

The Hobyahs

The Hobyahs

(as published in swag of yarns spring 99)

Once upon a time a little old woman and a little old man lived in the bush in a hut all made of bark. They had a little yellow dog called Dingo. The little yellow dog always barked when anyone came near the hut. (Real dingoes do not bark-they howl-but this dog barked.)

One night when the little old woman and the little old man were fast asleep, out from the gloomy gullies came the hobyahs, creep, creep, creeping. Through the grey gum-trees came the hobyahs, run, run, running. Skip, skip, skipping on the ends of their toes ran the hobyahs.

And the hobyahs cried, "Pull down the hut, eat up the little old man, carry off the little old woman."

Then the yellow dog Dingo ran out, barking loudly. The hobyahs were afraid. They ran home as fast as they could go. But the little old man woke up from his dream and cried "Little dog Dingo barks so loud that I can neither slumber nor sleep. In the morning I will take off his tail." So the little old man took off little dog Dingo's tail to stop him from barking.

The second night, along came the hobyahs, creep, creep, creeping. Through the grey gum-trees came the hobyahs, run, run, running. Skip, skip, skipping on the ends of their toes ran the hobyahs.

And the hobyahs cried, "Pull down the hut, eat up the little old man, carry off the little old woman."

Then yellow dog Dingo ran out barking loudly. The hobyahs were afraid. They ran home as fast as they could go. But the little old man tossed in his sleep and cried, "Little dog Dingo barks so loud that I can neither slumber nor sleep. In the morning I will take off his legs." So the little old man took off little dog Dingo's legs to stop him from barking.

The third night along came the hobyahs. Out from the gloomy gullies came the hobyahs, creep, creep, creeping. Through the grey gum-trees came the hobyahs, run, run, running. Skip, skip, skipping on the ends of their toes ran the hobyahs.

And the hobyahs cried, "Pull down the hut, eat up the little old man, carry off the little old woman."

Then yellow dog Dingo barked loudly. The hobyahs were afraid. They ran home as fast as they could go. But the little old man heard Dingo. He sat up in his bed and cried, "Little dog Dingo barks so loud that I can neither slumber nor sleep. In the morning I will take off his head." So the little old man took off Dingo's head. Then the little dog Dingo could not bark any more.

That night along came the hobyahs. Through the long grass came the hobyahs, creep, creep, creeping. Through the grey gum-trees came the hobyahs, run, run, running. Skip, skip, skipping on the ends of their toes ran the hobyahs.

And the hobyahs cried "Pull down the hut, eat up the little old man, carry off the little old woman."

Now little dog Dingo could not bark any more. There was no one to frighten the hobyahs away. They pulled down the hut. They took the little old woman away in their bag. But the little old man they could not get, for he hid himself under the bed.

Then the hobyahs went home. They hung the bag upon a hook. In it was the little old woman. They poked the bag with their fingers and cried, "Ha! Ha! Little old woman."

But when the sun came up, they went to sleep. Hobyahs, you know, used to sleep all day.

When the little old man found the little old woman gone, he was very sorry. Now he knew what a good little dog Dingo had been. So he took Dingo's tail and his legs and his head and gave them back to him. Then little dog Dingo went sniffing along to find the little old woman. Soon he came to the hobyahs' house. He heard the little old woman crying in the bag. He saw the hobyahs were all fast asleep.

Then he cut open the bag with his sharp teeth. Out jumped the little old woman, and ran home as fast as she could go.

Dingo did not run away, but crept inside the bag to hide. When night came, the hobyahs woke up, and they poked at it with their long fingers.

They cried, “Ha! Ha! Little old woman.”

Out of the bag jumped the little dog Dingo, and ate up every one of the hobyahs.

And that is why there are no hobyahs now.

The hobyahs it is said first made their appearance in Jacob’s More English Fairy Tales (1894) which was reproduced by the Journal of American Folklore (vol.111) communicated by Mr. S.V. Proudfoot who had it from a Perthshire family. The story is believed to be a ‘nursery bogie’ tale featuring fictional creatures rather than creatures which were objects of real belief.

In Australia for many years Victorian school children learned about the hobyahs through their second grade reader first published in 1928.

Submitted by:

June Barnes

Editor

Swag of Yarns

Australia's National Storytelling Magazine

bunyip@netspace.net.au

Visit [Swag of Yarns Web Site](#)