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Wolf and Dog - Sylvia Vanden Heede

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Although wolf and dog are cousins, they have many differences. As a wild animal, Wolf has the instinctive skills and wily ways necessary to survive in his forest homeland. Down the hill, Dog leads a comfortable life as a house dog and has no need to hunt for food or shelter.

The cousins' distant relationship leads to an odd friendship. Dog is often on his own, guarding the house for his 'boss', and welcomes Wolf's company. Wolf is the classic 'lone wolf' preferring a solitary existence, yet he's also a 'hungry wolf' and constantly sniffing out food. He's afraid of Dog's boss and only enters the house when the man is away.

The pair recognise their shared heritage, even though they never quite trust each other. Their interactions are spiced with humour and one-upmanship. There's an hilarious scene when Dog acquires a biting flea from Wolf.

Wolf protests. "I didn't give it to you, You're wrong about that. You took it from me. You're a thief, Dog! You stole my flea!"

Dog sidles up to Wolf and is relieved when the flea jumps over to his cousin. He laughs and says, "A flea is wild, not tame and still. And just like you, he bites at will."

Word play and clever banter keep the plot moving at a sharp pace. Wolf is swift to act while Dog is, well, dogged. His perseverance outsmarts Wolf in the end.

Amusing drawings by Marije Tolman develop the distinctive nature of the two characters. A fun book for early readers to enjoy and discover the differences between wild and tame animals.

**Reviewed by children's book author,
Jean Bennett.**

