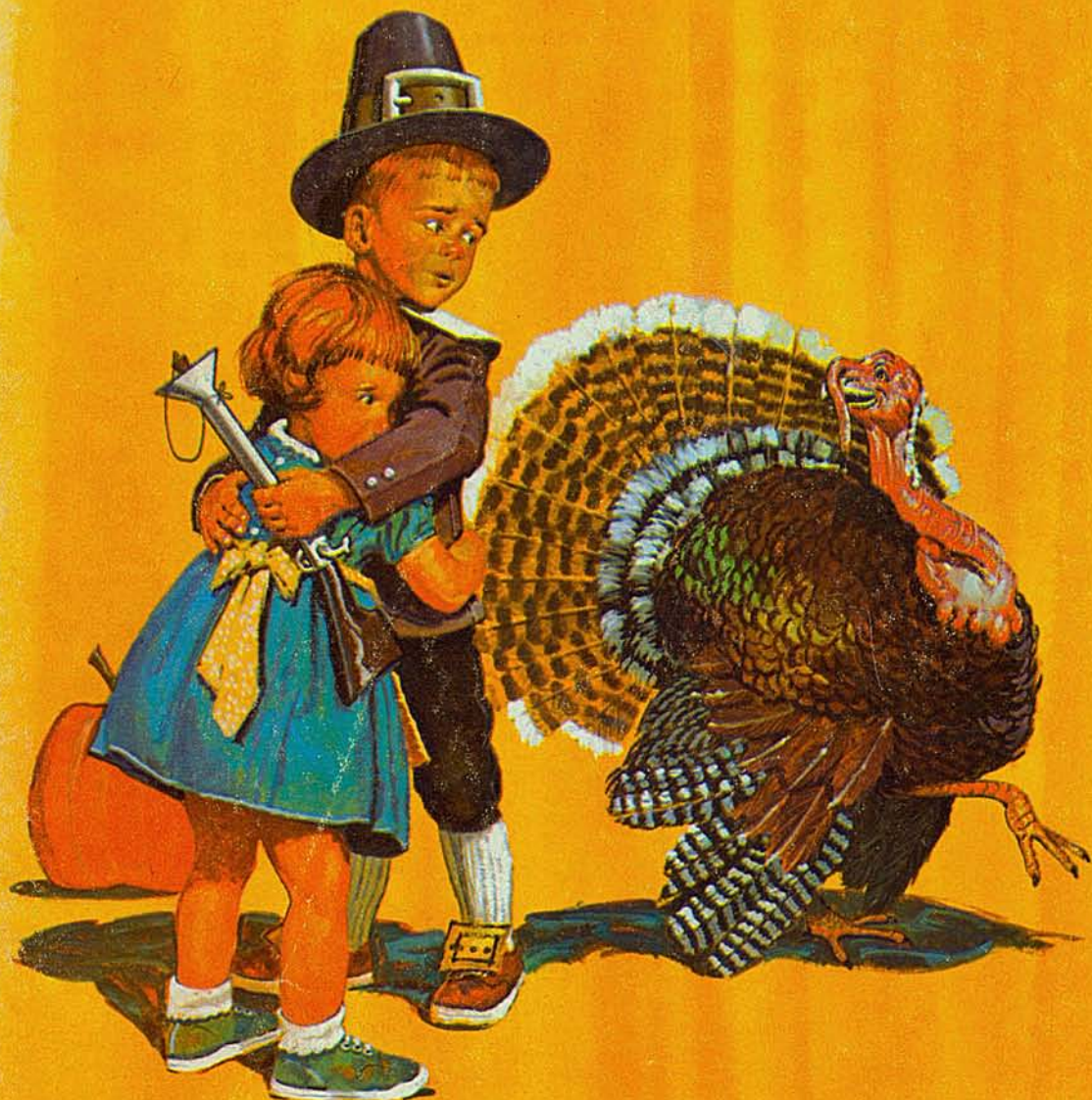


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g. mcConnell

Thanksgiving Dinner in Storyland
Stories & Puzzles & Cutouts & Turkey Hunt



THE BLUE JACKAL

A FABLE FROM INDIA

By ROBERT TEMPLE

Illustrated by Patricia Lynn

ONCE while wandering at the edge of a forest, a jackal saw a large dye vat. He jumped up to see what it contained, but he fell in with a splash. He floated in the blue dye and didn't move when the dyer came out of his hut to see what had happened. The dyer pulled the jackal out of the vat, and thinking he had drowned, threw him into the bushes. Thereupon the jackal ran away to join his jackal friends in the forest.

When the jackals saw that he was blue, he told them: "I am a special jackal, a royal jackal, because I am blue. I should be your king." And so the jackals asked him to be their king.

Tigers, lions, and other animals in the forest, when they saw the blue jackal, also acknowledged him as their king. They thought that, being blue, he must have been sent from heaven to rule them.

When the blue jackal saw the lions and tigers honoring him as

their king, he thought: I have no need of the jackals now. I will send them away.

And so all the ordinary jackals were sent away, while the blue jackal sat surrounded by a circle of admiring lions and tigers and wolves.

Then one day there came a terrible storm. The blue jackal, terrified of the thunder, howled like an ordinary jackal. The lions and tigers and wolves then looked at each other and said: "He is just a jackal. Why are we honoring him as a king?" Then they all pounced upon him and chased him away with many bruises and scratches.

And only afterwards did the blue jackal think: My old jackal friends wouldn't have minded if I had howled.

And so the sage says:

यः स्वभावो हि यस्य स्यात्तस्यासौ दुरतिक्रमः

yaḥ svabhāvo hi yasya syāttasyāsāu duratikramah

"The natural character of a person is difficult to overcome"

History of the Fables

The fables of India were very popular in ancient times as well as now, and were told in Greece over two thousand years ago. Aesop wrote many of them down, and so people thought they were his. The Indian fables are said to have been translated into more languages than any other writings except the Bible. And long before the time of Christ, the



Indian fables were being read and recited throughout the ancient world, in Arabia, Syria, Greece, Egypt, and other countries. Christ, Mohammed, Julius Caesar, all probably heard Indian fables when they were children. In 1678, La Fontaine in France compiled a book of fables, most of them Indian, which have been popular in Europe ever since.