



Learn English Through Stories

**Adapted and modified by**

**Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

<https://learn-by-reading.co.uk>

## **Contents**

**16. The Stag and His Reflection**

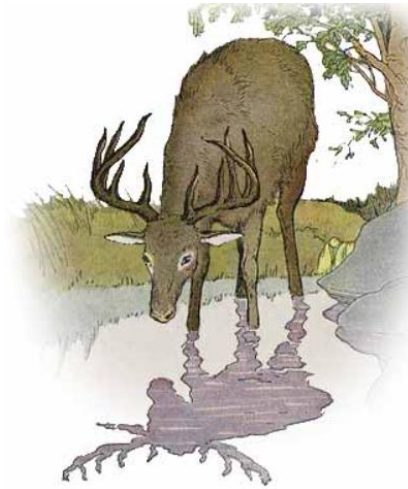
**17. The Cock and the Fox**

**18. The Fox and the Goat**

**19. The Fox and the Leopard**

**20. The Frog and the Mouse**

## 16. The Stag and His Reflection



A Stag, drinking from a crystal spring, saw himself mirrored in the clear water. He greatly admired the graceful arch of his antlers, but he was very much ashamed of his spindling legs.

"How can it be," he sighed, "that I should be cursed with such legs when I have so magnificent a crown."

At that moment he scented a panther and in an instant was bounding away through the forest. But as he ran his wide-spreading antlers caught in the branches of the trees, and soon the Panther overtook him. Then the Stag perceived that the legs of which he was so ashamed would have saved him had it not been for the useless ornaments on his head.

*We often make much of the ornamental and despise the useful.*

## The Stag and His Reflection – Version 2

There once lived a proud stag. While wandering in the forest, he came upon a pond. He stopped there to drink water in order to quench his thirst. As he bent down, he saw his own reflection in the water. "How beautiful are my antlers!" he thought, admiring its long curves.

As the stag was admiring his antlers, he suddenly noticed his legs. "Ohh! Look at my skinny legs. I cannot believe God has given me both beautiful antlers and such ugly legs," he thought. The proud stag now felt ashamed of his legs. His pride vanished. "These ugly legs are no match for my beautiful antlers," he thought.

Just then the stag heard the roar of a lion. When he turned around he saw a lion charging at him. "Oh no!" Screamed the stag and ran as fast as he could.

The stag felt the lion's breath close to him, "I must get into the densest part of the forest where there are many branches. The lion will not be able to catch me in that part of the forest," thought the stag.

So, with this thought in mind, the stag ran into an area where there were many bushes and branches. Soon the stag had left the lion far behind.

"Ah, I outsmarted the lion," thought the stag proudly. But all of a sudden his antlers got entangled between the trunks of two trees standing close to each other. "Aaarghh!" cried the stag, as he had to stop at once.

The more he tried to free himself, the more difficult it became. As the stag was struggling to get free, the lion came nearer and nearer.

"How I praised my horns and cursed my legs. Now I know the real value of my legs which almost took me to safety," wailed the stag.

The lion pounced on the stag and killed him. That was the end of the proud stag.

## 17. The Cock and the Fox



One bright evening as the sun was sinking on a glorious world a wise old Cock flew into a tree to roost. Before he composed himself to rest, he flapped his wings three times and crowed loudly. But just as he was about to put his head under his wing, his beady eyes caught a flash of red and a glimpse of a long pointed nose, and there just below him stood Master Fox.

"Have you heard the wonderful news?" cried the Fox in a very joyful and excited manner.

"What news?" asked the Cock very calmly. But he had a queer, fluttery feeling inside him, for, you know, he was very much afraid of the Fox.

"Your family and mine and all other animals have agreed to forget their differences and live in peace and friendship from now on forever. Just think of it! I simply cannot wait to embrace you! Do come down, dear friend, and let us celebrate the joyful event."

"How grand!" said the Cock. "I certainly am delighted at the news." But he spoke in an absent way, and stretching up on tiptoes, seemed to be looking at something afar off.

"What is it you see?" asked the Fox a little anxiously.

"Why, it looks to me like a couple of Dogs coming this way. They must have heard the good news and—"

But the Fox did not wait to hear more. Off he started on a run.

"Wait," cried the Cock. "Why do you run? The Dogs are friends of yours now!"

"Yes," answered the Fox. "But they might not have heard the news. Besides, I have a very important errand that I had almost forgotten about."

The Cock smiled as he buried his head in his feathers and went to sleep, for he had succeeded in outwitting a very crafty enemy.

*Sometimes, the trickster is easily tricked.*

## The Cock and the Fox – Version 2

Once upon a time, there was a farm near a forest. The owner was a farmer who took care of his animals. The forest was infested by predators, and the farmer had to put traps to save his animals.

One morning when the sun was still sleeping, a fox came close to the farm. From a distance, he saw a cock resting on the top of the chicken coop. He planned to attack and kill the cock. He thought it was a lucky day.

He closely approached the perimeter of the farm. He checked his surroundings and waited for the right time. The moment he was going to pounce, he stepped on a trap set by the farmer. He shrieked in pain.

The cock was sleeping peacefully but woke up when the fox sounded in pain. The fox tried not to wake the farmer as it would be his last day.

The cock saw the fox was trapped. He approached closer to the fox and made sure it was true.

The cunning fox said, hiding his pain, "Good morning, Mr Rooster! How have you been? The cock was not anyone to be fooled.

He said, "I am fine. It seems you are in a sticky position! What happened?"

The fox replied, "Oh, this? I was going to visit my cousin. He lives near this farm close to the forest."

The cock said, "So, what are you doing here?" The fox replied, "This is the shortest route to go to his house. He is not well. I was going to take care of him."

The fox continued, "As you can see, I have been trapped here. I mistakenly stepped into this trap. Can you please release me so I can go to my cousin and take care of him?"

The cock said, "Why should I listen to you? You have killed chickens and pigs before on the farm. I have seen you. Why should I trust you?"

The fox replied, "I am changed now. Please don't wake up your master. I promise I will not harm anyone anymore."

The rooster did not listen to the fox. He went inside the farm closer to his master's bedroom and said, "Cock-a-doodle-do! Wake up, master. There is a surprise waiting for you in the trap."

The master woke up and came outside hurriedly. He found the notorious fox trapped. It was this fox who had been killing animals on the farm every day. The fox did not live to see the sunrise.

### **Moral of the Story**

The Rooster and the Fox Story moral explains that we should not trust someone with a bad reputation. No matter how much one acts like a saint, we should understand the intention and be alert. The fox did have a bad intention but wanted to fool the cock.

## 18. The Fox and the Goat



A Fox fell into a well, and though it was not very deep, he found that he could not get out again. After he had been in the well a long time, a thirsty Goat came by. The Goat thought the Fox had gone down to drink, and so he asked if the water was good.

"The finest in the whole country," said the crafty Fox, "jump in and try it. There is more than enough for both of us."

The thirsty Goat immediately jumped in and began to drink. The Fox just as quickly jumped on the Goat's back and leaped from the tip of the Goat's horns out of the well

The foolish Goat now saw what a plight he had got into, and begged the Fox to help him out. But the Fox was already on his way to the woods

"If you had as much sense as you have beard, old fellow," he said as he ran, "you would have been more cautious about finding a way to get out again before you jumped in."

*AS they say:*

*Look before you leap.*



# The Fox and the Goat – Version 2

By Lavinia Murray

One day a rather clever Fox went out for a stroll. The sun was shining, clouds bumped along in the sky and - well, better than that - the great cloud shadows raced across the fields.

‘Whoo hooo!’ barked the Fox as he chased after them. ‘What fun! It’s a very good day to be a Fox.’

The not quite looking where he was going Fox laughed and - whoops! splish! splash! - Fox fell into a well that he just hadn’t noticed.

That’s all right! I’ll jump back out again. Look at me, I can leap over hedges and fences and sleeping dogs! I’m the best jumper there ever was!’ said the rather hopeful Fox.

However, the walls of the well were much too high. They were also slippery with moss. So, a rather soggy Fox doggy-paddled to and fro and tried to come up with another plan. After he had swum one hundred times around the well, and back again, the rather tired Fox had to admit he was trapped.

‘I never thought I’d end up down here,’ he sighed. ‘No more racing in the sunlight and chasing shadows for me!’ And a rather sad Fox floated quietly in a patch of water that reflected the sky. Just then a goat’s head appeared over the edge of the well.

‘Hello,’ she bleated. ‘I thought I heard a voice. What are you doing?’

‘Hello,’ said the rather quick-thinking Fox. ‘Actually, I’m having a wonderful time. This is the best water in the whole wide world. Drinking it makes you happy, paddling in it makes you healthy - and it tastes delicious! It’s wonderful!’

Fox smiled and dipped his face into the water and blew bubbles. Then drank and drank and drank.

‘Oh, where are my manners,’ Fox said as the Goat leaned down, stretched her neck, stuck out her tongue and tried her hardest to reach the water.

‘Would you like some?’

‘Yes, please,’ said the Goat.

‘Well jump straight in and help yourself. I’ll move over here so there’s room for two.

‘I am very thirsty,’ said the Goat. ‘I’ve just eaten thistles!’ And in she leapt.

‘Slurp, gargle, gulp,’ went the Goat. ‘This water is perfect - cool and sweet and delicious. Thank you for letting me share it. Now I’ll be off, there are lots of thistles waiting to be munched.’ Then the Goat looked up and frowned.

‘Excuse me for asking, Fox, but how do we get out of here?’

The Fox pretended to think about it for a minute, then clicked his paws. ‘I know, lean up against the side of the well and I’ll climb up your back, onto your shoulders then step on your head and I’ll be out.’

‘Ohhhh what a good idea! You are clever,’ said the Goat, standing on her hind legs and leaning against the mossy well wall. ‘There you are, my friend - a goat ladder!’

‘Ups-a-daisy!’ the Fox giggled as he scrambled out of the well. Then he shook his coat. Water flew off him and the warm sunlight made his fur steam. ‘Hello sky!’ he cried and chased his tail before running off across the wide, green field.

‘Hello?’ bleated the Goat. ‘What about me? How do I get out?’

Fox shouted back over his shoulder, ‘You should have thought about that before you jumped in!’

‘Wait!’ wailed the Goat.

‘It was good to see you but I wouldn’t want to be you!’ the rather clever Fox sang, as he followed a cloud shadow over the hill.

## 19. The Fox and the Leopard



A Fox and a Leopard, resting lazily after a generous dinner, amused themselves by disputing about their good looks. The Leopard was very proud of his glossy, spotted coat and made disdainful remarks about the Fox, whose appearance he declared was quite ordinary.

The Fox prided himself on his fine bushy tail with its tip of white, but he was wise enough to see that he could not rival the Leopard in looks. Still he kept up a flow of sarcastic talk, just to exercise his wits and to have the fun of disputing. The Leopard was about to lose his temper when the Fox got up, yawning lazily.

"You may have a very smart coat," he said, "but you would be a great deal better off if you had a little more smartness inside your head and less on your ribs, the way I am. That's what I call real beauty."

*A fine coat is not always an indication of an attractive mind.*

## The Fox and the Leopard – Version 2

Once upon a time, in a lush forest, lived a cunning Fox and a proud Leopard. They were neighbours, but they often argued about who was more beautiful.

The Leopard boasted about his sleek, spotted coat, strutting around and showing it off. He made fun of the Fox's ordinary appearance, calling him dull and plain.

The Fox, though not as flashy as the Leopard, was known for his cleverness and wit. He listened patiently to the Leopard's bragging, then calmly replied, "My dear Leopard, your coat may be beautiful, but true beauty lies not just in appearance but also in intelligence and wisdom."

The Leopard, taken aback, retorted, "What do you mean? My coat is the envy of the forest! Everyone admires me."

The Fox smiled knowingly and said, "While your coat is indeed striking, it's what's inside that truly matters. A beautiful mind and a kind heart are far more valuable than just a pretty face."

The Leopard, starting to understand the Fox's point, asked, "So, you think being clever and wise is more important than being physically attractive?"

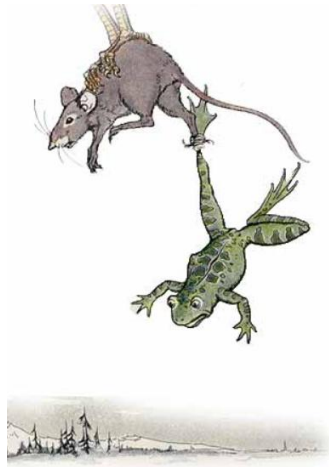
"Absolutely," replied the Fox. "A sharp mind and a good heart will take you far in life, while mere beauty fades with time."

The Leopard pondered the Fox's words and realized that he had been too focused on his appearance. He apologized to the Fox for his boasting and promised to value intelligence and kindness more.

From that day on, the Fox and the Leopard became good friends, respecting each other's unique qualities. They learned that true beauty comes from within, and that a kind heart and a sharp mind are the most attractive qualities of all.

**Moral:** True beauty lies not only in physical appearance but also in intelligence, wit, and wisdom. A sharp mind and a kind heart make one truly beautiful, regardless of their outward appearance. And also, beauty is only skin deep.

## 20. The Frog and the Mouse



A young Mouse in search of adventure was running along the bank of a pond where a Frog lived. When the Frog saw the Mouse, he swam to the bank and croaked:

"Won't you pay me a visit? I can promise you a good time if you do."

The Mouse did not need much coaxing, for he was very anxious to see the world and everything in it. But though he could swim a little, he did not dare risk going into the pond without some help.

The Frog had a plan. He tied the Mouse's leg to his own with a tough string. Then into the pond he jumped, dragging his foolish companion with him. The Mouse soon had enough of it and wanted to return to shore; but the treacherous Frog had other plans. He pulled the Mouse down under the water and drowned him. But before he could untie the string that bound him to the dead Mouse, a Hawk came sailing over the pond. Seeing the body of the Mouse floating on the water, the Hawk swooped down, seized the Mouse and carried it off, with the Frog dangling from its leg. Thus at one swoop he had caught both meat and fish for his dinner.

*Those who seek to harm others often come to harm themselves through their own deceit.*

## The Frog and the Mouse – Version 2

Once upon a time, a mouse and a frog were close friends. The frog often visited the mouse at his home and they both shared the food and provisions the mouse had stocked in abundance.

One day, the frog invited the mouse to his house. “Dear Mouse, I come to your house all the time. Now, I invite you to mine!” “I would love to — my dear friend,” the mouse replied, “but your house is across the stream. I don’t know how to swim and I am afraid I will drown.”

“Don’t worry, I have a plan. You can climb on my back and I can tie you to me with a strong blade of grass. That way, you will be safe to cross the stream,” said the frog. To this, the mouse immediately agreed and they set forth.

Halfway across the stream, however, the frog started to get wicked thoughts. “If I were to let the mouse drown, I can get all his food stock and never have to worry about being hungry for a long, long time!” the frog thought. So, the wicked frog dove for the bottom of the stream.

The mouse realizing too late the betrayal of the frog started to cry for help. “Help me! Help me!” cried the mouse. A hawk flying above the stream saw the scene and swooped down upon the mouse. The hawk picked him up with its beak and started to fly high into the sky. The frog tied to the mouse was also taken away.

The frog realized his mistake. In his greed to get more food, he had not only his good friend, the mouse down but also put his own life into danger.

**WE MUST NOT TRY TO TAKE AWAY THE THINGS WHICH IS NOT OURS.**