



## The Tricky Wolf and the Rats



Once upon a time a Big Rat lived in the forest, and many hundreds of other Rats called him their Chief.

A Tricky Wolf saw this troop of Rats, and began to plan how he could catch them. He wanted to eat them, but how was he to get them? At last he thought of a plan. He went to a corner near the home of the Rats and waited until he saw one of them coming. Then he stood up on his hind legs.

The Chief of the Rats said to the Wolf, “Wolf, why do you stand on your hind legs?”

“Because I am lame,” said the Tricky Wolf. “It hurts me to stand on my front legs.”

“And why do you keep your mouth open?” asked the Rat. “I keep my mouth open so that I may drink in all the air I can,” said the Wolf. “I live on air; it is my only food day after day. I can not run or walk, so I stay

here. I try not to complain.” When the Rats went away the Wolf lay down.

The Chief of the Rats was sorry for the Wolf, and he went each night and morning with all the other Rats to talk with the Wolf, who seemed so poor, and who did not complain.

Each time as the Rats were leaving, the Wolf caught and ate the last one. Then he wiped his lips, and looked as if nothing had happened. Each night there were fewer Rats at bedtime. Then they asked the Chief of the Rats what the trouble was. He could not be sure, but he thought the Wolf was to blame.

So the next day the Chief said to the other Rats, “You go first this time and I will go last.”

They did so, and as the Chief of the Rats went by, the Wolf made a spring at him. But the Wolf was not quick enough, and the Chief of the Rats got away.

“So this is the food you eat. Your legs are not so lame as they were. You have played your last trick, Wolf,” said the Chief of the Rats, springing at the Wolf’s throat. He bit the Wolf, so that he died. And ever after the Rats lived happily in peace and quiet.

