

The Fable of Hector and Jehosaphat

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Parental Note:

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The Fable of Hector and Jehosaphat

Hector was a small man with very little hair. He lived on asparagus and mice which he caught in the corner of his kitchen by lying in wait with a sharpened fork. He wasn't a happy man but then so few men are. He figured that this was just the way life was so he best just get over it. He polished his fork and waited.

Jehosaphat was an unfortunate mouse. He was forever falling into disrepute with the other mice who criticised him for his clumsy ways, his stumpy tail, and his lack of a sense of smell. The worse thing of all about Jehosaphat was that he was lactose intolerant. This meant that while the other mice chomped on down on tasty blocks of cheddar Jehosaphat had to settle for gnawing on the paper label off the wrapper. As a result he was a rather skinny mouse. He made up for this by being rather well read.

The other mice were quite cruel to Jehosaphat, teasing him about his olfactory deficit and calling him names like 'stumpy', 'clumsy', 'mental mouse' and 'short rod' because of his stumpy tail.

One day the mice all went out into the big wide world. One by one they sniffed out tasty morsels of cheese and one by one they discovered that tasty morsels of cheese are often attached to nasty *bitey snappy cracky mousey trapeys. One by one they tasted the fine dairy only to discover that snap....!

('Bitey snappy cracky mousey trapeys' is just a silly name for a lump of wood with some wire and a spring stuck on it. – G.B.)*

Jehosaphat looked on in wonder as each of his mousy detractors met their unfortunate end. Most died within minutes but some, like Ferdinand and the spiteful Gemima died slowly and painfully from broken backs and ruptured bowels.

Jehosaphat looked on with glee. Each of his tormentors, one by one, met a grisly and bloody end. Each died in agony. Each called for his help as they died. Each was destroyed by their own greed for cheese. Jehosaphat laughed and smiled. He grinned and he guffawed. He danced a little jig. Then he picked up a razor blade in his teeth and chopped off all their tails.

At last Jehosaphat was a mouse that mattered. He was king mouse! He was an alive mouse. He had the longest tail. He had triumphed in the end and had beaten them all!

Jehosaphat mouse! Lord of all!

But then, not too much later, Jehosaphat realised that he was all on his own. He thought very hard and eventually came to an amazing decision. He realised that he wanted to be around other mice, even if they did sometimes laugh at his tail. Jehosaphat prepared. He packed a small bag, in which he stowed droppings to leave in people's cupboards and cheese wrapper paper to eat on the way, and set out on a journey.

Hector saw the mouse with the small bag and the stumpy tail emerge from the cupboard in the corner of his kitchen. 'There'll be droppings in there!' he thought to himself. He stayed perfectly still until the mouse was in the open, far from any cover, slowly raised his fork, and struck!

The moral of this fable is that everyone will meet people who aren't nice to them. We're all nasty to others sometimes even though we like to think we're good. Glorifying in another's downfall is foolish because we'll all have to die one day.

Hector died because he under-cooked Jehosaphat and caught a nasty stomach infection. You see Jehosaphat hadn't left his droppings in the cupboard at all and he was still clutching his little bag when Hector ate him. Even though everyone was sort of nasty they all went to heaven anyway because God decided to let them in. Here Jehosaphat played happily with the other mice and they were all so awfully nice to each other. Of course Hector still stabbed at them with his fork and in his mind always caught them but in theirs they always escaped. This is because in heaven all your dreams come true.

As for Hector, one day he'll eat steak and leave the poor mice alone, but this day is far, far away. For now he's trapped in the reality he believes in. You see, whether mouse or man, you always get what you imagine, if only you believe.