

Dingo and Wallaby

Retold by

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Wallaby is more than a match for
Dingo – no matter how many
wallabies he may have eaten in the
past.

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Dingo gloated. “Munch and crunch for lunch! Time to chew on you.” He licked his lips. Wallaby was the loveliest he had ever seen. She was soft and fluffy and he had to swallow hard when he thought about how sweet and succulent she would taste.

“If you must,” replied Wallaby, “But I should warn you: I’m very tough.” Dingo took a step back.

“Rubbish,” he scoffed.

“Don’t be fooled by my round, fluffy tummy and my thick legs. I’m as hard as a stone. You’ll break your teeth. Look!” Wallaby held out her paw.

Dingo felt it and marvelled, “You are tough! I know, I’ll let you go this time and when you are good and fat you can come back and I’ll eat you then!” Dingo nodded, pleased with his plan.

“We’ll see,” smiled Wallaby as she trotted away.

Dingo’s tummy rumbled as he thought about the other wallabies he’d eaten. Each one had thin tough paws. Wallaby had tricked him.

He put his nose down, his tail in the air and began to hunt and there she was!

Dingo crept as quietly as a mouse. Just as he put his paw onto Wallaby’s shadow she called, “Dingo, do you like mushroom?”

Dingo jumped. “Yes – but I’ve come to eat you!”

“I’d taste better with mushroom,” she said. “There’s one in the lake.”

“First you, then the mushroom,” replied Dingo.

“Tst! Tst!” Wallaby was shocked. “You can’t swim for an hour after you have eaten!”

“Oh! Yes,” Dingo sighed. “Mushroom first.” He dived in and snapped a mouthful of cold lake water. He dived again and again until he had a stomach-ache.

Dingo crawled out to find a stick. “Just as well the moon’s bright.” He looked up and noticed that the mushroom was simply a reflection of the moon!

He put his nose down, his tail in the air and began to hunt and there she was! Dingo crept as silently as a spider.

Just as he was within striking distance of her throat, Wallaby gasped, "I'm so glad to see you!"

"What?"

"I've been holding up this mountain all afternoon and I'm very tired. When you rip out my throat I will be dead it's true, but then the mountainside will fall and squash you flat!" replied Wallaby.

"Rubbish!" scoffed Dingo.

"Fine, go on then. Enjoy your first bite – it'll be the last you'll ever take," said Wallaby.

Dingo thought for a moment. "I'll go and get help."

"Good idea, but hurry," urged Wallaby.

"How do I know you won't just let the rock go anyway?"

"You don't," replied Wallaby.

"I don't trust you. *I'll* hold the rock, *you* go for help."

"I'll go as fast as I can," assured Wallaby. Dingo wriggled in as she wriggled out and skipped down the track.

Dingo pushed hard against the boulder for hours but it wasn't until the setting sun was dazzling his eyes that he remembered the mushroom and the paw and realized that Wallaby had tricked him again.

As he finally moved he found that he was one big bundle of pins and needles – from his nose to his tail, from his ears to his claws.

He put his nose down, his tail in the air and began to hunt. He hunted all night, through the next day and the next until he trapped her.

“Don’t speak. Not one word!” he yelled. “Lift your head. I’ll rip your throat out and it’ll all be over!”

“That’s the problem. The last thing I’ll remember is you ripping out my throat. I don’t want to die covered in red blood.”

‘NO TALKING!’ Dingo was beside himself with anger. ‘NO DISCUSSING, NO WORKSHOPPING – JUST ME EATING!’

“I know,” Wallaby was excited. “You could swallow me whole!”

“I could not – you’re far too large.”

“I wonder,” mused Wallaby. “I think you could. Have you ever tired?”

“No, of course not,” scoffed Dingo. “What a stupid idea!”

“Well let’s try. Open wide. Good. Now here goes!”

“OW! Get away! You don’t fit!”

“Humm.” Wallaby stood thinking. “I could jump down your throat.”

“No you couldn’t,” Dingo was indignant. “You’re too big.”

“Oh, don’t start all that again. We won’t know until we try. So, open up. Back I go, hop and JUMP!”

When Wallaby smacked into his mouth Dingo stood, quivering, for a moment before falling, clunk, onto the ground with his legs stiff. He blinked once or twice, cleared his throat and said, “That’s enough!”

Dingo scrambled to his feet and advanced. A low, menacing growl came from deep in his chest.

“You know I’d be honoured to become your lunch but I can’t bear the thought of the ripping and the crunching,” gabbled Wallaby, “Your mouth’s too dry; I can’t slip down if it is too dry. You need to lick your lips.”

Dingo stopped. “Do you really think that’ll work?”

“Well, we must try everything,” she replied.

He licked his lips. They were soft and slippery. “Alright! Let’s do this now!”

“Open your mouth really, really wide,” she said. But as Dingo opened his mouth, it dried up.

“You have to keep licking, Dingo. It’s the only way to keep it moist,” called Wallaby. Dingo began to lick.

“Yes!” encouraged Wallaby. “Lots and lots of lick. Keep your mouth wide open!”

Dingo licked and licked and licked. He held his mouth wide, wide open.

“Great,” called Wallaby. “That’s really great! I’m coming!”

Wallaby’s backward stroll became a forward hop, a slow bounce, and then a full jump as she leapt towards the still licking Dingo. At the last possible moment she sprang – SMACK – into Dingo’s mouth.

Dingo rolled over and over and over. “I’m sorry, Dingo,” Wallaby wandered over. “You were correct – I can’t jump down your throat.”

Dingo groaned.

Wallaby propped on her tail and sadly raised her head. “You’ll just have to rip out my throat and eat me in the usual way,” she sighed.

"Do a-thay," moaned Dingo.

"Go away? Go away?" Wallaby looked down at Dingo.

"OOH! Dingo, your bottom teeth are through your tongue! Your top teeth are pushed flat. There’s blood all over the ground. Does it hurt?"

"Do a-thay," sobbed Dingo. "Do a-thay thand thether tum dear be a-dain!"

"Well," she said. "After all I've done to become your lunch all you can say is 'go away and never come near you again'? Well, look at me – I'm going. I'm going right now. And YOU never come near ME again."

It took Dingo twenty minutes to prise his tongue off his teeth, and another twenty minutes to push his top teeth straight. It was days before he could do more than drink water and six weeks before he could eat the most tender baby rabbit.

And he never, ever chased after that Wallaby ever again.

Dedicated to
Emily and Elizabeth