
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Storytellers

Camping



The Hobson family were going camping. It was Bella's first camping trip, and though she was excited, she was nervous too.

“What if the tent falls over and squashes us?” she asked Joe.

“It too light to squash us,” said Joe.

“Well, what if the wind blows it away?”

“The wind isn't strong enough.”

“Well, what if a wolf comes into the tent and eats us?”

This made Joe laugh. Bella had read too many fairy stories with big, bad wolves in them.

“There aren't any wolves in Yorkshire,” he said. “There aren't any wolves in the whole of Britain. Except in zoos, of course.”

“Well, what if one escaped from a zoo?” asked Bella.

Joe said that zoos were far too careful to let their animals escape. And Bella soon forgot about wolves as they started planning for the camping trip.

“Let's get ready, kids!” said Dad, on Saturday morning. “As soon as we're packed up, then we're off!”

They all helped load up the car.

First, they put in the tent – it was a big one for the whole family.

Then the sleeping bags and blankets. It's cold at night, when you're sleeping in a tent.

Then they packed the cooking equipment, and lots of food to cook.

When everything was packed, the car was full to bursting. The Hobson family just managed to squeeze in.

Soon they were leaving the city behind them.

“Look at the hills!” said Dad. “Look at the heather on the moors!”

They drove up a winding road with no houses until they reached the turning for the campsite. It belonged to a farm and was in a big field. There were views out over the moors, and lots of space for people to pitch their tent.

“Right,” said Dad. “First things first! Let's get the tent up. Here's a good spot, next to this hedge.”

Once the tent was up, it was time to eat. Then Joe and Bella went to explore. There were trees to climb and a stream for paddling.

Bella started collecting tadpoles in a jar with another girl, and Joe played on a rope swing with some of the older kids. The day flew by.

“Tomorrow,” said Dad, “we'll go for a long hike over the moors.”

“I can't wait,” said Joe.

It was getting dark. The family ate sausages and beans, then roasted marshmallows on sticks over a camp fire. They drank hot chocolate too. In the darkness, strange rustling noises came from the hedge next to their tent.

“What's that noise?” asked Bella. She looked nervous, and moved closer to Mum.

“Don't worry, it's not a wolf,” said Joe teasingly.

“How do you know?”

“I expect it's just a rabbit, Bella,” said Dad. “Or maybe it's just the wind, rustling the leaves.”

Bella didn't say anything more. Of course she was only little, thought Joe. You couldn't really blame her for having silly worries about wolves!

“Time for bed,” said Mum.

They were all tired after a day outdoors. They put out the fire, closed the tent flap and crawled into their sleeping bags. Soon Bella, Mum and Dad were asleep.

Joe was too excited to sleep. So he lay awake thinking about the day, and wondering what would happen tomorrow.

Suddenly, he heard something from outside the tent. A rustling noise.

“Probably just a rabbit,” he thought.

Then he heard more rustling. It sounded like something walking around outside – something bigger than a rabbit.

What if, thought Joe, Bella was right? What if a wolf did escape from a zoo? This campsite was just the kind of place it might like.

Joe lay there, shivering, as the rustling continued. At last, he could bear it no longer. He got up and stuck his head out of the tent.

A cow gazed at him over the hedge. She had soft, brown eyes, and was chewing peacefully on some leaves. "Moo!" she said.

Joe chuckled to himself as he crawled back into his sleeping bag. "To think I was afraid of a cow!"