

So Unjust Stories

Pangolin and Tiger Join Forces

Long, long ago, Best Beloved, in fact, for some 50 millions of years, the Lovely Pangolin could simply curl herself into a ball (her name, after all, means “one who rolls up” in Malay) and Tigers and Lions and Jaguars and any other potential annoyers or botherers would be confounded and leave her alone. She lived simply, all by herself, except for those times when she had a Baby to care for, who would ride on her tail until it was big enough to fend for itself, and find its own tree-root den.

One day, Tiger was so very hungry that he forgot how Pangolin could protect her-

self with her beautiful scales that were hers alone, in all the Animal World. As he futilely pawed at the ball that was Pangolin, she called out to him. “Silly Tiger,” she said from within her curled body, “Instead of trying to eat me, you should join me in the Grand Plan I have to save us both.”

“Grrmph! What could that be?” asked Tiger, “Could it be some way to stop the Humans that have been capturing our relatives?”

Humankind, as you well know, Dearly Beloved, has relentlessly tried to make profit from the natural world. And both Pangolin and Tiger were seriously affected by this.

“We need to find some way to alert Humans that there is a far easier way to prepare the strange unctions, tinctures and who-knows-what-else that go into what they call ‘traditional medicine,’ said clever Pangolin. “For instance, my scales are dried and ground-up, and sometimes cooked in oil or vinegar or even the urine of young boys, and these silly People think that they can cure male impotence, fever, diseases of the heart, psoriasis, cancer, or even male impotence. But—in reality, although of course they are far, far more beautiful, my scales are no different from human finger- and toenails. And your teeth, Tiger, although they are wonderfully big and sharp, are actually the same as the Humans’ puny ones.”

“I’m not sure where you’re going with this,” puzzled Tiger.

“People have all sorts of industries built around their appearance: these include nail salons where finger- and toenails are trimmed short and the remainder painted strange colors. They also visit Healers called Oral Surgeons, who remove their teeth if they cause them trouble. Add to that the baby teeth of their

children, that fall out on their own, and if all these were collected, they would not need to cage you and your relations in order to steal your teeth.”

And so, Dear One, while Tiger immediately agreed and was ever so enthusiastic about Pangolin’s plan, I will leave our story here, because as we all know, there is no Mowgli of the Jungle, nor Dr. Doolittle to convey the message.

Sorry.

So, so sorry.

