

The Hyena Who Couldn't Take a Joke

Inspired by Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson
Written by Sundeep Parmar





LITTLE KEYS TO THE UNIVERSE

The Hyena Who Couldn't Take a Joke



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DEDICATED TO

Ria & Mia



Big Lessons. Little Stories.



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Harley loved to laugh. He laughed at the elephant's big floppy ears. He laughed at the giraffe's long wobbly neck. He laughed at the lion's fluffy mane, calling it a It's just a joke, Harley would say, giggling and rolling on the ground. The other animals didn't always like his jokes, but they didn't want to upset him. After all, hyenas were supposed to laugh, right? Then one day, everything changed. At the great gathering, all the animals came together to tell stories.



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The sky was painted in shades of gold and purple, and the fireflies had just begun their nightly dance when Zara the zebra turned to Harley with a playful grin. Hey, Harley, she said, your laugh is the loudest in the grasslands. It sounds like a squeaky door. The animals chuckled. It wasn't mean, just a friendly joke, like the ones Harley always made about them. But Harley didn't laugh. His smile vanished. Squeaky door?



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My laugh is not squeaky, he huffed. That's not funny at all. The animals blinked in surprise. But Harley, said Leo the lion, his voice calm, we thought you liked jokes. Yeah, when they're about you, not about me, Harley snapped. Silence settled over the group. Then wise old Tilda the tortoise spoke up, her voice slow and steady. Harley, she said, if a joke isn't funny when it's about you, maybe it was never funny at all.



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Harley's ears drooped. He thought about all the times he had laughed at his friends. Had they felt the same way? Had they smiled just to hide that it hurt? His paws shuffled in the dirt. I didn't mean to be mean, he mumbled. We know, said Zara smiling, but maybe next time let's laugh with each other, not at each other. Harley sat quietly, thinking. He had always wanted to be the funniest animal in the grasslands.



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But was it really fun if it made others feel bad? He looked at his friends, the elephant, the giraffe, the lion, the zebra. He had laughed at all of them, but had he ever stopped to think about how they felt? Then something unexpected happened. Zara nudged him gently. You know, she said, your laugh is actually one of my favorite sounds. Not because it's loud, but because when you laugh with us, it makes everyone feel happy.



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Harley blinked. Really? Leo nodded. Of course, you don't need to make fun of others to be funny. You're already fun to be around. For the first time, Harley saw laughter differently. It wasn't about being the loudest or the funniest. It was about making others feel good, too. That day, Harley learned an important lesson. He could still be funny, but real fun is when everyone is laughing, not just him.



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Harley nodded, his laughter softer this time, not at anyone's expense, but filled with warmth. Thank you, Tilda, he said, his voice steady. I get it now. Moral of the story. A joke isn't truly funny if it only makes one person laugh while making someone else feel small. True confidence isn't about putting others down. It's about lifting them up. Real strength, like Dwayne the Rock Johnson teaches, comes from kindness. It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be kind because kindness lasts far beyond the moment.



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Now, it's your turn. The next time you make a joke, pause for a moment. Ask yourself, is everyone laughing or just me? Choose kindness and watch how much brighter the world becomes. Tomorrow, find a way to make someone smile, not at them, but with them. That's where the real joy is.



THE LITTLE KEY
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Laugh **WITH** your friends, never at them.
That makes everyone happy.



KINDNESS IS STRENGTH

A young hyena loves to laugh — but learns the difference between laughing **WITH** his friends and laughing **AT** them. A warm bedtime story about kindness and respect.

For kids who tease without meaning to hurt — a reminder that kindness is stronger.

Big Lessons. Little Stories.

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