

It wasn't my fault....

by Ian Guy

A courtroom dock stands in the middle of the stage. Enter 3 people, an older man, a young man and a woman. As each speaks they move into the 'dock' and out of it when they finish

Older Man: Can I just start by saying it wasn't my fault. Oh, I know I've got a really bad press over the years. All of us have. But, what do you expect, when you're born and brought up in the northern reaches of Scandinavia where, for weeks, months on end there's no night so no one gets a good sleep. I was the youngest, the smallest and, well, the ugliest. Now you'd have thought that in my culture that would be an advantage but it wasn't really, you're just one of so, so many ugly faces in the crowd and being the smallest I was always being pushed and shoved out of the way, trampled on, squashed face first into the mud and snow. And being the smallest I missed most of what was being said, there was this constant noise above me, above my head. All I've heard, all of my life, was 'get out of the way shorty' or 'move, shrimp' usually just before I found myself heading towards the ground. What I yearned for was peace and quiet, a place where I could be on my own, to be the biggest person around. I've never been able to stand noise.

Woman: I *do* know. I do know what people say. Have said. Still say. But it really wasn't my fault. It wasn't. Alright? I suppose you could say I had a pretty happy, normal childhood in an obscure, out of the way *small* castle in some remote far flung corner of (pause), well that's not really important is it, you're not that interested in my background are you. I was the youngest of four girls. My three older sisters were so much prettier than me. Or so my father kept telling me. "Why, oh why, did I get girls" he'd say, "I wanted a son to be my heir, take my title, but, no. Four girls to marry off to safeguard my lands". My older sisters were blondes or brunettes, to be honest I can't remember them, and they were all dutifully married off to Prince this, the Duke of that and the mighty overlord of... wherever and I never saw them again. I was, at last, according to my father, found to be worthy of marriage to some Eastern potentate. So, I was shipped off, miles and miles from my home to the other side of the world and married to someone old enough to be my grandfather. And I wasn't even the principal wife. I was one of many. I was the twenty eighth 'wife' and lived in a harem with all the others. And every single one of them was so much prettier than me. And I was eleven years old.

Young Man: Look, I know I come across as confident and everyone's friend and, really, I was only a bit player in what was going on. What I did got blown up out of context. Truly, honestly, it wasn't my fault. I had the sort of upbringing that any father would want for his son, his only son. His pride and joy. I learnt how to use a bow about the same time I started to walk, got given one as a birth present. Then a knife and I soon learnt how to use that, I could knock a squirrel out of a tree before I was four. At nine I got my first axe, had my first pickaxe at eleven, had my first beer at twelve and had my first girl at thirteen. Dad was right proud of me. I grew tall and I grew strong and I knew my way about the mountains and valleys around our village. Wasn't a tree or a stream or a cave that I

didn't know how to get too three different ways. The only thing I wasn't any good at, but me Dad said it didn't matter cos I could do everything else, was schooling. Who needs to read and write when you can hunt and shoot and kill and drink and, .. enjoy the ladies. And I did. Every girl in the village from fourteen to forty. Well, almost every girl. There was just that one. The one I really wanted.

Older Man: As soon as I could I moved away from there. Moved south where it actually went dark at night time. But, of course, my face came with me and away from my own kind I stood out. People screamed, they ran away, they threw things so I looked for somewhere to live away from humanity. Humans can be so cruel "we can smell you from miles away" they shouted, "go and wash" they'd scream and then they'd laugh and run away. Unless they were already running away screaming in fear because they'd bumped in to me unexpectedly. And the noise of the screaming and the laughing bounced around in my head and it gave me headaches. Then I found a cave. And it was heaven. It was dark and it was private and it had a little stream that ran nearby and I had a bath every day just in case someone came by unexpectedly. They never did of course because I made sure no one knew I was there. Oh, I wasn't lonely; don't get me wrong, I don't want sympathy. I had friends. Lots of friends. There were badgers and hedgehogs and deer and the birds and none of them seemed to bother about how I smelt or looked. When it got really cold in the winter some of them even moved in with me. I didn't bother them and they didn't bother me. And it was all going so well until '*they*' turned up. How could they have been so rude, so uncaring and so..., well, the smell! It was awful. It really made me think "is that what I smell like to humans". And no manners whatsoever! Toing and froing from the stream to my cave and back as if they owned the place. And the noise they made! I imagine it's what a barrel full of marbles must sound like if you throw it down the side of a mountain. The noise and the smell were too much and I had to leave my beautiful, idyllic, home and find somewhere else. I've hated goats ever since.