

The Fox and the Crow

Aesop fable from Europe

www.planetozkids.com/oban/oban.htm

One day, while he was out walking, a fox saw a crow swoop down and pick up a piece of cheese in its beak. The crow then flapped its wings and flew up onto a high branch in a nearby tree.

"That's a tasty looking piece of cheese," the fox thought to himself. "I should have that cheese. I'm the fox and I deserve it," he thought, "I'm a sly, smooth talking fox, I'll have it soon enough."

The fox walked over to the foot of the tree. "Good morning Crow" cried the fox. "How are you today?" asked the fox. "Your feathers look so glossy and black and your eyes are sparkling like the stars," said the fox, flattering the crow.

"If you can sing as beautiful as you look then I'll have to call you Queen of all Birds" said the fox.

Flattered by all the compliments from the fox, and wanting to be called Queen of all Birds, the crow lifted her head and began to sing.

But the moment she opened her mouth the cheese fell out, and the quick fox jumped and caught it before it hit the ground swallowing it in one bite.

The End

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the moral of this story?

2. What is the role of the fox, what is the role of the crow?

Mouse Deer and Tiger

Folktale from Indonesia/Malaysia

www.aaronshp.com/books/MouseDeer.html

<http://www.aaronshp.com/stories/R01.html#1>

"I'm quick and smart as I can be. Try and try, but you can't catch me!"

Mouse Deer sang his song as he walked through the forest. He was looking for tasty fruits and roots and shoots.

Though he was small, he was not afraid. He knew that many big animals wanted to eat him. But first they had to catch him! Then he heard something, "*Rowr!*"

There was Tiger!

"Hello, Mouse Deer. I was just getting hungry. Now you can be my lunch."

Mouse Deer didn't want to be lunch. He looked around and thought fast. He saw a mud puddle.

"I'm sorry, Tiger. I can't be your lunch. The King has ordered me to guard his pudding."

"His pudding?" said Tiger.

"Yes. There it is." Mouse Deer pointed to the mud puddle. "It has the best taste in the world. The King doesn't want anyone else to eat it."

Tiger looked longingly at the puddle. "I would like to taste the King's pudding."

"Oh, no, Tiger! The King would be very angry."

"Just one little taste, Mouse Deer! The King will never know."

"Well, all right, Tiger. But first let me run far away, so no one will blame me."

"All right, Mouse Deer, you can go now."

Mouse Deer ran quickly out of sight.

"Imagine!" said Tiger. "The King's pudding!" He took a big mouthful. "*Phooey!*" He spit it out. "*Yuck! Ugh! Bleck!* That's no pudding. That's mud!"

Tiger ran through the forest. "*Rowr!*" He caught up with Mouse Deer.



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"Mouse Deer, you tricked me once. But now you will be my lunch!"

Mouse Deer looked around and thought fast. He saw a wasp nest in a tree.

"I'm sorry, Tiger. I can't be your lunch. The King has ordered me to guard his drum."

"His drum?" said Tiger.

"Yes. There it is." Mouse Deer pointed to the wasp nest. "It has the best sound in the world. The King doesn't want anyone else to hit it."

Tiger said, "I would like to hit the King's drum."

"Oh, no, Tiger! The King would be very angry."

"Just one little hit, Mouse Deer! The King will never know."

"Well, all right, Tiger. But first let me run far away, so no one will blame me."

"All right, Mouse Deer, you can go now."

Mouse Deer ran quickly out of sight.

"Imagine!" said Tiger. "The King's drum!" He reached up and hit it. *Pow. Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz.* The wasps all flew out. They started to sting Tiger.

"Ouch! Ooch! Eech! That's no drum. That's a wasp nest!"

Tiger ran away. But the wasps only followed him! *Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz.*

"Ouch! Ooch! Eech!"

Tiger came to a stream. He jumped in-splash!-and stayed underwater as long as he could. At last the wasps went away.

Then Tiger jumped out. *"Rowr!"* He ran through the forest till he found Mouse Deer.

"Mouse Deer, you tricked me once. You tricked me twice. But now you will be my lunch!"

Mouse Deer looked around and thought fast. He saw a cobra! The giant snake was coiled asleep on the ground.

"I'm sorry, Tiger. I can't be your lunch. The King has ordered me to guard his belt."

"His belt?" said Tiger.

"Yes. There it is." Mouse Deer pointed to the cobra. "It's the best belt in the world. The King doesn't want anyone else to wear it."

Tiger said, "I would like to wear the King's belt."

"Oh, no Tiger! The King would be very angry."

"Just for one moment, Mouse Deer! The King will never know."

"Well, all right, Tiger. But first let me run far away, so no one will blame me."

"All right, Mouse Deer, you can go now."

Mouse Deer ran quickly out of sight.

"Imagine!" said Tiger. "The King's belt!" He started to wrap it around himself.

The cobra woke up. *Sssssssssssss*. It didn't wait for Tiger to finish wrapping. It wrapped itself around Tiger. Then it squeezed him and bit him. *Sstt!*

"*Ooh! Ow! Yow!* That's no belt. That's a cobra! Help! Mouse Deer! Help!"

But Mouse Deer was far away. And as he went, he sang his song.

I'm quick and smart as I can be. Try and try, but you can't catch me!

Another name for the Mouse Deer is Chevrotain. In Indonesia and Malaysia instead of being "as sly as a fox," you would be "as cunning as a Chevrotain." In both stories, the fox and the Chevrotain are "tricksters". Tricksters are characters in folklore that outsmart or outwit other animals or people in the story.

How Bear Lost His Tail

Iroquois Native American story

Back in the old days, Bear had a tail which was his proudest possession. It was long and black and glossy and Bear used to wave it around just so that people would look at it. Fox saw this. Fox, as everyone knows, is a trickster and likes nothing better than fooling others. So it was that he decided to play a trick on Bear.

It was the time of year when Hatho, the Spirit of Frost, had swept across the land, covering the lakes with ice and pounding on the trees with his big hammer. Fox made a hole in the ice, right near a place where Bear liked to walk. By the time Bear came by, all around Fox, in a big circle, were big trout and fat perch. Just as Bear was about to ask Fox what he was doing, Fox twitched his tail which he had sticking through that hole in the ice and pulled out a huge trout.

"Greetings, Brother," said Fox. "How are you this fine day?"

"Greetings," answered Bear, looking at the big circle of fat fish. "I am well, Brother. But what are you doing?"

"I am fishing," answered Fox. "Would you like to try?"

"Oh, yes," said Bear, as he started to lumber over to Fox's fishing hole.

But Fox stopped him. "Wait, Brother," he said, "This place will not be good. As you can see, I have already caught all the fish. Let us make you a new fishing spot where you can catch many big trout."

Bear agreed and so he followed Fox to the new place, a place where, as nFox knew very well, the lake was too shallow to catch the winter fish--which always stay in the deepest water when Hatho has covered their ponds. Bear watched as Fox made the hole in the ice, already tasting the fine fish he would soon catch. "Now," Fox said, "you must do just as I tell you. Clear your mind of all thoughts of fish. Do not even think of a song or the fish will hear you. Turn your back to the hole and place your tail inside it. Soon a fish will come and grab your tail and you can pull him out."

"But how will I know if a fish has grabbed my tail if my back is turned?" asked Bear.

"I will hide over here where the fish cannot see me," said Fox. "When a fish grabs your tail, I will shout. Then you must pull as hard as you can to catch your fish. But you must be very patient. Do not move at all until I tell you."

Bear nodded, "I will do exactly as you say." He sat down next to the hole, placed his long beautiful black tail in the icy water and turned his back.



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Fox watched for a time to make sure that Bear was doing as he was told and then, very quietly, sneaked back to his own house and went to bed. The next morning he woke up and thought of Bear. "I wonder if he is still there," Fox said to himself. "I'll just go and check."

So Fox went back to the ice covered pond and what do you think he saw? He saw what looked like a little white hill in the middle of the ice. It had snowed during the night and covered Bear, who had fallen asleep while waiting for Fox to tell him to pull his tail and catch a fish. And Bear was snoring. His snores were so loud that the ice was shaking. It was so funny that Fox rolled with laughter. But when he was through laughing, he decided the time had come to wake up poor Bear. He crept very close to Bear's ear, took a deep breath, and then shouted: "Now, Bear!!!"

Bear woke up with a start and pulled his long tail hard as he could. But his tail had been caught in the ice which had frozen over during the night and as he pulled, it broke off -- Whack! -- just like that. Bear turned around to look at the fish he had caught and instead saw his long lovely tail caught in the ice.

"Ohhh," he moaned, "ohhh, Fox. I will get you for this." But Fox, even though he was laughing fit to kill was still faster than Bear and he leaped aside and was gone.

So it is that even to this day Bears have short tails and no love at all for Fox. And if you ever hear a bear moaning, it is probably because he remembers the trick Fox played on him long ago and he is mourning for his lost tail.

The Old Man and the Bear

Russian Folktale

www.folklore.mashaholl.com/AnimalTales.html

The old man went to the forest to sow some turnip seeds. He plowed and worked hard. Then the bear came up:

"Old man, I'll break your back."

"Don't break my back, good bear, let's sow the turnips together instead. I'll just take the roots, you can have all the tops."

"So be it," the bear said. "But if you try to trick me, don't you dare show yourself in my forest!"

Having said this, he went away deep into the forest.

The turnips grew to good size. In the fall, the old man arrived to harvest the turnips. No sooner did he reach the field that the bear came out of the forest.

"Old man, let's divide up the turnips, give me my share."

"All right good bear, let's share: you take the tops, I take the roots."

The old man gave all the greens to the bear, and loaded all the turnips in the cart and took it to the city to sell it.

The bear came towards him.

"Old man, where are you going?"

"I'm going to the city, good bear, to sell the roots."

"Let me taste those roots."

The old man gave the bear a turnip. No sooner had the bear eaten the turnip that he roared:

"*Aahrgh!* Old man, you tricked me! Your roots are sweet! Now don't you dare fetch wood from the forest, or I'll break your back!"

The following year, the old man sowed rye in that same field. When he returned to harvest it, the bear was waiting for him.

"You won't fool me twice, old man, give me my share!"

The old man said: "So be it. Take the roots, good bear, and I'll just take the tops."

They harvested the rye. The old man gave the roots to the bear, and loaded the rye into his cart and took it home.

The bear tried to chew on the roots this way, and that way, but got nothing out of them.

He became very angry at the old man, and from then on, there was great enmity between bears and men.