



Once upon a time, in the kingdom of Zoulvisia, there lived a group of forest woodsmen on the edge of a great lake. They hunted, fished and cut firewood for the neighbouring villages to keep warm during long winter nights.

A huntsman called Durin came across a trail that had been badly damaged by animals rooting about. In horror, he also checked the main road through the forest and found more devastation.

That was not the end of it, for the next day a little girl had gone to play in the woods and come back badly injured and frightened. She said that savage wild boars had attacked her while she was picking strawberries and doing them no harm.

Durin set off for the palace and informed Queen Zoulvisia of what had been going on. She was deeply troubled by the news.



Calling for a great hunt and summoning all her finest knights, the queen set off for the forest. They rode all day and all night along the broad road until they came to the eaves of green trees and a forest track.

They were determined to rid the woods of evil creatures, and stop them doing damage and frightening the foresters' families. Yet the queen was not cruel, and sought only to lessen the number of boars, rather than completely destroy them. Remember that boars are a sort of wild pig, only very fierce with huge tusks.

A long line of riders entered the darkening branches— clad in greens and browns, sporting hunting horns. Most of the knights carried bows and their squires had extra quivers of arrows as they rode alongside. It was a very impressive group, as they chatted merrily listening to lutes. Zoulvisia and Sir Oliver rode at the head of the column, more serious than their companions.







Several days passed, but there was no sign of the wild boars. Sir Oliver sent out packs of dogs to sniff through hill and meadow, but they found nothing.

Gradually, the cavalcade entered a lovely part of the forest, with blankets of pure purple flowers spreading out through slender trunks of trees. A few of the party of hunters rode out to enjoy the beautiful day, convinced the boars had left. But the vicious creatures were only biding time.

They waited carefully as a few knights went off to the west, and some to the east while more travelled along a river to picnic. Zoulvisia and Sir Oliver were left alone, with the disturbing sense that someone or something was watching.

Quietly the boars circled round each group of hunters, ready to spring at a moment's notice.



Just as Zoulvisia was about to suggest they sound a horn call to summon the others, a lone boar strutted out into the path, blocking their way.

"Why do you hunt us?" he snorted.

The Queen told of their evil devastating ways and how it needed to stop, but the boar only laughed, "we enjoy ruining roads and hurting humans," he cackled. Without any warning, the wild animal hurtled itself at the queen with fangs bared, but fell dead with Sir Oliver's arrow through him.

Hundreds of boars appeared on all sides and ran grunting and snarling to attack. Sir Oliver took them down, three arrows in his bow each time, yet it was not enough. The Queen lifted her silver horn and blew. Noble and ringing echoes sounded through the forest, but the other knights were under attack as well. Who could come to help the queen and her knight?





Just as Sir Oliver used his last arrow, a neighing and ringing sound of a sword heralded the arrival of two heroes—Isabel and Bob the Unicorn charged into the fray and made quick work of the evil boars. They too had heard of the plight of the woodsmen and their families and had come to help just in time.

Thoroughly cowed, the remaining leader of the boars bowed on his thick little hooves, begging for the lives of the animals that remained. Queen Zoulvisia agreed, but made them promise never to harm anyone again, and to leave all forest paths alone— whether made by men or other beasts. The deer and rabbits had been irritated by the wild boars as well.

As a reminder of the oath and promised peace, Sir Oliver stabbed a sword into a stump near the main road where both sides would pass by and be reminded.

THE END (for now)

