“The Power of Reasoning”

1000 words

Of the history Fairyland few fragments have survived. By chance an account of one of its

defining moments has been preserved. Fairyland, a wise and wondrous realm, was once nearly

destroyed by its lack of )50))N)) hiuhiuuuiggygylogic and reasoning. This is a tale of how these were returned to the

people of Fairyland.

In times past, there had been a Logician, who served the Queen. But, being eager for

power, he had tried to usurp the throne. He was defeated and banished - thereby depriving the

court of its most useful personage. Years passed, and the Logician was forgotten, but more

importantly - his knowledge lost. The people of Fairyland were oblivious to the world outside

their domain. Bereft of a Logician, they were apt to disregard common sense and sound

judgement. Wisdom gave way to whimsy, and the Realm Perilous risked ruin.

Sensibilities were ruffled when a child was born to a faun and dryad that possessed

neither the faun’s hooves nor dryad’s magic. In fact, he almost looked human. The parent’s

dismay was turned to disaster when an ancient centaur, who had the gift of foresight

proclaimed over him, “This child has been born with a super-power that has long been dormant

in our land. He shall save Fairyland from those who seek to destroy it! Take heed!” The crowd

murmured uncomfortably. The Queen tossed her head, “There is no danger in Fairyland” said

she to the crowd. And to the centaur, “Disrespectful wretch! I am Queen here and as long as I

hold the reins to this kingdom, I will say what is and what is not.”

Veritatis grew up fast and was despised for his ability to reason. “Some super-power”

scoffed the other courtiers. “More of a nuisance,” whispered the peasantry loudly. Veritatis,

thought more of the kingdom beyond the borders of Fairyland than about the whispering and

gossiping in his own neighborhood. That Logician of old had taken his books and knowledge,

which he now turned on its head, creating a formidable enemy to unsuspecting Fairyland. In the

shadows of the borderlands, he twisted and broke the will of each logical argument, turning

each into a counterfeit of truth. Under his command, the Ad Hominem dwelt in the forests,

Strawmen lurked on the hills, the rivers ran red with the great ruby fish, known to the wise as

Red Herrings. This cruel and powerful kingdom was ever growing, its leader bent on the

destruction of Fairyland. His army was now ready over the hills and across the rivers it marched

ever nearing its goal.

As Veritatis stood on watch scanning the horizon tensely, a cloud of smoke suddenly shot

into the air. Distant sounds of screams and shouts rang through his ears, snatching up his sword

he dashed for the palace. “What are you doing here?” frowned the Queen suspiciously. “Most

gracious Queen, the ford has fallen and the village has been burnt! I pray you to send forth your

army to repel this threat!” “Impossible! Have I not my best troops stationed along yonder

ford?”, she scoffed.

Veritatis was already gone, dashing to the village. the sound of a battle met his ears. The

call-to-arms trumpet blared out its shrill note. Clambering up the wall, he viewed the situation.

Streams and pools were filled with Red Fish and the ground was crowded with Strawmen. The

defenders struggled vainly to maintain their position. Veritatis made his way to the streams and

demanded “Why have you taken the streams?”

At this challenge, a hideously large fish came up to the surface and replied “The

Strawmen are storming yonder ramparts!” “Foul fish, you are a Red Herring, begone!” Off

tumbled the fish’s head. Only when the creature’s true identity is revealed can its armor be

sundered. The herring’s comrades, evidently dismayed, made good their escape. Next, he

advanced upon the Strawmen, who were finishing up the last of the defenders. He boldly

shouted, “Have you no mercy in battle?” The largest of the Strawmen came forward, sneering,

“Presumptuous fool! Are you saying not to kill a mortal enemy in battle?” “No, strawman you

exaggerate my issue, and behold! Your armor is sundered!” Down tumbled the Strawman.

Veritatis quickly drew out his sword and advanced upon the rest. Only after a score of their

comrades had fallen did the rest retreat with haste.

All this was being viewed by the old logician from his gilded chariot “Fetch my armor and

call forth the Ad Hominem! Spare none, I myself will handle the kid!” Veritatis, meanwhile, was

grimly battling his way through the remaining Strawmen towards the Ad Hominem. Of all the

creatures in the world, he feared them the most. He was far from faultless and it was that

weakness that the Ad Hominem utilized in combat. “Halt!” cried he. “Are you so impudent as to

say to us halt, you are a mere youth with no real super power and you would think you are

champion of fairyland, weakling!” Down tumbled Veritatis for he couldn’t withstand the might

of the Ad Hominem. With great force of will he staggered up and croaked, “You would seek to

break my will, Ad Hominem, but I will not yield to you, begone!” The Ad Hominem fell, pierced

through and through by truth. Many more fell to the sword of Veritatis until at last he came

upon the Logician. “You would match yourself against me, boy! I am the only one with power

here!” intoned the Logician. “Every illogical distraction you brought against me I have bested!

You have failed - fallacies are as powerless as you!” retorted Veritatis. The Logician wobbled

unsteadily, then fell over and did not rise.

By and by the Queen made Veritatis Logician over the people of that country. He lived

many long years in happiness. Fairyland once again became a realm defined both by wisdom

and whimsy, where from time to time, humans visit to gaze into the mirror that it holds up to

our world.

Glossary of Logical Fallacies

Red Herring – a fallacy that attempts to distract from the

issue at hand

Strawman - a fallacy that attempts to distract by

exaggeration

Ad-Hominem – a fallacy that attempts to distract by

making a personal attack that is unrelated to the issue at hand.