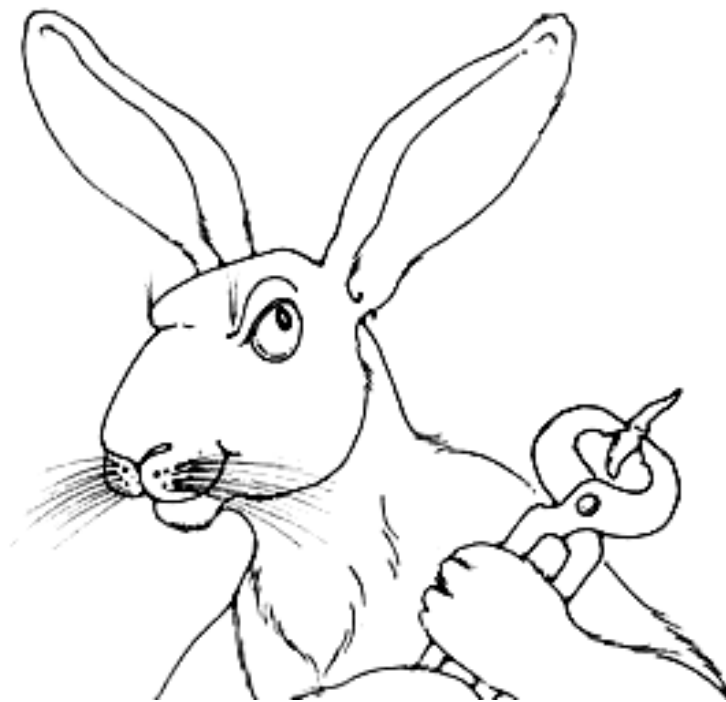


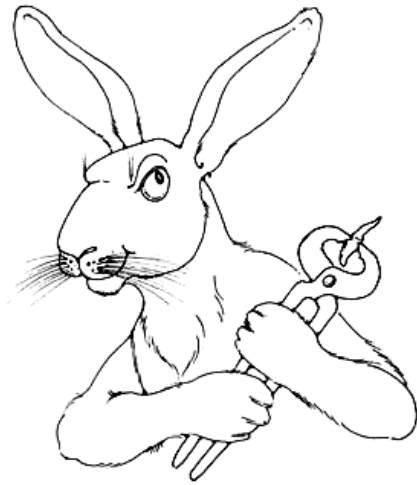
## THE MARKET DENTIST



and what happens if  
you don't look after  
your teeth properly



### 3. THE MARKET DENTIST



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You have not heard about the animals' market? I am surprised. They have one every Saturday. It is always full. All the animals come, some to sell, and some to buy. Others just come to meet their friends. Look at the different things they sell. The Guinea Fowl sells eggs. The Buffalo sells milk. The Warthog sells cassava. He digs it up. The Monkey sells fruit very cheap. That is because he steals it all. The Crocodile sells fish. But nobody comes to buy at his stall any more. Last week two ducks came to buy from him, but he ate them.

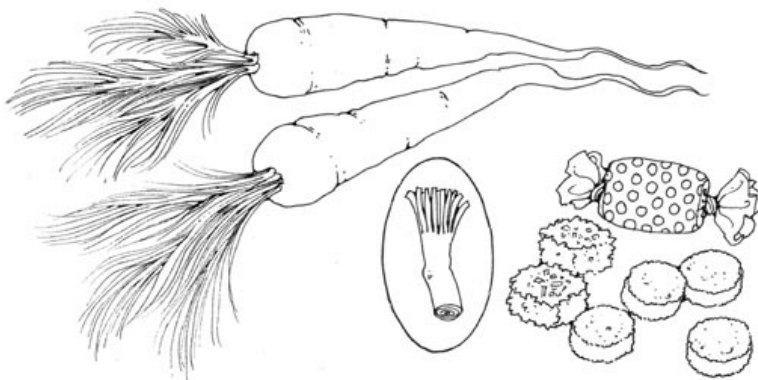
Bouki the Hyena has a stall at the edge of the market. He has a stall selling very old meat and bones. It smells. It is covered in flies. Only the vultures buy at that stall. The other animals keep away. The Chimpanzee walks past holding his nose, and two giraffes laugh. Bouki gets angrier and angrier.

Right in the centre of the market, there is a stall under a tree. Many animals stand round it. There is a shout. Sonko the Hare has pulled out one more tooth. He comes there every Saturday. He

makes a lot of money. Look at him. He is fat. His fur shines. Sonko jokes with the animals who come.

Many animals, you know, eat very bad food and never, never clean their teeth. Some have big holes in their teeth. Some have gums which bleed. Some break their teeth on stones. Sonko has plenty of work. After he has pulled teeth and taken the money, Sonko gives good advice. “Keep your teeth clean and white like me,” he cries, biting into a carrot. “Brush your teeth after you eat,” he tells them. “Use a little stick from a tree, like this. You, Monkey, go and get me one.” The Monkey climbs up the tree and brings down some little sticks. ‘Now bite it and clean your teeth. Down – up. Down – up.’ The monkey hangs from the branch by its tail, opens his mouth wide, and brushes his teeth.

“Now you, Sir,” Sonko points to a young Gorilla just down from the mountain. “You say your mouth bleeds. That is because your gums are not healthy. Your gums hold your teeth. If your gums are bad, your teeth will fall out. You eat too much sugar, Sir. You don’t clean your teeth at night.” All the animals laugh. The young Gorilla feels very unhappy. His teeth begin to hurt even more.



Bouki has crept up and is watching from behind the tree. Bouki’s teeth do not hurt, but his head does. He thinks about Sonko. He gets angrier and angrier. “Why does that hare always have good

ideas?” he thinks. “Why does he make money? Why is he so fat and healthy? Why does he make people laugh? Why is he not inside my stomach? This time I will catch him,” thinks Bouki.

The next week Sonko is there under the tree as usual. But who is this poor animal with a cloth round his head? An animal who groans and cries out with pain. An animal who can hardly walk. It is Bouki the Hyena.

Bouki comes slowly up to Sonko’s table. “My tooth”, he moans. “My poor tooth.” He takes off the bandage – there is a big lump on the side of his mouth. Sonko looks at Bouki. The hyena looks very sick.

“Can you pay?” he asks. Bouki nods his head. “Then open your mouth,” says Sonko. Bouki opens his mouth and Sonko looks in. Bouki’s teeth look very sharp and very healthy. Sonko rolls up his sleeve. He is going to put his paw into the hyena’s mouth.

Just then the Monkey swings down from the tree and speaks into Sonko’s ear. He speaks softly. “My brother saw Bouki this morning,” said the Monkey. “He looked very well. But he had a big round stone in his hand, the same size as the lump in Bouki’s mouth.”

Sonko rolls down his sleeve. “I am sorry, Bouki,” he says. “I cannot pull out your tooth. I can see that you have a big lump. It looks as big as a **STONE** to me. Go home and rest. You have had a **HARD** day. **ROCK** yourself to sleep. You do not need a meal this evening.”

Bouki hears what Sonko says, and understands what Sonko means. He goes home, very hungry and very angry. Sonko is angry too. He looks at his paw. It is still part of his body. It is not

half way down Bouki's throat. "This time," he thinks, "I will make the hyena pay. He will pay me with TEETH."

Two months later Bouki is at home with his wife and children. Sonko comes to visit. He stands a little way outside Bouki's house...a little way away from Bouki's teeth. "Let us be friends," says Sonko. "I have presents in my basket for your children."

The little Hyena's run up to the basket. It is full of presents. There are sweets, and biscuits, and cola and other sweet drinks. There is chocolate and condensed milk. "All for you my dear little ones," says Sonko. "Eat as much as you like. You are only young once."

Then he turns to Bouki's wife. "Give them some, Madam, before they go to bed. They will sleep better. Have some yourself. I have plenty."

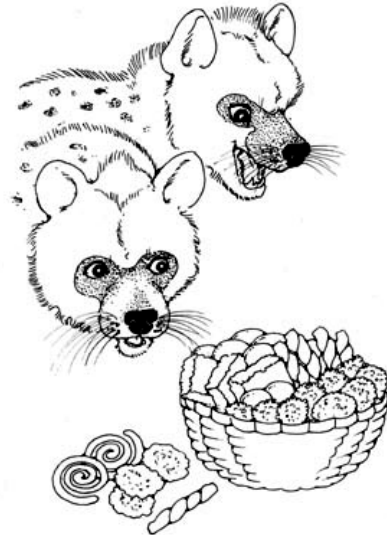
Now hyenas, as you know, are very greedy. Very soon all the sweets are finished and all the chocolate, and all the drinks, and all the biscuits. When one basket is finished, Sonko comes by with another. "Life is sweet" says Sonko.

The little Hyenas begin to call him 'Uncle' Then one day, one of the little ones breaks his tooth eating a sweet. "What shall I do, Uncle?" he asks.

"Drink more cola," says Sonko.

A week or so later two more little Hyenas come up to him. "Uncle, our teeth hurt,"they cry.

"Eat more sweets," says Sonko. "Eat them at night before you go to bed."



“Our teacher said we must brush our teeth at night,” says one little Hyena. “He says if the sugar stays on the teeth all night, it rots the teeth.”

“He’s wrong,” replies Sonko. “I know. I am a dentist.” I think you can guess what happened. All the little Hyenas got holes in their teeth. And Bouki’s wife. And Bouki (he used to come every night and eat up the sweet things when all the others were asleep). Everyone’s teeth began to hurt very badly. One by one they came to Sonko and he pulled their bad teeth out. Soon there was not one tooth in the family.

“Don’t worry,” says Sonko.

“Your friends the Vultures don’t have teeth.”

“But they have beaks,” says Bouki. “They have beaks to eat their food. Hyenas have no beaks. How will we eat meat?”

“I don’t know,” says Sonko. “No teeth, no beaks, no meat, no hare...what a pity! Have another sweet drink.”

## **A NOTE TO TEACHERS**

### **About the story**

This animal story is suitable for children in any country. The story teller should explain that the characters come from West African folk tales.

Like many folk tales this one contains a good deal of violence.

There are clear teaching points about care of teeth and gums but also an important discussion point about actions which the characters take..

Should the crafty hare take revenge in this way on the hyena's children?

### **Activities possible**

In addition to usual activities (songs; drama, drawing pictures and posters ) , there are especially good opportunities for surveys (how often do we clean out teeth and when) practical and practical activities (looking at each other's teeth and making brush sticks.)

Source Child-to-Child, *The Market Dentist* (slightly abridged ) Harlow: Longman,1995 The original story was written by Dr.Yvon Moren translated and abridged by Hugh Hawes .and a team from Child-to-Child.