

Sheep, Wolf, and Man

by Enzo Scavone
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A herd of sheep lived in the woods. They were free and wanted for nothing. They ate when they were hungry, they drank when they were thirsty, and they slept when they were tired.

However, once in awhile, at night, several sheep would get snatched by Wolf who also lived in the woods.

The sheep were very distressed by that. As they thought about what they could do, they remembered that not long ago they had seen Man clear a part of the woods and build a hut. Now, man was very crafty, had fire, and Wolf was cautious not to come too close to him and so the sheep resolved to talk to him about protection from Wolf.

Surely, man would want something in exchange. So, the sheep tried to think of the most delightful thing they knew--Milkberries which grew in the brush. Certainly, Man would be pleased if they offered him those in exchange. The sheep gathered a large amount and headed for Man's hut in the clearing.

As the sheep arrived, they saw Man working and called out: "Greetings to you, Man! We are sheep from the woods. We are being tormented by Wolf and wanted to ask you if you could protect us and let us stay here in your clearing. If you do so, once in awhile, we will give you a copious amount of Milkberries to have and enjoy."

"Greetings to you, sheep," Man answered. "I cleared the woods and built this hut. It is safe here and you are welcome to stay but you must know that keeping all this makes me very hungry. Your Milkberries are a generous and enticing offer but they won't hold me through the exhaustion. I need meat to sustain myself. So, I ask you, not because I am evil, but because this is what clearing the woods takes out of me, to give up a few of your herd each full moon. If you do so, you can stay in my clearing and I will protect you."

The sheep were distressed by that. They stood there and helplessly looked at each other. After a while, one of them stepped forth and began, "Sheep, we have to choose. Either, we stay in the woods and every once in awhile, at night, Wolf comes and snatches several of us. Anyone could be next. Or, we stay with Man and each full moon we elect a few of us to be given over. Although these two choices seem to damage us equally, I say we should choose the latter. There always have been troublemakers amongst us who don't follow the herd as nicely. We can dispense of those and we could vote them out. Now, each sheep must not be afraid of being voted out if they simply are nice and follow the herd, as any sheep should do regardless. Follow and you'll be safe."

The other sheep agreed. Troublemakers are not good for the herd and they would be better off without them. To avoid being voted out, they would simply be nice and follow the herd--something any sheep should do regardless. They'd follow and

they'd be safe.

So, the sheep agreed to Man's condition and safely grazed in the clearing. They did not dread Wolf anymore and wanted for nothing. They ate when they were hungry, they drank when they were thirsty, and they slept when they were tired. Then, full moon came. A few sheep had to be surrendered to Man. The sheep immediately could think of two who were troublemakers and constantly doubted the decision to stay in Man's clearing. A third sheep followed the herd, but not as nicely as all the others. These three sheep were voted out and given over to Man.

Man thanked the herd, gave his condolences and mentioned how he could only imagine how hard a decision this must have been, and admired the sheep for their sacrifice. The sheep thanked him for his words. He led the three behind his hut out of the others' sight. There he bound their mouths and slit their throats. He hung up the two troublemakers to gut them. The third sheep, he dragged out to where the clearing bordered the woods. There he waited. After a while, attracted by the smell of blood, Wolf appeared. Not trusting Man, he did not come out of the brush. Man could hear him prowling and said, "Wolf, I will give you one sheep every full moon if you growl and rattle the brush each time the sheep that graze on my clearing come close to the woods."

Wolf came out of the brush, grabbed the sheep, and dragged it back in to eat it.