

THE LAMB WHO CAME FOR DINNER



"Vegetable soup again," groaned the old wolf. "Oh, I wish I had a little lamb. I could make a hotpot, my favorite!"

Just then there was a knock on the door. It was a little lamb.

"Can I come in?" the little lamb said.

"Yes, my dear. You're just in time for dinner," sniggered the old wolf.

The little lamb was shivering with cold.

"Goodness gracious me!" said the old wolf. "I can't eat a lamb that's frozen. I hate frozen food!"

So he put her next to the fire to warm her up. The old wolf looked up for a recipe for lamb hotpot. He felt hungry just at the thought of it.

The lamb was feeling hungry too. Her tummy rumbled.

"Goodness gracious me!" said the old wolf. "I can't eat a lamb with a rumbling tummy. I would get indigestion!"

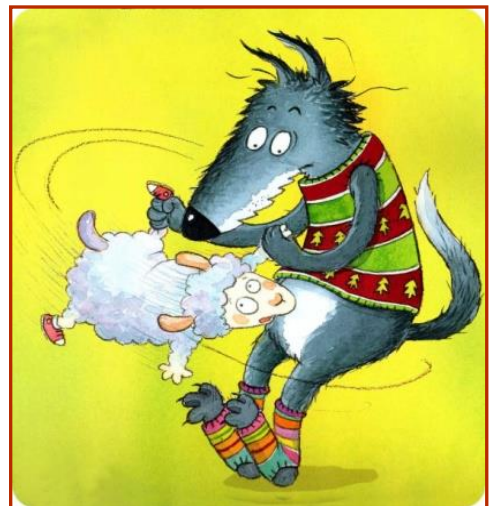
So, he gave the lamb a carrot to eat.

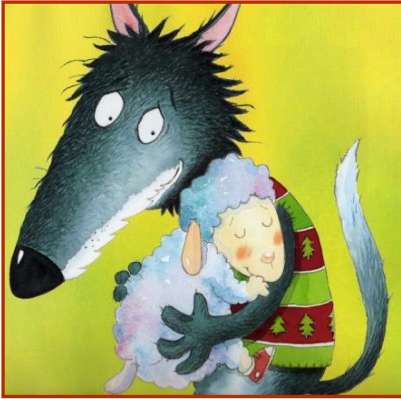
"Stuffing," said the old wolf to himself.

The little lamb gobbled down the carrot so fast that she got the hiccups.

"Goodness gracious me!" said the old wolf. "I can't eat a lamb who's got the hiccups. I might get them too!"

But he didn't know how to cure the hiccups. He tried throwing the lamb in the air. That didn't work. He held her upside down. That didn't work. He twirled her round and round. That didn't work either. So the old wolf put the lamb over his shoulder and patted her back with his big hairy paw. The lamb stopped hiccupping, snuggled under the wolf shaggy chin and fell fast asleep in his arms.





The old wolf went funny. He had never been hugged by his dinner before. And suddenly he didn't feel so hungry after all. The little lamb snored gently in his ear.

"Goodness gracious me!" whispered the old wolf. "I can't eat a lamb that's snoring."

The old wolf sat down in his chair by the fire, the little lamb warm in his chest, and thought just how very long it had been since anyone had given him a cuddle. He sniffed and sniffed again. The lamb smelled so delicious. He was just about to gobble her up when she woke up and gave him a great big kiss.

"No!" groaned the wolf. "That's not fair! I'm a big bad wolf and you're a hotpot!"

"Hotpot?" said the little lamb with a smile.

"Give me strength! You'll have to go."

He wrapped the little lamb up warmly and put her outside.

"Now go away! If you stay here, I'll eat you and we'll both be sorry!"

And he shut the door with a bang. It was dark outside and cold.

The little lamb banged on the door.

"Wolf," she cried. "Can I come in, wolf?"

But the old wolf stuck his fingers in his ears until she stopped.

At last, all was quiet.

"Thank goodness she's gone for she's not safe here with a hungry wolf like me!"

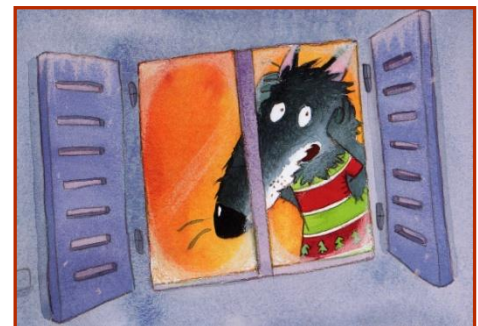
Then he thought of the lamb all alone in the dark wood.

"She might get lost, she might get frozen, she might get eaten! Oh, no, what have I done?" cried the wolf.

He leapt up and opened the door. The lamb was gone.

The old wolf rushed out into the dark wood crying,

"Little lamb! Little lamb!
Come back! I promise I won't
eat you."



Much, much later a sad, soggy old wolf trudged wearily to his cottage alone. He pushed back the door and there, by the fire, sat the little lamb.

"You came back!" said the wolf with a smile. "Haven't you got anywhere else to go?"

The little lamb shook her head.

"Would you like to stay here with me?" asked the wolf.

The little lamb gave him a hard stare.

"You won't eat me, wolf?" she said.

"Good gracious me! I can't eat a lamb that needs me. I might get heartburn."

The little lamb smiled and then threw herself into the old wolf's arms.

"Are you feeling hungry, hotpot?" asked the wolf. "How about some vegetable soup? It's my favorite."



Steve Smallman
The lamb who came for dinner