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## The Message, the Medium and the Missionary

### Abstract

The wolf, who had gone about in sheep's clothing and had narrowly escaped being slaughtered like a sheep, thought and thought and thought about it. It was obvious to her that if everyone were a sheep, there would have been no problem. And eventually she concluded she had been saved for a purpose and that her mission in life was to convert other creatures, to bring them all into the fold, so to speak.

SUNITI NAMJOSHI

## The Message, the Medium and the Missionary

The wolf, who had gone about in sheep's clothing and had narrowly escaped being slaughtered like a sheep, thought and thought and thought about it. It was obvious to her that if everyone were a sheep, there would have been no problem. And eventually she concluded she had been saved for a purpose and that her mission in life was to convert other creatures, to bring them all into the fold, so to speak.

She leaped over the fence and set off through the countryside. The first creature she met was a rabbit. 'Repent!' she cried out. 'Why?' asked the rabbit. 'Repent because you're not a sheep. It's best to be a sheep.' 'But I'm a rabbit,' protested the rabbit. 'Precisely,' replied the wolf. 'If you don't repent, you'll come to a bad end.' 'All right,' agreed the rabbit. 'What do I have to do?' 'You have to eat grass,' the wolf told him firmly. 'That's easy,' said the rabbit. 'And you have to baa like a lamb,' the wolf added. The rabbit didn't mind; and the wolf went on and left the rabbit practising baaing.

Next the wolf came across a large cow. 'You have to be a sheep,' the wolf informed her. 'I'm a bit large for a sheep,' the cow said modestly. 'No creature is excluded because of their size,' the wolf replied. 'All creatures, great or small, must turn into sheep. Then we shall have peace and goodwill.' 'Well, but I don't think I'd be much good at it.' The cow was diffident. 'You have to try,' the wolf spoke earnestly. Then she went on her way with the cow's promise to keep on trying.

'It's easy to convert creatures,' she said to herself. 'They all think exactly as I do, and want very much to turn into sheep. Soon we shall have peace on earth and endless goodwill. Why didn't anyone think of it before? No matter. It's clear now that this is my destiny.' Such thoughts made her feel so optimistic and so cheerful that when she came upon a company of wolves, she quite forgot that she was dressed in sheepskin. She greeted them gaily. 'Sisters and brothers, I have come to convert you to the Way of Sheep.' 'We are not your sisters or your brothers. We are wolves and you are a sheep. Wolves eat sheep.' 'But I'm a wolf too!' the wolf cried out in spite of herself. 'You can't eat me.' And she ripped off her sheep's clothing. The wolves were puzzled. 'Look here,' they said, 'are you or aren't you a true sheep?' 'I am a sheep,' the wolf told them. 'I'm just like you. I'm a sheep disguised in wolf's clothing.' 'Well, that's

all right then. We're wolves disguised in wolves' clothing. We're going to eat you up.' And that's what they did. They ate her up completely except for her skin.

When the rabbit and the cow, who had been watching from a distance, approached the spot and found her sheepskin and her wolf skin, they shook their heads sadly. She had meant no harm. On the contrary, her intentions had been good, indeed saintly. She had in her way achieved martyrdom. But had she been a sheepish wolf, or a sheep who had found that everyone's a wolf underneath the skin? What was the message? Wherein lay the truth? And what should they believe?