

The Twelve Wise Owls and the Wolf

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Once there was a wolf. So many animals complained about it killing their children that the twelve wise owls were called on for a judgment. They sat in a circle around the wolf to see what they could see.

"There is no wolf," said the first owl, blinking in the bright daylight. "I think the animals are mistaken. They complain too much."

"I agree," said the second owl. "I do, however, see shades of brown and gray—but color is not dangerous."

"True," said the third, "but all I see is fur. Still, fur is found on mice and they are no problem for us."

"And all I see is a tail," said the next. "It swings back and forth. What is the harm in that?"

"All I see are two ears turning this way and that," said another. "Even we wise owls turn our heads to listen."

"I see paws," said one. "They are used for walking and running. We owls have claws that are much more dangerous."

"I hear a noise," said his neighbor. "It sounds like 'grrrr' ... but sounds are harmless things."

"Very true, said the oldest. "And I hear a licking sound too. Licking is a friendly sign."

"I hear panting," said the tallest. "It has to be admitted that we all have to breathe."

"And I am suddenly standing in a shadow," said the youngest. "Shadows are nothing at all."

"I feel something warm wafting towards me," said the eleventh. "We all need warmth."

"And I see white hills gleaming," said the fattest. "They are sharp but tiny, and tiny hills never hurt any—"

And that was the end of the twelve wise owls, and never did they get any wiser.