



The Cunning Fox

ONE day a fox went roaming through the forest in search of food. After many hours, he became quite tired and sat under a tree to rest. So tired was he that he was just about to fall asleep when he was startled by the sound of something falling not far off.

"What can that be?" he said to himself.

He pulled himself up and walked quietly around a clump of bushes. There, lying on the ground before him, was a dead elephant.

"Today must be my lucky day," said the fox as he went closer.

The poisoned tip of a hunter's spear was still stuck in the elephant's head. The fox looked to the left and to the right, he looked this way and that way but no hunter was in sight. So, very quickly, he went right up to the dead elephant and began to tug at the

broken spear with all his might. At last he managed to rip it out of the elephant's tough skin. He sat down for a moment to catch his breath before going to have his fill of elephant meat.

But poor Mr. Fox! He could not bite through the thick skin of the elephant. Even though he was very hungry, he was even more tired and soon he became so exhausted that he gave up trying altogether. While he was sitting there, next to the elephant's dead body and wondering what he could do, he saw a lion approaching. An idea came to him immediately

"Good day, great king," said the fox, "you are truly the king of the forest. I heard that you were passing this way. Please do me the honour of sharing my meal."

"I can see that you are a very kind fox," said the lion, "but I eat only the meat of animals that I have killed myself. Please don't be offended but I must be on my way. Good day."

With these words, the lion walked proudly on his way while the fox was left standing with his dead elephant. His plan had failed. Not long after a tiger came striding through the jungle. The fox was afraid that the tiger might want the elephant all for himself.



He decided to send the tiger on his way as quickly as possible.

The tiger came up to the dead elephant and started to sniff and lick at the blood on the elephant's head. The fox saw this. Anxiously, the fox ran up to the tiger and whispered something in his ear. The tiger raised his head quickly and spun around excitedly, looking in all directions.

"Where is he?" asked the tiger.

"Didn't you see him bathing in the river?" inquired the fox.

"I passed the other way," replied the tiger.

"He's probably on his way back now," said the fox. "He asked me to take care of this elephant for him while he took a bath. I think, maybe he wanted to meet you."

"Why would he want to meet me?" asked the tiger. "Lion is my enemy. Don't you know that?"

"But lion asked me to let him know at once if a tiger passed this way," said the fox.

"You can tell him that I passed. But you will also have to tell him that I have gone," was the tiger's hurried reply as he disappeared into the forest.

So the fox was able to get rid of the tiger but he was still hungry and getting hungrier all the time. How could he get someone to help him tear through the tough skin of the elephant? While he was thinking about this problem, he saw a leopard coming his way.

"Good day, my friend," said the fox, "how do you feel today? You look quite thin and hungry."

"You speak the truth," said the leopard. "I am not only hungry, I also feel quite weak. I haven't eaten well for many days."

"Maybe I can help you," said the fox. "The lion killed this elephant and he has left me to watch over it until he returns. Come, eat as much as you want

from it."

"But what if the lion comes and catches me eating his meat? He would surely kill me," said the leopard. "No! No! I think that I'll have to do without this elephant meat today."

"Have no fear," the fox told him, "I'll stand guard. If I see the lion coming, I'll warn you in time for you to escape safely."

The leopard was very hungry and was willing to take the chance. He sprang on to the elephant and started to tear at the tough skin with his strong, sharp teeth. The fox stood at the side watching carefully. As



soon as the elephant's skin was properly torn, the fox shouted, "The lion is coming! Run quickly! Run before he comes!"

The leopard jumped up from the elephant's body and raced into the forest as fast as he could, licking his lips as he ran. He never got the chance to eat any of the meat. The fox was the only one to enjoy the delicious elephant meat. He had a great feast all by himself and, for many days, he was never in need of food.

