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Title: Some Folk-lore Stories and Songs in Chinyanja

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Description:

Long ago a chief built his village, and to the village there used to come lions to seize people. And the chief said, "What are we to do with these lions?" And his people said, "Speak with them." Then the chief asked them, saying, "How is it you are always seizing people?" And the lions said, "We are saying you must give us your two daughters whom you love, and when you give us the children we shall not come back to catch people." Then the chief took his two children, and went and made a rough grass hut for them at the hill where the lions came forth from. And from another country there set out two men, one blind and the other hunchbacked, and they were on their way to the chief's village. And Hunchback saw a tortoise on the path, and he told his comrade, "There is a tortoise here." And Blind-eyes said, "Pick it up." And Hunchback refused. Then Blind-eyes said, "Pick it up for me." And he picked it up for him, and put it in his wallet. And they walked and walked, and came to another place, and found that a porcupine had died there. And Hunchback said, "There is a porcupine here." And his companion said, "Pick up one of his spines. But he refused, and Blind-eyes said, "Well, pick it up for me." And he did so, and put it in his bag, and they went elsewhere, and found there had died an elephant there, and the man who had wounded the elephant, he also was dead, and his gun was there, and Hunch back again said, " There has died an elephant here, and the man and his gun are on the same spot. And his companion said, "Pick up the gun and one tusk." And he refused, and Blind-eyes said, "Pick them up for me." When they saw the sun was setting, Hunch back climbed a hill, and he saw on the other side there was smoke rising, and they went there and found two maidens in a grass hut, and they said, "Darkness has overtaken us, and we wish somewhere to sleep." But the girls refused, saying, "You must not sleep here; as for us, our father built us the hut, that when the lions come they may come and eat us." But they refused to be warned, and said, "We sleep here."

When they would have talked on, they find the lions have come, they are roaring, and then one asks, "Who is it talking in the hut? Let us eat them up together." Then Blind-eyes said, "You are not able to eat us; and as for us, we only came here to find sleeping-room. And the lion said, "I shall throw one of my lice at you, and you will be frightened enough then."

Thereupon they all fainted with the exception of Blind-eyes; and then the lion threw a louse, and Blind-eyes felt about with his hand for it, and picked it up, and said, "That tiny little thing! See, I go and cast it on the fire." And when he did so, it gave a crack, and he said, "Now, in my turn, I am going to throw you my louse." And he got out the tortoise and threw it; and the lion picks it up, looks at it, and says aside, "Ah yes, he has huge lice." But he says, "No, I am not afraid; now I am going to throw a hair of mine for you to see." And he pulled out one hair, saying, "There it is, I have thrown it for you to see." And Blind-eyes feels about for it, and says, "That is what I am to fear! Look at mine." And he takes the porcupine quill, and throws it at the lion, and the lion picks it up, looks at it, and says, Yes, indeed" (aside). But he says, "No; even though you can do such things I am not going to spare you." And he takes a tooth and throws it, and Blind-eyes feels about for it, picks it up, and says, "I am to fear this, am I? Wait till I throw you mine."

Then he cast the tusk of the elephant at him, and the lion gave a jump, saying, "Ha! Yes, indeed, the fellow has a fearsome tooth " (aside). But he said, "Now I am going to let you hear my voice. ' And he began to roar, and Blind-eyes said, "The other — let it sound its voice too, that I may year you." Then he said, "I have heard, and now come close that you may hear my voice." Then the lions came up close, and Blind-eyes said, "Where are you? " And they said, "We are here." And he said, "Lay your heads together." Then he took his gun and pointed it in their direction, and said, "Now listen, I am going to talk my words." And he fired the gun, and killed the lot. Said he, "Have you heard my words?" He finds all is silence. Then he roused his companions who had fainted, saying, "Get up, I have killed those wild beasts."

And they contradict him, saying, "You are deceiving us."

And Blind-eyes said, You people, do get up; you must open the door for me, and I can go and look myself." And they did so, and he goes and feels, and says, "This is the male, this the female. Come outside, that you may see for yourselves."

Next morning, they went off; one of the maidens carried Blind-eyes, and the other Hunch back, on their backs. When they came to the village their father saw them, and said, "What, you have come back again, though I said you were to remain there; now I shall kill you all." And the children told him that the men had killed those wild beasts, and the father asked if that was indeed true, and they said, "May I be struck dead if it is not." And the father sent men to see. And they came and found them, and cut off their tails, and went and told the chief, saying, "There are the tails; it is quite true they killed them." Then the chief held a consultation with his people, saying, "Well, those people who killed the wild beasts, what are we to do about them?" And they said, "You must just give them these maidens in marriage." So they gave Blind-eyes his, and Hunchback his, and took six shells, saying, "One, three, the other, three, and you must go and build your village there."

And as they went along the road, Hunchback said, "They have given us five shells, and they say, two are yours, and three are mine." And Blind-eyes said, "Oh, you are cheating me; did not the chief say he had given us six? —mine three, and yours three; how comes it you deceive me, insomuch as when I said "Pick up this, you refused?"

Then Hunchback stood up and hit him on the eyes, and straightway Blind-eyes found his eyes were opened; and he took his knobkerry and hit his companion, and Hunchback found his back had straightened. And thereupon they grasped hands in token of friendship.