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Prompt 2: The Three Brothers

There were three brothers in the family. They did not get along and were constantly trying to best each other in various tasks. If the brothers needed milk from the cow, they would race to see who could get to the cow first, and bicker about who could get the most milk from the cow. Their parent was a peculiar being, whom the brothers called Folk. Folk was a large being with many legs, eyes, and arms. However, Folk would rarely chime in on the brother’s bickering but was often displeased by the bickering. However, there was no mistaking that Folk was an extremely powerful being. Nearly anything Folk wanted could be willed into existence and regardless of the three brothers, whatever Folk decided was best was what happened.

One day the three brothers had painstakingly finished their chores and were still arguing about who could be the better leader. Folk heard this argument and decided to settle it once and for all. After gathering the brothers and quieting them, Folk explained that it would give each of them absolute power and beings to lead. Folk then began cutting arms and legs from itself and building beings for the brothers to lead. Discussing and tailoring the beings to the brothers’ specifications.

The first brother, the youngest, went first, deciding that the way to lead his entities to prosperity was for all of them to simply care for themselves. He did this as this is how he had survived up to this point. Folk gave this brother a population of goblin like creatures, fierce and witty. Folk then moved on to the eldest brother, who disagreed with the first brother and thought that the best way to prosperity was through caring only for each other. The Folk cut more flesh from its bones and limbs and fashioned a population of dwarfs. These dwarfs were fiercely loyal, hardworking, and concerned only with their fellow dwarf. Finally, the middle brother, who had both taken care of himself, and taken care of his younger brother. Folk once again, tore some of its flesh off and fashioned some humans to rule over.

After giving each brother their beings to rule over the Folk took a long-needed rest. For centuries, Folk slept while the brothers attempted to prove their method to be the best to prosper. Each brother tending carefully to the needs of their people and enforcing the rules they decided on. Upon awaking, the Folk discovered it was alone. Curious and worried about its children the Folk went looking for the three brothers across the land.

First, Folk came across a desolate city, where there was despair and ruin wherever Folk went. Intricate architecture and massive abandoned buildings peppered the landscape. As Folk wandered through the barren wasteland, Folk found bodies upon bodies of dead goblins, mutilated, and desiccated. With each body Folk scooped up the carcass and popped it into one of its many mouths. Making its way to the center of the city Folk found the youngest brother, kneeling with the last goblin in his hands. Folk inquired to what had happened, and the brother responded. The goblins had followed the brother’s ideology to the letter, taking care of their own needs. At first the goblins achieved great things, building massive architecture and prospering. However, eventually sickness spread and with none of the goblins caring for one another they all died off. Folk consoled the embarrassed younger brother and eventually moved on to look for the other brothers.

Eventually, Folk came across a great mountain, with massive halls and infrastructure. However, like the goblins’ city, the place seemed desolate. Eventually dwarf bodies began to show up and Folk ate them like the last, reabsorbing them. Upon reaching the heart of the mountain, Folk found the eldest brother sitting. Upon asking what had happened, the brother explained that every dwarf had cared for each other only. A sickness came and the dwarfs cared for each other and got better. However, a famine then came and instead of feeding themselves they only fed each other until some starved to death, and then more and more until they all died off. Folk consoled his eldest son and then moved on to find the middle child.

Upon traveling Folk came across a moderate city of humans. People bustling and working. They stopped and stared as the unusual form of Folk passed by, in awe of the power wielded. Upon reaching the center of the city, Folk saw the middle child and asked what had happened that made his people successful. The middle brother explained that his people had lived and when sickness came, they cared for each other, and when famine came, they cared for themselves. While they did not thrive in the same way as the goblins and dwarves had, they had continued to survive and continued too. Folk called the other two brothers to him and decided that the three brothers were to live amongst the humans ruling them as the middle child had ruled them. The brothers agreed and began ruling together, no longer bickering. Folk returned home, watching the brothers from a distance.

Analysis:

The three brothers is a modern tale that addresses modern issues through a general structure borrowed from the tale of Goldilocks and the Three Bears in addition to elements from the Three little Pigs. There are many differences and lessons that can be taken from this story. The main theme addressed in this tale is the ideologies of capitalism, communism, and socialism. These ideologies are represented by the ruling styles and the beings that were created for them by Folk. The goblins are greedy creatures typically in other stories. Often almost nasty to each other. I picked them for capitalism because of their greedy nature. The dwarves, I also could have chosen to be greedy, as they are sometimes portrayed as greedy and gold concerned. However, I feel that they are more group minded and are friendly to other dwarves, so I chose them to be the ambassadors of communism. While I ended up choosing humans to portray socialism, it was simply because no one creature I could think of embodied socialism, so I chose humans.

Folk is a powerful character, meant to represent people, combined into one entity. I portray Folk as having all of the power, because the people are the ones who have the power ultimately, and I wanted to remind the reader of that, by giving Folk mythical powers and a striking presence. I chose the name Folk because of its literal meaning of people. Folk in addition to being the allegory, is the “Goldilocks” of the story, who come along after a period and judges each of the civilizations. Like the bears beds in the story, Folk procedurally walks through each civilization judging it to be too greedy, or too much of the opposite, until Folk comes across the final civilization that is just right and has survived for centuries. I used this narrative to provide the reader with a clear message regardless of their age. I would hope that an adult would read this and see the allegories for what they are, however, that is not the only message that can be taken away from this fairy tale.

One of the sayings my mother has that has stuck with me over the years is “everything in moderation”. This tale attempts to embody that as well, possibly for younger readers who do not necessarily recognize the capitalism, communism, and socialism in it. The first two civilizations being the two extremes that someone can go to, and they do not end up working out well. Whereas the middle brother’s civilization surviving showing that moderation may be the key to being successful.

There is one more tale I took elements from, The Three Little Pigs. In my version the three brothers go off to do things their own way, with the first two brothers ending in disaster and the third brother building his civilization out of stronger stuff allowing it to weather what time throws at it. The big bad wolf in my story is not represented by a physical being and is instead represented as sickness and famine. Each time this “bad wolf” visits one of the brother’s civilization the brother’s civilization either can overcome it or not, with them eventually living with the middle brother who has the last standing civilization.

Overall, this story is cautionary tale and could be considered almost propaganda like with its political motives. However, political discussion seems to be common these days and that is why I chose it as one of my lessons/narrative elements in my fairy tale. To appeal to modern day readers, the topic must be relevant, and that is why older fairy tales are still popular. Because older tales are relevant still, they remain popular. Politics is not a permanent thing, and so I believe this tale won’t stand the test of time but may convey a needed message that moderation is a good thing and the healthiest way to live is caring not only for others but yourself as well.