

The Boy Who Cried Wolf

In a far away country, long, long ago, lived a boy. The boy's name was Jack. Jack was extremely helpful, and was always helping his mum around the house, fetching the water, collecting firewood and going to the bakers for the family's bread.

However one day, Jack's dad sat Jack down, and said "Son, you are now old enough to go up on the hillside and look after our flock of sheep."

"Thanks dad." replied Jack.

"Tomorrow, we will go up together, be ready at 8am."

Jack was so excited that he couldn't sleep that night. He kept on waking up and looking at his clock, but the large hand never seemed to get any closer to 8.

All of a sudden Jack heard his dad shouting from downstairs, "Are you awake yet, we will be leaving in 30 minutes."

"Just coming dad. Be with you in ten minutes."

Jack rushed into his clothes, quickly brushed his hair and teeth, and splashed some water on his face. He then raced downstairs, to his dad, who was still eating breakfast. "Tuck in", said dad, "it will be a long day."

Jack sat down and ate some bread and drank some of the fresh milk.

"Come on then, we're off. Bye love."

"Bye mum." said Jack.

The walk up the side of the mountain seemed to be long and tiring, but soon they found a tree, and sat down. It wasn't long before the sheep were happily eating the grass in the area surrounding the tree.

"Now," said dad, "you need to keep a look out for wolves. If you see a wolf blow on this whistle and shout wolf, wolf."

"OK, I should be able to remember that."

"If you are happy up here, I will go back and chop some logs for the fire, mum's been asking me to do that job for a long time. Bye"

"Bye" replied Jack.

It was quite boring up on the hillside by himself, and Jack started to feel quite bored. He missed his chats with his mum, and the baker. He decided that he would try out the whistle. He placed it into his mouth and blew as hard as he could. Then for a laugh shouted, "Wolf, wolf."

Anyway about 5 minutes later, his dad, red faced and totally out of breath came running up the hillside towards Jack.

"Where's the wolf, Jack ?" asked dad.

"There isn't one. I just wanted to try out the whistle," replied Jack, "Sorry."

"Please don't do it again, unless there is a wolf."

"OK"

"Bye, see you later when I come to take the sheep home."

"Bye."

Jack sat back down under the tree, whistle around his neck, and started to look out down the side of the hill. He saw a shadowy figure approaching. At first he was scared, but then he noticed it was his best friend.

"Hi ya. Jack," said Bill, "What are you doing up here ?"

"I'm now old enough to look after my dad's sheep all by myself."

"Wow, that's such an important job."

"I know."

The boys sat down, and started talking. Jack was quite happy to have a friend to talk to, but soon the talk turned to the whistle around Jack's neck.

"That's a lovely whistle. What's it for?" asked Bill.

"It's for me to signal to my dad that's there a wolf around."

"What does it sound like?"

Now Jack remembered what his dad had said, but he wanted to show Bill how he could use the whistle. What on earth could he do. He sat there and thought for a minute. Well, maybe if I just blew it quietly, dad would not hear it, thought Jack.

Jack placed the whistle to his lips, and gave it a light blow.

"Is that all the sound it makes, my whistle at home is a lot louder than that."

"So is mine, I just didn't blow it that hard."

"Well blow it harder then, and show me that your's is louder than mine."

"Ok I will then."

So Jack placed the whistle to his mouth and gave it an almighty blow.

"Wow, it is as loud as mine. Maybe I should go and get mine, and we could have a competition.

Bye, I'll come back after tea."

Well, it wasn't long after Bill had become a speck on the hillside that his dad came running up the other side of the hill.

"Come on then, where's the wolf?" shouted dad.

"There wasn't one. I was just showing Bill how loud the whistle was."

"I getting fed up with this. I going back home to finish chopping the wood. I will see you in an hour."

Jack lay back against the trunk of the tree, and started to look out over the side of the mountain. All he could see was the grass stretching out for miles and miles. Nothing in sight apart from their village over a mile away.

He opened his flask of drink, and bag of cheese sandwiches. He started to take a mouthful when he noticed a dark speck in the long grass. It didn't look like much, so he carried on eating. He was just about to start the second sandwich when he noticed that the speck was larger now, and had four legs and a tail.

He put the whistle to his mouth. Mmmm, better not blow it until I know it's a wolf. I would hate to think that I got dad up here again for no reason. Jack waited silently and still, as the animal approached. By now he could see the teeth and the eyes that seemed to stare right through him. He knew this time it was a wolf. He started to blow the whistle, but as he was so scared the sound did not come out fully.

Back at home, dad heard a faint sound of the whistle.

"Is that not Jack's whistle" shouted mum.

"Yes but it must be just Jack practising again, only this time a little softer. I will go up in half an hour when we are to bring the sheep down."

"OK, as long as you are sure."

"Well I have already gone up twice on false alarms. I am started to become quite weary, with all this extra running."

Anyway back on hillside the wolf was now at the outside of the flock. The sheep seeing the wolf, started to flee, and the wolf gave chase, eventually finding one of the younger sheep to eat.

Racing off with it in his teeth, back down the hillside. Jack just sat there, frightened, wondering where on earth his dad was.

We, of course, know where his dad was. He was sitting at home having a cup of tea; before walking up to bring the sheep down for the night. If Jack hadn't of used his whistle twice when there hadn't had been a wolf, then his dad would have race up the mountainside. As it was, his dad was fed up with Jack false alarms. Maybe from this, Jack will learn not to call wolf, when there isn't one.

I wonder what Jack's dad said to Jack when he arrived on the mountainside.