

Saved by Common Sense

DEEP in the forest one day, a male fox was chasing after a deer, hoping to catch some food for his dinner. As he was running, his foot got caught in a hunter's trap. He fell headlong into a clump of bushes. The fox tried and tried to get his foot loose but no matter how much he tried, his foot remained stuck fast. Finally, he realized he could not get out on his own and he began to call for help.

A female fox, who was passing by, heard his cries for help and came running to find him. "Oh my!" she said when she saw him, "look what trouble you've got yourself into, Mr. Fox!"

"Stop standing there talking and see if you can help me get my foot out before the hunter returns!" the fox shouted crossly.

"You'd better watch your tongue or I may just



walk away and leave you right there!" the female fox replied, annoyed at the way in which Mr. Fox had spoken to her.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry," Mr. Fox stated, not really sounding as if he were sorry.

"All right then, I'll see what I can do." Miss Fox went in search of a stout piece of wood with which she could force open the trap.

Within a few minutes, Mr. Fox was standing on one foot, rubbing the other foot and groaning as if he were in the greatest pain. "Aah! Aah! How am I ever going to hunt for my dinner now?" he complained. "I shall starve to death for I have no-one to take care of me." He said this, slyly watching Miss Fox out of the corner of his eye.

"All right, all right. You can stop all that moaning and groaning now. I'll take you home and look after you until your foot is better," Miss Fox said to Mr. Fox.

"How kind you are! I don't know what I would have done without you," Mr. Fox smiled at her. Using the same stick which had opened the trap, Mr. Fox hobbled alongside Miss Fox as she led the way home.



Days passed and Mr. Fox was content to remain with Miss Fox. Every day she would rub his foot with a special ointment she had made from crushed leaves. And every day Mr. Fox would lie in the shade outside Miss Fox's hole, relaxing, while she went out looking for food.

As his foot got better, Mr. Fox returned to his old self. He quite forgot how helpless he had been with his foot caught in the trap. He forgot too that it was Miss Fox's quick thinking that had saved his life. All he could think about now and talk about too was how clever and smart he was. He boasted that he

would be able to do so many brave deeds if only he could walk properly. Miss Fox would shake her head and smile to herself when she heard Mr. Fox talking in this way.

One day, as Mr. Fox was lying in his usual spot, he said to Miss Fox, "Well, Miss Fox, we've known each other for some time now. What about raising a family together? I am very smart and know many things. You have shown me that, even if you are not as smart as I, at least you have common sense. Together we can have some fine children."

Miss Fox agreed. And, indeed, after some years had passed, they had many fine children.

One evening, the two foxes and their children were roaming the forest in search of dinner. They came upon a lion's cave. This lion was a very fierce lion who used to attack the neighbouring village every day. He would kill their cattle for food. On this particular evening, the lion was not around but the bones of animals he had eaten were scattered about the cave. The fox family decided to stay awhile and feed on the scraps of meat which they found inside the cave.

While they were eating, they heard the lion

coming in the distance. "The lion is coming. He's going to catch us here. What shall we do?" said Mr. Fox trembling.

"Well, you're the smart one. You tell us what to do," Mrs. Fox told her husband.

"I can't think. All my senses have gone away. There is no hope!" cried Mr. Fox.

"Calm down, calm down," said Mrs. Fox. "Just listen to me and do as I say."

They could hear the lion getting nearer and nearer. Mrs. Fox went and whispered a few words in Mr. Fox's ear. He listened carefully, nodding his head.



in agreement. When the lion was within hearing distance, Mrs. Fox took hold of her children and began to beat them one by one. All at once, the forest echoed with the howling of the young foxes.

"Why are you beating the children like that? What have they done?" asked Mr. Fox.

Shouting above the cries of her young ones, Mrs. Fox replied, "They're only bothering me for fresh lion meat. They're hungry. But they say they are tired of eating stale lion meat."

"Well, I don't blame them. I myself can do with some fresh meat. Stop beating the children. Let's see if we can find some fresh meat for everyone."

"Come on," Mrs. Fox said. "I think I smell a lion nearby."

The lion, meanwhile, had been listening to the conversation between the two foxes. When he heard what Mrs. Fox said, he stopped dead in his tracks. He quietly turned around and ran back at top speed in the direction from which he had come.

And so, common sense proved smarter than all the other senses put together.

