



## THE GOAT AND THE HEDGEHOG

Once upon a time there was a very angry horned goat with moulting, scabby fur. One day, as she was roaming around the woods, she came across a fox den and went inside. She liked the den and decided she would make it hers. After a while, she heard rustling outside. It was the sound of the fox returning home! The little red fox had had a long day and wanted to take a nap, but as she was about to enter her den she suddenly saw a strange, angry-looking creature inside.

As soon as the goat saw the fox she leaped up, stamped her hooves, and bleated, “Don’t come any closer! If you come in I’ll butt you with my horns and trample you and then you’ll be dead!”

The fox, terrified, took to her heels and ran away. She rushed through the forest, sobbing and wailing over what had happened, until she got to her friend the wolf’s den.

“Why are you crying, my dear fox?” asked the wolf.

“Oh, brother! I’ve just found the most terrifying creature in my den. She said she would kill me if I came in!” answered the scared fox.

“Don’t worry, I’ll chase it off,” the wolf said, bravely. “Come on, there’s no need to cry. Let’s go see what it is.”

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When they got back to the den, the wolf shouted: “Who are you, creature, and what are you doing in the fox’s den?”

But the goat just stamped her hooves again and bleated, “It’s mine now! Don’t come any closer! I’ll butt you with my horns and trample you and then you’ll be dead!”

The wolf was too scared to go closer and he and the fox ran back to the woods. The fox started crying again, and when they got to the woods they bumped into their friend the bear.

“Why are you crying, sister?” the bear asked.

“Oh, my dearest bear! There’s a monster in my den, and it won’t leave!”

“Don’t worry, fox, I’ll chase it off at once,” the bear said. “Let’s go.”

When they returned, the bear roared, “Who are you, creature, and what are you doing in the fox’s den?”

Once again, the goat stamped her hooves and bleated, “It’s mine now! Don’t come any closer! I’ll butt you with my horns and trample you and then you’ll be dead!”

Even the bear was frightened by that, and he and his two companions hurried away. When they got to the edge of the forest, they ran into a little hedgehog.

“Why in the world are you crying, dear?” asked the hedgehog.

“Oh, hedgehog, it’s horrible!” the fox cried out. “There’s a terrible monster in my den and we can’t chase it off!”

“Well, let’s go, then. I’ll get rid of it,” the hedgehog said.

“But you’re so tiny!” the bear said. “There’s no way you can scare it away.”

“I may be little, but there’s a lot in me,” the hedgehog said confidently. He curled up into a tight little ball and rolled down the hill toward the fox’s den. The others followed him, but they couldn’t keep up with the tiny animal.

When the hedgehog got to the den, he shouted as loud as he could, in a small but determined voice, “Who are you, creature, and what are you doing in the fox’s den?”

The goat stamped her hooves again and bleated, “I live here now! Don’t come here again, or I’ll butt you with my horns and trample you and then you’ll be dead!”

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“Well, I’m not scared of you!” said the hedgehog boldly. He curled up into a ball again and rolled inside the den and right under the goat. It was dark, and whenever she moved she would get pricked on her belly by his long, sharp spines. The goat bleated with pain, jumped out of the hole and rushed away as quickly as she could.

When the others finally got to the den, they couldn’t believe their eyes. How could such a tiny hedgehog have chased off the terrible monster?

After that, the goat never came back and the fox lived happily in her den and spent time with her forest friends. They never found out how the hedgehog, the smallest of their group, had been so fierce, and the hedgehog never forgot the adventure. For the rest of his life, he walked bravely around the forest, knowing he could fight any monster that came his way.