

AND THAT IS WHAT I SAW!

by

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BERBER STORYTELLER

The next story?

ALL

We listen, we learn.

BERBER STORYTELLER

First let us tell you about the Berbers, so that you will hear out story knowing what we know. We live in a beautiful part of Northern Africa - the high Atlas Mountains. In the winter we live in houses made of mud and brick. But in the summer we live in tents, like this one here. (Storyteller draws tent top over African hut.) We have lived there since the dawn of time. It is a land of snowy peaks and green forests, of hot days and cool nights. We keep goats and chickens and sheep, farm wheat and barley, and are happy. And if, perhaps, you were to ride on mule back up the steep and narrow path to our village, we would greet you with open arms and share with you our tajine stew, stories, songs; and best of all, our favorite drink. It is made in a pot and drunk in small cups. Can you guess what it is? (Storyteller asks audience for guesses.) Green mint tea. Hm! A delicious steamy sweet cup of tea! There is only one sad part to Berber history. Feuding. (Actors mime action as Storyteller speaks.) When one group of people fights another for a long time it is called feuding. We Berbers feuded like this, one village against its neighbor, for many lifetimes - so long that no one could remember the cause of the feud. Now we settle arguments in better, more peaceful ways. But we tell a story so that we won't forget the sadness of feuding. It is the story of the boy without a name.

BERBER STORYTELLER

A Berber warrior chieftan named Maggadim once lived in the high Atlas Mountains of Morocco. He had only one son. But he gave his son no name.

CHIEF

I will not give you a name until you've done your first great deed!

BERBER STORYTELLER

And so everybody called the Chief's sone Boy, since he had no real name of his own. Boy and the other children raced and leapt and Boy was good at these things; but Boy was also kind and gentle. When the men of the village needed someone to help calm a frightened horse or push a mule stuck in one of the snowy mountain passes, Boy was always the first person to volunteer to help. But one day the Chief called to Boy and the other children:

CHIEF

Boy, tomorrow we are going to fight Fahdil.

BERBER STORYTELLER

Fahdil was the Chief's ancient enemy. Fahdil's village and Maggadim's village had been feuding since before Maggadim's grandfather was born.

CHIEF

And so you need to practice with the sword and the spear. Wait until tomorrow Fahdil!

BOY

Father, why have you always feuded with Fahdil?

CHIEF

Well...once...his grandfather said to my grandfather that he was a...I don't know! Because they always have been! Now go learn about the spear and the sword.

(IMPROV SEQUENCE)

(Berber Storyteller teaches children use of spear. They pick up imaginary spears but Boy says-

BOY: Stop! There's a bird up on that branch. You might have hit it.

BERBER STORYTELLER: What are you talking about. We've got to practice. Tomorrow we attack Fahdil!

BOY: And anyway, I don't understand why we have to feud with Fahdil anyway.

BERBER STORYTELLER: Boy! Okay, let's go on to sword practice. (Children begin to learn use of imaginary swords until Boy says-)

BOY: WAIT! That's danderous! Somebody might get hurt!

CHIEF: Boy! Come here!

BERBER STORYTELLER: (To children) The rest of you go on back. (Children return to place in audience.)

BOY

Father, I love you. But even for your sake I can't fight for no reason.

CHIEF

What are you talking about? You're a Berber - destined to be the Chief. You must be a warrior and feud with Fahdil. You must fight to become famous! You must fight so that no one will think you are a coward.

BOY

No Father. I've made my own decision. I will only fight for what is right.

CHIEF

You are just a coward! And you shall never have a name! Unless you want the name Coward!

BOY

I'm sorry Father. I know you can't see things my way. But I...

CHIEF

Quiet!

BERBER STORYTELLER

Berber on your feet! We're off to feud with Fahdil!

CHIEF

Come brave warriors. We'll leave the coward at home!

(Warriors dance off to war. Warriors call VICTORY! at end of dance, and then limp, sore and bruised, back home.)

BERBER STORYTELLER

One day a stranger appeared. He was tall and fierce. His name was Krim.

CHIEF

Welcome, Krim, to our village.

KRIM

(Krim thrusts sword at Chief.) I have killed more enemies than anyone here. I dare anyone to fight me!

CHIEF

We don't allow fighting in our village.

(Krim interrupts him by fighting with a child.)

KRIM

I'm going to be the Chief of this village. You there, get me that piece of meat your old used-to-be Chief is holding. You, help me put up my tent. Ha, ha! No one can beat me, so I am now the boss!

(Chief chatters throughout)

BOY

Father, you're the Chief. Don't let him push everyone around!

CHIEF

There's nothing I can do. He is strong and powerful. I'm getting old. I can't challenge him. And you...you're a coward and won't.

(SUDDENLY KRIM BEGINS BEATING A DOG WHO HAS TRIED TO TAKE HIS PIECE OF MEAT.)

BOY

Hold, Krim. You'll kill that poor dog.

KRIM

You bet I will. That mutt stole a piece of meat from me.

BOY

He didn't know he was doing anything wrong. You shouldn't beat him, it's not just.

KRIM

Just! What do I care! He stole my meat, and I'll kill him for it.

BOY

You let him go! (Boy attacks Krim who throws him and starts to kick him.)

CHIEF

Krim stop! No! (Krim turns to go for Chief. Boy calls "Krim!" and fight begins.)

BERBER AND LITTLE BERBERS

Boy wait! Don't! Please! Boy means no harm! Stop it! He's no warrior!

(Boy beats Krim)

BERBER AND OTHER ACTORS

What strength! Boy beat Krim! He is a great warrior! (Dog barks)

BOY

Get up Krim. Go away from this village. And don't come back ever again. You will not be next Chief, Krim. I will, and when I am Chief there will be no feuding. We do not have to prove our bravery by feuding for no reason. We will only fight for justice.

(KRIM EXITS SLOWLY IN PAIN AND DEFEAT)