

The Legend of St. Francis (of Assisi) and the Wolf of Gubbio

The town of Gubbio, in Tuscany, was being terrorized by an enormous wolf. It prowled around Gubbio, “clawing at the gates by day and howling below the wall by night.” The people of the town couldn’t go outside the city walls, for fear of the wolf. They and all their animals were suffering. Because they could neither sow nor reap, they were beginning to starve.

Brother Francis, a friar from the nearby town of Assisi, heard of their plight. He went to the town, to see how he could help. The people assure him that there was nothing he could do. If he tried, the wolf would surely destroy him.

But Brother Francis went out to the wolf anyway. When the wolf rushed at him, he stood still, held out his hand, and spoke to him softly, addressing him as Brother Wolf. The wolf became meek and obedient. He agreed never to kill the people or their animals again, if they would agree to feed him every day for the rest of his life.

The wolf and the people all kept their promises, and the wolf lived among them for another two years, before he died of old age. The people mourned Brother Wolf, who had become a friend to them.

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