

Decline and Fall of Humphrey Dumpty

A Fairy Tale for Our Times

By PETER ROBERTS

Once upon a timetable, long before the Husky was replaced by the snowmobile, there was a community of strange people. Their leader was a podgy man called Humphrey Dumpty. He was an O.K. guy really, who didn't stop people from doing their own thing.

"People," he shouted from his 46-storey apartment, "people, I am not going to stop you from doing your own thing. Just don't do it in my backyard, y'hear?"

"Yaa, boo, hiss-hiss, rhu-barb, rhubarb!" answered the crowd who were his old buddies from school. They turned him off and went to listen instead to the local hamstring radiator.

The radiator blurted out: "If you goddam in the woods today, you're sure of a big surprise." (It was an advertisement for Bear Country.) Things went on in the woods, and this real mean game-keeper knew about it because he was AWARE.

"Ee by goom, Ay dorn't underdusted, wot's gawin' on 'ere" he said. "Ay cum down 'ere every Mundaye an' Ay sees orl these tewbes of goom lyin' around. Ay says to myself Ay says, summat funny gawin' on. Ay ain't seen naw plastic remort-controrl hairy-planes runnin' around 'ere for long time. Must be them bloody commies, sellin' at cut prices to oondercut the current wage disparities. Blimey, Ay must run and tell Humphrey Dumpling."

Humphrey Dumpty made a pertinent announcement on the radius the following morning.

"Awright you guys—we got a Commie in our midst. And it is with a heavy heart I say this—GET RID OF THE HOODS, BEAT 'EM, SPIT

AT 'EM, DO SOMETHING—but, and I hope you will bear with me in this time of dire stress and bitter anguish, be subtle."

"Yah, rah-rah, olé! We want Hump!" screamed the crowd.

So Humphrey Dumpty had started the terrible ostracization of the Hood family. Mr. Hood was shop steward, with local 2-409 of the "Bookkeepers, Bookmakers and Bookcritics Union" and had only one child who flunked out of kindergarten at the age of twelve because she was not versed in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Fag. Poor Little "Red" Riding Hood was booed and spat upon by all the school kids.

"Your mother wears combat boots," they yelled. But Little 'Red' Riding Hoodlum turned a cold soldier to all of this.

The worst of the kids that baited her was Lily White and her seven warts. She came from a really nice background and lived only two doors away from the venerable Humphrey Dumpty. Her mum and dad went to all the charity balls in aid of money for the charter flight to the Third Crusade. (The British had really buggered the last two.)

Old Man White was Humphrey Dumpty's right hand man. I suppose he was all right because he supplied the whole town with jobs. He had a chain of amphitheatres so he needed a lot of Christians, and he also had the best gladiator fights south of the north pole.

The venerable Humphrey Dumpling was proud to say that his community did not have any social problems—no unemployment, no races (not on Sunday anyway), no bigamy. This was mainly because old man White had Christian-eating contests every weekend in his amphitheatres. To assist Hum-

phrey Dumpty in his ghetto-clearance programme White let all the diseased and outcasts enter as well. So you can see it was a very prophylactic community.

But down the hill by Swan Lake was a ghetto problem. Down there lived ten little niggers and they knew what was coming off. One day one little nigger went to market and one little nigger stayed at home. The one who went to market got gypped by this kid Jack.

"Hey man, you want to sell me your can of baked beans in exchange for this cow?" cried Jack.

"Shaw t'ing, baby, I'll buy that," replied the nigger, and started off merrily for home. Then he realized the cow was stale so he was damn mad.

When he got home he found that the other little nigger had been arrested for being incredible and had to appear in the magistrate's amphitheatre at two on Saturday. (Humphrey Dumpty's slum clearance programme was on the move.) The first nigger got frustrated and committed suicide. Then there were eight little niggers, who were a pretty good match for Lily White and her seven warts.

These eight little niggers decided to protest against Humphrey Dumpty's new slum clearance programme and Little 'Red' Riding Hood was on their side all the way, baby—good for her!

Now just about this time Humphrey Dumtruck didn't want any trouble because he was running for re-election.

So he called in the pigs.

"Men, justice is being undermined and underhand. I want you to prevent it. You can push, pull or kill if it's unnecessary—but whatever you do, stop those protesters," he told them.

"Un, Chief, like . . . uh . . . we is der, uh

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caseatthemomentum . . . uh yeah weisalreadyworkingona . . . an' . . . phew . . . well-wewanttofinishitofffirst . . . uh, I mean is dat awright wid yourself?" said the Chief pig eloquently.

"Yes, bonehead, that's alright, but hurry up with it. That's all."

Meanwhile, there was trouble a-brewing in town. Humphrey, our hero, had got Old Man White to campaign for him.

The little niggers were trying to get placards made by the "Bookkeepers, Bookmakers, and Bookwriters Union."

H.D.'s pigs went into action and started to worry—so they should.

They got ready with all their gladiators that Old Man White lent them for the weekend.

Meanwhile, there was a big conspiracy going on among the niggers and the Union. They had a few trumps up their sleeve.

The protesters started out on the election day with all their placards. They wanted to talk everything over with Lily White and her crowd, but got stopped by the gladiators,

who thought it was a ball being on the loose.

So there was a big fight in the streets. Jack, the cat who double-crossed the first nigger, got conscience-stricken by the death he had caused, so he was helping Little "Red" Riding Hoodwink et al. He climbed up his beanstalk with his peashooter and lay in wait for Humphrey Dumpty.

But H.D. never came out of his protected palace. He was making his last acceptance speech: "People, I have brought this community out of its poverty. I have got rid of all social problem. Now I shall start to get rid of the world's problems. First I shall try genocide; if that doesn't work—suicide."

"Yippee, more wars, we want Humpback!" shouted the crowd. But Humphrey Dumpty needn't have worried, because there was so much backsliding and backslapping after his speech that he cracked under the pressure and oozed slowly into the floor among the leaflets and policy speeches.

Outside, there's a sudden cry. It's a bird, it's a plane, NO, it's Cinder Ella!



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