



Tawny Scrawny Lion

Kathryn Jackson , Gustav Tenggren (Illustrator)

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Once there was a tawny scrawny lion who chased monkeys on Monday—kangaroos on Tuesday—zebras on Wednesday—bears on Thursday—camels on Friday—and on Saturday, elephants!

So begins the funny, classic Golden story of a family of ten fat rabbits that teaches the hungry lion to eat carrot stew—so that he doesn't eat *them!*

From the Hardcover edition.

Tawny Scrawny Lion Details

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From Reader Review Tawny Scrawny Lion for online ebook

Sheila says

What do I like best about this book? The fact that when I had my daughter, my cousin sent me a box of "hand me down clothes" and included in the box were a couple childrens books, old childrens books, and old childrens books that I had written my name in. This is one of the books. My name is written on the inside cover in childish print. This book was mine. I read it when I was probably 5 or 6 years old. That is why I like this book.

Connie says

Now, like many stories of that era featuring "wild animals", the geography is complete nonsense. Lions coexist with bears and kangaroos. Yes, this is annoying. How annoying probably has a direct relationship to whether or not your beloved Mama read you this book when you were little :) And, like many stories of that era, the biology is also a bit skewed - Lions who eat carrot and fish stew will not be happy and plump, they will be even scrawnier because lions are obligate carnivores. Eating meat isn't something they do to be mean, it's something they do because they have no choice.

So, you know, if you're looking for realism, this is not the book for you.

If you're looking for a cute little story about how friendship tames wild beasts and makes everybody happy... well! This one is great. It's a bit wordy, so consider your audience.

Harini Srinivasan says

There's a Tamil saying which, loosely translated, says: Will a tiger eat grass even if it's hungry? The traditional answer is of course supposed to be a resounding 'No'. This book, meant to read out to and enjoy with the kids in your life, tells what happens when a tawny scrawny eternally hungry lion meets a family of fat, happy rabbits and is invited to share their carrot stew. Rollicking fun!

Kat says

This was always one of my favorite books when I was very small. There was just something about a lion eating carrot stew that struck me as really funny. It's definitely a classic, and I still love the illustrations as an adult, though the lion looks a bit possessed at times. *shrug*

Nathaniel Hardman says

There's a page in this book where the lion has been filled with stew, and he's bummed because he's so full he

can't eat all the bunnies. So he asks if he can stick around for a while, and the bunnies all hop up on his belly. The picture that goes with this scene - the look on the lion's face - it's perfection. I had the pleasure of reading this to my three-year-old daughter recently, and she enjoyed it almost as much as I did, though she didn't understand that the lion wanted to eat the bunnies until I explained it to her.

Rachel says

This is one of those rare children's books that quietly teaches kids something but is a STORY. It's a fun tale about a lion who was never satisfied, who befriended rabbits who fed him stew and gave him companionship. It's funny, the pictures are great and kids love this book.

April says

Promotes pescetarianism & shopping locally.

Also rabbits.

Pam says

The Tawny Scrawny Lion was a highlight of my childhood. It is a book I loved so much that I have copies of it put up for hopefully future family members some day. It is a great book to read to children and teach them about working within their spectrum of the environment they reside in. The Lion had to slowly come around to eating lots of healthy things to become healthy not just in body but mind.

Marcella Lowry says

This has to be one of the best books of all time. Its sweet simpleness catches the reader's attention, starting with the sad condition of the lion, followed by the accepting nature of the rabbit. I found it taught Christlike principles, such as loving others, the Golden Rule, among others. I read this to all my children, & hope you enjoy reading this to yours.

Claire S says

Great story, mini-example where two actors who seem to be in a zero-sum game are able to change their paradigm into a win-win. Also, is warm and sweet and the pictures and lovely and it's completely wonderful!

Dylan says

This is a great book for kids. I still have my copy over 20 years later and when a friend has a baby I'll order up a copy. It's great for a laugh and gives a different spin on the story of the king of the jungle.

Michael says

I saw this book in a toybox at the barber shop today. I'm sure I've read this numerous times to Karen. I couldn't resist the temptation to read it again. I did get some looks. It was worth it.

Calista says

The nephew brought this extra book to be read tonight. He had one wordless book and he said that didn't count toward our books read tonight. So we gave the Tawny Lion a turn. He has read it before and I had not. I love that the rabbits and their vegetarian stew were able to sate that ol' lion. To think that carrot stew would fill you up more than meat. I think this is probably the first vegetarian story.

Anyway, the nephew loved the book. He gave it 5 stars. I thought it was a cute story and the art work was decent. It's from the early 50s. I think it would mean more if I was younger. I did like those wily rabbits. They were sneaky and crafty and took out a predator without any violence. It's a pretty good moral.

La Coccinelle says

We used to have a fairly decent collection of Little Golden Books when I was a kid. We read them over and over, as kids are wont to do. I can remember certain ones like *The Poky Little Puppy*, but *Tawny Scrawny Lion* didn't really ring a bell. I'm not sure if I ever did read it as a child, because it wasn't familiar to me at all.

It really is nonsensical and silly. You've got a lion--presumably in the wild--who can somehow chase animals as diverse as kangaroos, bears, camels, and elephants. (I thought perhaps these animals were in a zoo, which would explain why they were all in one place; but that just brings up the question of why the lion was allowed to run free and chase all the other animals.) The big animals, tired of being chased, tell a clueless little rabbit to go talk to the hungry lion, with a sort of "nudge-nudge, wink-wink" thing going on behind his back (they assume he'll get eaten). This did *not* sit well with me, as it reminded me of some of the stories I've heard where kids tell their developmentally disabled classmates to do things they shouldn't. I don't think the rabbits had any disabilities, but they were gullible and naive; their survival seemed more like a stroke of luck than any cunning on their part. They manage to sate the lion with carrot stew and berries (conveniently ignoring the fact that he's an obligate carnivore), and everyone lives happily ever after since the lion's not trying to eat his neighbours anymore.

The illustrations are just weird. They're from the 1950s, and they look it. Also, the lion is just plain creepy. He goes through the book with this dazed expression on his face, as if he's high on some really weird drug (you can actually see what I mean just by looking at the cover).

There are much better picture books that have come out in the last 60+ years. I don't think I'd recommend this one, except maybe to people who are looking for another nostalgic addition to their Little Golden Books collection.

Swankivy says

This book was kinda disturbing to me as a kid because I have always hated stories in which animals or inanimate objects depicted as thinking and feeling like people attempt to eat each other or try to avoid getting eaten. To this day I'm disturbed by M&M's commercials and Chik-fil-A ads in which the talking creatures reason with you to make you less inclined to eat them, and I'm disturbed by talking cereal ads and food packaging that says "Eat me!" or "I'm delicious!" So a whole book in which a ravenous lion chases animals he wants to eat was scary to me as a kid even though nobody got eaten, because I was a sophisticated enough kid to understand that the food chain was a real thing. I was happy for the characters in the story that the bunnies taught the lion to eat carrot stew, but I knew lions can't really survive on carrots and that they are eating other animals in the wild every day. I still wonder if books like this and the aforementioned advertising ended up influencing me to become the vegetarian adult I am today.
