

How Old Jackal Got the Pigs

Captain Arthur Owen Vaughan

South African

Intermediate

13 min read

The pigs had been very troublesome all the morning, almost destroying the gate of the garden in their efforts to get at the tempting show within. It was in reward for the help of the children in driving the marauders away that Old Hendrik yielded at last to a question of Annie's and told them another tale.

"But you never told us, Ou' Ta'," said the little girl, "what Old Jackal did for something to eat in the rinderpest time, after he crossed the drift in the pumpkin. What did he do?"

"Well," replied the old Hottentot, scratching his head, "I tole you what he didn't do—he didn't hoe. An' I'll tell you now dat, whatever he is do, it's a-gun' to be sometin' skellum. O' course, he hatto do sometin' to eat, now de game's all dead o' de rinderpest, an' he hatto do it quick an' lively too. So he go raungin' round, an' he trot dis way an' he trot dat way, an' de on'y chance he can see at all is at a farm where dere's some pigs.

"Dese yere pigs was all de time a-sneakin' into de lands, an' a-rootin' up de crops, an' de farmer he'd chase 'em out wid a long ox-whip till he nearly bu'st, an' den he'd stand an' mop his face an' swear what he's a-gun' to do wid dem pigs if he don't get some'dy to look ahter 'em soon. O' course, if Ou' Jackalse had a-bin Ou' Wolf he'd a-gone right up an' ax for de job hisse'f, straight out, an' de ting 'ud be done an' no more about it. But he wahnt: he was yust Ou' Jackalse, an' he done Jackalse—he plan'.

"De nex' time de man chase de pigs, Ou' Jackalse wait till dey gets into a leetle grass-pan, an' den he try to drive 'em off furder. But de man he'd seen him a-stalkin', an' he run along wid his whip an' fetch a cut so near his tail

dat Ou' Jackalse near yump out troo his eyeholes, an' he fair light out f'm dere into some sugar cane an' hide.

“Well, dar he sit an' dar he tink an' study till he's added it all up, an' den he ses it out in once. 'I'll hatto get Ou' Wolf here,' ses he, breakin' off a piece o' sugar cane an' bitin' on it. 'I reckon dat's what I'll hatto do; den I'll get dem pigs a' right.'

“Well, off he go, an' he come to de river side an' shout for Ou' Wolf. By'n'by Ou' Wolf come an' stand on de oder bank, and Ou' Jackalse make like he yust is s'prise' to see de look on him. 'Why, what's de matter wid you?' ses he. 'You does look mighty bad.'

“I don't,' ses Ou' Wolf out straight. 'I feel yust dat good an' fat I wish dere was buck to hunt, even if I didn't ketch none.'

“Don't you b'lieve it,' ses Ou' Jackalse, mighty concerned. 'You yust looks good'n' bad. You take an' look at you' eyes; dey're all red an' yalla, like you's in a terr'ble state. An' look at de skin under your yaws, an den at de hair on de top o' you' head, an' you'll see straight off how bad you is.'

“Well, Ou' Jackalse speak dat se'ious dat Ou' Wolf try to look where Ou' Jackalse tell him. But he didn' had no lookin'-glass, an' he try to look widout one. An' he look dat cross-eyed, tryin' to see wid his one eye into his toder eye, dat he fair loose all de skin along bofe sides his ribses an' stiffen his tail right flop up wid de pull in tryin'. An' when he see dat his eyes cahnt see into one anoder, he 'gin to tink if he ain't a bit bad ahter all.

“Den he try to see de skin under his yaws, and he twist an' he snake till he fair stan' on his head an' scratch de air—an' yet he cahnt get a look at it. Dat make him feel he ain't a-feelin' well at all. But when he try to 'xamine de hair on de top of his head, he get dat desprit he fair t'row a double back somerset an' land hisse'f clean into de muddy river, an' when he's crawled onto a rock an' stood a bit he makes up his min' dat dere ain't no two ways about it—he's feelin' bad.

“What'll I ha' to do for it?' ses he to Ou' Jackalse, 'cause Ou' Jackalse is King Lion's doctor.

“Well,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, ‘you see what it is. It comes o’ you’ eatin’ on’y dese yere bessie berries an’ pun’kin; an’ pun’kins is mighty bad widout some meat wid ’em. You’ll hatto yust eat meat for a while, dat’s what you’ll hatto do; an’ I’s sorry for dat, ’cause I’s yust found out where dere is some, an’ dere ain’t har’ly mo’ dan enough for me. But, bein’ as it is, an’ bein’ as it’s you, I s’pose I’ll hatto share wid you now, you an’ me bein’ such ole chummies. A’ right den; if I has to do it I has to, so come on across an’ we’ll get it done,’ ses he.

“Ou’ Wolf he tink by jimminy Ou’ Jackalse is yust about de decentis’ chap he’s seen for a long time. ‘It’s mighty good o’ you to do it,’ ses he; ‘an’ I ain’t a-gun’ to forget it needer.’ Den he plunk into de drift an’ come out on de bank. ‘Where’s dis yere meat at?’ ses he.

“Well,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, lookin’ kind o’ far away over his shoulder, ‘it’s a dis way. Over on de yonder side dat spruit dere’s a farm where dey has some pigs, an’ dese yere pigs is makin’ a terr’ble trouble, rootin’ up de mealie lands, an’ de sugar cane, an’ de water-millions; an de baas he says he want some’dy to look ahter ’em. You should hear him swear to dat Well now, you go an’ take de yob o’ mindin’ ’em. Den you drive ’em down to de spruit to look ahter ’em, an’ I’ll be dere, an’ we’ll see what we do nex.’

“Right-o!’ ses Ou’ Wolf, an’ off he go.

“Well, he gets de yob. ‘Mind now an’ keep you’ eye open for a Jackalse dere is som’eres about,’ ses de man. ‘I seen him a’ready havin’ a try for ’em.’

“Oh, I’ll be a-lookin’ out for darie Jackalse,’ ses Ou’ Wolf. ‘I’s seen him myse’f a’ready, an’ he ain’t a-gun’ to get de best o’ me,’ ses he.

“So Ou’ Wolf he drives de pigses down to de spruit, an’ dar’s Ou’ Jackalse a-waitin’ him. ‘What we gotto do nex?’ ses he.

“Ou’ Jackalse he stop chewin’ on de piece o’ sugar cane an’ he laugh right out. ‘I’ll show you,’ ses he. ‘Now we’ll yust drive de pigs into de donga here, an’ we’ll ketch ’em an’ cut off all deir tailses; every last one o’ dem.’

“Well, dey done it, an’ mighty hard work on sich a hot day too; an’ Ou’ Wolf notice every now an’ agen dat he’s doin’ most o’ de work an’ Ou’ Jackalse doin’ mighty little but de bossin’. But he don’t say nawtin’ yet, ’cause he feel he’ll yust hatto get cured. ‘An’ what do we do wid dese yere tails now?’ ses he when dey finis’.

“See dat mud hole?’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘Well, you stick de tails all about in de mud, wid deir little curls a-curlin’

in de air. Do dat now.'

"Ou' Wolf he done it. 'An' what's de nex' ting?' ses he.

"Well, de nex' ting is one ting, but dere's anoder ting afore dat,' ses Ou' Jackalse. 'De nex' ting is for you to go an' tell de man dat de wilde-honde come an' chase de pigs till dey run 'em plunk-clunk right into de mud hole, an' dar dey all is, head down an' dead down, smodered, wid on'y deir little curly tailses a-stickin' out. Dat's de nex' ting, but de ting afore dat is dis way. De man he'll say—"Why didn' you pull 'em out?" An' you'll say you tried to an' come mighty near bein' smoder yourse'f. Den he'll say—"Where's de mud on you?" An'—well, dere you is, where is dat mud?' ses Ou' Jackalse, an' he look mighty business like.

"Den I hatto daub myself wid mud?' ses Ou' Wolf, like he's tinkin' weder he will or not.

"Daub yourse'f?' ses Ou' Jackalse. 'Daub ain't no sort o' word for it. You's fair got to roll in it, an' squirm in it, till you look like you come so near bein' smodered dat dere wahnt no fun in it at all. But I'll he'p you,' ses he. 'Here you is now, an' over you goes,' an' 'fore Ou' Wolf knows what's a-happenin', Ou' Jackalse lands in his ribses, biff! head first an' wollop he go, smack into de mud.

"Wid Ou' Wolf bein' tuk so s'prise' like dat he had his mouf open an' shoutin' when he hit de mud, an' his years an' his eyes open, an' he squash 'em all so full o' mud, inside an' out, dat he tink he surely is a goner. An' Ou' Jackalse he yust lie down on de bank an' flop wid laughin', an' he feel dat good he 'gin to lam more mud at Ou' Wolf where he's a-diggin' hisse'f out.

"Den Ou' Wolf, gets out at last, an' he stand an' try to scrape de mud outen his eyes till he can look at Ou' Jackalse. But Ou' Jackalse he look at him like it was a hawse he was a-buyin'. 'Dat's about it,' ses he. 'You's yust about right now. De man'll see right off dat you done all you could to save dem pigs, an' he'll gi'e you sometin' for it. You's about de mise'blest looking ting in de veldt yust now, but you's about de usefulest chummy ever was.'

"Oh, I is, is I?' ses Ou' Wolf, an' he don't know weder he's a-gun' to fight or on'y use some words. But de mud in his tummy make him feel dat sick he don't do one nor toder. He on'y ses—"An' what's you goin' to do all dis time?"

“Oh, while you’s gone I takes de pigses an’ I lights out for de kraal at you’ house. Den when you comes an’ finds me dere well have meat; all de meat we want. An’ dat’s what’ll cure you; you tink o’ dat now,’ ses he.

“Ou’ Wolf he tunk. ‘Well, a’right dis time,’ ses he, an’ off he snake hisse’f, for he was dat t’ick an heavy wid de mud he cahnt trot at all.

“Well, he comes to de man, an’ he tell him how de pigs is smodered, an’ de man comes back wid him to have a look. He looks at de mud hole, an’ at all de little curly tails a-stickin’ up, an’ den he look at Ou’ Wolf. ‘You’s sure de pigs is smoder’ in dere?’ ses he.

“Dere’s deir little curly tails a-stickin’ out,’ ses Ou’ Wolf. ‘Dey’s all down under dere, head firs’.’

“Well,’ ses de man, ‘dat’s mighty funny now; ’cause yestiday I rode troo dat mud hole an’ it wahnt knee deep.’ An’ den he make a grab for a tail, an’ dar it is in his han’, clean cut off.

“Ou’ Wolf he tink it’s about time to be slantin’ out o’ dat, but he ha’n’t made de second stride afore de man had him. ‘Deir little curly tails is a-stickin’ out, is dey?’ ses he, an bash he biffs him in de ribses. ‘De wilde-honde chase ’em into de mud, did dey?’ an’ he yust mash de wind ouden him. ‘Dey’s smoder’, is dey?’ ses he, an’ he grabs Ou’ Wolf up in de air an’ lam him down on de ground, an’ den he fair wipe up de scenery wid him. Den he left what was left an’ went off back to de house.

“Well, ahter a while Ou’ Wolf he scrape up what dere is of him, an’ he slant out for home, mighty slow an’ mighty sorry, on’y he tink, well, he’s a-gun’ to get dat meat now to cure hisse’f wid, as soon as he gets to de kraal an’ de pigs.

“But he gets to de kraal an’ he don’t get to de pigs, ’cause de pigs ain’t dere, an’ dere ain’t no sign of Ou’ Jackalse needer. ‘Dat’s funny,’ ses he. Den he sit down to wait, an’ he wait till it drop dark, an’ still dere ain’t no Jackalse an’ no pigses. ‘If he don’t come ’fore long,’ ses Ou’ Wolf, an he grines his teef.

“But long or short Ou’ Jackalse didn’t come—dat night nor de next mawnin’. An’ what’s mo’,” ended Old Hendrik, “he ain’t never come dere yet. But f’m dat day to dis he’s al’ays had plenty lard in his house to keep his nose well greased. I don’t say how he has it, but he has it—dat’s all.”

Read more fairy tales on Fairytalez.com