

ARCHIVES OF FUDGEMORE



OBIFUS THE LIAR

The Archives of Fudgemore

A History of Truth Seekers

Volume 3 Issue 1: Obifus the Liar

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Published by School of Unusual Arts

61 Adelaide Street, Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada

Schoolofunusualarts.com

ISSN 2816-2781 (Online Version)

ISSN 2816-2773 (Print)

First Edition

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Cover concepts: Bao Luo

Cover design by @upillustrations

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Obifus the liar

In which Obifus the Liar abandons his village in an attempt to understand the extent of his own ignorance, and of how he lies in order to save himself, and of the pumpkin and what war has to do with it all.

Obifus was a consummate liar. “Yes, it is” he would say when it was not. “No, it isn’t” he would say when it was. “Over there” he would say when it was here, and “here” he would say when it was over there. He learned his skills from a certain Del Samara, a candymaker who’s shop was on some side street of a certain town. Rumor has it that Del Samara methodically taught children to lie and rewarded the best liars with free sweets. The proof that Obifus was a great liar was evident in that he never wanted for an after school sweet.

Rumors are dangerous though, for it might already appear to you that Obifus as well as Del Samara were not good people. How far from the truth this is can never be fully known, because good and the appearance of good are not the same thing, and neither of them cared a whiff about appearances, but sought the truth as well as justice in all matters.

Just how a truth seeker and a liar can coexist in a singular person is a question that Obifus embodied perfectly. You see, Del Samara, the candymaker did indeed teach the children to lie. Oops, but that is another story. Suffice it to mention here his last words to the little entourage that frequented his shop and thus received his instruction. “Learn to act the part of generosity even when your insides are not feeling that way, and do this for the sake of others despite yourself”.

Obifus took this last instruction to heart, and he came up with some ideas which distracted him from a settled life and indeed led to some misadventures, as we shall see. “The most difficult thing”, he said, “is to try and understand another person, and more difficult than that is to try and understand another culture. As I wish to understand the extent of my own ignorance, what better way than to saddle my donkey and head to the land of pointy hats and bindings, for I would like to find out more about these two strange customs”.

And so, on a whim and for no other reason than to seek knowledge, Obifus packed a supply of food, loaded his donkey and made the three day journey to the place famous for “hats and bindings”. And about these curious customs Obifus wanted to know more. Setting eyes on the place for the first time, two things struck him. One, all the men wore pointy blue hats, and two, all the women walked very slowly. Otherwise, the town seemed quite prosperous and the people not entirely miserable.

This last opinion of his changed rather abruptly when he was suddenly pulled to the ground by force and made to face a certain very red-faced gentlemen who it turned out was the mayor of the town. There were three of them all together and all three bearing the expression of anger,

as if a cockroach had made its home between their toes and refused to be evicted. One of the mad men said “We don’t like people from over there, in fact they don’t last a night in this town.. Where are you from boy? “ Oh I am certainly from over here” answered Obifus, even though he was from over there. “And why aren’t you wearing a pointy cap? This feller’s a liar” one said, “and deserves some local justice I do believe”. And the man put his hand on some implement of truth and justice, and Obifus feared for his life.

Then Obifus told a lie and said “indeed, I am not lying! My tale being a strange one will at once make matters clear. You see, my pointy hat, which, God bless her soul, was given to me by my maternal grandmother, was taken from me by a violent wind. Not only my hat, but my bindings which were woven especially for my wife to be. And not only my pointy hat and my bindings, but also my very clothes were ripped from my skin, and I was forced to enter a nearby town, a virtual beggar and beg for mercy in the form of something with which to clothe my person. And this town, which as we can be sure is full of barbarians who do not wear pointy hats, were exceedingly kind and happy to help in every way they could. I was not to be fooled, however, and all on my own, I deduced that their kind motivations must not be as they appear and must instead be a ploy to increase their population by adding me to their numbers. And so it was that they gave me the garb you now see me dressed in. I made a mad escape from the place at night. And here I arrived, knowing no better civilization on earth, and full of upright and superior people such as yourselves, hoping to be returned to my former state of respectability. Please to relieve me of this awful garb and supply me with something respectable to wear, for this barbarian costume tells all the wrong things about me, and I might be mistaken for some scoundrel from over there”.

On hearing this, the very red-faced gentleman was heard to mumble “well, he seems to be acquainted with our superiority over the others, a fact which would never be admitted by a barbarian. He must be an honest man”.

Then Obifus told another lie and said “Indeed, I am an honest man and would never dissemble the truth let alone tell a lie”. And in this way, he obtained not only new clothes, but a degree of admiration and respect and was thereby able to find out things about this strange culture which people from over there had never done before.

According to local custom, as he was to discover, men in this region should wear the pointy hat. The pointy hat had the effect of making them taller and improved their sense of significance thereby. The women on the other hand wore the bindings, which article was woven between their legs and gave them the elegant inability to walk quickly, and gave them a kind of disabled grace in the eyes of the locals.

Concerning the peace and security of the world, his visit could not have been better timed. For in a matter of but a few days, Obifus was to discover that a hatred of people from over there had been brewing and was soon to lead to confrontation. You see, the very red-faced gentleman, the mayor, had conjured in his mind the idea that people from over there were

daily committing all manner of injustices, and must surely be plotting something. And the fact that they had a history of being peaceful only added to his suspicion, as it must. But he, in his genius, would put an end to a potential future grief by causing a present and lasting misery for all. He was, after all, admired for being a man of conviction, and he was convicted of the fact that the people from over there, whom he had never met, must be plotting something and must be a grave threat.

Realizing that conflict was imminent, and that he must do something, Obifus rushed to the market before it closed and bought a pumpkin. When he got it home, he took the pumpkin, hollowed it out and filled it with water. He then sat down and placed the pumpkin on his head. And he did this in order that he should think without distraction about what needed to be done. So, the pumpkin filled with water, balanced on his head, reminded him to pay attention and to keep his self in perfect balance. And in this state, he must come up with a good lie which might avert the impending conflict between his own people and the people of this good town.

Now pretty well everyone knows the end of the story which is that Obifus the liar saved both peoples from an impending disaster, and earned the title of “the pumpkin headed one” which you will agree is a singular title. What exactly went through his mind and what exact lie he conjured is another story, and a very instructive one at that. Let us hope that we can hear it one day.

The End

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