

## The Fox Without His Tail

A fox that had been caught in a trap succeeded at last, after much painful tugging, in getting away. But he had to leave his beautiful bushy tail behind him. For a long time, he kept away from the other foxes, for he knew well enough that they would all make fun of him and crack jokes and laugh behind his back. But it was hard for him to live alone, and at last, he thought of a plan that would perhaps help him out of his trouble. He called a meeting of all the foxes, saying that he had something of great importance to tell the tribe. When they were all gathered together, the fox without a tail got up and made a long speech about those foxes who had come to harm because of their tails. This one had been caught by hounds when his tail had become entangled in the hedge. That one had not been able to run fast enough because of the weight of his brush. Besides, it was well known, he said, that men hunt foxes simply for their tails, which they cut off as prizes of the hunt. With such proof of the danger and uselessness of having a tail, said Master Fox, he would advise every fox to cut it off if he valued life and safety. When he had finished talking, an old fox arose and said, smiling, "Master Fox, kindly turn around for a moment, and you shall have your answer." When the poor fox without a tail turned around, there arose such a storm of jeers and hooting that he saw how useless it was to try any longer to persuade the foxes to part with their tails.

**Moral:** A wise person considers the motive of someone giving advice.

## The Ant and the Chrysalis

An ant nimbly running about in the sunshine in search of food came across a chrysalis that was very near its time of changing. The chrysalis moved its tail and thus attracted the attention of the ant, who then saw for the first time that it was alive. "Poor, pitiable animal!" cried the ant disdainfully. "What a sad fate is yours! While I can run hither and thither at my pleasure and, if I wish, ascend the tallest tree, you lie imprisoned here in your shell with power only to move a joint or two of your scaly tail."

The chrysalis heard all this but did not try to make any reply. A few days after, when the ant passed that way again, nothing but the shell remained. Wondering what had become of its contents, he felt himself suddenly shaded and fanned by the gorgeous wings of a beautiful butterfly. "Behold your much-pitied friend!" said the butterfly, "Boast now of your powers to run and climb as long as you can get me to listen." So saying, the butterfly rose in the air and, borne along and aloft on the summer breeze, was soon lost to the sight of the ant forever.

**Moral:** Pity is often misplaced.

## The Fox, the Rooster, and the Dog

A dog and a rooster, who were the best of friends, wished very much to see something of the world. So they decided to leave the farmyard and set out into the world along the road that led to the woods. The two comrades traveled along in the very best of spirits and did not meet any adventure to speak of. At nightfall, the rooster (looking for a place to roost, as was his custom) spied a hollow tree nearby that he thought would do very nicely for a night's lodging. The dog could creep inside and the rooster would fly up on one of the branches. So said, so done, and both slept very comfortably. With the first glimmer of dawn, the rooster awoke. For the moment, he forgot where he was. He thought he was still in the farmyard, where it had been his duty to arouse the household at daybreak. Standing on tiptoe, he flapped his wings and crowed lustily. But instead of awakening the farmer, he awakened a fox not far off in the wood. The fox immediately had rosy visions of a very delicious breakfast. Hurrying to the tree where the rooster was roosting, he said very politely, "A hearty welcome to our woods, honored sir. I cannot tell you how glad I am to see you here. I am quite sure we shall become the closest of friends."

"I feel highly flattered, kind sir," replied the rooster slyly. "If you will please go around to the door of my house at the foot of the tree, my porter will let you in." The hungry but unsuspecting fox went around the tree as he was told, and in a twinkling, the dog had seized him.

**Moral:** Those who try to deceive may expect to be paid in their own coin.

## The Wolf and the Goat

A hungry wolf spied a goat browsing at the top of a steep cliff where he could not possibly get at her. "That is a very dangerous place for you," he called out, pretending to be very anxious about the goat's safety. "What if you should fall? Please listen to me and come down! Here you can get all you want of the finest, tenderest grass in the country."

The goat looked over the edge of the cliff. "How very, very anxious you are about me," she said, "and how generous you are with your grass! But I know you! It's your own appetite you are thinking of, not mine!"

**Moral:** An invitation prompted by selfishness is not to be accepted.

## The Lamb and the Wolf

A stray lamb stood drinking early one morning on the bank of a woodland stream. That very same morning, a hungry wolf came by further up the stream, hunting for something to eat. He soon got his eyes on the lamb. As a rule, Mr. Wolf snapped up such delicious morsels without making any bones about it, but this lamb looked so very helpless and innocent that the wolf felt he ought to have some kind of an excuse for taking its life. "How dare you paddle around in my stream and stir up all the mud!" he shouted fiercely. "You deserve to be punished severely for your rashness!"

"But, your highness," replied the trembling lamb, "do not be angry! I cannot possibly muddy the water you are drinking up there. Remember, you are upstream and I am downstream."

"You do muddy it!" retorted the wolf savagely. "And besides, I have heard that you told lies about me last year!"

"How could I have done so?" pleaded the lamb. "I wasn't born until this year."

"If it wasn't you, it was your brother!"

"I have no brothers."

"Well, then," snarled the wolf, "it was someone in your family anyway. But no matter who it was, I do not intend to be talked out of my breakfast." And without more words, the wolf seized the poor lamb and carried her off to the forest.

**Moral:** The tyrant can always find an excuse for his tyranny.