



STORY: THE GOAT IN THE JALAPEÑO PATCH, A MEXICAN TALE

Adapted and Retold by Dianne de Las Casas

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Pedro had a pet. Now it was no ordinary pet, for it was a cabrito, a little goat. Having a goat for a pet is not like having a cat or a dog. Although Pedro fed his goat, his goat was still always hungry and began eating things around the house. First, it was just little things like socks and toys from happy meals. But then Cabrito moved on to bigger things. When he began chewing on the sofa, Pedro's mama said, "That cabrito is eating too much!" When he began chewing on the kitchen table, Pedro's mama said, "That cabrito is eating too much!" When he began chewing on the TV, Pedro's mama said, "That cabrito is eating too much!" When he began chewing on mama's bed, mama said, "That's it! Cabrito must be cured of his dietary dysfunction!"

Mama said to Pedro, "Let's take Cabrito to Abuelo's (Grandfather's) house. Abuelo has a jalapeño patch that will cure Cabrito."

So they took Cabrito to Abuelo's house. Mama explained the situation to him and he said, "Si (yes), my jalapeño patch is just the answer. My jalapeños are so hot that just one lick will set his mouth on fire and will cure him for good."

They put Cabrito in the middle of the patch and Abuelo said, "Mira. Watch this. My jalapeños are so hot that just one lick will set his mouth on fire and will cure him for good." Abuelo laughed.

First, Cabrito began sniffing around the patch. Then, when he found the biggest, juiciest looking jalapeño, he stopped. He bent down, and took a big bite. Pedro, Mama, and Abuelo waited for Cabrito to run out of the patch but the goat just kept chewing and chewing without even the slightest flinch. When he was finished with that jalapeño, he found another one. He took a bite and chewed. Over and over again, Cabrito found a jalapeño, took a bite, and chewed until he had eaten a quarter of the jalapeño patch.

Pedro shouted, "That cabrito is eating too much!"

Mama shouted, "That cabrito is eating too much!"

Abuelo shouted, "That cabrito is eating too much! Ay yi yi!" Then Abuelo marched into the patch and tried to push the goat out. But Cabrito just raised his hind legs, kicked, and sent Abuelo flying out.

Perro (dog) was walking by when he heard the commotion. “Que pasa?” he asked. “What’s wrong?”

Abuelo answered as he rubbed his backside, “That cabrito is eating too much! Ay yi yi! He’s going to eat my whole jalapeño patch if we don’t stop him!”

“I can get him out,” said Perro. He went into the jalapeño patch and began to bark furiously. But that didn’t scare Cabrito. He raised his hind legs and kicked Perro right out of the patch. Then Cabrito just kept on eating.

Caballo (horse) was walking by when he heard the commotion. “Que pasa?” he asked. “What’s wrong?”

Abuelo answered, “That cabrito is eating too much! Ay yi yi! He’s going to eat my whole jalapeño patch if we don’t stop him!”

“I can get him out,” said Caballo. He went into the jalapeño patch and began stomp on the ground and neigh furiously. But that didn’t scare Cabrito. He raised his hind legs and kicked Caballo right out of the patch. Then Cabrito just kept on eating.

Toro (bull) was walking by when he heard the commotion. “Que pasa?” he asked. “What’s wrong?”

Abuelo answered, “That cabrito is eating too much! Ay yi yi! He’s going to eat my whole jalapeño patch if we don’t stop him!”

“I can get him out,” said Toro. He went into the jalapeño patch and began to charge at Cabrito. But just as he reached Cabrito, the goat raised his hind legs and kicked Toro right out of the patch. Then Cabrito just kept on eating.

La pulga (the flea) was walking by when she heard the commotion. “Que pasa?” she asked. “What’s wrong?”

Abuelo answered, “That cabrito is eating too much! Ay yi yi! He’s going to eat my jalapeño whole patch if we don’t stop him!”

“I can get him out,” said La Pulga.

Abuelo answered, “But you’re too tiny to make a difference.”

“Watch me!” said La Pulga with attitude. She went into the jalapeño patch and climbed up Cabrito’s hind legs. She was so tiny, he didn’t even notice her. When she reached Cabrito’s backside, she stopped and took a big bite. Cabrito let out a loud yelp and went running out of the jalapeño patch and believe me, he was cured for good.

Mama was happy, Pedro was happy, and of course, Abuelo was happy.

“Muchas Gracias, Pulga,” said Abuelo, “Thank you very much.” La Pulga smiled as Abuelo presented her with a big juicy jalapeño pepper.

From that time forward, Cabrito ate only what he was fed and everyone remarked that Pedro had such a nice pet.

