



The Beginning of the Armadillos

by Rudyard Kipling

Once upon a time there was a Sticky-Prickly Hedgehog who lived on a riverbank, eating shelly snails. And he had a friend, a Slow-Solid Tortoise, who also lived on the riverbank, eating leafy lettuce.

But also, there was a young Jaguar, who ate anything he could catch. One day he asked his Mother Jaguar to teach him how to catch clever animals like hedgehogs and tortoises. She said to him, "My son, when you find a Hedgehog you must drop him in the water and he will uncoil. When you find a Tortoise you must scoop him out of his shell with your paw."

Full of confidence, the Jaguar went down to the riverbank to hunt. But by the time he got there, the Sticky-Prickly Hedgehog had coiled up and the Slow-Solid Tortoise had hidden in his shell. The Jaguar couldn't tell them apart!

"Excuse me," said the Jaguar, "My mother said that when I meet a Hedgehog I should drop him into the water so he uncoils, and when I meet a Tortoise I should scoop him out of his shell with my paw. Which of you is a Hedgehog and which of you is a Tortoise?"

"Are you sure of what your mother told you?" asked Sticky-Prickly, "Perhaps she said that when you uncoil a Tortoise you must shell him out of the water with a scoop, and when you paw a Hedgehog you must drop him on the shell."

"I don't think it was like that," said the Jaguar, now confused.

"Are you sure?" asked Slow-Solid, "Perhaps she said that when you water a Hedgehog you must drop him into your paw, and when you meet a Tortoise you must shell him till he uncoils."

"Please stop, you're making my spots ache," said the poor Jaguar. "Just tell me which of you is a Hedgehog, and which is a Tortoise!"

"I will never tell," said Sticky-Prickly, "but you can scoop me out of my shell if you like."

"Aha!" said the Jaguar, "Now I know you're a Tortoise!" And as he scooped at Sticky-Prickly, his paw was filled with painful prickles. He whimpered and cried, and the Hedgehog quickly rolled away.

"No, no," said Slow-Solid, "You've got it all wrong, I'm the Tortoise!" But the Jaguar did not trust him. Angrily, he pushed the Tortoise into the river in hopes that he'd uncoil. But the Tortoise swam and swam until he got to the other side, where he met his friend Sticky-Prickly. They laughed as they heard the Jaguar roar in anger, calling for his mother's help.

"Mother, mother," cried the Jaguar, "I tried to scoop the Tortoise out of his shell, but now my paw is full of per-ickles." Mother Jaguar gently reminded him, "A Hedgehog coils up in a ball, and a Tortoise hides in his shell. You scoop the Tortoise

and push the Hedgehog into water.” This time, the Jaguar would not forget. Sticky-Prickly and Slow-Solid knew they would have to think of something really clever.

“Alright hold my head up,” said Sticky-Prickly, “I am going to learn how to swim!” Slowly but surely the Hedgehog became a great swimmer, and his prickly spines even began to melt away.

“Okay, now help me unlace my back-plates,” said the Tortoise, that way I’ll be able to curl up in a ball too!” Slowly but surely the Tortoise’s shell became bendy, and he could curl up into a full ball of armor. Soon the Tortoise and the Hedgehog began to look a lot alike!

The next week they met the young Jaguar again, and when he saw them he fell three times backward over his own painted tail.

“Good morning, Jaguar!” They both called out to him. Both the Hedgehog and the Tortoise curled up and rolled to the river, where they jumped in and swam away.

“Mother, mother!” cried the Jaguar, now really confused, “I’ve just seen two new animals by the river. The one that you said couldn’t swim, swims, and the one that you said couldn’t curl up, curls up, and both of them are scaly all over instead of one being smooth and the other very prickly! It isn’t a Hedgehog and it isn’t a Tortoise, and I don’t know its proper name.”

“Nonsense!” said Mother Jaguar, “Everything has its proper name. I shall call it ‘Armadillo’ until we find out the real one.”

And that was how the beginning of the Armadillos came about.

Activities

Order of Events

Number these events in the order which they happened.

- ___ Sticky-Prickly learns to swim.
- ___ Mother Jaguar gives the Armadillo its name.
- ___ Slow-Solid learns to curl into a ball
- ___ Young Jaguar asks how to catch clever animals.

Who Was It?

Circle the correct answer.

1. Which animal was supposed to be scooped with a paw?
 - A. Hedgehog B. Tortoise
 - C. Jaguar D. Mother Jaguar
2. Who tells young Jaguar how to catch clever animals?
 - A. Hedgehog B. Tortoise
 - C. Jaguar D. Mother Jaguar
3. Which animal was supposed to be thrown in the water?
 - A. Hedgehog B. Tortoise
 - C. Jaguar D. Mother Jaguar
4. Who was confused about Hedgehog and Tortoise?
 - A. Hedgehog B. Tortoise
 - C. Jaguar D. Mother Jaguar

Secret Code: Answer the question by using the secret code. Write the letter in the blank that matches the number from the code.

What could Sticky-Prickly and Slow-Solid do?

3 21 18 12 1 14 4

19 23 9 13

Code Key 7 = G 11 = K 15 = O 19 = S 23 = W

1 = A 4 = D 8 = H 12 = L 16 = P 20 = T 24 = X

2 = B 5 = E 9 = I 13 = M 17 = Q 21 = U 25 = Y

3 = C 6 = F 10 = J 14 = N 18 = R 22 = V 26 = Z



