

The goat herder Skin lost his goat. He was looking everywhere for it. His desperate search led him into the mountains. The hours went. The sun was setting when he rounded a corner and saw an old man sitting on a rock at the end of a canyon.

Nosy as Skin was he went to take a look.

"Old man," Skin said when he was close enough. The old man turned his head looking a bit puzzled.

"Young man?"

That was when Skin realized his mistake.

"I'm dreadfully sorry, Elder! I did not look and have offended you. How can I repay you for your trouble."

"Well, young man, first tell me your name, please."

"My name is Skin, sir."

The Elder frowned. "Skin?"

"Yes, sir, indeed. Skin."

"Oh well. Hello Skin. You are in luck. You can indeed help me and repay me for your insolence." Skin's troubled face cleared.

"Please sir, do tell me."

The Elder pointed up the canyon.

"Up yonder hill lies my travelling chest. In it are my healing potions. I need them, because I tripped and fell down the hill. My ankle is sprained. I can't get up and fetch them myself."

"Well, that is an easy enough task," Skin concluded happily.

"Yes, that part is, but I also lost my five keys and you need those to open the chest."

Now Skin looked puzzled.

"Why, Elder, if I may implore, do you need five locks on a chest?"

"Do not be too smart for your own well being, young man."

"Sorry, sir!"

"Now go and fetch those keys for me."

"Yes, Elder, and I'll get the chest as well. It looks light enough."

"NO!!" the Elder snapped.

Skin took a step back. "Have I offended you again, Elder?"

"No, Skin, as long as you do exactly what I say when I say it."

"Yes, sir."

"Now be off."

Skin ran up the hill.

"Stop!" the Elder commanded. "There in those bushes."

Skin looked down. "I don't see anything."

"Look better!"

Skin went on his knees and just then felt a gust of wind. He looked over his shoulder, but saw nothing.

"What!?" the Elder implored.

"Wind!"

"Ah, yes, I see a storm brewing up the mountains. Be quick about it, now!"

"Yes, sir."

Skin went down on all fours and thus found the first key.

"I've got it!"

“Right! Now go to that bush up there on your left. And you’d better be quick about it.”

“Yes, Elder, I will.”

Skin went further up the will. He looked about for the specific bush, while he got numerous instructions. After ten minutes he stopped and put his hands in his sides.

“Look, Elder, I don’t want to be rude, but I get the feeling you do not know here this second key is.”

The Elder tried to get up all flushed.

“What!?” he bellowed, “Get on your knees, you boor, and pray to the Gods they will not strike you down where you stand!”

Skin yelped in anguish over the divine threats and dropped down in prayer. Not even two seconds later the rocks just 100 yards from him exploded, and the ground trembled fiercely.

“Forgive me! Elder, Please? I meant no disrespect,” Skin cried looking to the sky in horror.

The Elder still looked very stern, but seemed to accept the cry for forgiveness.

“Now get me those keys!”

“Yes, sir!”

Now Skin was mortified, and he skipped and jumped, heeding every call the Elder made. Skin finally found all five of the lost keys even though there were strange gusts of wind and peculiar earth trembles.

“Elder,” Skin said, “I found all your keys. What will you have me do now?”

“Well, young man,” the Elder said looking a bit anxious. “Now you may go to my travelling chest and fetch my potions.”

“Yes sir,” panted skin for he had run up and down the hillside.

‘The Elder might not be playing with a full memory deck,’ Skin thought, ‘but he hadn’t lost any ego along the way.’

Now Skin made his last way up the hill. After some 70 yards Skin stopped and stared down.

“What now?!” the Elder barked. “I have been more than patient with you, young man!”

Slowly Skin’s head turned.

“I slipped, sir.”

He looked down again.

“I.. ehm.. I slipped over my goat”

“Have you lost it? There is no goat there!”

“Yes, there is, sir, on, ehm, I mean, in the ground.”

The Elder looked up in to the sky anxiously, hesitated, but then stood up shouting: “Run, run! I know your goat is there! Now run!! To my chest!”

“Elder! Your foot!”

“Yes, yes! I know! All better. Now run!!”

Skin blushed with anger.

“You tricked me! I ought to....”

SQUASH!!!

“You lose,” a voice like the thunder and the rain bellowed over the mountain.

The Elder sat down on his rock again.

“Yes, I know, but I got him much further than the last time”

“Yes, Elder, but it is five to null,” the mountain giant thundered. “You should think of a better strategy for our game.”

“Hey!” the Elder cried, “four, not five. The goat doesn’t count!”