

**Stuck!
Now What,
Rose?**



Rose had spent all summer as the **biggest** sheep on the hill, eating sweet grass and sniffing the cool breeze. But summer was ending, and she trotted down to her snug hay bed at the farm.

Then she stopped. The farmer had put in a new gate, a very small, very not-Rose-sized gate.





'Go on, Rose! Just squeeze past!' called the sheep behind her.

Rose tried. She really tried. The sheep shoved and bumped and pushed, and Rose wedged into that gate like a cork in a bottle. She was the **biggest** sheep on the hill, and she could not go on. She could not go back. She was stuck.

'Stop pushing!' Rose cried. 'You are squishing my face!'

A small sheep trotted over and balanced upside down, not even wobbling. 'I know just what you need,' said Zen, perfectly still. 'Stretching! I kneel and stretch each day, and look at me. I am the **trimmest** sheep on this hill. I float right past that gate.' Rose blinked. Zen did look very still. Very bendy. Very... small. 'Does it work?' Rose asked.





'Trust me,' said Zen, rolling out a mat. 'Kneel. Stretch. Relax. Do it each day, and that gate will be no problem at all.' Rose knelt on the mat. She bent low. She stretched up high. She tried to relax the way Zen showed her. But mostly her nose just made a loud hissing sound. **'Fitter and fitter!'** said Zen. 'Sort of.'



The sun was the **hottest** it had been all summer. Day after day, Rose bent and stretched on her mat under the blazing sky. She pointed her toes. She twisted into shapes that made the other sheep look away. But Rose kept going. If this was what it took to get home, she would stretch until her wool fell off.



One full week of stretching. Rose's legs hurt. Her back was sore. Her nose still made that odd hissing sound. She walked up to the gate and held her breath. She turned sideways. She sucked in her tummy. Nope. Same gate. Same Rose. Same problem. She was no **thinner** than before. Rose let out a long, tired sigh.



'Stretching will not work!' called Kim, the **thinnest jogger** on the hill. 'Running is the answer! I run each day, rain or shine. Slim as a stick!' Kim did a lap, kicking up dust. Rose looked at Kim. Then she looked at the gate. Then she looked at her own big, round, wooly self. She sighed.





But Rose ran. Up the hill and down, each day. Rose was not a **runner**, but she ran anyway. The sun beat down, **hotter** and **hotter**, and her knees knocked together on every lap. After one full week, Rose wobbled up to the gate on shaky legs. Same gate. Same Rose. Same problem. 'I think,' she puffed, 'that all these plans are... not great.'

Rose dragged herself to the pond for a drink. Then she spotted Pip, a **swimmer**, floating past on her back with red **flippers** and looking very pleased. 'Swimming!' said Pip, kicking along. 'Jump in, swim each day, and you will shrink right down. I give my word.' 'Your word?' said Rose, one brow up. 'No joke,' said Pip, splashing a **flipper**. 'Well... almost.'





Rose did not wait. She backed up three steps, lowered her head, and launched herself into the pond with the **biggest** splash that pond had ever seen. A frog went flying into the tall grass.

If swimming was the answer, Rose was going to swim harder than any sheep had ever swum.

Rose swam all week. Each evening, she floated on her back in the golden light while a small bird sat on her knee like the **skipper** of a very wooly ship. It was just lovely. Cool water, a fine sunset, no one telling her to stretch or run. But Rose knew the truth. She was not one bit smaller. Three plans. Three weeks. No results.





Rose climbed out of the pond, water dripping from her wool, and looked up the hill at the gate. She stared at it for a long, quiet moment. Then her eyes went wide. 'Oh!' she whispered. 'Oh!' A grin spread across her face, slow and glad. Rose felt like a **winner**. 'I do not need to get smaller. I have been thinking about this all wrong!'

Rose was a **planner** now. She packed her red bag with a saw, a hammer, **cutters**, a knife, a coil of rope, and a big fistful of nails. She marched up that hill with the bag bouncing on her back and a plan set in her mind. She had wood to cut, knots to tie, and one very silly little gate to fix.





She cut and tied and fixed that gate. That night, Rose lay curled up in a soft pile of hay, right where she belonged. Her friends snored all around her.

Her knees were tired. Her knuckles were sore. Sawdust was still stuck in her wool.

But she was home, and she was **snugger** than ever. For the first time in three weeks, Rose closed her eyes and smiled.

'You got in!' the sheep cried the next morning, crowding close with wide eyes. 'How? Stretching did not work. Running did not work. Swimming did not work! What did you do?' They bumped and pushed, climbing over each other to get a better look. Rose just sat there, the **snuggest** sheep in the pen, with hay still stuck to her back.





'I am strong, and I feel good,' said Rose, sitting tall. 'Stretching was nice. Running was hard. Swimming was fun. But I am still big.' She paused, and every sheep leaned in. 'So I stopped trying to shrink, picked up a saw, and made the gate fit me.' The sheep turned to look. There it was: a brand-new gate, wide and strong, with neat hinges and fresh wood. Wide for any sheep. Wide for the **biggest** sheep of all. Wide for Rose.



Stuck! Now What, Rose?

Rose is the biggest sheep on the hill, and the new farmyard gate is far too small for her. Her friends swear stretching, running, or swimming will shrink her down to size, so Rose tries each plan with all her might. Will any of them actually get her home? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 108: Doubling Rule -er, -est), this book practices words like 'fitter', 'hotter', 'thinner', 'runner', 'snugger'.

Phonics Focus: Doubling Rule -er/-est

biggest, cutters, fitter, flipper, flippers, hotter, hottest, jogger, planner, runner, skipper, snugger, snugger, swimmer, thinner, thinnest, trimmest, winner

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