

The brave dog

One day a dog wanted to become the bravest dog in the world. He decided he would never be afraid again. Especially when he was running.

He ran and ran and didn't look around. He bumped into other dogs. And when they didn't want to run with him, he kept on running. He ran over flowers, beautiful flowers, dead flowers; he didn't care one bit. He ran over stones, round stones, loose stones, sharp angular stones; he didn't care one bit.

He ran over seashells, through bramble bushes, crossed fences with barbed wire and even electric fences; he didn't care one bit. He ran up the hill, up the mountain, up the dike and down the hill, down the mountain, down the dike. He didn't look around; he didn't care one bit. He didn't look ahead, he never looked aside. He didn't mind if he flipped over or slipped or forcefully bumped into something. He ran in the dark, he ran in the hail and in the snow, he ran in the fog. He kept on running like nothing was there. "Being afraid is for wimps", he said and he kept on running into the following day.

On a vast plain he saw a wolf who curled his lips and growled. "What are you doing, you fool?", asked the wolf.

"I am not afraid. I am braver than everybody", said the dog. "I am the best and the bravest dog ever."

"Well well", was the only thing the wolf said. And it wasn't clear whether his curling lips were growling or grinning.

And off the dog went again to become even braver. He ran right through a room full of people with chinaware. He ran wildly through two small children who were strolling in the garden hand in hand. He overran someone who was walking with a rollator. "Watch out, dork", he said, "don't bother me, I am the bravest and the most courageous dog in the whole wide world." And as the dog became braver and braver, all the animals, the plants and the people became more scared of the dog. And more sad. And more careful.

The dog started to talk nasty talk. He roared and growled and barked through everyone in any way he pleased. He laughed at everybody and he patted himself on the back.

Then on a beautiful sunny day, he saw the wolf again. The wolf curled his lips and growled at him, while he raised his hackles. "Aren't you done yet?", he hissed. "Far from it", said the dog and he raised his hackles too. He stood in front of the wolf. "Are you afraid of me or not? Are you angry? Shall I grab you? Shall I catch you? Shall I bite you? Shall I kill you?" "No way", said the wolf and he looked stern, as he lowered his hackles. "When I am afraid, I am wise. When I am angry, I am afraid. Only when I am brave, I am friendly. Good evening."

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