

# Storytime with Dad

## Harold's Hat Dilemma

Welcome to Storytime with Dad! Today, we will be reading Harold's Hat Dilemma.

Once upon a time, in a little green meadow surrounded by tall trees and wildflowers, there lived a curious hedgehog named Harold. Harold was a perfectly ordinary hedgehog - except for one very peculiar problem. Harold had decided he needed a hat. Now, you might wonder, why would a hedgehog need a hat? Harold didn't need one to keep warm; his prickly quills were already like a cozy blanket. He didn't need one for shade; he spent most of his days under bushes or curled up for a nap. But Harold wanted a hat because hats, he'd heard, were what fancy creatures wore.

"Foxes have scarves," said Harold to himself as he admired his reflection in a puddle. "Owls have spectacles. Even the squirrels wear tiny bow ties when they feel like showing off. Why shouldn't I have something splendid, too? A hat it shall be!"

But there was one teeny, tiny, hedgehog-sized problem. Harold's quills. You see, if Harold tried on a hat and didn't like it, his little prickly quills would poke holes in the fabric. And if he poked holes in it, he'd have to buy it - even if it was the wrong hat! "What a prickly predicament," Harold muttered as he paced nervously under an oak tree. "How can I choose the perfect hat if I can't try them all first? What if I choose the wrong one? What if everyone laughs at me? What if it doesn't fit my head just right?" Harold sighed a big hedgehog sigh. Choosing a hat was turning out to be a much bigger deal than he had imagined.

Determined to solve his problem, Harold set out on a quest to find the perfect hat on the very first try. His first stop was Badger's Bonnet Boutique, where Badger sold every kind of hat you could imagine: tall top hats, floppy straw hats, rain hats, cowboy hats, and even a chef's hat with polka dots. Harold stood in the doorway and stared. "Well, what'll it be?" Badger asked, leaning over the counter with a big smile. "I've got hats for sunny days, rainy days, and days when you just want to look extra fancy."

Harold's little paws trembled. "How do I know which one I'll love forever?" he asked.

Badger scratched his head. "No clue! Hats are like friends. You don't know if you like 'em until you spend some time with 'em."

Harold sighed. That wasn't very helpful at all.

At his next stop, Squirrel's Snazzy Caps, Harold tried to solve the problem with logic. "I'll just pick the most popular hat," he told Squirrel. "If everyone else likes it, I probably will, too!" Squirrel clapped his paws together and proudly pulled out his most popular hat: a huge, floppy sun hat decorated with pink flowers, ribbons, and sparkly beads. It looked like something a garden might wear to a tea party. Harold's quills quivered as he stared at it. "It's... nice?" he said hesitantly, though he wasn't so sure. Harold imagined himself trying to play hide-and-seek with a hat that big. He'd be spotted from a mile away!

"Go on, try it!" said Squirrel, holding the hat out eagerly.

But Harold shook his head. "Nope. Too risky. What if I poke holes and hate it?" So Harold waddled away, still hatless and feeling more unsure than ever.

By the time he returned home, Harold was in a very grumpy mood. He plopped himself down next to his wise old father, who was busy tending to his garden. His father was always calm, always wise, and always seemed to know just what to say. "Dad," said Harold with a dramatic sigh, "how do you choose something when it feels like such a big decision? What if you mess it up? What if it's the wrong choice and you're stuck with it forever?"

Harold's father chuckled and put down his watering can. "Ah, Harold, that's the tricky part of life, isn't it? We're always afraid of making the wrong choice. But let me ask you this - what are hats for?"

Harold blinked. "To look nice?"

His father smiled. "Sure. But a hat's real job is to fit you and make you happy. It doesn't matter what other people wear or what they think. And you know what else? It's okay if you don't love it forever. You'll never know unless you take a chance."

Harold frowned. "But what if I poke holes in the wrong one?"

His father patted Harold gently on the back. "Sometimes, my son, you just have to be brave, pick a hat, and wear it proudly - even if it ends up with a few holes in it."

The next morning, Harold woke up feeling a little bit braver. He marched back to Badger's Bonnet Boutique and stood tall on his tiny paws. "I'll take the green hat with the little feather, please," Harold said firmly.

Badger blinked in surprise. "Are you sure?"

"Nope," said Harold, smiling. "But I'm brave enough to try it."

Harold carefully placed the hat on his head. It was soft and cozy, with just enough room for his quills to wiggle without poking too many holes. A little feather on the brim bounced as he walked. Harold peeked at his reflection in the shop window and smiled. It wasn't too fancy. It wasn't too plain. It was just right.

As Harold waddled through the meadow wearing his new hat, everyone stopped to admire him. "Nice hat, Harold!" called Fox from his den. "Very snazzy!" chirped Squirrel as he leapt from tree to tree. Even the wise old owl hooted in approval, which almost never happened.

Harold beamed from ear to ear. His dad was right - sometimes you just have to make a choice, take a chance, and wear it proudly, holes and all. And from that day on, Harold the hedgehog wore his green hat with pride, and a little feather that bounced wherever he went.

The end.



What a brave little hedgehog! I'm glad he finally got his fancy hat and was happy with it.

First off, I want to say that this story was for my listener Rise, he requested a story about a hedgehog who wears a hat, so I hope you liked the story I came up with! I love when listeners like you send me story requests, so for everyone listening please feel free to send your own requests to me at [storytimewithdad.com](https://storytimewithdad.com). I'll do my best to make one up for you just like I did for Rise and others recently.

Now it is the holiday season for me, so I've been delayed in putting this episode out due to Thanksgiving, but I wanted to publish something before Christmas. I wish you all a very wonderful Christmas and New Year, and hope next year brings you many blessings.

Now, back to Harold. The thing I like about this story is it's so relatable. I've met tons of people, and am one to some degree, get what we call "analysis paralysis". They just can't make a choice because they're afraid it won't be the best choice. So they sit there, and just don't choose anything. Harold learned from his dad that sometimes you just gotta choose and be happy with your choice! So the next time you find yourself worrying if you are doing the right thing, commit to it.

Don't know if you want Vanilla or Chocolate ice cream? Pick one, go all in and then (here's the trick) you can choose to enjoy it and not wish you made a different choice. This choice is not forever, most aren't, you are probably going to find yourself in the exact same situation again. And then, only then, if you didn't like your choice the first time around, pick a different choice the next time. Hopefully, you'll remember Hedgehog Dad the next time you find yourself wondering what you should do. Let me know how it goes for you!

Thank you for listening and I'll see you again next time.

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