The Cat and the Dog

Once upon a time there was a cat and a dog. "Cat", said the dog, "I want you to marry me, because I love you very much."

"Dog," replied the cat, "I don't want to marry you because your mouth is too long. If you can cut it, then I will marry you. So the cat ran to the blacksmith and paid him a silver cup. The blacksmith cut the cat's (dog's?) mouth. The cat went back to the dog. The dog said to the cat:

"I cannot marry you now, because my family does not agree."

That is why cat and dog do not agree up to now.

(There is some confusion as to whose mouth is to be cut)
The Featherless Cock & the Fox

A cock once decided to settle in a place that no one would know. He went to the bush and built houses for all his family, not knowing that the site he chose was part of King Fox's kingdom, and the cock's intention was to settle in a place where Fox's kingdom did not reach. The Fox's sons on their royal tour came to the new settlement and on their return reported it to their father. King Fox said "Go and call me the head of the family." The messengers came and said to the cock "Father wants you." One of the cock's sons who was featherless and very fat said "Father, I shall go to answer." The father said "You, being featherless, they shall eat you at once. The featherless son said "If I go I shall save myself and save you. It is necessary that I should go." The featherless son left for the King's place, and it was just after he had taken a heavy meal. On his arrival, the king said to him, pointing to the featherless cock's stomach, "Where is your father ?" The featherless cock replied "My father is coming but he has strangers. He is getting ready to come with the strangers." The king asked "Who are the strangers ?" The featherless cock replied "They are dog strangers." "Where are the stranger ?" asked the king. "They are coming," replied the featherless cock. "One of them is called Father Sila and the other Bai Mbala." The king said to the featherless cock: "Don't you know that they are the cause of my isolating myself and my family in this bush ?" So saying he ran leaving the little foxes seated. Seeing their father run, they also followed. The featherless cock returned home and finally became the owner of the land. The fox and his sons fled.
A Hunter's Good Luck

Once upon a time, a hunter went out hunting. He saw a deer drinking at the river, and so hid in a thick bush. Then he saw a lion coming towards the deer, not knowing that a crocodile was stalking it. As soon as the crocodile saw the lion he sprang on the deer at once. The lion rushed up and attacked them, and threw them to the ground. The lion fell, and his back was broken.

So the hunter got deer, lion, and crocodile, and went home saying "My road was fine."

The Monkey and the Dog in a sack

Once upon a time a man was going on a journey, so a monkey gave him money to buy groundnuts for him. On returning home, the man bought a big dog for the monkey instead of groundnuts. He put it in a bag and tied it up. When he arrived home he gave the bag to the monkey, saying "Here is the bag of nuts you sent for." The monkey was pleased and said "I am not going to open the bag here, because there is too much grass in this place, and I might lose some of my nuts. I am going to open it in the open field, so that I can see all, and nothing will be lost." When he reached the field, he opened the bag. The dog sprang out and killed the monkey. From that time monkeys never sent anybody again.
Kumba-without-mother had a pair of silver bracelets which she had inherited from her mother. Kumba-with-mother always cried for the bracelets. Kumba-without-mother and Kumba-with-mother were the daughters of two co-wives. One day the father cut off Kumba-without-mother's hands and gave the bangles to Kumba-with-mother. Kumba-without-mother then ran away and hid under a tree, crying. A spirit came to her and she tried to run away, but the spirit said to her "Do not run. I want to help you. Tell me why you are crying." Kumba-without-mother explained and said "My father cut off my hands and gave the bangles which my mother left me, to the daughter of my mother's co-wife." The devil told her to sit down, and she did so. Then the devil asked "Are you brave?" She replied: "Yes." The devil said "I am going to swallow you and make you a nice pair of hands and gold bracelets." Next morning the devil vomited her, just as she was before with nice hands and gold bracelets. Then she returned home. When her father saw her, he said "You are cured!" She replied "Yes. Man proposes and God disposes."

Two days later the King saw her and wanted to marry her. When they were engaged the King called for a dance. Kumba-with-mother said to the king "The girl you are engaged to is without hands." The King then announced that all the girls attending the dance should dance and swing their arms and anyone found handless would be killed. If, on the other hand, none were found without hands, the one who spoke falsely should be killed. All the girls attending danced one after the other. At last Kumba-without-mother danced and swung her arms and the King and the spectators found them normal. He turned to Kumba-with-mother and said "You spoke falsely, so I shall kill you." And she was killed.

1. Compare Tale (49).
Wolf and Circumcision

Some years ago, a wolf went to a village. He found the people of that village performing circumcision ceremonies. The order was "Those who are circumcised will get one cow, those who 'double' (hababal) will get two." The wolf heard that. Also he saw the cows. He asked "What about these cows?" "The cows are for the boys who are being circumcised. Those who are circumcised will get one cow, those who 'hababal' will get two." "What is the meaning of hababal?" "It means double." "Well, I am prepared to hababal." "Yes, if you do it, you will get two cows."

He said "All right." They hababal him, and he sat down with the boys. Shortly afterwards he asked the boys whether they felt cold. They said "No." "I too don't feel cold." In the afternoon he asked again whether the boys felt cold. They said "No." "I too don't feel cold." In the evening he died.

That is why too much wanting is no good.

1. In Kobes: Dictionnaire Volof-Français, hababal is translated as rapace, avide de gain.

2. A similar tale "The last to be circumcised" is given in H. T. Norris: Shinqiti Folk Literature and Song, Oxford, 1968, p.119 (Folk-tales of the Trarza, in Mauretania)

The Goat on Pilgrimage and the Wolf and the Lion

One day a goat started a journey on a pilgrimage to Mecca carrying with him a gourd full of honey. On the way he met a wolf and wolf asked "Where are you going?" "To Mecca on pilgrimage," replied the goat, "You have completed the pilgrimage when you met me; when a goat is going to Mecca and meets a wolf that is its destination," said the wolf. The goat begged the wolf, but the wolf would not listen and took the goat to a cave to eat him. Luckily they met a lion there. The wolf was frightened at the sudden appearance of the lion and offered him the goat saying "I heard you were ill, and I brought you this goat." The lion asked the goat, "Where were you going?" The goat said "I was going to Mecca." "And what is in your gourd?" continued the lion. "Holy water," answered the goat. "Will you give me some?" asked the lion. "But it is not used like that," said the goat, "you must mix it with some wolf skin." At once the lion caught the wolf by the leg and tore off a large piece of skin and handed it to the goat. The goat dipped it into the honey and gave it to the lion who heartily enjoyed it. "Some more please," demanded the lion. Again it was done and wolf asked permission to go, saying "I am going to urinate." They allowed him and off he went. They stayed for some time, and lion said "I am going to look for wolf and come back soon." When lion went away, the goat also made his way home. Lion came back without finding either of them.

1. A similar tale "The adventure of the murabit goat" is given in H.T.Norris: Shingiti Folk Literature and Song, Oxford, 1968, p.120 (Folk-Tales of the Trarza, in Mauretania)


4. I have heard a variant of this story told at Njau, Upper Salum, The Gambia, in 1979.

5. Compare also the tale "A Plotter Out-Plotted" in Aesop's Fables, involving an old lion, fox, and wolf.
Wolf and Goats

In the time when goats were wild animals a strolling wolf came to a flock which comprised all the goats on earth, with the largest billy goat on guard at the entrance. When he saw this, he greeted them. The billy-goat replied. The wolf asked "Are you the leader here?" "Yes", replied the billy-goat. The wolf was delighted to see all the world's goats in one gathering and decided to go back to his family and call them, so he asked "If I go and come back soon, will I find you here?"

"Yes", answered the billy goat. The wolf went away, but by the time he returned the billy goat had divided the crowd into four sections, suckling goats, barren goats, billy goats, and pregnant goats. After this division he told each section to follow a different road to the villages so that people might save them. When they had all gone, the large billy goat followed. Then the wolf came back. To his sorrow, no goat was to be seen.

He looked on the ground for footprints and saw them leading in different directions. He stood there in surprise and said "If I follow this road, those shall escape me", so he placed one foot on the first road, and the second foot on the second road, and so on until his legs were far spread out and his belly was flat on the ground. Then he sprang up suddenly to follow all four roads, and tore himself into pieces and fell down dead.

That is why wolf and goat are enemies and why goats became domestic animals.


2. A version is given by M.le Baron Roger: Fables Senegalaises recueillies de l'Ouolof et mises en vers français. 1828, Fable no. VIII.
The Slave Boy & his Master

Once upon a time a master and his wife had a boy. The wife was always worrying the boy. She even asked the boy to empty the latrine. The boy became annoyed with her, so he went to a marabout man and asked him if he could write a charm so that if anybody called his name, the charm would make him fart. The man said "Yes, I can. If you pay me one shilling, I will write it for you." So the boy went to the house. Under the pillow was one shilling which belonged to his master's wife. Shortly after the wife came into the house for her shilling; she did not find it. She called the boy. The boy came. As she called the boy's name (Arjuma), she at once farted. She repeated it again and again farted. She drove the boy away and called her husband. When the husband came, she said "The shilling which I kept under the pillow is lost." "Did you ask Arjuma?" he said, and at once farted. He repeated it again, and farted. He said "I see that whoever calls your name farts. So you will not sleep here tonight. I am going to sell you. He took him to another yard (compound) and said "I am selling a slave." They asked him "What is the name of your slave?" He said "Ask the slave his name." They said to him "The slave belongs to you; you ought to know his name." He told them "When you are counting the days of the week, after you have said Wednesday and Thursday, what do you say next?" "Arjuma", he replied, and farted so that he soiled his trousers. He drove him away with his slave.

He (his master) asked him "What have you tied?" He (Arjuma) said "Nothing, but anyone who calls the name, he farts. That is that."

So they went home again, and left him alone.

1. Arjuma - Friday
2. i.e. what spell has been made?
Wolf and Rabbit

Once upon a time a wolf and a rabbit went hunting in the bush. The wolf said "Rabbit, what are we going to do now." Rabbit said "You should wait for me here. I will go and come back." The wolf agreed to wait. The rabbit went off and on the way he found a dead goat lying by the road. He ate until he was full and then returned to wolf and said "I found a band of hunters lying in wait in the bush; so let us run before they catch us." The wolf said "Yes, let us run." They ran away, so the rabbit made a fool of the wolf, and that is why they do not agree up till now.

Wolf and Rabbit and the Teeth-cleaning

Once upon a time there was a wolf and a rabbit. They planted a corn farm together. After they had planted the corn, rabbit went and cleaned his teeth and came to the wolf who said "Your teeth are very clean, Mr. Rabbit." "Yes," said the Rabbit, "Do you want yours like them ?" "Yes" replied the wolf, "I came so that you could do it for me." The rabbit said "Let is go to the garden" (?). They went there. When they reached there he said "I am sent by Mr. Rabbit for you to clean my teeth white." "If you want that, you should go to my goldsmith, and tell him that you were sent to have your teeth cleaned." He went, but the goldsmith told him "Your mouth is too wide and your teeth are too sharp, unless we fix them." So the goldsmith took his hammer and struck his teeth, and cut his mouth. That night the wolf died, so the rabbit took all the wolf's belongings.

Always the wise live on the fools.
The Animals hold a Wrestling Match

The wild animals one day decided to hold a wrestling match. When they all met they asked the deer to be M.C. and form the crowd into a large circle. The deer did so. Then they told ndobin (a black bird the size of a hen with red eyes) "Since your bowels are always loose, you fly and rest on the tree and anyone who wins, you shall ease yourself and let him drink it, by force. The wolf told his wife to bring with her a large receptacle for gathering the flesh of the animals he hoped to kill.

On starting the wolf challenged goat and knocked her over and killed her. Mrs. Wolf collected the remains and sat down. Again wolf challenged sheep and knocked him down and killed him. Mrs. Wolf again collected the flesh and waited. They said "Ndobin, give wolf some of your excreta to drink, for he knocked two over." Ndobin eased himself and wolf drank the excreta.

Elephant challenged wolf and smashed him. Giraffe challenged elephant, and elephant knocked him over and killed him. They said "Ndobin, ease yourself for elephant to drink, for he knocked two over."

Lion got up and challenged leopard and knocked him off. Again lion challenged safand (lynx?) and knocked him off. They said "Ndobin, empty your bowels for lion to drink. He knocked two off."

Scorpion challenged horse. Horse said "I do not know what to do with you, whether I shall just tread on you or kick you. I do not know because you are too small." Horse came near wanting to blow scorpion away with its breath and the scorpion stung horse on the nose causing him to fall down and faint. They said "Ndobin, ease yourself for scorpion to drink." The scorpion said "I am not here to drink ndobin's faeces, I am going." He went and met mbota (frog) and mbota told him "Return to the game. No one should leave such an interesting show as that." Scorpion said "I can't keep on knocking the animals down and
drinking ndobin's faeces." Mbotā said to him "Since that is the cause, let us go together."

When they reached the wrestling place mbota challenged elephant, the elephant rushed to mbota. At once mbota whipped him on the nose with its tail and knocked elephant over. They said "Ndobin, ease yourself for mbota to drink, since he knocked elephant over. Scorpion said to mbota "Refuse, don't drink it." Lion sprang up, asking "Who said 'Refuse it'?" Scorpion said "I said it." Lion told scorpion "If I beat you, you'll die. If I blow on you you shall die; if I tread on you, you'll die, but wait, I shall place my testicles over you." The scorpion said "Yes, place them over me. If you place them on me, whatever happens to you, I shall not be blamed." The lion said "Hear this little thing, I talk and he (dares to reply)" and placed its testicles on the scorpion. He received a sting which caused him to fall over and cry "There is something in the little thing which does not tear nor bite, but when it touches you, it makes 'rai rai'." That is why lions roar.

1. M.C. Master of Ceremonies.

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M. le Baron Roger: Fables Sénégalaises, recueillies de l'Ouqlof et mises en vers français... 1828.

9 On ne pouvait pas traduire et répéter à chaque fable les espèces de formules par lesquelles beaucoup de Sénégalais ont l'habitude de commencer et de finir ces récits; mais je crois intéressant de les faire connaître, en passant, comme une chose tout-à-fait bizarre. Celui qui raconte dit d'abord: Lèb-on-nà, c'est-à-dire, j'ai fait une fable, ou peut-être: il y a une fable; la politesse exige que chacun des assistants réponde: Lou-pô-on-ne, c'est-à-dire, cela a été fait pour l'amusement; cela est récréatif. Le conteur reprend: Am-on-ne-fi, cela a eu lieu ici; on lui répond encore: Da-nà-am, c'est vrai, cela a été. Il entre alors en matière ordinairement par une locution équivalente à notre: En ce temps-là, ou à notre: Il y avait une fois, etc. - Quelques Sénégalais ne manquent guère, après avoir achevé leur récit, d'ajouter cette phrase assurément bien singulière: Ici la fable est allée tomber dans la mer, ou dans l'eau (Filé lèb dorkhé tabi gheïe).

11 Les fables ne paraissent destinées, par les Sénégalais, qu'à l'amusement. Tandis que nous considérons la concision comme un des grands mérites de ces sortes de compositions, les nègres s'y laissent aller volontiers à la prolixité. Dans le prologue de ce recueil, je décrit avec exactitude une scène de fabuliste au Sénégal. Le conteur attire ordinairement un nombreux auditoire; il ne néglige rien pour occuper l'attention, pour amuser; tant qu'il voit qu'on l'écoute avec plaisir, il s'évertue à prolonger le récit, ce qui lui est facile, parce qu'il improvise en prose. Les vers ne sont pas connus en ouqlof; cependant ce langage prend parfois quelque chose de soigné, de cadencé, qui sent la poésie.
Le nègre conteur de fables aime à reproduire les mêmes pensées, à répéter les mêmes expressions ; ce genre d'ornement paraît dans la nature....

Chez les fabulistes sénégalais, le récit est toujours accompagné de mouvements et de gestes imitatifs. Quelquefois il s'y mêle des chants adroitement introduits et qui font corps avec le sujet. On en verra des exemples dans les fables 6 et 8, Le Loup et la Gazelle, et le Loup qui veut faire Tabaski.

Les fables des nègres diffèrent encore des nôtres en ce que les premiers n'ont pas de moralités exprimées positivement, ni même souvent d'intentions morales adroitement sous-entendues, comme notre La Fontaine en a fourni de si heureux modèles.......

Les nègres attacheraient plutôt à leurs fables un sens satirique que moral; elles sont quelquefois pour eux ce qu'était originairement la comédie pour les Grecs. C'est très certainement une des causes du plaisir qu'ils y trouvent. Considéré de cette manière, l'apologue doit d'autant plus convenir aux hommes, qu'ils sont dans un état de dépendance et d'avalissement; c'est alors en même temps un sujet de consolation et d'amusement; c'est même un petit moyen de vengeance, sorte de satisfaction que les misérables n'apprécient pas moins que les dieux.....

Les Sénégalais en sont encore à ce point où l'on se contente d'amuser les gens, sans avoir la prétention de les éclairer et de les rendre meilleurs. Aussi, comme je l'ai dit plus haut, on ne voit dans leurs fables aucune moralité déduite du sujet. ....
Translation: [Notes from Baron Roger]

9 One cannot translate and repeat with each fable the types of formula with which many Senegalese habitually begin and conclude these stories, but I believe it interesting to make them known, as something completely strange. The teller says first Lèb-on-nà, that is to say, "I have told a fable," or perhaps "There is a fable." Politeness demands that each of those around replies: Lou-pò-on-ne, that is to say, "It is for amusement, it is for recreation." The teller goes on Am-on-ne fi, "that took place here;" people reply: Da-nà-am, "it is true, that has been." He then starts with a locution equivalent to our "At that time," or "Once upon a time, etc." Some Senegalese never fail, having finished their story, to add this phrase, certainly very peculiar: "Here the fable has gone and fallen into the sea, or into the water." (Filé lèb dorkhé tabi gheie).

The fables seemed to be destined, by the Senegalese, only for amusement. While we consider conciseness one of the great merits of these sorts of composition, the blacks let themselves go towards verbosity. In the prologue of this collection, I describe with exactitude the scene of the story-teller in Senegal. The teller ordinarily attracts a large audience. He neglects nothing to keep the attention, to amuse; so that he sees that he is listened to with pleasures, he strives to prolong the telling, which is easy, because he is improvising in prose. Verses are not known in Wolof; however this language sometimes takes on something polished and cadenced, which seems like poetry.
Translation:

12. The black story teller likes to reproduce the same thoughts, to repeat the same expressions; this sort of ornament appears naturally...

With the Senegalese story teller, the recitation is always accompanied by movements and imitative gestures. Sometimes there are mixed in songs skilfully introduced, and intimately united with the subject. One sees examples in fables 6 and 8, the Wolf and the Gazelle, and The Wolf who wished to perform Tabaski.

The fables of the blacks differ from ours again in that the former have no morals specifically expressed, nor even the moral intentions cleverly implied, such as are provided in numerous examples by La Fontaine.

15 The blacks attach rather to their fables a satiric sense rather than a moral one. They are for them what comedy was originally for the Greeks. It is very certainly one of the causes of pleasure that they find. Considered in this manner, the fable should be more suitable for men, when they are in a state of dependance and degradation; it is then at the same time a subject of consolation and of amusement; it is even a small means of vengeance, a sort of satisfaction that the unfortunate do not appreciate less than the gods...

18-19 The Senegalese are not yet at the point where one can be content to amuse people, without having the expectation of enlightening them and rendering them better. So, as I said earlier, one does not see in their fables any moral derived from the material...
This collection includes (1) Fables translated or imitated from Wolof,

(2) Fables in which the subjects, actors, and descriptions belong to Senegal,

(3) Fables composed during M.le Baron Roger's stay in Senegal.

The first 27 fables fall in the first category.
No.in Roger

I. Monkey and Hare. (Monkey tries not to scratch, hare to keep still)
II. Jackal, Elephant & Hippopotamus. (Jackal borrows a cow from each...sets up tug-of-war at time of repayment)
III. Hare who put on a gazelle skin. (Hare puts on skin of dead gazelle, looks thin, tells creditors that hare cursed him when he pressed for repayment of debt. Creditors do not pursue hare's debts)
IV. Wolf & the gun. (Wolf lent gun to sheep; afraid to reclaim it).
V. Pony & Calf. (Pony's mother died, calf died; pony adopted by cow. Cow owner claims it. Judge says he is about to give birth)
VI. Wolf & Gazelle (Drought. Wolf digs well, Gazelle drinks, leaves tracks, is caught, sings until she gets out of trouble)
VII. Goat and sheep. (Different natures, goat restless, sheep quiet)
VIII. Wolf wants to perform Tabaski. (Invited to four feasts...caught at cross-roads, cannot make up mind where to go, loses all)
IX. Dog, Camel & Crab. (Dog fails to make camel cross river by barking from behind. Crab pulls him in by cord attached to camel's nose)
X. Two Moors & horse (Horse sold...dispute over shadow)
XI. Lion, Wolf & Sheep. (Wolf tries to seize sheep in lion's flock which insulted him by farting. Owner Lion comes and farts...Wolf does not try to seize him)
XII. Crocodile & shark (When water is fresh, crocodile is there and takes its toll, when water becomes salt, shark takes over)
XIII. Wolf & his Wife (Ambitious wife tells Wolf to go and live at the court of the King to become rich. Dogs are set on him. He returns & sends his wife, who gets killed).
102) XIV. Monkey & Jackal
(Jackal seizes young monkey left at foot of tree, warns monkeys about danger of hyaena seizing such children)

103) XV. Wolf, Ox, & Elephant
(Wolf falls in hole, pulled out by ox, wolf wants to seize ox; elephant judges, puts wolf back in hole).

104) XVI. Lion & Quail
(Lion who has said he fears no animal, is scared by Quail rising at his feet).

105) XVII. Lump of butter & piece of earth (Travelling companions, butter goes to fetch fire, earth to fetch water, both perish).

106) XVIII. Blind Hare
(Hare lives on charity. Monkey tries to learn to beg alms, but demands...God gives him nothing).

107) XIX. Tree squirrel
(Allows himself to be caught through greed)

108) XX. Lion, Jackal & Wolf
(On journey lion's bag of provisions gets torn; jackal asked to mend it; jackal says it needs wolf sinews; lion kills wolf; jackal says Lion should now take Wolf's bag).

109) XXI. Death and the Wolf
(Death agrees to feed Wolf for two years, but claims him in the end).

110) XXII. Gris-gris
(Ox makes and sells gris-gris. Hare buys one to enable him not to pay his creditors; then refuses to pay ox).

111) XXIII. Lion, Snake & Panther & Grasshopper (Grasshopper throws up earth on Lion's nose. The dangerous animals kill each other).

112) XXIV Grass-snake & lizard
(The two small animals fight. Larger animals refuse to intervene; the small animals scatter the fire, everybody is killed).

113) XXV Hare & search for wisdom (Asked to collect birds in calabash)

114) XXVI The Obo (A Fish)
(The Obo which goes up river, receives many commissions to carry out, receives a bone for each to remind him).

115) XVII Anger
(Quiet reaction of Marabout to angry Warrior)

The Wolf (Le Loup) is in reality the Hyaena.

The fables are told in verse, and therefore differ considerably from the original Wolof tales in form.

Baron Roger provides useful notes on the Senegalese background, and a general preface on the tales.
(1) **Le Singe et le Lièvre** (Wolof) pp. 39-42

Monkey swears to remain from sunrise to sunset without scratching itself; hare to remain from morning to night without looking around. Both make the movements in giving accounts of what happened to them in war.

(2) **Le Lièvre et les Moineaux** (Wolof), pp. 43-47.

Hare seeks wisdom from God and is given task of filling a gourd with sparrows. Succeeds...God says he has enough wisdom.

(3) **Hyena and Hare** (Wolof) pp 49- 53.

In period of famine, hyena changes into a horse and has hare sell him to the King for bulls. The "horse" when it sees meat seizes it and eats it. Eventually return to the forest and takes the herd. Hare speaks as if talking the king's people...hyena flees.

(4) **Lion and Hyaena** (Wolof) pp. 55-61.

Lion had married a goat. Hyaena comes by, offers to cook a meal for Lion. A child warns goat who was in the market. Mother buys honey, lets lion taste it and says it comes from hyaena. Mother pours honey on backside of hyaena. Lion chases hyaena...

(5) **Hyaena, Hare and Lion Cubs** (Wolof) pp. 63-69

During period of famine, hyaena and hare go to seek for food. Separate at fork in road. Hyaena finds only lizards which hide. Hare finds lions living in a hollow baobab tree. Says his name is "All of us". Mother brings food. Hare shares in the meal. Later meets Hyaena. Explains how he found food. Hyaena forgets the name "All of us" and says he is "Great Warrior," Mother knocks him down, and children strip him of his hair.
(121) (6) Lion, Hyaena and Hare (Wolof) 71-81.

Lion employed Hyaena to tap palm wine. One day he hides most of it. Quarrel with Lion, he strikes Lion and then flees. Lion offers reward if Hyaena is brought to him. Hare tells Lion to pretend to be sick. Hare goes and announces that Lion has died and that Hyaena is the heir. Hyaena sets out for Lion’s place. When he enters Lion’s house, Lion rises up and kills him.

(122) (7) The Old King and his Young Son. (Wolof) 83-86.

Young man decides to set up an independant village. Dresses himself in the fresh skin of a calf. This dries out and tightens. Old King passes by, and has him soaked in the river. "Old people are worth keeping in the village."

(123) (8) Hyaena and Eagle.

Hungry eagle decides to deceive hyaena. Tells him there is meat at Bangaye (which is far off). On journey hyaena kills one of his children to feed himself. Another child can’t walk. Eagle eats him. Children die on the way, eagle continues eating them. Finally hyaena’s wife dies, eagle eats her...eventually hyaena himself perishes and is eaten.

(124) (9) Hyaena and Lion. (Wolof) 93-97.

Female
Hyaena about to die of hunger, saved by Lion who takes her home and feeds her. When she is well fed again, she pays no attention to Lion when called. Lion goes out and kills a female hyaena, and brings it back for Hyaena to skin. Hyaena flees.

(125) (10) Hyaena, Ox, and Elephant. (Wolof) 99-103.

Hyaena falls down a well. Helped out by ox. Then wishes to eat ox. Elephant comes to settle dispute. Has hyaena go back in the well again.

(126) (11) Monkeys and Dogs. (Wolof) 105-112.

Man was carrying honey to sell to king. Scared by troop of monkeys. Calabash of honey falls and breaks. Says "Diable " Monkeys taste the honey, think it is called "Diable"
and propose going to king to ask for "diable." King says come back tomorrow and he will be ready. He gathers all the dogs in a house. When the monkeys come he lets the dogs loose. Monkeys flee.

In the end only the chief of the monkeys and the chief of the dogs left. Monkey is up a tree. Dog plays dead. Monkey lets go on head of dog, which still does not move, so he believes him truly dead. Examines dog's teeth, this one killed so and so etc. Dog springs up and chase begins again. Monkey goes back to his wife. Tells her to bring ashes to cover the blood which dog has lost...boasts of the fight..... wife says that (the shit ) on the road is not that of dogs , but of monkeys. The King of the monkeys is so shamed he is changed into a bush.  cf. Tale 25 (Guillot/}

[127]

(12) Man, Hare, and the Crocodile. 113-124.

Crocodile stranded far from river. Hunter finds him and agrees to take him back. When hunter enters water crocodile seizes him. Decide that witnesses shall decide the dispute. An old horse states that man is ungrateful and should be eaten. An old cow and an old donkey likewise. Hare then arrives. Says that to judge he must go back to the beginning. Has crocodile tied up and carried back again. Hare tells him to take crocodile back home and eat him.  man

When  he  reaches home he is told his daughter is ill, and that the right medicine is the skin of a hare. He calls his dogs, but hare quickly escapes. cf. Tale 141(Diop)

[216] Terrisse

(128)

(13) Elephant the King. 125-132.

During drought animals were not to drink from pond during day time. Hare says he will drink when he likes. Makes clothing of pieces of metal etc. which makes a great noise. Scares off the guard (Hyaena) who believes a spirit came. Next day Ostrich appointed guard. Also scared off. Likewise, Antelope, then Lion. Finally Elephant takes over, and scares hare whose garment catches between two trees and falls off. Elephant catches him, and kills him. Animals make Elephant king.

[129]

(14) The birth of fire. (Fula/ Mandinka tale) 133-137.

Herders find bush fire in dry season. Man sent to find the cause. Discover dwarf in a cave. Herder brings milk and sets a trap, capturing the dwarf. Dwarf says he did not speak before, because he was ashamed of his tail. Herder confirms that the dwarf had set the fire. Cuts off the tail, and takes
him home, asking him to teach them how to make fire, which he does by using two stones. The descendants of these dwarfs became smiths.
Summary and her friends,

(130) 1-16 Fari L'Anesse. Fari, an ass, changes to women. Marries the king. Changes back at twilight by means of a magic song. A Mauretanian discovers them, tells secret to king, and teaches the magic song to a griot. She is changed back to an ass, along with her friends.

(131) 17-27 Un Jugement. A man repudiates his wife, then says he has not done so. Her word against his. Final judgement determined by wise imam who asks "Where is the man who repudiated his wife?"

(132) 28-39 Les Mamelles Two hump-backed girls, co-wives of one man. The good natured one goes to dance of spirits. Hands over her hump so that she can dance, and is able to return home without it. Ill-tempered wife goes, but is given her co-wife's hump as well. Ashamed, she throws herself into the sea. The humps become Les Mamelles.

(133) 40-45 N'Gor-Niébé Man who refuses to eat beans. Attractive woman begs him to eat the beans she has prepared and only she will know, but he calls her intimate friend to whom she tells her secrets, and the intimate friend of this one, until he has a dozen women who would know the secret.

(134) 46-55 Maman-Caiman Old crocodile knows history...hears of war and escapes...young refuse to go...the remedy for wounds of the warriors turns out to be the brains of young crocodiles.

(135) 55-62 Les Mauvaises Compagnies. Monkey and Chameleon. Monkey steals palm wine. When caught accuses chameleon, because his walk is unsteady. Chameleon sets field on fire. Accuses monkey, whose hands are black (the color of the ashes). Monkey punished.

(136) 63-70 Les Mauvaises Compagnies. Crab and Rat. Crab sets up chain of events. Rat climbs palm tree to take fruit. Arrow is asked to destroy Rat, Termite to destroy Arrow, Cock to destroy Termite, Jackal to destroy Cock, Dog to destroy Jackal. but the fruit drops on Crab and flattens him.

(137) 70-76 Les Mauvaises Compagnies.
    p.74 Hen or egg oldest.
    75-76 Dog and hen. Dog puts muzzle in pot to get rice with oil. Hen got only dry rice from top. Now hen scratches to get below.
Les Mauvaises Compagnies. Calao eats toads whom he has invited to work on his farm.

Toad invited by Bee to eat calabash of honey, but told to go and wash his hands each time he tries to eat. Bee finishes all. In return Toad invited Bee, each time Bee wants to eat, he is told to go and leave his drum (his buzz) outside.

La Lance de l'Hyène. Fula herdsman has lance, with which he kills game. Hyaena wants one. Told to fetch iron and go to smith. On the way picks up bag closed with cotton which contains meat. Thinks it is all cotton. Uses it to pay smith. When he discovers it contains meat he wants it back, claims the smith has not made him the sort of lance he wanted, both long and short, sharp and blunt.

Man will give daughter in marriage to whoever will send meat with a hyaena. Biram packs it in a skin bag, puts it in a cloth sack, inside a bale of straw. Hyaena smells meat but can't discover where it is. Delivers bale of straw.

Child and Crocodile. Crocodile, far from water asks to be carried back. Then seizes child saying the reward for kindness is wickedness. Witnesses -old cow and old horse -confirm this. Hare states he cannot believe the story, and has Crocodile tied up again to show what happened.

King has daughter shut up in house behind seven stockades. Hare tricks rat etc. into digging tunnel. Then he seduces the daughter who gives birth to a son. A Mauretanian reports child's cries to the King. All are called before the King and the son is given kola nuts to present to the father. Hare tried to avoid the child but is caught. To avoid execution (the King shouldn't kill the father of his grandson) - he is given tasks to carry out - bring the skin of a leopard, elephant tusks, a lion skin, and the hair of kuss. Succeeds in tasks - has leopard take off his skin so that he can wash it for him, puts pepper on it...has elephants stand on each other like a ladder to heaven, they fall down, and tusks are broken off, etc. So hare escapes, but to prevent the animals taking revenge on him, he puts on an old antelope skin -tattered and torn, and tells hyaena that Hare did this to him with one paw, and so is left alone.

Father is killed. Sister then calls her brother 'Little Husband'. Brother goes through circumcision ceremonies. Sister continues to address him as 'Little Husband.' He is ashamed, and disappears into the sea. Mother kills her daughter, and the sea swallows them both. The song is found in sea shells.
127-134 Vérité et Mensonge. Truth and Lie travel together. When Truth is told it leads to trouble. Lie takes over. Come to place where the King's youngest wife has died. Lie claims to be able to revive her. Asks for half of the King's possessions. Then says father of the king has offered him more to bring him back too. King decides to leave everyone dead.

135-153 La Biche et les Deux Chasseurs. Antelope and the two hunters.

135-138 Confusion of Marabout over Bambara language, which he thinks is Wolof. When called to eat he thinks he is asked 'who is there?'

139-141 Antelope acquires knowledge by eating grass on which marabout's spittle has fallen. Is killed by hunter, but hunter's child falls down well, the meat does not boil, his wife becomes blind from an ember, the hunter chokes on tasting the meat, and antelope regains his life and escapes.

141-153 Animals ask for help against another hunter. Animals (antelope, elephant etc.) change to women and go to hunter's place. Hunter warned by mother against them. Offered food with meat, but turn it down. Ask to be given dog meat. Hunter kills dogs, but mother saves blood and has bones gathered up. Animals say they are leaving, hunter accompanies them. Asked to leave gun and bow behind. Mother gives him magical palm nuts. Women change back. Hunter throws down magical nut and tree grows. Begin to chop down tree. Throws second nut and taller tree grows up. Then hunter thinks of calling dogs. They come to life again, take up his guns and bow and rush out to save him. Animals flee.

154-161 Les Calebasses de Kouss. Hyaena and Hare go in search of ornaments for their wives. Hyaena makes clay beads. Hare finds wealth in hollow baobab, belonging to a kouss (bearded dwarf). Hare finds young kouss who agrees to take him home, telling him not to laugh. At what he sees in their house in a tamarind tree. At the end he is offered two calabashes and told to take the smallest. On reaching home finds it filled with gold, jewels, cloth, etc.

Hyaena feigns toothache, seizes hare, until he tells how he got wealth. Hyaena behaves badly towards the kouss, takes the largest calebash. When he gets home he closes up the house, and a club jumps out of the calabash and sets about beating him.
L'Héritage. Father leaves skin bags of sand, gold, and pieces of cord to sons. Seek person to interpret the meaning. Kén Tann. On way see strange sights.

1 Wild pig, clothed in red robe, yellow sandals, with prayer beads, etc.
2 Goat wrestling with tamarind tree stump half swallowed by ant hill.
3 A Bull - fat but covered with sores.
4 A Cow - in rich pasturage, but thin.
5 A Cow - in area with one tuft of grass, but fat.
6 Antelope with three legs which keeps escaping from them.

Interpreted:
1. A king without a throne becomes religious, but insincere.
2. A young man who has married an older woman.
3. A man of honor, who keeps his character in spite of misfortune.
4. A bad wife, who does not know how to give.
5. A good hearted wife/generous mother.

As regards the inheritance. Sand represents what is built on the land, and what is in the fields. The cord what is tied ..flocks, cattle. Gold cannot be eaten. Heir depends on brother sharing. So should return and work together.

Sarzan. Demobilized Sergeant who opposes sacrifices to ancestors, cuts branches from sacred tree, attacks the kankurang, etc. enters the sacred grove and breaks the jars and statuettes. Ancestors and spirits make him mad.
The major episodes in this book are a simplified form of stories given by A. Sadji, and first printed in *Contes d'Afrique*, edited by René Guillot, 1933.

(151) pp. 26-27  Hare given three tasks by sorceress - to obtain whale's milk, a lion's tooth, & a leopard's claw.

(152) 30-33  Hare sets up tug-of-war between whale & elephant (GUILLOT, p. 17).

(153) 40-51  Hyaena kills young of animals, except hare's. Hare says all the animals are dead and hyaena is the heir. Animals play dead. Lion seizes hyaena, puts him in tree split by elephant until he disgorges the animals taken. (GUILLOT, pp. 8-9).

(154) 52-55  Hare has himself tied in bean farm by children of smith. Caught. Hyaena takes his place. (GUILLOT, pp. 7-8).

(155) 56-63  Famine. Hare & hyaena search for food. Hare finds family of blind people living in baobab tree, gets in using magic word and obtains food. Hyaena tries it, is discovered, and is caught in tree when he uses the magic word to close the tree too soon. (GUILLOT, pp. 10-12).

(156) 64-67  Hare & hyaena feed inside bull. Hyaena is too greedy & eats the heart. Bull dies. Hare escapes through hiding in the bile tract which the butchers throw away. Hyaena caught. (GUILLOT, pp, 10-11).

(157) 75-79  Famine. Hare & hyaena agree to sell aunts. Hare's aunt breaks cord. Hyaena's aunt sold for food. On return hare loosens donkey bearing loads, buries tail in ant hill. (GUILLOT, p.23).

(158) 80-82  Hare & Hyaena roast ox. Climb tree to plait hair. Hare ties hyaena's hair to tree branch. Eats meat alone and throws bones at Hyaena. (GUILLOT, pp. 12-13).

(159) 82-91  Hyaena freed by termite. Hare visits hyaena disguised as termite. Rain in night washes clay off him. Made prisoner, but gets thrown into morning dew as punishment and escapes. (GUILLOT, p.13).

(160) 92-105  Hyaena gives old woman an animal to look after for him, but steals it back. Goes every day to claim an animal as compensation. Lion takes place of last animal, disguising himself in its skin. Kills hyaena's family, and makes hyaena restore the animals taken.

(161) 108-119  Donkey of Laobé stolen by Hyaena. Hare obtains a wise donkey to play dead. Hyaena permits himself to be tied to donkey, which runs back to the Laobé who punish Hyaena. (GUILLOT, p. 28).

(162) 120-125  Hare goes to see Giraffe. Giraffe looks inside house...has red cloth put around neck. (GUILLOT, pp. 4-5).
Hare gets magic spoon and club. Goes to visit King (134) who mistreats him and takes spoon. Hare gets revenge when he brings club. (GUILLOT, pp. 80-81).

Hare takes child and gives him to Lions to be brought up. Mother Lion is killed by hunter. Later children turn on the boy who is forced to shoot two with poisoned arrows. Third becomes more friendly and works with boy. Boy accumulates herd through magic flute. Returns to village. His mother, who is poor, describes the bracelet he used to wear and he produces it.

Jinn and hunter Sadinali...tree uprooted in fight...enters eye of baby on back of giantess...takes refuge with giant leper. (GUILLOT, pp. 87-88).

Dilemma. Three men...seeing at distance, magic mat, medicine to revive dead. Restore girl to life. (GUILLOT, p. 51).

Three cowards...one emits fire, one tears, one cries so as to produce a strong wind.

* The story of the child and the lions is also given in Ousman Soce: Contes et Legendes d'Afrique Noire, Paris, 1962, 107-119.
Summary

(168) 23-34 L'O}s

Mor Lame greedy. Exchanges grain for bull. Selects hock to eat. Moussa, who was circumcised at the same time, wishes to share the meat. Mor Lame feigns sickness, but friend stays with him. Pretends to be dead, Moussa stays. Elders wash body. Mor Lame lets himself be put in shroud and buried. Decided that Moussa shall marry the widow after mourning period. His first words are to "Bring the bone (meat)."

(169) 35-42 Le Prétexte
A greedy parasitic talibé Serigne Fall comes to stay with a rich trader who is generous. Serigne Fall buys biscuits in market, the sound of his chewing them in the night causes the trader to drive him away.

(170) 43-52 La Rousette
a) Baboon almost burnt in village fire. Tells hyaena he will be rewarded with dried meat if he admits setting fire. Hyaena beaten by villagers.

b) Lion decided that because of hunger animals will not attack each other, but instead will eat the birds. Lion shares out game, gives bat to hyaena.

(171) 53-64 Boli
Boli (sacred statue). Old smith makes offerings to statue. Shadow becomes young man. After death of old smith, his son abuses the statue. An old Fula woman comes by, the young man says he can rejuvenate her. He remakes her in the forge. She brings her husband to be remade. They find the son instead. He agrees to try to remake the old man, but lacks the power to bring him to life, and is accused of murder. Shadow becomes young man again and restores the old man. Since then no smith has lacked respect for cult objects.

(172) 65-74 Dof-Diop
Moussa born an idiot. Given heifer, and goes off to sell it. He hears the sound of wind, and thinks it is tree making an offer. He ties animal to tree. It is eaten by hyaenas etc. Then because tree has not paid, he cuts it down, and discovers gold and silver inside. His brothers share wealth. King comes to offer condolences, and is well treated. His marabout comes later, and is told secret of wealth by Moussa. The marabout (a Mauretanian) is killed and buried. Moussa tells king of the murder. Brothers substitute a bearded white goat in place of the body.
Khary-Gaye. Khary the wise. During period of hunger, her father comes back with a little rice. Crowd gathers. Man does not wish to come back while crowd is there. Indirect question to mother to find out what to do with rice that is cooked.

Khary's mother died. Step-mother jealous. Sent to well with heavy wooden bowl. Asks who will help her put it on her head. Turns down toad, lizard, tortoise. Python helps her, and says he will come back later to claim reward. Python returns, singing song to reclaim her. Step-mother drives her out. Goes to well and finds young man with white horse. The Prince of the River. Marries her and takes her into the river kingdom. Becomes discontented and allowed to return home for seven days. Step-mother struck dumb. Daughter tells secret. Villagers go to river and kill python. Mother transformed into dove, daughter into euphorbia tree which weeps on touch.

Djabou N'Daw. Gharr-le Dragon prowls around village. Djabou N'Daw (child) fights with him. Dragon swallows child, he comes out, and swallows dragon. This happens several times. In the end the child stops up his anus and holds dragon. Returns to the village, releases the dragon which has turned into Lion. Struck by stick of old man. Flees to become King of the Bush, but still fears blow from stick.

Samba-de-la-Nuit. Child decides to be born early through his own efforts. Wants to go with brothers who have gone to seek seven sisters as brides. Brothers refuse. Turns into coin which one of the brothers picks up etc. Cross river on back of crocodile. Come to house of old woman with seven daughters. She prepares food grain sown, grown, harvested, prepared in one day etc. Child tells brothers to change garments and places with girls in bed. Child sleeps with old woman. Wakes when she wants to sharpen her knife. Asks for blanket made of cotton, sown, irrigated, gathered woven the same day. Old woman cuts throats of what she thinks are the brothers, and kills her daughters instead. Brothers escape. Pursuit. Old woman changes to jujube tree. Child recognises her. Old woman becomes white horse. Made to flee. Brothers cross river by means of magic cloth which splits the river. In home village find old woman has turned into a tamarind tree. Cut this down, and the old witch dies.

Cf. Story (67).
113-125  Le Taureau de Bouki.  Hyaena leads off bull. Hare ordered to follow to drive off flies, birds, bees, etc. When Hyaena goes to look for firewood, Hare rides off on bull. When Hyaena catches up, says he has not moved. Look at the tree and the moon. Hyaena goes to look for pot. Hare moves on again. When Hyaena goes to look for fire, hare moves again (nearer the village of the Hares). Hyaena ready to cook bull, says Hare can now leave. Hare organizes hares to make sound on drums like the approach of a big herd of cattle. Tells Hyaena Pate the herdsman is with them. Hyaena takes off.

127-140  Les Deux Genres.  Hare offers to find husbands for Khoudia's two daughters whom she wishes to be married at the same time. Lion and Hyaena chosen. Period of hunger. Hyaena goes to mother-in-law, and is given a ram. Eaten by himself and his children. Frequent visits to mother-in-law until flock is nearly finished. Hare visits the old woman and learns what has happened. Tells Lion. Only one animal remains. Lion has himself tied in its place. Hyaena leads Lion off. When he discovers it is Lion, he and his children jump up tree and hang on branches. Each child becomes tired and drops down. Split open by Lion, and animals eaten come to life again. In the end Hyaena falls. Lion hits his hindquarters, releasing rest of flock, but Hyaena escapes.

141-153  Liguidi-Malgam.  (Story from Mali).

155-156  Bouki Pensionnaire.  Lion welcomes Hyaena during famine. When well fed he becomes insolent. Asked to share meat of antelope, goat and bat, offers antelope to lion, but wants goat for himself. Struck by lion. Hare asked to share out meat gives all to Lion and his family.

163-173  La Cuiller Sale.  Orphan Girl made to work while half sister is idle. Had forgotten to wash wooden spoon. Told to go to Sea of Danyane. Walks for three days. Sees jujube tree...treats it politely and is given fruit. Goes on for three days...sees cakes etc. another three days...meets pot of rice that cooks itself. Comes to house of old woman who is the mother of wild animals. Given a single grain to pound for food, and a bone to cook. At night given a needle and told to prick animals lightly so they will think it is an insect biting and will leave early. Given eggs to break on way back in specified order. warriors, clothes, jewelry, herd emerge. From last egg come wild animals, but these are killed by warriors.

Stepmother sends own daughter. She behaves badly. Breaks last egg first, and is devoured by animals.
Notes

1. Le Prétexte. Also published in Présence Africaine, 6, 1949, 94-99.

2. I have recorded a similar story from the Fulbe of Mansajankunda, near Basse in the Upper River Province of The Gambia.


I have heard a variant of this story told at Njau, Upper Salum, The Gambia in 1979.
Out of ten stories, three or four are of Wolof origin.

(181) (1) Tanor, le dernier Samba Linguère. pp. 7-31. (Non-traditional story)

(Man sells peanuts, becomes trader, marries second wife. Entrusts money to European. Next year crops are poor. Farmers who borrowed money from him sell to his rivals. He goes into debt, and sells off jewelry etc. to avoid shame.)

(182) (2) Légende de Ghana, pp. 33-42.

(Describes the serpent of Ouagadou to whom a girl has to be sacrificed annually. Her loves kills the monster and saves her, but a long drought follows.)

This tales is widespread in West Africa, being found in collections of Hausa tales, etc.

(183) (3) Ham Bodedio (Légende Peulhe), pp. 43-55. (Fula)

(In Massina...The mother of a girl has her milk spoiled in the market by the dog of a Bambara ruler. She beats the dog, so the ruler has her beaten. Ham Bodedio (Fula) comes and carries out revenge, capturing the chief and making him the slave of the old woman.)

(184) (4) Tara (La Légende d'El Hadji Omar (Tall).) pp. 57-81.

(Goes on pilgrimage to Mecca...marries in Hausa country...takes child...wife follows. Hymn of Omar...illness...preaches Islam, builds up army. Defeats Guimba. Clash with French. Converts Kandia. Attacks the Bambara (Biram Ali at Segou) next. Biram Ali's wife prophesies defeat, and Biram Ali flees. El Hadj calls up djinns (spirits)...conquers Massina. Later Massina revolts. El Hadj besieged at Hamdallai, attacked before reinforcements arrive...goes to hilltop...vanishes.)

(185) (5) Penda pp. 83-91. WOLOF?

(A girl would not marry anyone with marks...Marries unknown handsome stranger...when he takes her away he changes to lion....girl saved by the horse she has taken with her.)

This too is a widespread tale.
(186) (6) Maissa - La Légende de Maissa Tenda Oueddi, pp. 93-105

(Historical account - the war against M'Boye Cisee, and the battle of Diobasse.)


(A boy makes friends with lion cub. The Lion kills his mother. The Boy kills the young lion's mother. The boy goes for circumcision. Lion helps with gifts... Boy marries the king's daughter. The lion comes at night, but is insulted by the boy, and they become enemies.)

(188) (8) Histoire de l'Homme qui avait las passion des cerises, pp. 121-127

(Individual had a passion for 'cerises' (Fruit not named - no cherries in Senegal). No one in his village wanted to marry him. His maternal uncle who lived in another village agreed to find him a wife. He made a great impression... but there was a tree with 'cerises' in the compound. At night he climbed up and began gorging himself. He let fall his torch which burnt down the village. Shame changed him into a thorn tree.)

(189) (9) Sara-Ba. (A Malian story, set in Kayes), pp. 129-144

(Love across caste lines (slave/free) & ethnic origins. Marriage disapproved by parents of girl.)


(Story set in Massina. Silamaka seeks fetish to make himself feared. Subject to the Bambara of Segou. Killed by child with bow and arrow. Poison made with the help of a louse from Silmaka's body.)
These stories are written in French for 'young people'. They are said to come from different regions of Senegal, but no data are given regarding the sources. Certain stories are "not edited", but there is no indication as to which these are. Most of the tales seem to be Wolof.

The Hare and Hyaena tales bear a close resemblance to those told by Sadji.


An orphan boy who is illtreated and thin, breaks a water pot, and is sent by his stepmother to obtain a replacement. He comes to a river. A hippopotamus whose back he helps clean, takes him across, but warns him that the crocodiles will not let him return. He finds himself in the land of the old. He is helped by an old woman who gives him 3 magic calabashes to help him. The first takes him to his (dead) mother, who gives him a pot. The next calabash takes him back to the river. The third turns into a canoe. On returning to the village, he finds he has become old (each calabash represented a stage in his life). He breaks the pot, which turns out to be filled with gold, so he can enjoy his old age.

(192) (2) Hare's Quest for More Intelligence. pp. 19-27.

Hare makes request from God for more intelligence. Asked to bring back black snake, milk from a leopard, the tail of a wild pig. With the help of squirrel, cricket and monkey in turn, he performs these tasks. Snake is trapped into going after a mouse in a water pot. Leopard is compared to a sheep to persuade her to show herself generous (leopard hopes to get a sheep as the result). Finally hare persuades monkey, who is cutting millet, to cut off the tail of pig. God refuses to give him any more intelligence. cf. Tales 13 & 14

(193) (3) Hyaena (Buki). pp. 27-36.

The animals are all living in peace. Hyaena begins to eat the young of animals, except for hare's whom he has been unable to deceive. Hare accused by jackal (because his children are not eaten). Hare persuades Lion to come and see Hyaena prowling around his place. Hare suggests animals play dead. Hare goes and tells Hyaena that hyaena has the right to inherit. Hyaena goes to the 'dead'animals; which drive him off, cf. Tale 20.
Animals learn how to hide their young.

(194) (4) Hare finds magic egg. pp. 37-46.

Hare releases calabash placed under a cactus by a sorcerer. This calabash serves food etc. on command. Then releases egg from nest in cotton tree. The egg which is really a magic pebble, strikes anyone who says the word 'egg'.

Before entering town, hare provides himself with gold, and then hides his magic objects. He is arrested by the King and accused of theft. He tells of his magic calabash, is sent to fetch it, and then has it taken from him by the king. He tells spider (who is the king's spy) about a second 'calabash'. Released and sent under guard to bring it. The King says 'It is a egg', and is beaten.

Hare recovers his magic calabash and his magic stone.

cf Tale (5) (Guillot/Sadjii)


Monkey falls in river, hangs on to canoe paddled by child, and taken to island which has coconut trees. Child paddles off. When monkey is ready to leave crocodiles are ready to seize him. He persuades them to line up to be counted, saying that his people outnumber the crocodiles, then uses them as a bridge to get to shore.


Tree strikes anyone who says that it talks, sees, or hears. Hyaena uses it to kill animals, such as antelope, donkey etc. Hare pretends to forget the phrase told him, Hyaena says it and is struck down.

(197) (7) Hare and the King's Daughter. pp. 64-71.

Suitors have to send arrow through baobab tree. Hare gets the help of his friend white ant (termite), who makes a hole through the tree, leaving the bark untouched. Hare's arrow goes through easily.


Seydoo, a poor fisherman dives into water to recover a cutlass, and finds himself in a prosperous land which is without water. He is given the job of herder which he accepts. In search of water he goes to a new country. Here he is given the job of drummer. He chooses the smallest drum. Setting off again, he finds a lake, dives down with the drum under his arm, finds his cutlass and returns to his old world. When he plays the drum riches come...house, food etc. The King becomes jealous,
learns his story, and tries to follow his route. Refuses to herd, chooses the biggest drum... throws away the cutlass. When he beats drum, evil spirits and demons appear and begin to destroy his people. Seydu drives them off, and is made king.

Child brought up by lions. pp. 80-93.

Mother leaves child in forest to follow his destiny. Rescued by Hare, and place with lion cubs. Nourished by lioness. Two of the lion cubs are wicked and jealous, the other kind. Hare gives boy a magic stick and bow and arrows. Tells him to use bow as a musical instrument and sing so as not to arouse suspicion. Mother shot by hunter with poisoned arrow. Child told to look after cubs. They become aggressive. The magic stick saves him. As lions become more demanding he consults hare again and is given arrows to kill aggressive cubs, and one to hold back the friendly cub. Child returns to the village with the young lion. Chosen king and reunited with mother. cf. Tale 187.

Squirrel and Jackal. pp. 94-98.

Attend annual meeting of the animals of the desert. Jackal consumes food supplies of the squirrel. When sheep is killed, squirrel cuts it up in pieces and puts them high up in a tree where Jackal cannot get them. Considers this just compension.


Hyena steals ram and goes off with it. Meets Hare. Asks Hare to take him to a place where they can be alone. Hare then sends Hyena to fetch food. He is to play the flute so that Hyena can find his way back. Hare slips away with ram to a similar clearing. Then sends Hyena for fire... and moves on to another clearing. When Hyena comes again he is sent off for salt... Hare moves on. He is now near his own people. They cook the ram. Hare sings to call his people (War song of the Hares)... tells Hyena that the noise he hears are the horseman of the Fula (from whom he stole the ram). Hyena flees.


Tortoise invited serpent to food... sits on dish so serpent cannot eat. Return invitation... snake coils up like a cover on dish so tortoise cannot eat. (A local adaptation of the Aesop fable of the Stork & the Fox?)

A young man puts on the fresh skin of a calf. It hardens. An elder calls a leatherworker who soaks him in water.

(204) (14) Hyaena falls in hole. pp. 113-115. cf. Tale (12)

Hyaena falls in a hole, and is helped out by a calf that he has promised not to harm. Then he wishes to eat calf. Hare called to be an impartial judge. Hare says 'Start at the beginning' and has hyaena put back in the hole.

(This is parallel to the story of the stranded crocodile ..which has a widespread distribution.) see (216)

(205) (15) Partridge and Crab. pp. 116-121.

Crab digs hole so that Partridge can drink. Partridge breaks shell of little crab accidentally, so he eats it. This is repeated until all the little crabs have been eaten. In revenge father Crab pulls feathers out of partridge, so that now other birds avoid him.


Hare goes to funeral of relative with porcupine. They share food. Hare calls himself 'Stranger' and when people say 'Here is the stranger food' Hare takes it all. In revenge porcupine takes stick and bag and uproots sweet potato and cassava fields, puts the stick etc. under hare's bed. Villagers find them, and punish Hare. Hare meets a blacksmith, tells them to take the "arrows" from his apprentice, porcupine, following behind. They strip him of his spikes. Unrecognized he passes hare, and meets weavers. Tells them his apprentice has 2 shuttles (i.e. hare's ears) and they can take them. Hare and porcupine meet again, but are attacked by hunter who shoots arrows at Hare. Porcupine retrieves them and puts them back on himself; agrees to retrieve hare's ears. Neither play tricks on each other again.
Hare's Division. pp. 132-140.

Hyaena prowls around Lion's place. Meets Jackal who is scavenging food. When caught Jackal enters King's service. Hyaena persuades Lion to take him on too, but King says Jackal will be responsible for Hyaena's actions. Hyaena becomes greedy, starts taking best meat. Deeds covered up by Jackal. Lion entertains Monkey and Hare (wandering entertainers). To test his servants King asks them to divide an ox, a ram, and small antelope. Hyaena says 'Ox to King, ram for himself, antelope for guests'. King displeased. Jackal suggests ox for King, ram for guests, antelope for himself. Lion displeased. Hare's opinion asked. Awards all to Lion. (The Lion's share)

cf. Tale (179)

Hyaena, Hare, Donkey and the Laobe (Woodworkers). pp. 141-149.

Hyaena steals donkeys. Hare wishes to help Laobes and watches. Borrows a 'wise' donkey from smiths. Donkey pretends to be dead. Hare persuades hyaena into being tied to the 'dead' donkey, which then carries him back to the Laobe.

cf. Tale (24)

Landing's Farm (Casamance area). pp. 150-156.

Man cultivates property of the jinn (spirits), who help him farm by imitating. The child makes a flute from millet stalk. Jinn copy him and spoil the farm. Father beats the child. Jinn imitate the beating...

Hare cures son of Lion. pp. 157-161.

Lion's child sick. Animals gather. Hyaena says Hare has not bothered to come. Says the medicine is hare's blood. When hare comes he says 'Yes, but only a little blood is needed and to make the cure work it must be taken with Hyaena's brains.' The child is cured.

Hyaena and Hare. pp. 162-168.

Hare finds blind man who opens up a baobab tree with magic words. Hare does likewise, and finds more blind people inside eating. Joins them every day. Tells hyaena, but warns him to eat silently and carefully. Hyaena goes alone...makes so much noise he is recognized as a stranger...beaten...tries to escape but is caught in baobab as he tries to escape.

cf. Tale (27)

Hyæna wants to farm. Gets help of Hare. Hyæna then wants greater share of root crops. Pretends to be dying and asks to be buried in the field. At night ravages field. Hare discovers damage. Gets skin of red monkey. Sets up a "glue baby" (tar baby) Hyæna found stuck to it. Hare brings villagers who discover Hyæna and set fire to him. Glue melts and he escapes.

(213) (23) Samba the Brave. pp. 179-189.

Samba sets off from home. Overthrows panther. Stops furious bull. Saves old man from youths. The men then come. He fights with a giant. Destroys them one by one. Old man turns out to be a jinn who was testing him. Given a magic spear and a horse. Enters a village of Thirst near a lake. Monster prevents people from getting water. Girl has to be sacrificed. Samba goes to fetch water. Monster killed by magic spear. Girl to be sacrificed discovers that the monster is dead. King offers his daughter in marriage to the one who killed it. Those who say they did, cannot pull out the spear. Samba is finally called and does so easily.

cf. Sose Tale (182)

(214) (24) Hare goes to sell his sister. pp. 190-200.

In period of famine, Fouta still has maize and millet. Hyæna proposes each should bring his sister and sell her for food. The night before reaching the market, Hare's sister escapes. They sell Hyæna's sister and buy food. The caravan stops where Hare's sister disappeared. Hare goes on... cuts off tail of donkey and sticks it in an anthill. Says donkey has entered hill. Hyæna pulls on tail and tail alone comes out. They prepare to roast a ram. Hare does Hyæna's hair and ties it to a branch. Hare's sister reappears with donkeys and millet.

cf. Tale (27) (23)


Hare soaks his skin and rolls in mud, and pretending to be a relative of termite goes to visit Hyæna. Rain falls, comes in through the roof at night, and washes off his disguise. Hyaæna tries to think of way of killing Hare. Cricket reports that hare has said that the dew will kill him. Hare thrown into dew... & escapes.

cf. Tale (27) (159)
Bassari...takes crocodile back to river, and is then seized by crocodile. Hare asked to judge case. Says he must go back to the beginning. Crocodile carried back. Hunter now leaves him there.

Wants to marry a man without a cicatrice. Such a man comes. Mother fearful. Asks her to take with her the horse which neighs when she goes to the stable. An old mare is the only one to respond. She takes her reluctantly. As they go the procession decreases. People turn to trees, until she is alone with her husband who turns into a lion. The old horse offers plan to save her. She spits three times under mat, in the compound, behind the fence, and takes three eggs. When lion returns and calls her, the spittle answers, delaying his start. When he catches up first egg thrown and turns into a sea, the second egg turns into a thick forest, the third egg into darkness. Fanta is told not to use her heels on the horse. As she nears her village the lion is catching up...she digs in her heels, and she and the horse vanish....
(218) 11-17 Verites Inutiles. Goat sets off for bush. Meets Hyaena, who says that if goat speaks three truths he will let him go. Goat says (1) "If I return to village and say I met a hyaena no one will believe me." (2) "There is something longer than a camel which spends the night in the house." (The warp of a weaver)." (3)"No hyaena, with or without teeth, pleases the owner of the goat." In the end, hyaena seizes goat.

(219) 18-27 Bouki et son oeuf. Hyaena and Hare meet. Hyaena has killed cow. Hare wants to get away and offers to go for wood. Hyaena tells him to stay and goes himself. Hare finds hollow baobab tree, hides meat in it except for the head which he buries. Tells hyaena the earth has swallowed the cow.

Ostrich finds Hare in the tree. Hare ties cord round Ostrich's neck as if to strangle her. Ostrich lays egg. Hare tells Hyaena he also lays eggs. Asks him to put head in hole in tree and he will lay a egg. Puts cord round hyaena's neck...and pulls. No egg.

(220) 28-36 La Mort de l'Ane. Hare and Ass are neighbors. Hare considered impertinent. Ass wants to catch him and feigns death. Hare asked to go to corpse. Hare says he is not completely dead as he is lying on his side. When he returns ass is on his back. Hare says his legs are not stiff yet, and leaves. On his return says belly not swollen yet...Finally ass farts.

(221) 37-46 Les Courses de M'Bam-Hal. Wild pig challenged by chameleon to race. Chameleon drops (from tree) on pig's back and is pitched forward when pig stops. When pig raises his head he sees chameleon.

Frog challenges pig to swimming contest. Arranges to have his relatives spread out along course. Wild pig is shamed and keeps his head lowered.

(222) 47-56 Le Poisson Grappilleur. Catfish stranded on sandbank. Meets partridge who takes him to glean on farm. Lends him nails, beak, feathers, etc. Owner of farm comes. Partridge takes back beak, feathers, etc. and leaves him. Farmer find fish who sings. Takes it back to his wife and says he found it on his farm. Fish sings. Takes it to the King. Fish sings. King calls all the people to see it. Fish remains silent. Wants to kill it. Griot says that a singer should not be killed. Fish taken back to river and thrown in...sings again.
57-63 Bouki sans Leuck. She has made me her friend, but I, I do not recognize her as a friend.

64-71 Bouki et ses tablettes. Hyaena goes to study with Mauretanian marabout. Prefers to search in the bush for firewood than to study. Meets camel. Camel says name is written on the tablets on which he is standing. Hyaena tries to read them, and receives a kick on the jaw.

72-81 Bouki Herbivore. Plenty of rain...abundant grass. Hyaena decides to eat grass. Asks Bull, Antelope, Ram, about grass. They say he has to have horns. (Discuss camel, elephant which have no horns). Hyaena finds horns on ant hill left by animist. Goes to blacksmith, who nails them on. When sun rises hyaena becomes dizzy; horns weigh heavily on him, and he drops down.

82-90 La Tabaski de Bouki. Hyaena sets out for N'Diour. Not welcomed because of hunger. Arrives at Ramadan. Waits for Tabaski when meat will be available. People told to call him by beating drums. On the day he hears drums from all directions, north, south, east, west, and can't decide where to go.

91-98 Bouki Orpheline. When/grandfather died, only one bull left to be sacrificed. Wants to kill, skin, and share animal himself. Puts meat in three heaps. One for himself, one for N'Djou (His village), one for the first to touch it (and his hand was on it.)

Dirge of Kelefa Ba. (Vultures, Hyaenas, will not touch corpse, because he sent them so many victims.)

Threatens woman with child on back. Scares hyaena off by saying that the baby swallows hyaena eyes.

99-110 La Peau de Bouki Jackal and hyaena follow old lion. Game less, but more left because lion has poor teeth. Lion falls sick. Jackal and monkey do not come to see him. Hyaena "spoils their skin" (their reputation). They seek revenge by telling lion that the warmth of the brain of someone who has been close will reduce the fire in lion's head, and the skin will warm his old body. Monkey adds that warm blood will drive out fire in lion's chest, skin will warm his cold limbs. Hyaena has been close and so is killed.
Le Fou du Marabout. A mad Fula herdsman asks marabout questions.

114-122 Everything that is new gives pleasure except for one thing. A grave.
I have what God has not, and can do what God cannot do. A father and mother, and be a witness. (God already knows and sees all.)

Burning ember thrown in water. Is it the water or the ember makes the hiss. Marabout slaps Fula's face. Was it his hand or the cheek made the sound.

123-130 Woundou El Hadji. Cat goes on pilgrimage. Eclipse of moon, when people say "The cat has taken the moon." On return with turban, prayer beads, water, etc. behaves like Muslim. Then casts aside his possessions and attempts to seize an old mouse (rat). Mecca never changes anyone.

131-138 Tel Sa M'Baye. Man has shady acacia in the middle of his farm. spring of water. stays there cooking his sweet potatoes. Villagers come to look for him. Replies that he does not need anyone.

139-148 Une Journée de Beau-Père. Mor Yacine due to provide labour on future father-in-law's farm. Says 'No one can do anything against me.' Blind man tells villagers that the day of their work has been postponed, and will be arranged later. Mor Yacine alone shows up. Meets griots and abundance of food prepared. Shamed. Loses fiancée.

149-162: Le Cercueil de Maka-Kouli. Demba Sall dies. Will given to son in an amulet. Property given in trust to his friend Malick Gaye. Malick fails to look after his friend's child. When grown up he goes to reclaim his property. Takes will out of amulet to prove claim. Falls down, and Malick lets it go into fire. Claims that property was given to him. Learned man judging case asks mother and son to carry a bier round the village, then Demba Sall and his wife. Bier is heavy. Inside are two students who have heard conversations of each couple. Property restored to son.

163-183 Le Tam-tam de Lion. *(a) Place where no drums or dances are permitted. Bride being taken to marabout. Her companions try to force him to dance. With drum beat, his limbs move in spite of his will.

(b) Lion advised by Hare to hold a dance. Antelope (Kewel) responding to song of hyena leaps on paw of Lion and cuts it. Lion seizes Hyena who has claimed cousinship with antelope.

* This section was previously published in:
Birago Diop
"Un cousinage,"
Presence Africaine, 12, 1951, 189-201.
Le Prix du Chameau. Big wind and storm turn villagers blind, except for Barane (out at farm). Told to go and sell camel with luck (ak barké). Offered four oxen and millet but buyer does not say ak barké, so he refuses. Offered gold dust, cloth, millet... does not sell. Sells to an old man with a bundle of thorny acacia faggots who adds ak barké. Father angry, but when wood is put on fire it restores the sight of the blind.

Griot visits Gorée. No one listens to his drums. All busy working.

Goes to learn at Arabic School on mainland. Mauretanian has school and runs shop. One night Mauretanian is robbed of everything. Declares it is not yet day to all who come.

Griot says 'God is good, but God kills.' Asks God to kill him. Lightning strikes branch, which falls just where he has been standing. "You were in a hurry to answer that prayer."

Teacher visits former students who came as strange farmers. Returns with son of a student. One night he sees an oiled thief in the doorway at night. Rubs cool water melon slice over back as thief bends over. Scared off saying 'A devil licked me.'
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***************

A number of stories in the Hare/Hyaena cycle are also found in Hausa tales (Nigeria), some of the motifs being applied to Spider. For example, in H.A.S. Johnson: A Selection of Hausa Stories, 1966. We have in story number -

5. Stealing of the Fulani harvest...setting up of tar baby... exchange of places with hyaena...spider talking as if directing Fulani to where Hyaena is hiding.


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Contes Wolof du Baol

Recueillis par Jean Copans et Philippe Couty. Traduits par Ben Khatab Dia.


This contains a brief analysis of the stories (pp. 1-27), a bibliography (pp. 28-32), and the French translation of 70 stories.