



THE SEVEN LITTLE GOATS

Once upon a time, there was a little wooden house with a big green door in a meadow under the mountains, and in that house lived a goat named Elisa and her seven babies.

The kids, which is what we call baby goats, had been born just a few weeks earlier, so they only ever left the house with their mom. They were still babies, but they already had tiny little horns and they liked to play games and pull stunts, so Elisa decided to teach them about the dangers they could meet in the world if they weren't careful.

Their mom led them beyond the babbling brook, right to the land where the old gamekeeper lived. He had an enormous garden with lots of fruit trees in bloom and currant bushes with young, crunchy leaves and tassels of currants waiting to be eaten. The kids had never tasted currants before, and they loved them.

Elisa was about to scold her little gluttons for munching the gamekeeper's currant bushes when they heard an angry barking very close by. It was so loud that the kids' little legs buckled out of fright, and a moment later, when they saw what the gamekeeper's dog looked like, they got even more scared. His name was Waggytail, which is not a frightening name, but he was as big as a bear, with long dark fur that stood on end in a ridge on his back. He was

THE SEVEN LITTLE GOATS

terrifying! Elisa stayed calm, however, because she knew that Waggytail was tied up and could only reach as far as the apple tree, which was far enough away for them to be safe.

“So, my little kids,” she said, sternly. “I want you to remember how dangerous it can be in these parts, and promise me you will never come here.”

“We promise, mom! We’re not about to forget a dog that big and scary,” said one of the kids, his voice shaking. “We’ll stay away from the gamekeeper’s house.”

In the nearby forest, there was even more danger. Not only was there an old bear, but there was a pack of wolves roaming around, looking for young kids to prey on. Elisa reminded her little kids every day that the forest wasn’t a safe place to walk around or play. There were dangers worse than Waggytail in the forest, she told them.

One day, however, Elisa had to leave her kids alone at home. As she left, she reminded them of the rules.

“I’ll only be gone for a little while, so don’t leave the house and don’t open the door to anyone. Just lock yourselves in and wait for me. Not even a step outside. You know very well that a wolf has been sniffing around our house,” she said.

“Yes, mommy,” they said. “We won’t let anybody in, and we’ll be good kids and wait for you to come back. Don’t worry!”

Elisa gave everyone a kiss goodbye, closed the door, and waited to hear the sound of the key locking the door. Once she was sure they were locked in and safe, she went on her way.

Almost immediately, the kids started arguing about how they should spend the time while they were waiting. They weren’t allowed to play outside, so they decided to dance around and sing for a while.

Suddenly there was a steady knocking on the door, and a rough voice said, “Little kids, open up! It’s me, your mommy. I have some sweet, juicy clover for you.”

The little goats got quiet and moved closer to the door, but they weren’t easily fooled.

“No, we won’t open the door,” called out one of the kids. “You can’t be our mom, she has a much lighter voice. You sound just like a wolf!”

THE SEVEN LITTLE GOATS

“Yeah! You’re not our mommy, you’re the big bad wolf!” cried out another. Outside the door, the wolf slapped his forehead angrily with his paw. He’d been so excited about the idea of a tasty lunch that he forgot to change his rasping voice. No wonder the little goats didn’t believe him!

He dropped his tail in disappointment and returned to the forest to practice talking in a lighter voice so that next time the kids would let him inside without any questions. He practiced and practiced, and as soon as he thought he sounded like a mommy goat he went back to the house, hoping that this time his plan would work.

He knocked on the green door again and called out to the seven lone little goats in a high-pitched voice.

“Little kiiids, your mommyyy is home. I brought you some fresh clover! Why don’t you open the door for meee, my tasty little kiiids?” The wolf smacked his lips and waited.

The little goats ran to the door, excited to welcome their mom home. She was back so soon and even brought them something yummy to eat! But then, right before unlocking the door, one of them said, “Wait a second, something isn’t right. Mom never calls us tasty.”

“You’re right,” said the oldest of the kids. “She’s never ever said that to us. And what’s more, she told us never to open the door for anyone. Nobody at all – not even her! She has her own keys.”

“What if she lost her keys?” asked the youngest kid. “Or what if she has sooo much clover that she can’t open the door?”

“Well... what if we just open the door a tiny bit, and if we don’t see mom there, we’ll slam it closed and lock it again!” suggested another.

The wolf was shifting impatiently from paw to paw when he suddenly heard the door unlock. One of the kids stuck his head through the slightly open door to see if Elisa was there. He saw the wolf and tried to shut the door, but as soon as the wolf saw the little goat in the door he leapt at it and pushed his way inside. The seven scared little goats started screaming and bleating and running around to find a good place to hide, but there weren’t enough good hiding spots in the

THE SEVEN LITTLE GOATS

house for all of them! The wolf quickly opened his bag and started shoving the little goats into it, one by one. When he had five he looked around and couldn't find more anywhere in the house, so he thought he had caught them all. He didn't know that two kids had managed to hide! Satisfied, the wolf headed home to the forest with his bag full of little goats.

Not long after he got to the forest, Elisa returned home. She found the door wide open, and the house was such a mess it looked as if a tornado had gone through it. Even worse, she couldn't find her babies. She called out to them, worried, and when the two hidden, frightened kids heard her, they climbed out of their hiding spot and told her everything.

Elisa ran into the forest as fast as she could to save her five kidnapped children. It didn't take long before she caught up to the wolf. He was tired and didn't feel like dragging the heavy bag all the way across the forest, so he had stopped at the first tree and put the bag down.

Elisa took the tired wolf by surprise and kicked him so hard with her hooves that he lost his appetite for goat meat forever. He used his last bits of energy to run away, and Elisa freed her kids from the bag, hugged and kissed each of them, and led them back home.

And, ever since that day, the little goats never opened their door for anyone.