road together until they came upon a farmer, who was complaining because all his servants had left.

"If you will feed us, we will work for you," suggested Hare.

The farmer happily agreed and gave them a pot of beans to cook in exchange for weeding a field.

They made a fire and sat the pot of beans on three large stones to cook while they began their work. When the sun was hot and high in the sky, they returned to rest and enjoyed their mid-day meal.

Hyena told Hare to watch the pot while he went down to the river to wash.

As soon as Hyena was out of sight of Hare, he stripped off his skin and ran back to Hare uttering strange cries. Hare was terrified and ran for his life.

Hyena quickly sat down and ate all the food, then he went back to the river, and found and put on his skin. He strolled slowly up the bank and returned to the cooking pot.

"O Hyena! Did you see it?"

"See what?" asked Hyena.

"That terrible demon, " explained Hare.

"I saw nothing. Let's eat, said Hyena calmly as he walked towards the cooking pot and looked inside.

Feigning rage, Hyena cried "Where is it? Where is the food?"

"That horrible demon must have eaten it," cried Hare.

"Nonsense," shouted Hyena, "You ate it yourself while I was washing down at the river." "I did not," said Hare, "and I shall make a fine bow and arrow to shoot the creature if it comes again."

The next day the farmer gave them another pot of beans. Hare set out to make a fine bow, but when he was almost finished, Hyena said, "Let me finish it for you. My father taught me a special way to make extra-H3 bows. Instead Hyena cut the bow so that it would break as soon as Hare tried to use it.

Hyena again bounded off to the river to wash, leaving Hare to watch the beanpot. Once again the most repulsive-looking animal he had ever seen raced toward him. He put on arrow in his bow and pulled. Snap! It broke in his hands and off he ran as the creature continued to come toward him.

Hyena again ate all the food, then returned to the river and retrieved his skin. He again accused Hare of eating all the food. This time Hare saw a little piece of bean stuck in Hyena's teeth as he spoke.

While Hyena was sleeping that night, Hare made another bow -- without any weak spots -- and three sharp arrows in the long grass near the spot while they cooked.

The next morning the two animals worked hard, stopping at noon for their mid-day meal.

Hyena went to the river to was, and Hare waited, bow in hand. This time when the loathsome-looking creature ran towards him, Hare raised his bow and shot. Hyena fell dead to the ground, the arrow piercing his heart.

"Oh well," Hare remarked, as he ate his first meal in days, "my mother always told me that greed does not pay and now I know she was right."

Source: Shortened and paraphrased from *African Myths and Legends*, retold by Kathleen Arnott.

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