

THE BOASTFUL GAZELLE

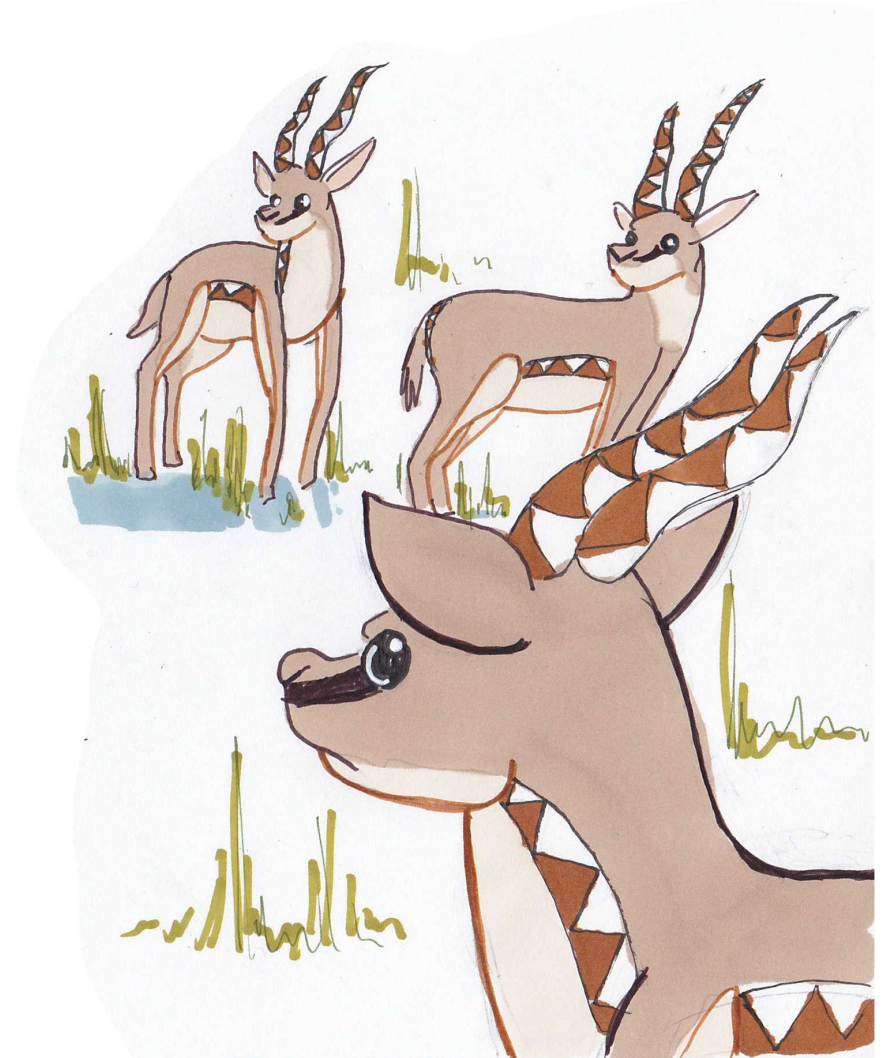


BY KHATOBLEPAS



On the savannah, where the animals all live, there was a very boastful gazelle. He could leap the highest, and run the fastest of all the gazelles on the plains.

He always let everyone know this, especially predators, for mocking them was his hobby.



One day, Boastful Gazelle met a very big hyena sunning himself on a rock. He was the biggest hyena the Gazelle had ever seen! "Why, Hyena," boasted Gazelle, "You are so fat, you'll never be able to catch me! I am simply the fastest gazelle there is!".

The hyena opened his eyes, and looked up at the Boastful Gazelle. "That is true, Gazelle, but one day, I will eat you."



Boastful Gazelle scoffed and laughed, leaping around him. "Is that so, Hyena? You might be able to eat one of my brothers, but you'll never be able to eat me!". And with that, the Gazelle bounded off to find one of his brothers.



So the Boastful Gazelle went to his herd, and boasted that he was the fastest Gazelle of all. The Small Gazelle said, "Brother, you are lying. You cannot get close to a Hyena without getting eaten!" But the Boastful Gazelle lead the Small Gazelle to the Hyena, and jumped around him.



Boastful Gazelle laughed again. "He will never catch me, he is too fat and too slow!". "That is no great feat," said the Small Gazelle, "I could jump around a Hyena as fat as him." "Try! Try!" laughed the Boastful Gazelle, "You will never be as nimble as me!" The Small Gazelle tried, and was never seen again. The Boastful Gazelle shrieked with glee. "See? I am the fastest Gazelle! You'll never catch ME, Hyena!"

But the Hyena simply turned his eyes upward, licked his lips and said:



"That is true, Gazelle, but one day, I will eat you."



The Boastful Gazelle needed a new challenge. He knew he was fast, but the Gazelles would not listen to him when he said he was, for Small Gazelle was liked amongst Gazelle. So Boastful Gazelle found a beehive, bursting full of honey. "Why, Honey Bees," said the Boastful Gazelle, "I am the fastest Gazelle, I can nimbly jump away from that fat Hyena! What can you do, being so small and weak?"

The bees buzzed at the Boastful Gazelle. "Did we not lend you honey to salve your wounds when you cut yourself on the thorn bushes? Leaping alone will not always help you!". But the Boastful Gazelle was angry. He wanted to be praised!



"That is no help when hyenas are around! I would simply jump away, while your hive cannot!" And the Gazelle kicked the tree the hive hung from, dropping the hive to the floor. "I will feed your hive to the hyena! That will show that I am the nimblest!" he cried out, and took the hive to the hyena. The bees were not as fast as the Gazelle, and their hive was never seen again. "That hive is not as great as me, for I can jump away, and it cannot! I have proven it!" boasted the Gazelle.

But the hyena simply turned his eyes upward, licked his honeyed lips and said. "That is true, Gazelle, but one day, I will eat you."



And so Boastful Gazelle continued his boasting, luring more and more animals to Hyena, boasting that he could outjump and outrun them always. And Hyena allowed this to happen, eating the slower animals and remaining sunning on his rock.

But soon, Boastful Gazelle was alone. Nobody would talk to him, for all he would talk about is how high he could jump. The whole Savannah was sick of his boasting, and nobody else wanted to be eaten by the hyena, who had gotten even bigger from Boastful Gazelle's mischief.



He jumped about, left and right, trying to find someone he could boast to.

At the watering hole, there was a lone wildebeest, drinking quietly. "You there, Wildebeest!" said Boastful Gazelle. "You can't jump away from Hyena like I can. Half the savannah already has proven itself inferior to me. I am simply the best there is at leaping away!"

The Wildebeest shook his head. "I am not interested. I have lived a long time, and am much cleverer than you. I am happy being here at the watering hole, I do not need to prove myself by mocking predators. If I was ever near Hyena, I would walk away, and you would be eaten."



This angered Boastful Gazelle. "Why, I will show you! I will jump so high and leap so far that no Hyena will ever catch me! Just you watch!" And the Gazelle leapt away to find Hyena. The Wildebeest followed. He was bored anyway.

When Gazelle found Hyena, Hyena was still sunning himself. There was no rock now, only Hyena laying on the floor. And Gazelle leapt and jumped around him, shrieking that he was the nimblest.





He jumped higher and higher, and shrieked louder and louder, trying to get the Wildebeest to acknowledge him.

Then finally. he jumped so high, that he touched the sun and burnt himself!



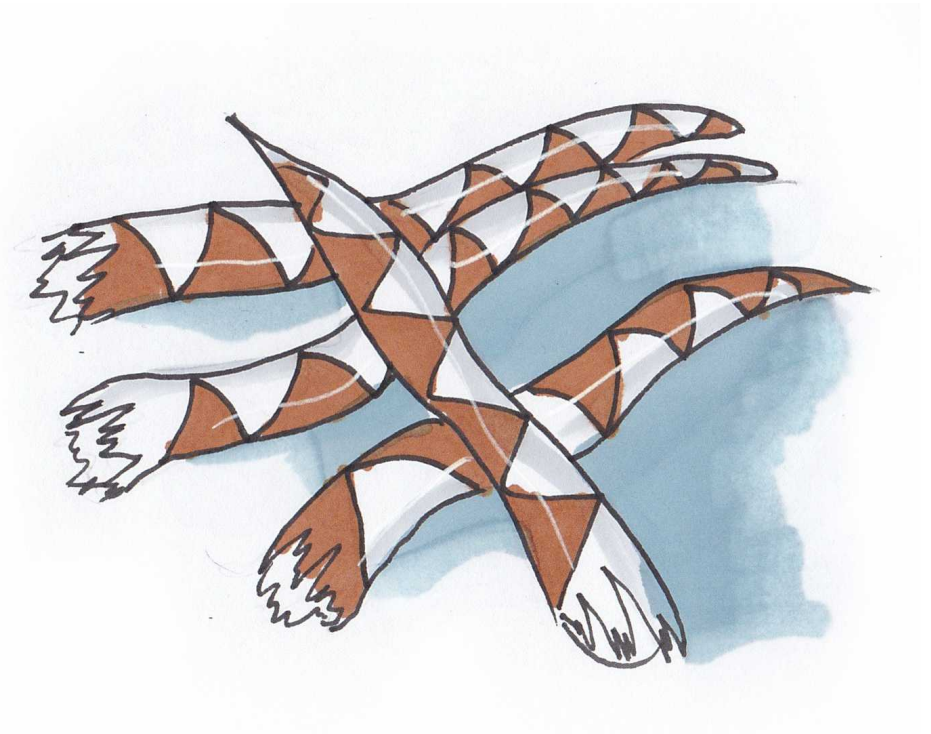
And he fell to the ground in front of Hyena, and could not stand up. He cried out.

"Bees! Lend me some honey so that I may soothe my burn and jump away!"

But the bees did not heed him. They had moved on to another plain.

"Brothers! Help me get away from Hyena!" he cried out again, but all his brothers had been eaten by Hyena already.

"Wildebeest!" he cried in horror a third time, "Pull me away from Hyena! I have burnt my leg and cannot jump!"



But Wildebeest shook his head. "You fed all of your friends to Hyena so you could boast that you were the best. Now that you aren't, you have nobody to help you but yourself." He walked away, just as he said he would.



So the Gazelle was once again alone, except for the drooling Hyena in front of him. "You can't catch me," he cried, "Your feet don't even touch the earth! You are a big and useless beast! I will win when I crawl away! You can't catch me!"

"That is true," said Hyena one last time. "But unlike you, I have friends."

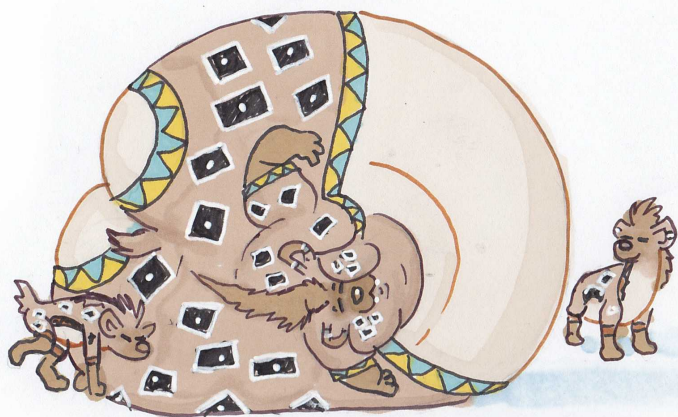


And to his growing horror, Boastful Gazelle looked around to find a pack of hyenas all too willing to help the Big Hyena eat his prey, good to his word.





And the Boastful Gazelle
was never seen again.



THE END.