# Ou' Wolf lays a Trap

The little girl was in a great way for a day or two at the immunity of the rascal Jackal in his dealings with Old Wolf. “But, Ou’ Ta’,” demanded she at last, “did Ou’ Wolf never pay off Ou’ Jackalse for his skellum tricks?”“Well,” answered Old Hendrik, taking a fresh piece of sugar cane from under his arm and biting a good two inches off it as he began, sitting by the barn end, “dere was one time when he come so near it he would a-got square if it hadn’t a-bin Ou’ Jackalse. It look one time like Ou’ Jackalse was a-goner, but bein’ it was him, why o’ cou’se—“It come like dis. Ahter Ou’ Wolf was new married, his missus she kep’ on a-yawin’ about how he’d let Ou’ Jackalse t’atch his tail fast, an’ steal his dinner, an’ biff him wid bones, an’ let him in for a bashin’ f’m de man wid de biltong waggon, till Ou’ Wolf he ’gin to be mighty glad he hadn’t tol’ her about all de rest o’ de times Ou’ Jackalse done him down. But all de same it seem like he ain’t save’ much by not tellin’ her, for de ting she did know seem like it’s quite enough to keep her goin’ all day an’ every day, an double span on Sunday. If she’d a-knowed more she couldn’t ha’ yawed more, ’cause dere ain’t but sev’n days in de week to yaw in when you’ve done your best. Ou’ Wolf couldn’t stan’ no more. He yust sneaked out an’ off.“Well, he see it stickin’ out pretty plain dat he’ll hatto get square wid darie Ou’ Jackalse or he’ll hatto leave home—one or toder. But for de life o’ him he cahnt yust make up his mind what’s de best way to do it, an’ he tink dat hard as he go along, and he tink dat close as he stride along, dat fust ting he know he find hisse’f walkin’ plump onto Ou’ Jackalse’s house. He yust wake up in time to sit down sudden behin’ a bush till he see weder Ou’ Jackalse is at home or not.“Pretty soon he’s pretty sure Ou’ Jackalse ain’t at home. In de fust place dere ain’t no smoke, an’ nex’ place de door’s shut fas’ an’ de window hole is bung up tight wid a vach-a-bikkie bush. ‘Dis is yust my chance at las’,’ ses Ou’ Wolf to hisse’f. ‘Dis is de time I’s a-gun’ to get even wid darie ou’ skellum. I’ll yust go inside dere an’ get behind de door till he comes in. Den—well den—won’t I bash him I’ll feel good, I will, when I biffs him. He won’t; dere won’t be no more’n a big mess left of him: yust a grease spot to swear by.’“Well, Ou’ Wolf he shamber over an’ sneak into de house an’ hide hisse’f behind de door, an’ he hadn’t more’n fit hisse’f into de cohner dan here comes Ou’ Jackalse home agen.“But Ou’ Jackalse he ain’t de sort to walk into no place foolish unless dere’s sometin’ extray on. ’Stead o’ goin’ straight up an’ steppin’ right in, he circle roun’ outside de house to see if it’s all serene fust an same’s he left it. He hadn’t gone half way roun’ ’fore he plump right on de spoor of Ou’ Wolf an’ dere he stop. ‘Dat ain’t my spoor,’ ses he, cockin’ his years all roun’. ‘Dat’s Ou’ Wolf ben here. P’r’aps he’s inside my house, hey?’“Well, he study an’ he won’er an’ den at last he stroke his nose. ‘I know what I’ll do,’ ses he. ‘I’ll ax my house if dere’s anybody inside.’“Den he call out, slow an’ cunnin’: ‘My ole house! My ole house!’ An’ he waits an’ dere ain’t no answer.“He call agen: ‘My ole house! My ole house!’ an’ agen dere ain’t no answer.“Dis time he winks an’ he change de call. ‘My ole house! I know Ou’ Wolf’s inside you, else you’d say, “Come in,” like you al’ays does.’ Den he laugh till you could hear him right troo de trees.“Ou’ Wolf behind de door he hear every word, an’ he hear dat laugh besides. ‘Now,’ ses he to hisse’f, ‘if I calls out “Come in,” he’ll tink it’s his ole house a-callin’ an’ he’ll step right in Ou’ Jackalse ain’t so smart as he reckon dis time, else he wouldn’t ha’ tol’ de words for de house to say.’ Den he try to make his voice soft an’ wheedlin’, while he call out high an’ cunnin’, ‘Co-o-me in!’“Ou’ Jackalse he let out a great big laugh fit to split, an’ he lam stones at de door till it rattle agen. ‘Come out o’ dat, ole fathead! Tink I cahnt tell your voice? ’Sides, dere’s you’ tail, wid de hairs a-stickin’ out troo de cracks.’“Ou’ Wolf he’s dat mad at bein’ had agen so cheap an’ nasty he yust swang de door open, an’ at fust he tinks he’ll chase Ou’ Jackalse till he plum runs him down. But Ou’ Jackalse he go two licks for his one, an’ every once in a while he kick out his back foot to rile him up mo’. Ou’ Wolf yust hatto go home an’ tink it all over agen.“Well, dis sort o’ ting go on an’ on till at last Ou’ Wolf he feel dat desprit he’ll hatto do sometin’ or bu’st. So off he sets for where de white owl lives, ’cause he ’members why de white owl on’y fly at night time, an’ he’s pretty sure Ole Owl’s a-gun’ to he’p him.“De white owl listen to what Ou’ Wolf tell him, an’ he look so straight at Ou’ Wolf dat you’d tink his eyes was fas’ to him. ‘Well,’ ses he at last, ‘Ou’ Jackalse is mighty slim, but Tink Tinkey was slimmer when de birds was choosin’ a king. An’ Young Tinkey’s de littlest bird in de veldt. I’s a deal bigger’n Tinkey, an’ we’ll see if I cahnt beat Ou’ Jackalse worse dan him. So here’s what you do.“‘You know where de leopard live, in de kloof on de yonder side de berg? Now she’s yust got four little cubses, an’ she fin’s it mighty hard scratchin’ to get scoff enough Well, tomorrow you comes home past Ou’ Jackalse’s house, as if you was comin’ from dat kloof, an’ you have some honey a-runnin’ down your yaws an’ a-drippin’ on your paws, an’ you pass Ou’ Jackalse where he’s a-sittin’ in de sun’ at his house end. But you don’t say good mawnin’ nor nawtin’—you yust goes on home.“‘Nex’ day you does de same agen, an’ dat time he’s mighty sure to say good mawnin’, ’cause he’ll a-bin tinkin’ an’ studyin’ about dat honey ever since yestiday. But you don’t say not a word agen—you yust goes on home.“‘Den de nex’ day once mo’, an’ dat day you ses good mawnin’ when he ses it, an’ dat’ll be enough. Ahter dat he’s mighty sure to open out an’ wheedle an’ coax to get it out o’ you where you got dat honey. But you don’t tell him at fust; you yust gives him a leetle teenty piece o’ honey-comb, what you’s got wropped up in a green leaf. Dat’ll make him fair wild to get mo’, an’ den’s your chance.“‘Ses you to him, p’r’aps you’ll take him to it if he promise to keep it quiet, an’ he’ll be dat stirred he’ll promise afo’e you’s done axin’. Den you take him along to de kloof, an’ in de kloof you take him along to de great big rock at de fur end, an’ under de rock you show him de leopard’s house. “Dere,” ses you, “in dere’s de honey;” an’ in he’ll pop. Den you rolls a big stone in de door an’ leaves him dere—de leopard ’ll do all de rest as soon as it come home.’“Well, Ou’ Wolf feel sure dat’s a-gun’ to be all right. It soun’ so slim he tink it’s about all done a’ready except de laughin’. An he do most o’ dat, too, as he go off to start de business.“Well, de fust day when Ou’ Wolf come past his house Ou’ Jackalse was a-sittin’ by de prickly pear in front an’ he don’t say a word. He yust looks over his shoulder to see if de door’s open so he can pop inside an’ bang it shut if Ou’ Wolf make a dive for him. Den he notice de honey a-drippin’ on Ou’ Wolfs mouf an’ his paws an’ he beat his tail once on de groun’ considerin’. But Ou’ Wolf take no mo’ notice dan if he was his own shadda on de wall.“Nex’ day when Ou’ Jackalse see him a-comin’ he ’gun to won’er. ‘Watto!’ ses he. ‘Here’s Ou’ Wolf agen, an’ de honey drippin’ off’n him worse’n yestiday. Dat’s a bit funny.’“’Stead o’ lookin’ at de door dis time he speak out. ‘Mawnin’, Oom Wolf,’ ses he.“Ou’ Wolf he don’t turn his head no mo’ ’n if it was meer-cats. He keep straight on an’ he lick his lips, smack! smack! till Ou’ Jackalse he fair hump his back wid wantin’ some o’ dat honey.“De day ahter dat, when Ou’ Wolf come past, Ou’ Jackalse was a-waitin’ ready, an’ as soon as he see de honey a-drippin’ he sort o’ sa’nter over close. ‘Mawnin’, Oom Wolf,’ ses he, ‘fine rains we bin a-havin’. Dere’s a Koodoo wid a calf de yonder side de spruit. Don’t you think we might get de calf if we all two goes togeder?’“Ou’ Wolf stop at dat as if he’s sort o’ considerin’. ‘No,’ ses he; ‘I ain’t so dead gone on Koodoo meat dese days nohow. I’s dat full o’ honey I ain’t a-itchin’ for anytin’ else.’“Ou’ Jackalse tongue begin to run. ‘Do you tink dat honey mightn’t be bad?’ ses he. ‘It look mighty dark.’“‘Oh, it’s de dark sort,’ ses Ou’ Wolf, an’ he lick his chops till Ou’ Jackalse cahnt stan’ it. He yust come right up an’ ketch a drop as it drip down.“Dat set him a-twitchin’ for mo’. ‘Oom Wolf,’ ses he, ‘ain’t you goin’ to gi’e me yust a leetle teenty bittie honey now? Ole chummies like us two, you know.’“Ou’ Wolf he sort o’ consider dat. ‘Well,’ ses he, ‘I wouldn’t mind doin’ it, but I’s on’y got one piece lef; a piece I’s a-takin’ home to my missus.’“‘Your missus!’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, sort o’ pityin’ like. ‘Well, if you does dat sort o’ ting, why’—an’ he shake his head like he’s pretty sorry for a man dat’s come down to dat. ‘But anyhow,’ ses he, ‘your wife don’t know you got dis honey, so it won’t matter if you does gi’e it me. What she don’t know about she cahnt trouble about. You can gi’e me it an’ she won’t never know.’“‘Oh, but she knows I went to get some,’ ses Ou’ Wolf, as if he’d like to do it but darsn’t.“‘Tell her some’dy else is been dere afo’ you an’ scrape’ it all away,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘She won’t know but what it’s true.’“‘Well,’ ses Ou’ Wolf, ‘I might do dat—dough I ’spects I’ll be sorry for it. Here it is den,’ an’ he unwrops de leetle piece o’ honeycomb.“In yust one bite Ou’ Jackalse take it in, an’ den dat set him on prickles to get a reg’lar feed of it. ‘Allah man!’ ses he, ‘dat’s good. Whar you get it?’“‘Oh! long way off,’ ses Ou’ Wolf. ‘Too fur to carry it home; so I goes an’ has a feed as much as I can hol’ every day. Dere’s such lots of it.’“‘Lots of it’,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse ahter him, fair squirmin’. ‘Couldn’t we yust go back dere now, an’ I’d take a calabas an’ fetch a calabasful back for you to take to your missus? Dat’d do all right den.’“Ou’ Wolf he shake his head an’ draw back a bit.“‘Well,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, ‘you’d a-better do it now. Your missus’ll see where it’s dripped on you, an’ she’ll smell it anyhow, an’ den she ain’t a-gun’ to b’lieve you nohow—you knows dat. You’d better come now an’ le’ me carry a calabasful back for her.’“Ou’ Wolf seem like dat strike him new. ‘Well,’ ses he, ‘p’r’aps I’d better. But no shenanigin now. If I takes you to dis yere place you’ll hatto carry two calabasies back, not one.’“‘Is dere all dat honey den?’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘Allah Crachty! yust hol’ on an’ I’ll get de two calabasies dis minute an’ show you,’ an’ off he darts into his house an’ out agen wid two o’ de biggest sort o’ nice new calabasies. ‘Here’s ’um, come on,’ ses he. But he wink to hisse’f, an’ he ses to hisse’f, ‘If I carry dat honey back I know who’ll eat it too.’“Ou’ Wolf he make like he’s mighty onwillin’, an’ he on’y go ’cause he’s feared of his missus. An’ all de way Ou’ Jackalse is a-tellin’ him where dey’ll hunt togeder nex’ day, an’ nex’ week; an’ where dere’s a-gun’ to be some fine water-millons ’fore long. An’ all de way Ou’ Wolf’s a-takin’ it all in an’ sayin’ he shouldn’ won’er if dere was.“Well, dey come to de kloof an’ dey come to de rock, an’ dere was de house where de leopard live. ‘De honey’s in dere,’ ses Ou’ Wolf. ‘Right inside, an’ you turn up de bed an’ dere it is. An’ don’t forget dem two calabasful for my missus.’“Ou’ Jackalse he laugh, an’ he dive right inside. He’ll see about dem two calabasies, he will. But he hadn’t mo’en got inside ’fore Ou’ Wolf spring about an’ roll a great big stone plump into de doorway. ‘Ho yeh, smarty!’ ses he. ‘Dis is de time you wahnt smart enough. You’ll be a’ right when de leopard comes home an’ finds you wid her cubses. You’d carry me two calabasies full o’ honey, hey? Lots o’ honey I’d trust you wid, wouldn’t I?’“Ou’ Jackalse hear de stone a-rollin’ in an’ he make a dive to get out agen, but he on’y bang his head—bang stars outen it. Den he hear what Ou’ Wolf say, an’ he sniff an’ sniff high. ‘I’ll bet you b’lieved I was a-gun’ to carry dat honey for you!’ ses he.“‘An’ I’ll bet you tink I should ha’ trusted you if dere’d bin honey here!’ ses Ou’ Wolf.“‘An’ I know you tink all de time I b’lieved dere was honey here!’ sniffs Ou’ Jackalse. ‘I know dere’d be no honey, or you wouldn’t ha’ showed me. But I knowed dere’d be sometin’—an’ dere is. Dere’s better eatin’ still; dere’s cubses.’“‘An’ dere’s mo’,’ ses Ou’ Wolf; ‘dere’s deir mammy. Dere’s de leopard. An’—Allah Crachty, here she come!’“You should ha’ seen Ou’ Wolf get out o’ dat.“De leopard come an’ look, an’ de leopard put its paw on de stone. ‘What’s dis doin’ here?’ ses it, an’ it growl till it give Ou’ Jackalse wits a scrick.“He hatto do sometin’ an’ be sharp about it too. He speak up quick an’ lively. ‘I put dat stone dere. You better not to shift it. I see Ou’ Wolf a-smackin’ his lips, tinkin’ what a nice dinner he was goin’ to make off ’n your cubses. So I yust got inside an’ pull dis stone agin de door to keep him out an’ save your little cubickies. If you look you’ll see his spoor.’“De leopard look, an’ sure enough dere’s Ou’ Wolfs spoor. ‘Allah man!’ ses it. ‘An’ so dat Ou’ Wolf want to get my cubses while I’s out a-huntin’, hey?’“‘He is dat,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse inside. ‘An’ he reckon if he cahnt get ’em to-day he’ll do it anoder day. So you better to leave de stone dere an’ le’ me hand out your cubses troo de winda to be suckle’ an’ put back. Den I’ll watch ’em while you go huntin’ agen, an’ I’ll keep on like dat till dey’s big enough to see an’ go wid you a-huntin’.’“‘Dere’s sense in dat,’ ses de leopard. ‘I’ll yust do dat. Hand me out de cubses.’“So Ou’ Jackalse he hand out one cub, an’ when it’s had enough he take it back an’ hand out anoder; an’ he do dat way till all four bin out an’ feed. ‘Now you look ahter ’em agen till I come back,’ ses de leopard, an’ off it go agen.“Ou’ Jackalse he sit down and look roun’. ‘Well,’ ses he, ‘dere never was no honey here, but dis dat’s here is near as sweet an’ a big lot better—dese’s cubses; fat cubses; yuicy cubses. Ou’ Leopard would hatto pay me for nursin’ ’em when I finis’ anyhow, but I reckon it’s better I draw my pay fust, den if you don’t like de work you nee’nt to do it. Here’s me has one o’ dem cubses anyhow.’“Well, he eat one cub, an’ it eat dat sweet he tink by jimminy it’ll take more dan one leopard to drive him out o’ dat while dere’s any cubses left. So dere he set an’ he sing a song about de honey dat had hair on. Den de leopard come back an’ ax, ‘Hello! how’s my cubickies?’“‘Yust fine,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse—‘for eatin’.’“‘What’s dat?’ ses de leopard, tail a-wavin’.“‘Well, deir eatin’s drinkin’,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘An’ here’s de first,’ ses he, handin’ out one.“Well, dey hands ’em out an’ dey hands ’em in, an’ dat’s t’ree cubses. De leopard’s a-waitin’ for de fourt’, an’ dat’s de one Ou’ Jackalse cahnt hand out ’cause it’s inside him. But he don’t turn a hair; he yust wink to hisse’f an’ hand out de first agen. ‘Extra dose for you,’ ses he when he take it in agen. ‘Extra yuice for me.’“So when de leopard’s gone a-huntin’ agen Ou’ Jackalse eat de cub what had de two drinks, an’ when de leopard come back he hands out de cubses, one, two, an’ den number one agen for number t’ree, and number two for number four. An’ he feel dat tickled wid hisse’f he stan’ on his head inside dere. Den de leopard go huntin’ agen, an’ Ou’ Jackalse eat anoder cub, an’ when de leopard come back dere’s on’y one lef. ‘How’s de cubickies?’ ses de leopard.“‘Fine,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘Dey yust is fine!’ an’ he wink to hisse’f. ‘On’y dere’s one make like he ain’t so well. But it’ll be a’ right ahter it’s had a drink.’“Den he pass out de one last cub, an’ it take it’s milk, an’ de leopard hand it back. Den he pass it out agen an’ it have anoder feed. Same way de nex’ time, an’ den de last time it’s yust so full it cahnt drink no more, an’ its little tummy’s all swell out. ‘Dat’s de one what ain’t so well,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse.“‘It do look like it’s a bit sickie,’ ses de leopard. ‘I wonder what’s de matter wid it?’“‘I tink dis stone stop up all de air,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘You might yust pull it a little way back; not de hool way out, else Ou’ Wolf might try to get in agen.’“So de leopard pull out de stone a bit; not too far, but yust far enough for Ou’ Jackalse to squeeze out if he want to. ‘Look ahter dat sick ’un,’ ses de leopard, an’ off she go.“Den Ou’ Jackalse scoff de last cub. ‘Allah man!’ ses he, ‘ain’t it a pity dey’s all done. An’ now I’ll ha’ to slant for home ’fore de leopard come an’ want to feed her cubses agen.’“Den he squeeze hisse’f outside ready to go, an’ he hadn’t strid de fust stride ’fore he sees de leopard comin’ back. Dere he was, an’ dere’s de leopard comin’ for her cubses; but darie ou’ skellum he ain’t done yet. He let a yell outen him, an’ run an put his shoulder to de rock. ‘Make hurry! make haste,’ he shout ‘De rock’s a-fallin’ on your house. Come an’ he’p me hol’ it up! make hurry!’“De leopard don’t stop to look, an’ de leopard don’t stop to tink. It hear Ou’ Jackalse yellin’, an’ it see him plank his shoulder to de rock, an’ strain an’ puff till his eyes stick out to hol’ up dat rock; an’ in yust about one tick dat leopard was dere too, wid his shoulder to de rock, scratchin’ an’ yammin’ to hol’ it up too.“‘Hol’ it now till I run an’ get a prop,’ shouts Ou’ Jackalse, an’ de leopard he yust double hol’s while Ou’ Jackalse dive into de trees to look for de prop.“But,” concluded the old Hottentot, with an impressive pause, “he ain’t got back wid dat prop yet.”

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