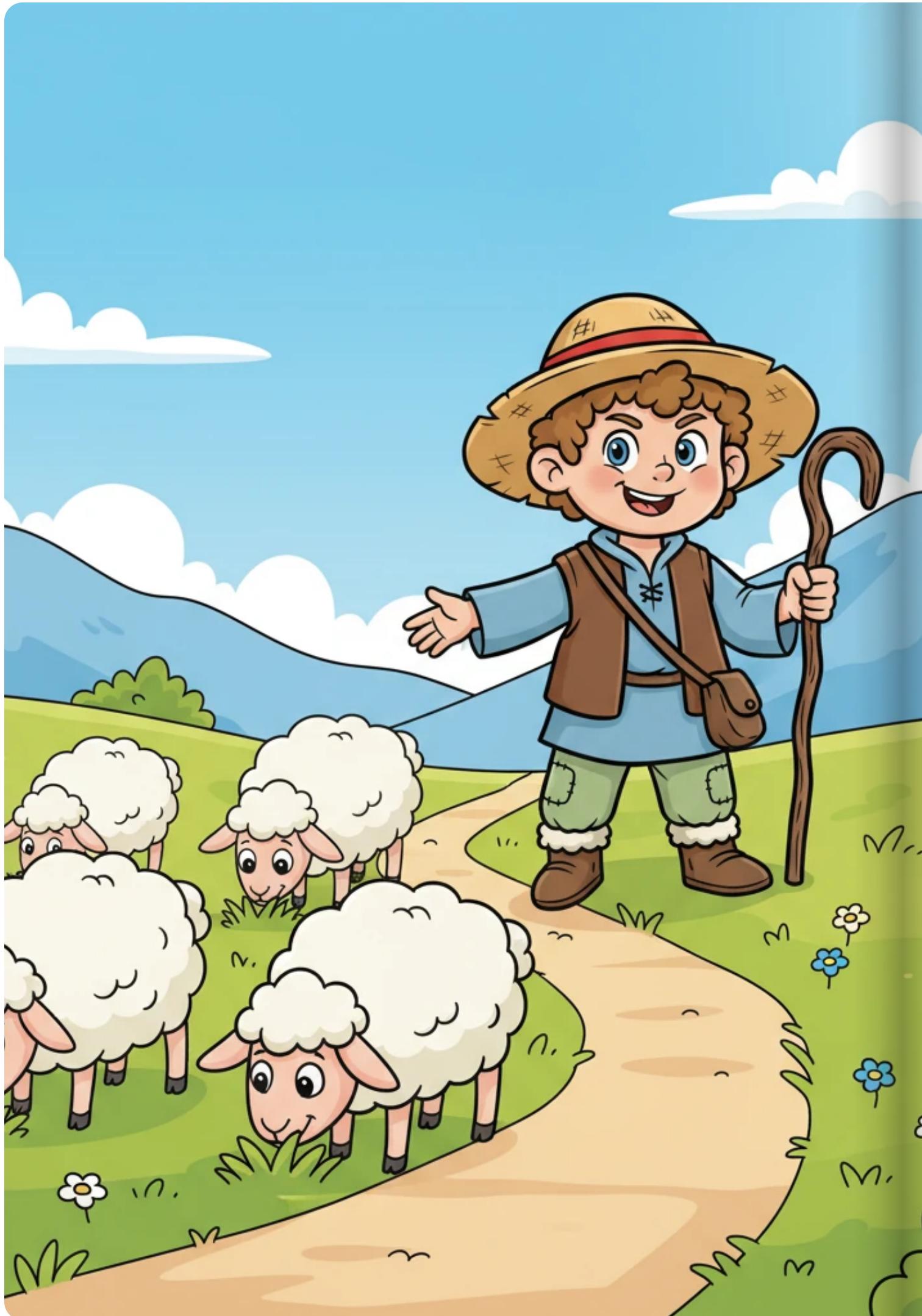




The Shepherd Boy Who Cried Wolf

Subramanya Naik



Every sunny morning, a cheerful shepherd boy named Leo led his fluffy sheep up the winding mountain path. He loved the fresh air and the wide-open spaces, making sure his flock grazed happily on the greenest grass. But sometimes, watching sheep munch grass all day could be a little bit... boring!



One particularly quiet afternoon, Leo sat on a large rock, his chin in his hands, feeling restless. The sheep were peacefully nibbling, and the sun was warm, but Leo wished for something exciting to happen. A mischievous glint sparkled in his eyes as a playful idea popped into his head.



Suddenly, Leo leaped to his feet, cupping his hands around his mouth and shouting with all his might. "Wolf! Wolf! A wolf is attacking the sheep!" His voice echoed across the valleys, filled with fake panic and a hidden giggle.



Hearing Leo's frantic cries, the kind villagers dropped their tools and raced up the steep mountain path. Their faces were etched with worry, eager to save Leo and his precious flock from danger. They carried pitchforks and brave hearts, ready to scare away any scary wolf.



When the panting villagers finally reached the mountaintop, they found no wolf, only Leo giggling uncontrollably. He was rolling on the grass, pointing at their worried faces, finding the whole trick incredibly funny. The villagers, however, were not amused.



A few days later, boredom struck Leo again, and he couldn't resist playing the same trick. "Wolf! Wolf! Help, a wolf is here!" he yelled, enjoying the rush of excitement. This time, the villagers hesitated, looking at each other with doubtful expressions.



Reluctantly, the villagers gathered their tools and slowly made their way up the mountain once more. Upon arriving, they saw Leo laughing again, proud of his clever prank. Their frustration turned into anger, and they warned him sternly about crying wolf.



Then, one sunny afternoon, a truly enormous, shaggy wolf with gleaming teeth actually appeared at the edge of Leo's flock! It snarled and lunged, scattering the terrified sheep in every direction. Leo's heart pounded with real fear.



Leo screamed louder than ever, his voice filled with genuine terror, begging for help. "Wolf! Wolf! Please, someone help me, it's a real wolf this time!" But back in the village, the people just sighed, shaking their heads, believing it was just another one of Leo's silly tricks.



Alone and helpless, Leo watched as the wolf chased his sheep away, its shadowy form disappearing into the forest. Tears streamed down his face, not from laughter, but from deep regret and sadness. He had learned a very hard lesson about the importance of telling the truth, and how broken trust is difficult to mend.