

# The Spikes of Thorny the Desert Devil

In the heart of the Australian desert, where the red sands stretch for miles and the sun blazes high, lived a small but mighty creature named Thorny. Thorny was a thorny devil lizard, covered head to toe in sharp, spiky scales that made him look fierce. But underneath those spikes, Thorny had a kind heart.

It was Halloween night, a time when all the creatures of the desert gathered for the Great Desert Feast. The moon hung high in the sky, glowing like a giant pumpkin, and the air was filled with the sounds of rustling leaves and distant howls. Thorny, however, was feeling a little sad. You see, despite his bravery and kind heart, he didn't have many friends. Most of the other animals were scared of his spiky appearance.

As Thorny walked slowly to the feast, he saw the other animals—kangaroos, emus, and even the shy bilbies—all gathered together, laughing and sharing stories. Thorny felt a pang of loneliness but decided to be brave and join them anyway.

When he arrived, the laughter stopped. The animals stared at Thorny with wide eyes, backing away from him.

"Look at those spikes! He's too dangerous to be around!" whispered a kangaroo.

"He might hurt us with those thorns," added an emu.

Thorny lowered his head, feeling even more alone. But then, he remembered what his wise old friend, a desert tortoise named Tilly, had once told him: "It's not what's on the outside that counts, but what's inside your heart."

Determined to prove himself, Thorny decided to leave the feast and explore the desert, hoping to find something that could show the others he wasn't so scary after all.

As he wandered through the night, Thorny heard a soft cry for help. He followed the sound and soon found a small, lost bilby stuck in a deep hole. The poor bilby was frightened and couldn't climb out.

"Don't worry, I'll help you!" Thorny called down.

“But you’re so spiky! What if you hurt me?” the bilby whimpered.

Thorny thought for a moment. He knew he had to be very careful. Gently, he used his tail to dig away at the sand around the hole, making it wider. Then, he stretched out his spiky body, careful not to touch the bilby with his thorns, and lowered himself into the hole. With great care, he helped the bilby climb onto his back.

“I’ll be as gentle as I can,” Thorny said softly.

Slowly, Thorny climbed out of the hole, making sure the bilby was safe on his back. Once they were out, the bilby looked at Thorny with wide eyes, no longer filled with fear but with gratitude.

“Thank you, Thorny! You saved me!” the bilby exclaimed.

Thorny smiled, his heart swelling with happiness.

They returned to the Great Desert Feast together, where the other animals were amazed to see the bilby safe and sound. When the bilby told everyone how Thorny had saved him, the animals realized they had been wrong about Thorny. They had judged him by his appearance instead of seeing the kindness in his heart.

From that night on, Thorny was no longer lonely. The animals welcomed him with open arms, and he became one of the most beloved creatures in the desert. The valuable lesson they all learned was that it’s not how someone looks on the outside that matters—it’s the goodness within that truly counts.

And so, under the light of the Halloween moon, Thorny the Brave Little Devil celebrated with his new friends, knowing that true courage and kindness always shine through, no matter what.

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