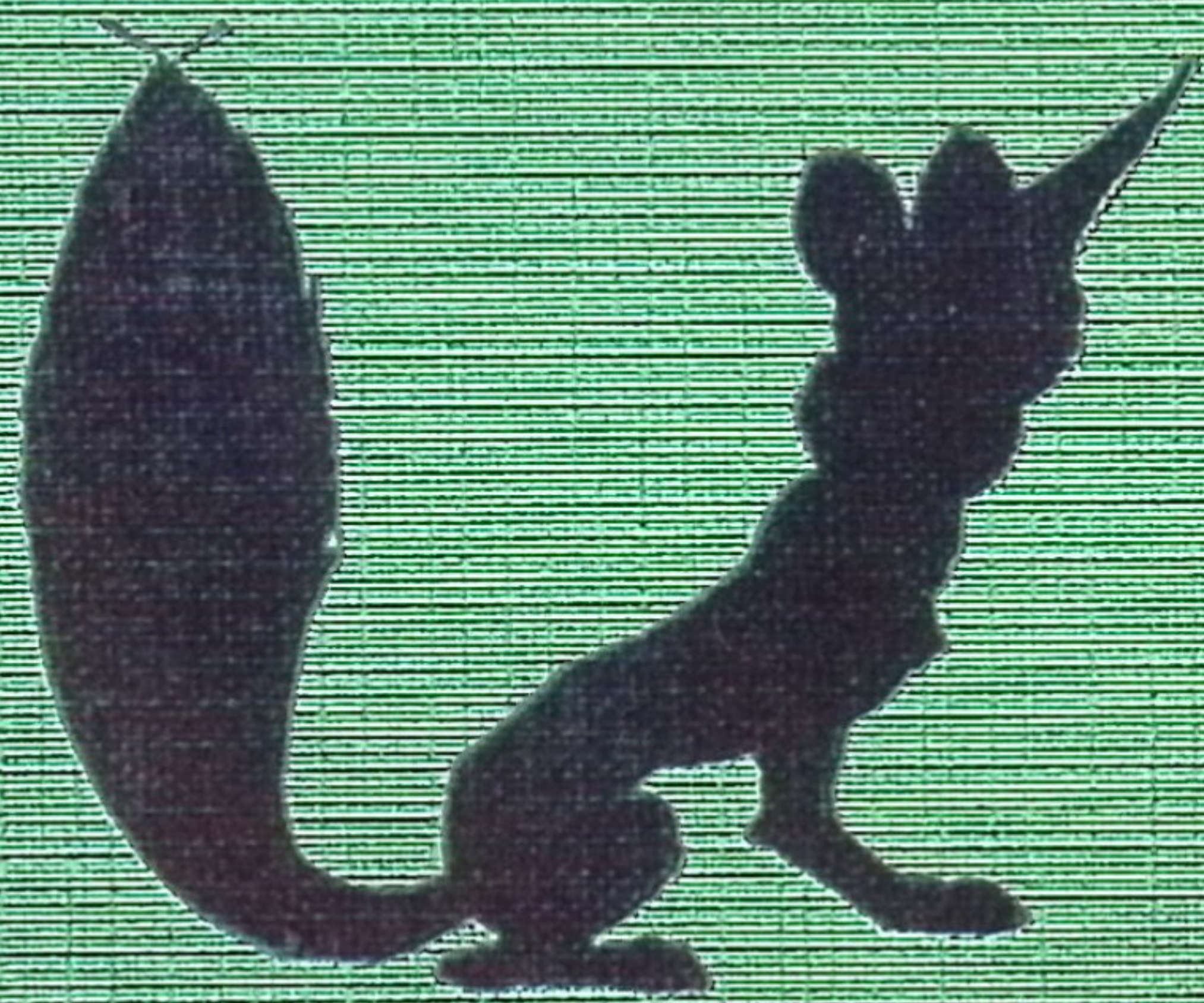


THE STORY OF



REYNARD THE FOX



Barbara Smith

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1st  
thru



THE STORY  
OF REYNARD THE FOX



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"Cock-a-doodle-doo-oo-oo!"

# *The Story of Reynard the Fox*

*Translated from the French  
Version by Odette Larrieu*



PICTURES BY F. LORIOUX

New York  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

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Set up and electrotyped.  
Published, May, 1928.

Printed in the United States of America by  
THE STRATFORD PRESS, INC.

## CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. A WORD ABOUT OUR HERO . . . . .	1
II. CHANTICLEER . . . . .	13
III. THE ADVENTURE OF THE EELS . . . . .	31
IV. TYBERT THE CAT . . . . .	51
V. THE HAYCOCK . . . . .	69
VI. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL . . . . .	87
VII. THE LION AND THE WOLF . . . . .	107
VIII. BRUIN'S ADVENTURE . . . . .	127
IX. REYNARD'S TRIAL . . . . .	149
X. THE DEATH OF COUARD . . . . .	173
XI. THE SECOND TRIAL . . . . .	193
XII. THE FOX HUNT . . . . .	215
XIII. BROWNIE'S REVENGE . . . . .	237



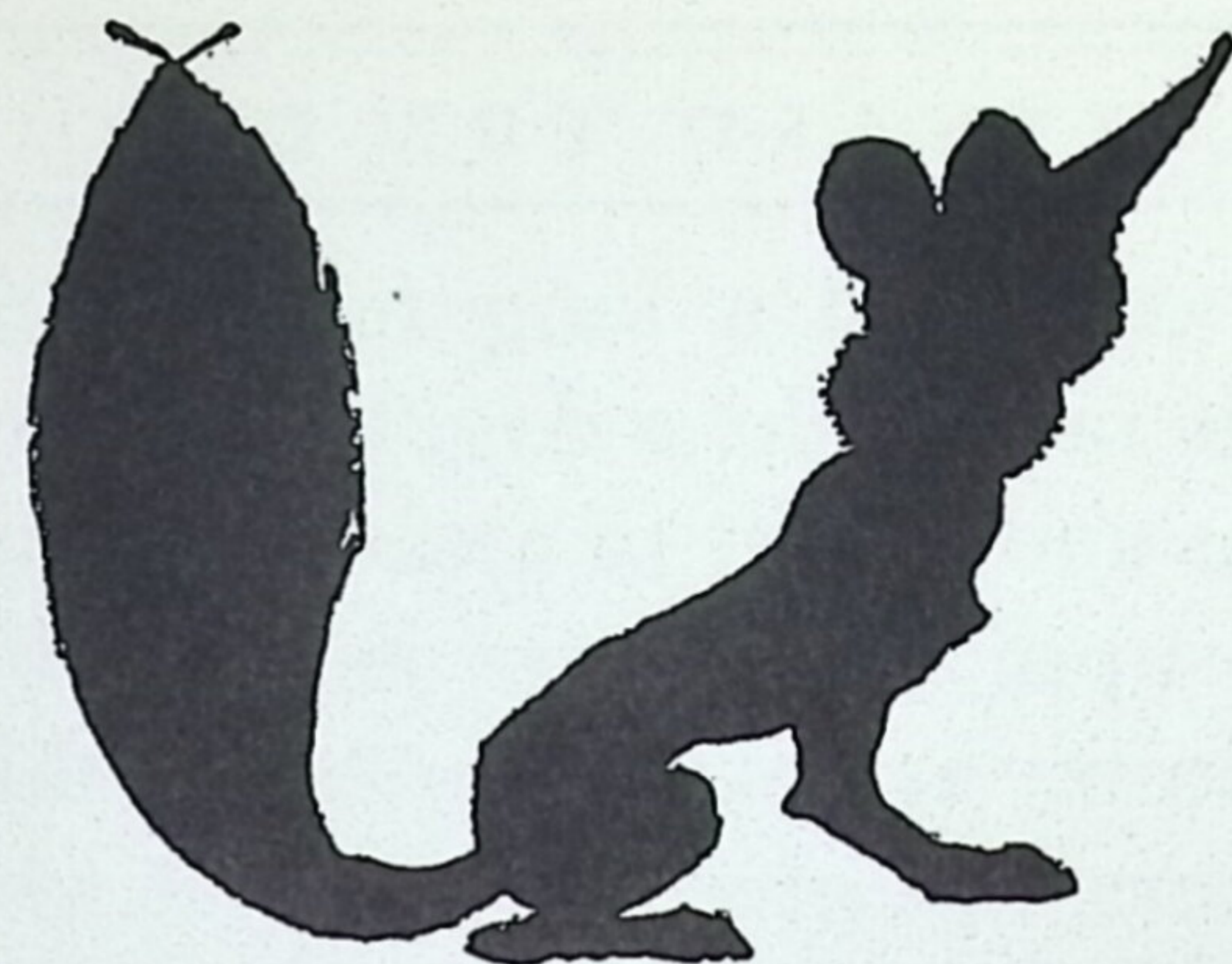
## ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Page</i>
"COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO-OO-OO!" . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
TYBERT STARED DOWN TRIUMPHANTLY AT REYNARD . . . . .	<i>facing</i> 62
"ABOVE ALL, PUSSY, DON'T TOUCH MY CHEESE!" . . . . .	<i>facing</i> 88
"TELL REYNARD TO APPEAR IN COURT" . . . . .	137
HERMELINE AND SHARPNOSE DANCED WITH JOY . . . . .	177
A LARGE AND WEALTHY CASTLE . . . . .	221



THE STORY  
OF REYNARD THE FOX





### A WORD ABOUT OUR HERO

**R**EYNARD, about whom this book has been written, is perhaps the most famous of all wild animals. Poets have sung about him; his craftiness and quick wit have inspired many familiar proverbs. And he is quite an amusing hero of romance. He represents the rogue of the animal world. He is malicious and unscrupulous, and though you may be his friend to-day, he will deceive you to-morrow. He is a beautiful slender creature, with a fine coat of reddish fur and a white chest, pointed



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REYNARD THE FOX

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nose and ears and a long feathery tail. In shape he is rather like a dog, but he has all the suppleness and agility of a cat, and this quickness and suppleness shows itself in his mind also. Nature, as though to favor this spoilt child of hers, has given him a coat which, for his protection, harmonizes with the color of the ground where he lives, so that on the Russian steppes he is tawny yellow; in the desert, the color of the sand; in the polar regions, pure white like the snow. And in our own countryside his color seems to blend so perfectly with the general hue of the woods, especially in fall, with the dead leaves and the rocks, that he can glide almost unseen about the fields and copses where his sober color and light foot save him from detection. Though slender, he is very strong and quick. Let the farmer take good heed to his well-stocked coops and chicken houses, for sooner or later

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A WORD ABOUT OUR HERO

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Reynard is sure to find them out! And as for traps, or for mere blows and beatings, there Reynard is more cunning than you. He will destroy your traps, avoid your blows, recover from his beatings and return again. It is a clever hunter who can catch him. Strength alone will not overcome him, nor can trickery prevail, for in that he is himself a past master.

As for recovering the stolen booty, useless to attempt it. Prudent as he is, he owns more than one burrow; he has several, situated in different places, and in case of alarm the whole family will move readily from one to another. So he takes care to hide his provisions here and there, and in order to find them one might have to dig up the whole neighborhood, for a fox's burrow is not only long and winding and very deep underground, but it will contain many rooms, including a main den and a little separate den for each member of the family, not



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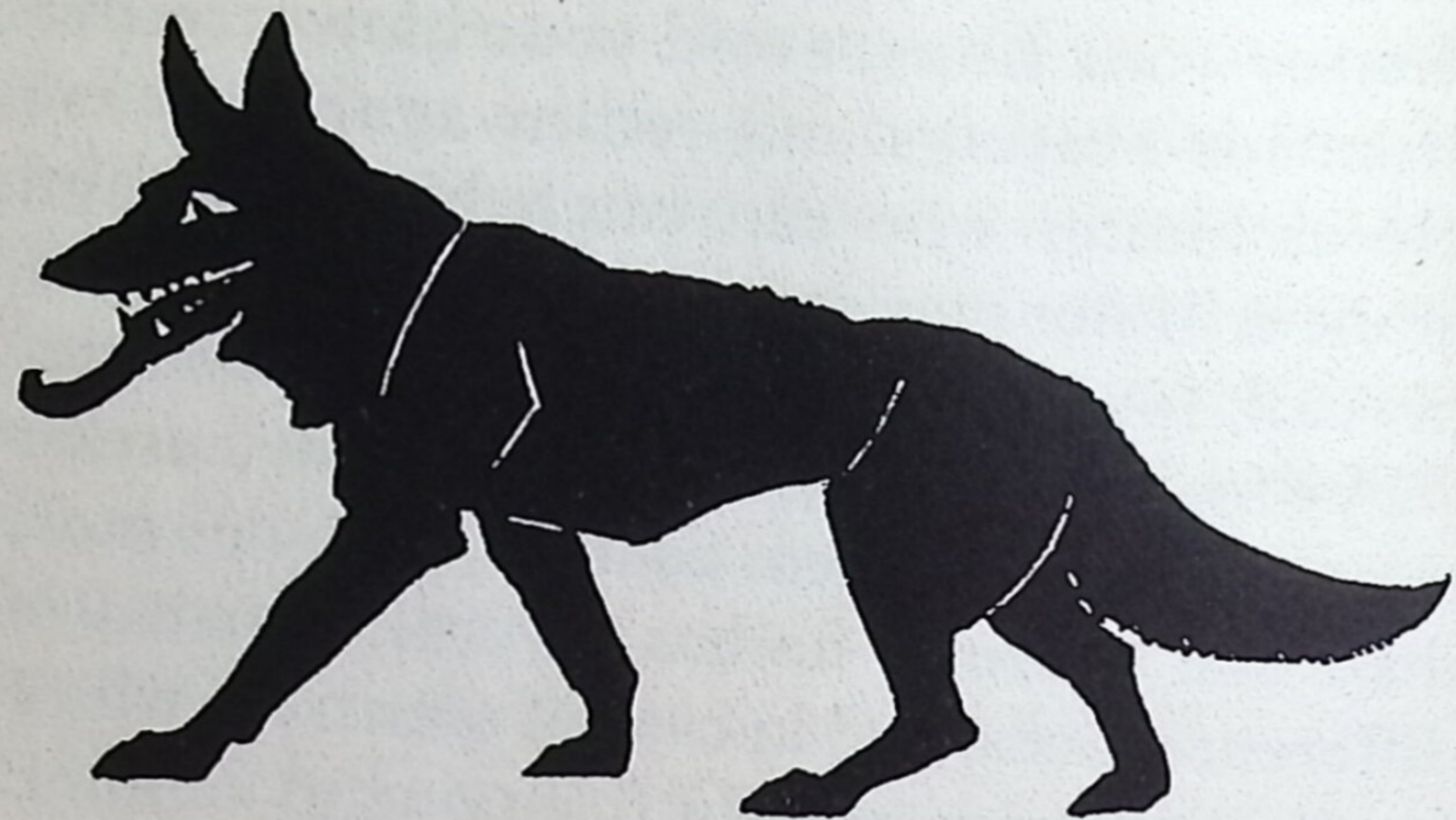
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REYNARD THE FOX

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to mention numerous galleries leading to the different entrances. In fact, foxes' houses are nearly as elaborate as ours.



Farmer and hunter alike wage unceasing war on the fox, and he needs all his cleverness to defend himself. Many are the tales told of his courage and audacity. Foxes are devoted parents and, like other wild animals, will take great risks to protect their young. There is a story how once, when a burrow was destroyed,

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A WORD ABOUT OUR HERO

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a little fox cub was taken prisoner by some peasants, who fastened it by a chain and collar outside their house. The night passed, and next morning they found the fox cub chained up just as they had left him, but with a fine turkey lying in front of him, half eaten! The chicken house had been entered, and several birds stolen. Evidently the parent foxes had come and taken their booty, but before leaving





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## REYNARD THE FOX

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they had been at pains to leave plenty of food for their captive little one.

Such an animal must figure inevitably in popular legend. The tales told over and over again by country folk, tradition and observation, have given rise to many familiar proverbs and by-words. Reynard appears often in literature, and some of the best-known fables concern foxes, as "The Fox Who Lost His Tail," "The Fox and the Grapes," "The Fox and the Stork," and many others.

A great number of these stories had their origin in *THE ROMANCE OF REYNARD*, also known as "The Story of Reynard the Fox."

This *ROMANCE OF REYNARD*, from which the following tales have been adapted, is a collection of short poems—twenty-six in all—written during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They come from various places, including Germany, but they chiefly originated

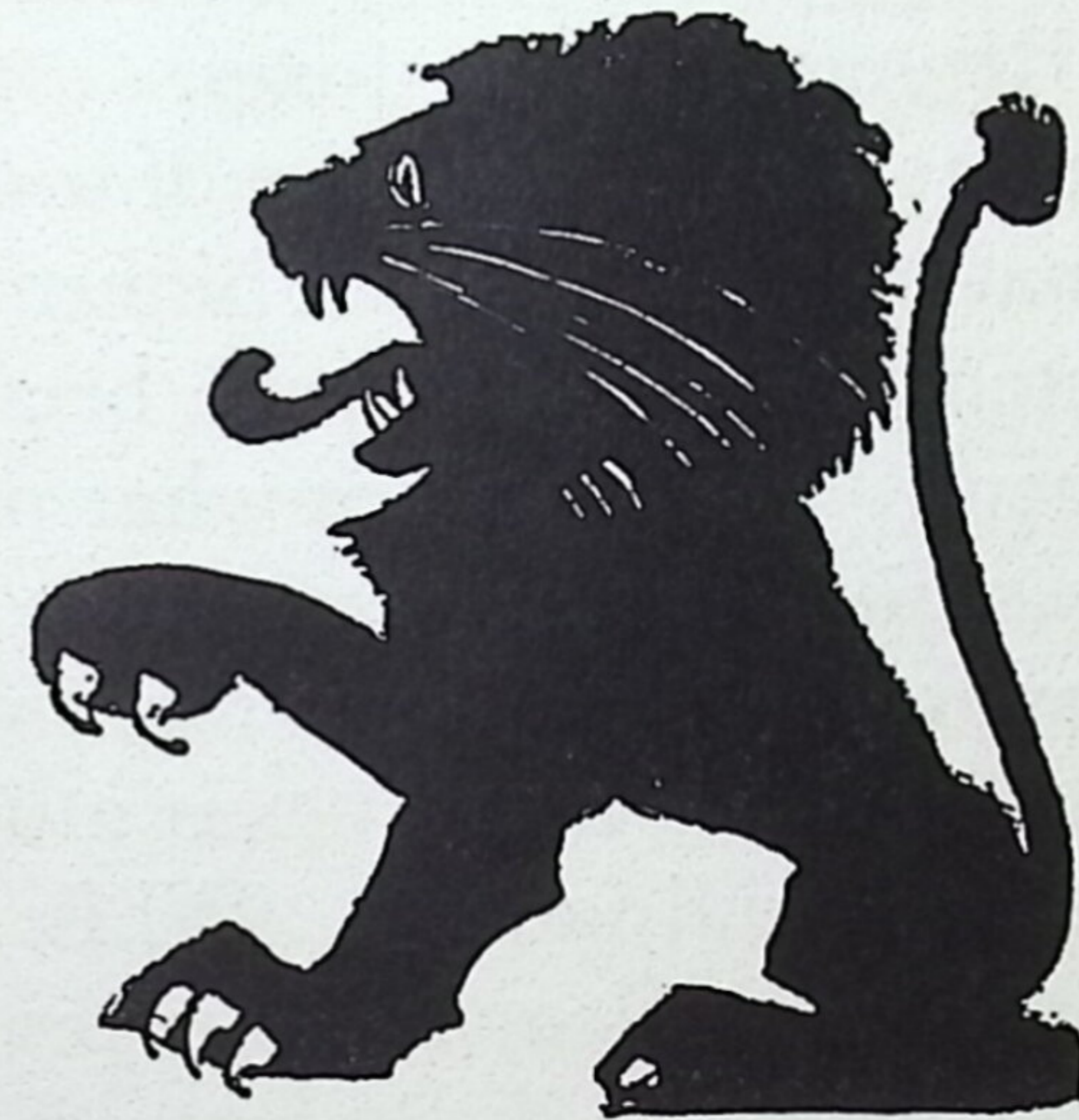
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## A WORD ABOUT OUR HERO

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in French popular legends, whence they were transcribed by early writers, for the most part unknown. Only three authors' names have been traced: Richard de Lison, Pierre de Saint-Cloud, and a certain priest of Croix-en-Brie.



This collection, of which only a few of the tales are here presented, was a book which described an entire animal world, organized on



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REYNARD THE FOX

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the model of human society as it then was. There is the royal court, the lords and the peasants, each animal being represented by a single individual. Thus Noble, the King, represents all the lions, Isengrin, the wolf, all the wolves, Bruin, all the bears, Tybert, all the cats, and our hero, Reynard, all the foxes.

Satire enters into this picture of society, but it is good-natured and without bitterness. The writer's intention seems to have been merely entertainment. He describes what passes before his eyes, and if he notes an abuse here and there it is more in friendliness than in malice.

THE ROMANCE OF REYNARD is a delightful mixture of truth and fantasy. While they are at court, the bear, the leopard, and the cat treat the sheep and mice with the utmost respect; once outside they devour them without remorse. They converse with men, they have a

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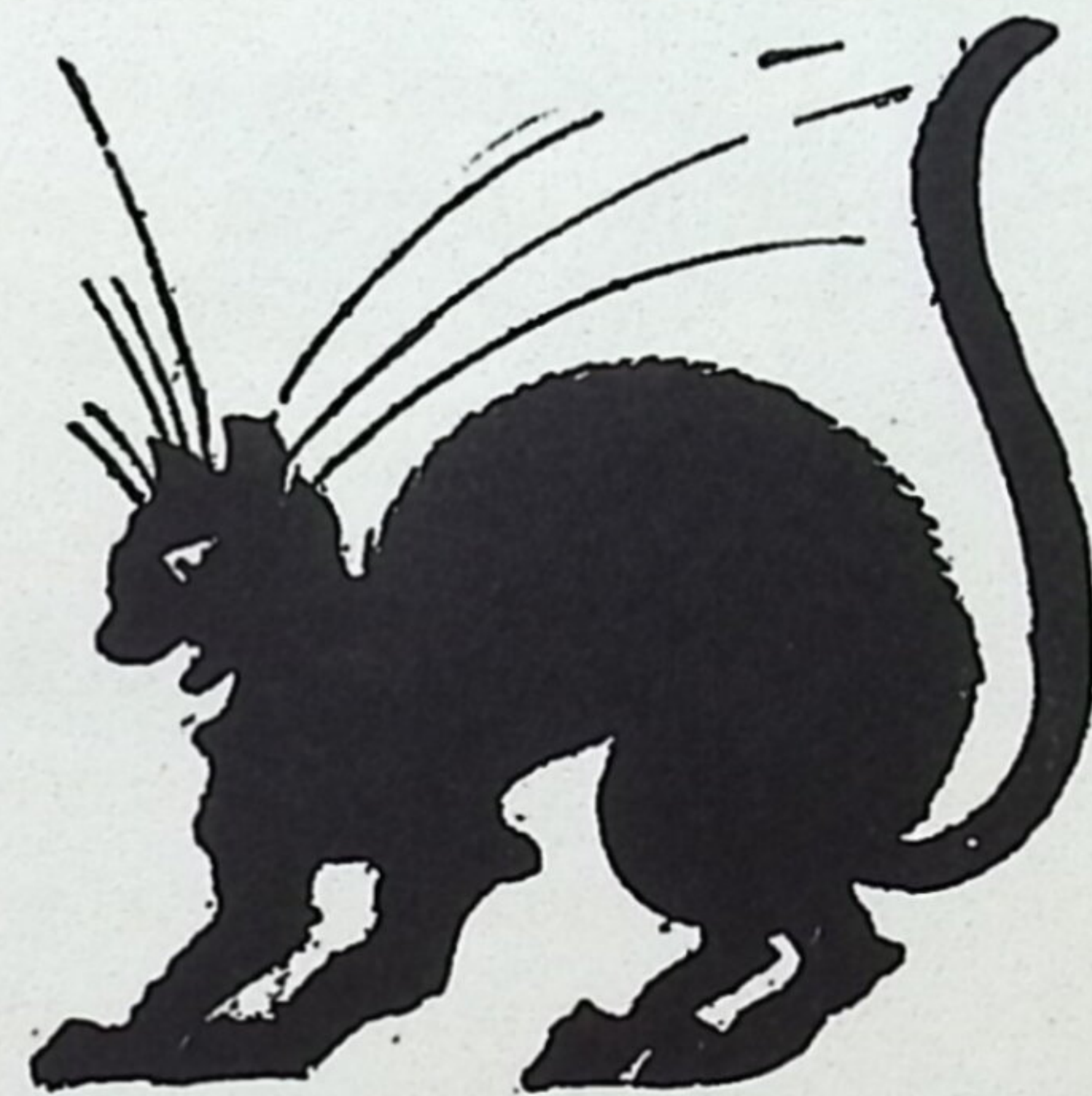
A WORD ABOUT OUR HERO

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tribunal, they fight duels, speak of their burrows as of castles and estates.

We hope that while waiting for a chance to read this picturesque story in its original form you may find some entertainment in the few selected adventures here retold.



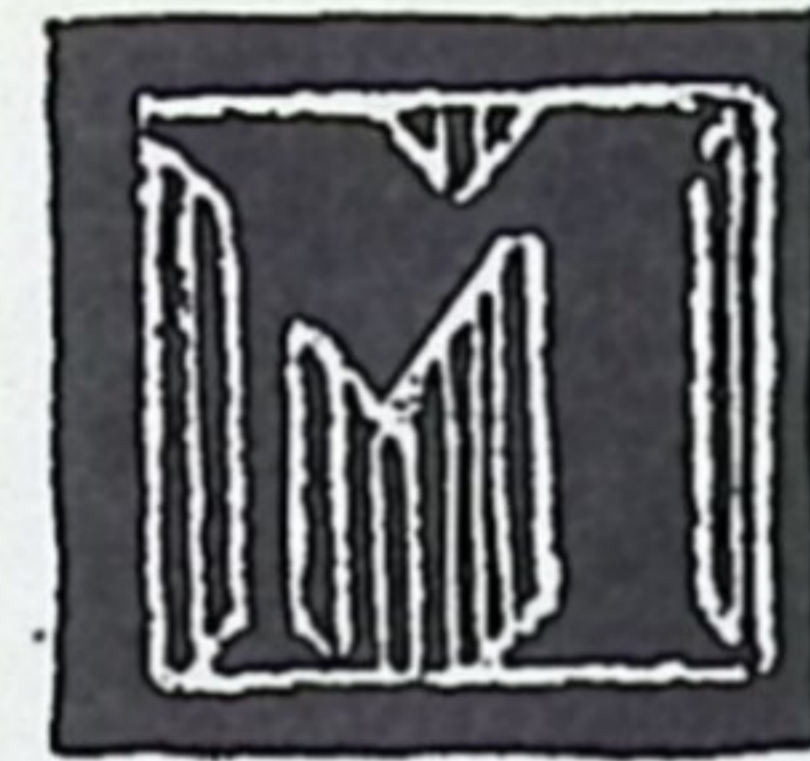




CHANTICLEER



## CHANTICLEER



ANY years ago, in his burrow of Maupertuis, there lived a fox famous throughout the countryside for his prudence, his cleverness, and the naughty tricks he delighted in playing on both his friends and his enemies. Reynard was his name, and he was a very fine fox, with a pointed inquisitive nose, quick eyes, paws like steel springs, a beautiful red coat and the finest plumed tail in the world.

One day Reynard met Tiecelein, the raven, carrying a fine fresh cheese in his beak. Knowing that Tiecelein was very vain, Reynard at once began to flatter and praise him, telling him what a fine voice he had, until the silly bird opened his beak wide to reply, of



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REYNARD THE FOX

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course letting drop the cheese, when the fox, quick as lightning, snatched it and ran away before poor Tiecelein could recover from his surprise.

Another time he pretended to be dead, in order to attract two crows, husband and wife, who happened to be flying near by. Delighted at the death, as they thought, of their wicked enemy, the crows drew nearer and nearer, till they were almost close enough to brush his ears with their wings, when all at once snap went Reynard's jaws, and the poor husband-crow disappeared before his wife's very eyes, while Reynard, suddenly come to life again, ran away crying: "There's another good trick to teach Sharpnose and Brighteyes!"

For I must tell you that Reynard had a wife, Dame Hermeline, and two pretty little fox cubs called Brighteyes and Sharpnose. Dame Hermeline, in the days when Reynard was still

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CHANTICLEER

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poor and unknown, without influence at court, had been known to every one as plain Mrs. Brown, but with her husband's rapid rise to fame and fortune, she began to think this name far too commonplace, and so changed it for something that sounded more aristocratic. As for the two little cubs, they both bade fair to follow in their father's footsteps, for young as they were they already showed signs of all the treachery and wickedness which made Reynard himself so hated, far and near.

For the lord of Maupertuis did not content himself merely with playing naughty tricks; he was cruel, sly, and revengeful, and by his clever tongue knew how to take advantage of any one stronger than himself, from Noble, the King, downward.

Having extreme cunning, but no great strength, he feared only those more powerful



than himself and treated the small and weak with contempt. It was through this very fault that misfortune once overtook him.

One day Reynard, Hermeline, Sharpnose, and Brighteyes sat looking sadly at their bare cupboard and empty larder, where there was not a mouthful of food left. For two days Reynard had hunted vainly through the neighborhood, but the country folk, who had doubtless good cause to complain of him, had carefully barricaded all their chicken houses, and Reynard, his tail between his legs, was obliged to slink back empty-handed to Maupertuis, where his family awaited him, growing hungrier and hungrier every minute. After a long and gloomy silence Reynard, at the end of his resources, finally said: "Well, happen what may, I'm going to try and get food somewhere!" And he set out once more.

Crouching low, he drew near a chicken yard not far away, which belonged to a wealthy farmer of the neighborhood. Reynard had already robbed this yard many times before, but to-day it seemed in vain that he prowled round. The chicken yard was enclosed by a brand-new fence, which was further strengthened by some big stones. But at last, almost at the end of his patience, Reynard succeeded in discovering a broken stone which left a tiny gap in the wall and, making himself as small as he could, he managed to squeeze through somehow and hide behind a heap of branches and dead leaves just inside.

Warned by the rustling that some intruder had just entered, the hens and chickens all ran away with a great flapping of wings, paying no heed to the voice of Chanticleer, the old rooster, who cried out: "Stay here, don't be



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REYNARD THE FOX

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afraid! I'll take care of you. Even if Reynard himself came I am strong enough to defend you all!"

But it needed more than that to daunt Reynard. He kept as still as a mouse, and in a few minutes Chanticleer, not hearing any further sound, strutted out into the yard with his most lordly air, flapping his wings and scratching up the ground here and there while he glanced about him. All the hens whispered: "How brave he is! What a fine air he has! Ah, he certainly is the grandest rooster on the farm!"

Chanticleer, overhearing these praises, felt braver than ever. He strutted still nearer, and Reynard, judging that the right moment had come, sprang out from hiding. But his jaws only closed on the empty air, for Chanticleer, who had very keen ears, had heard him coming and fluttered promptly to the top of a barrel

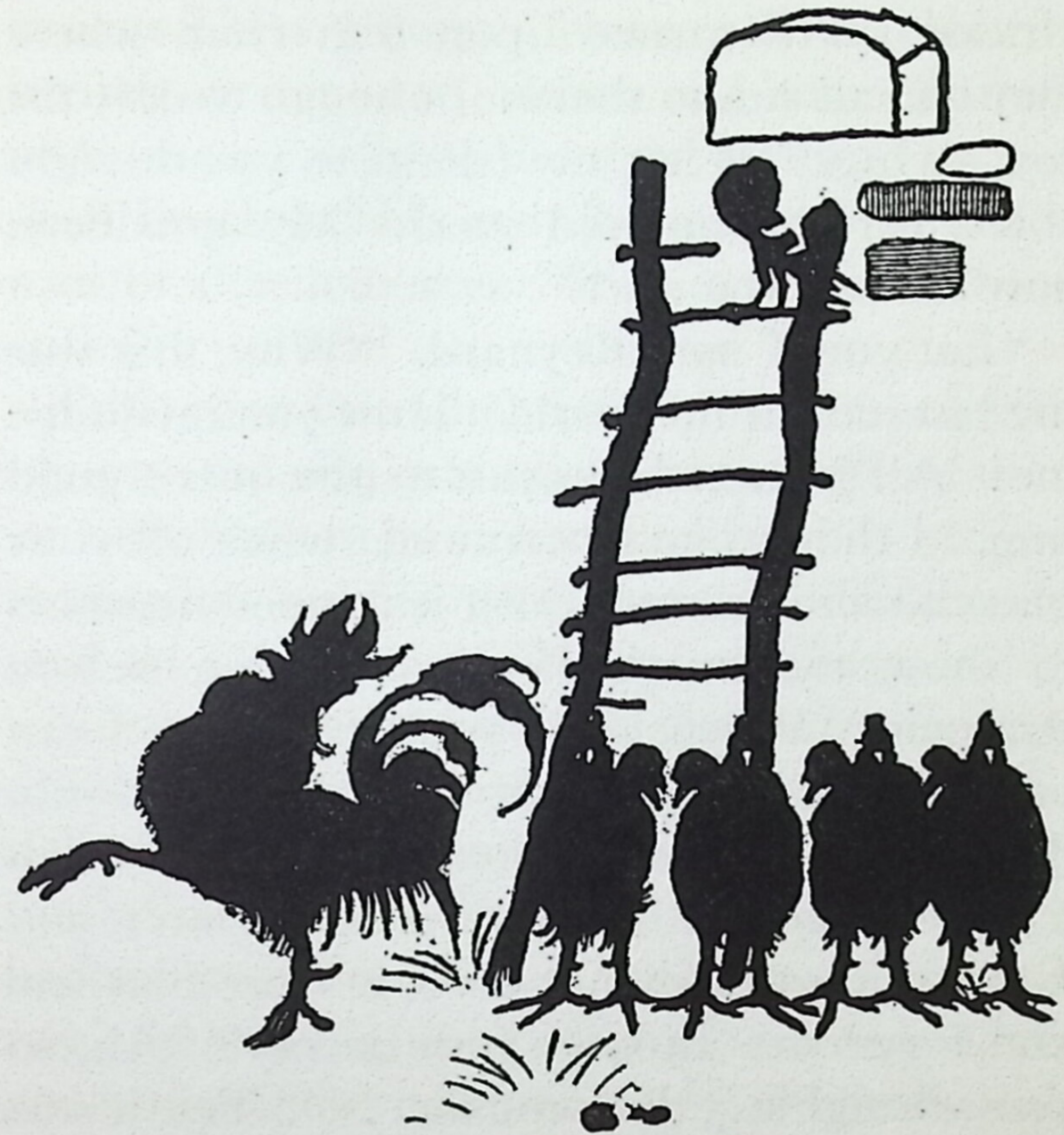
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CHANTICLEER

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near by. Here, perched safely out of Reynard's reach and feeling the eyes of the whole



chicken yard turned upon him from where they had all run to shelter, he began to defy the fox, saying: "What, my friend, so you thought you'd eat me up, did you? My goodness, how clumsy you are!"

"Eat you?" said Reynard. "Why, that was my last idea in the world! How you misjudge me! All I wanted was just to give you a good hug. I didn't like to come out when all your friends were around, for it isn't good manners to show too much family affection before strangers. When I saw you were alone I ran out—a little hastily I admit, but that was only due to my excess of feeling. But you still seem a little surprised and puzzled. Don't you know that my father and yours were brothers and loved one another very deeply? Ah, so you are sighing, dear cousin. . . . Yes, it was a very sad loss to us all, the death of my beloved uncle Chanteclin, and both my wife and I

mourned him greatly. In fact, we are barely getting over it now. I can see him this moment, the proud way he used to stand . . . when he closed his eyes he would crow in a manner that has never been heard before or since!"

Now upon this Chanticleer, jealous at hearing any one else praised, even though it were his own father, gave a resounding "Cock-a-doodle-doo-oo-oo!" and added: "Well, and what do you think of *that*, cousin Reynard?"

"I hate to disappoint you, but really there is no comparison! I assure you that when Chanteclin crowed, his voice could be heard for two miles round. Positively! All the other roosters would stop crowing to listen to him, they admired him so much. If you only have seen how handsome he was, with his head held so proudly, his eyes shut, his spurs stretched out and his fine tail like a plume! No, really,



my dear cousin, you don't compare with him at all, and yet it would be so easy."

"Are you sure he used to shut his eyes?"

"Positively! Besides, why should I lie about it?"

"You see, I'm not quite so sure whether you really are my cousin or not."

"Please yourself!" returned Reynard. "I only wanted to teach you how you could surpass all the other roosters on the farm. If you don't care to try it, so much the worse for you. It's your loss, not mine; the question can have no interest for me. I only acted out of friendship. Well, good-by, cousin!"

And he pretended to stroll away.

"Stop! Stop!" cried Chanticleer, overcome by jealousy. "I am going to try, and you shall be the judge."

Forthwith he shut his eyes and opened his beak, and Reynard, who all this while had been

really fuming with impatience, immediately caught him by one wing and began to carry him off. But in leaping he had managed to upset the barrel on which the poor rooster was perched, and the owner of the fowls, hearing the rattle of wood and iron, the flapping of wings and excited clucking of the hens, rushed out and arrived just in time to see Reynard disappearing with his prey.

"The fox, the fox! Quick, quick, the fox!"

Farm hands and servants, all armed with mattocks and pitchforks, set out in pursuit of the robber. But it would take a very clever man to catch Reynard in his flight.

Poor Chanticleer, all bruised and wounded, began to lament piteously. "Ah, you cruel villain! You traitor! How about all that talk of relationship! Who can put faith in a word you utter?"

Reynard undertook to console him by ex-



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REYNARD THE FOX

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plaining that, as it was certainly his fate to be eaten sooner or later, it was much more satisfactory to be eaten by some one who really was starving and in need and who perhaps might have died had it not been for Chanticleer's ready assistance in being caught. These words brought but little comfort to the unlucky rooster but, pretending nevertheless to feel a little more resigned, he said:

"Ah, well, Reynard, I suppose I must make the best of my fate! This life really isn't worth living, anyway. But will you at least grant me just one dying favor?"

"Willingly, if I can."

At that moment the cries of the pursuers could be heard, louder than ever. "Death to the fox! Death to the fox!"

"Well, then," Chanticleer continued, "I would just like you to call out something to those men behind there. They are very cruel

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CHANTICLEER

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to my people, and anything that would annoy them will help to avenge me. Now, what can we say? Suppose you shout out: 'Hullo there! While you are chasing me, my friend the wolf is eating up all your provisions!' or something like that, just to make them angry."

Reynard always enjoyed making fun of his enemies. Forgetting all prudence in his eagerness to play a trick on the men, he shouted out to them as Chanticleer suggested.

That was his mistake.

The rooster immediately took advantage of the moment when Reynard opened his jaws and, fright lending him speed, fluttered up to a branch just out of Reynard's reach. Safely perched out of danger, he flapped his wings and crowed with laughter, while the fox, forgetting his pursuers in his rage, leaped again and again in the hope of recapturing his prey.

"Bad luck to the mouth that opens when it



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REYNARD THE FOX

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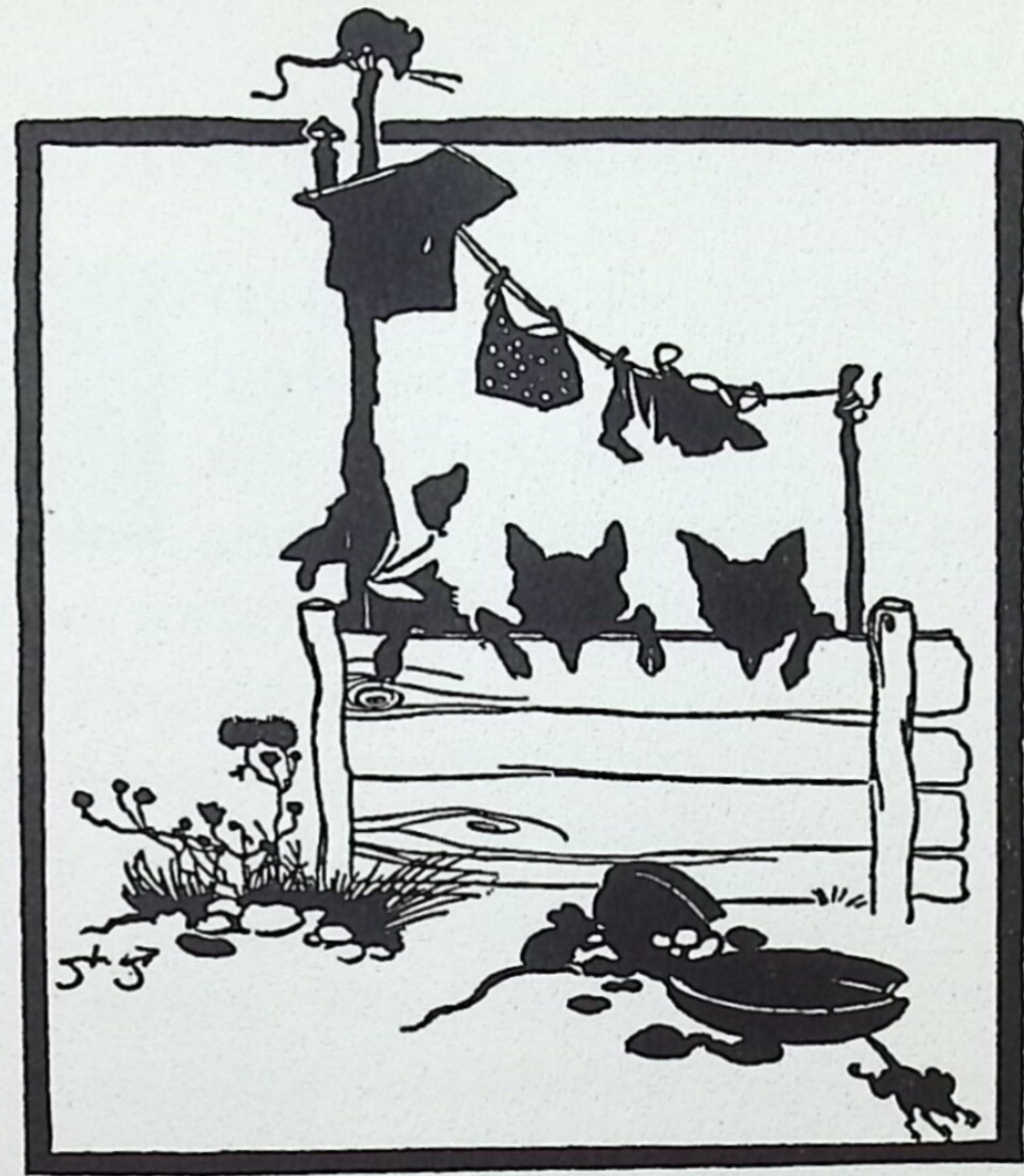
CHANTICLEER

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ought to stay shut!" he thought to himself bitterly. But it was too late now, for the hunters were drawing near, and Reynard, interrupting his reflections, had barely time to take to his heels and return, shamefaced and drooping, to the castle of Maupertuis where his hungry family awaited him.

Chanticleer meantime returned in triumph to the chicken yard, where his cleverness and cunning won him the praise and admiration of all.





THE ADVENTURE OF THE EELS



## THE ADVENTURE OF THE EELS

**O**NE day Reynard, as usual, was on the lookout for some kind of wind-fall. He believed firmly in luck and felt quite sure that some bit of good fortune would come his way if he waited long enough.

Meantime he strolled about the fields, sniffing the various odors borne to him on the breeze. It had been snowing, and the ground was all white. Over this soft carpet Reynard walked so softly that no one could have heard his footsteps.

He had already wandered a long way, leaving the track of his footprints behind him, marked deeply in the fresh snow, when all at once, as he was passing behind a hedge which



bordered one side of the highroad, he heard the sound of wheels.

Pricking up his ears, he was able to hear the conversation of two fishermen, who were returning from the sea.

"Well, we caught a pretty fine mess of fish to-day," one of them was saying; and the other replied: "Yes, indeed, and without counting the herring and mackerel we have at least twenty strings of eels to take to market."

And they went on discussing the money that they would get for their fish.

Reynard had heard quite enough. He began to run, galloping along behind the snow-covered hedge, and soon left the two men a little distance behind. When he was far enough ahead he slipped out on to the road and there he stretched himself out right in the middle of it, with his four paws in the air, his body quite stiff and his tongue hanging out.

Soon the cart and its two occupants came into view. Reynard lay perfectly still, with his eyes shut fast; he could hear the cart approaching, he could hear the voices of the two men, still arguing about the price of their fish. Suddenly one of them called out:

"Why, look there on the road! Whatever is that?"

"It must be a wolf!"

"No, it's a dog."

"Nonsense, it's a fox. Wait a minute . . . keep quite still. I'm going to catch him!"

The two men jumped out of the cart, ran up to Reynard, and stopped short, saying: "Why, he's dead!" For a moment they stood staring at him, and one of them said: "He can't have been dead very long, for there's hardly any snow on him yet. Besides, he's still warm!"

"Are you sure he's dead? Foxes are so sly!"



"Of course he's dead, sure enough. Can't you see he isn't breathing at all?"

They picked Reynard up by his paws and threw him into the back of the cart, on top of the baskets of fish; then they climbed in again, quite pleased with themselves, saying: "That's a very fine fox; it has good thick fur and is beautifully marked. We ought to get a good price for the skin."

And the cart started on its way again, the two men disputing this time about how much they would get for the fox skin.

But what was Reynard doing, meantime? He opened one eye, then another, stretched out his paw, poked his nose forward, and began very quietly to lift the cover of one of the baskets. A moment later, if either of the men had happened to turn round to look at their dead fox, he would have seen only his paws and

his tail. His head was already inside the basket, busily gobbling up the eels and herring. Now Reynard made up for all his past hunger and for hunger yet to come. He ate up everything he could reach, watching meantime out of the corner of one eye to see if the drivers of the cart were going to turn round and catch him. Presently, his appetite for once satisfied, he hung two or three strings of eels around his neck, to take back to his family, and before jumping out of the cart waited a moment or two, out of curiosity, just to hear what the two men were saying.

By this time their dispute had become a real quarrel, and Reynard himself was the cause of it all.

"I saw it first, so I ought to have the larger share, if not the whole."

"What nonsense! If I hadn't lent you the



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REYNARD THE FOX

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cart, where would you be now? Would you have found the fox without me? It is most certainly mine!"

"I don't want to argue with a thief like you!"

"Thief yourself!"

And they actually began to exchange blows. Reynard laughed and, springing lightly to the ground, with the eels hung round his neck, he called out in his high-pitched mocking voice:

"Better luck next time, my friends! I'll leave you some of the eels, but I certainly don't intend to leave you my skin as well!"

The men stared in amazement. At the sound of Reynard's voice they forgot their quarrel, but while they were still shouting, "Ha, Reynard, you rogue, you won't trick us like this another time!" the robber had already disappeared.

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THE ADVENTURE OF THE EELS

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At that moment, in the castle of Maupertuis, there was very little gayety. Who knew when Reynard would return home and whether he would have been able to find any food at all in this bitter snowy weather, with all the fields frozen and deserted?

As soon as he came in sight of his home, however, Reynard began to herald his return with yelps of victory. His family came running out to wait for him on the doorstep. When he waved the strings of eels round his head they welcomed him with shouts of joy.

He related his adventures for the benefit of Sharpnose and Brighteyes, while the two little cubs rubbed his frozen paws. Then they skinned the eels, cut them in pieces, and put them on the spit. A fire was quickly lighted, and soon an appetizing smell filled the kitchen and floated out through the keyhole.

Now Isengrin the wolf, who was by turns



Reynard's friend or enemy according to how Reynard treated him, happened just at that moment to be passing by. He drew near the door and sniffed at the nice smell of cooking which came through the cracks.

Isengrin had had nothing to eat since the day before, and Isengrin, in spite of his title, his fine castle and his credit at court, was a very stupid and credulous person who had none of Reynard's cleverness in obtaining through trickery what he could not get by force.

So he made up his mind then and there that this was a very good occasion to be friendly with Reynard, and he went up and began to knock—tap, tap, tap—at Reynard's door.

From the inside Reynard called out: "Hullo! Who's there?"

"It's only me, Reynard."



"And who are you, pray?"

"Your friend, Isengrin."

"And what might you want, friend Isengrin?"



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REYNARD THE FOX

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"I want you to open the door and let me taste a little of that fine food that smells so good!"

Now Reynard was about to refuse, when suddenly an idea came into his head and he changed his mind. Isengrin, growing hungrier and hungrier, cried: "Why don't you answer me, and open the door?"

"Because no one can enter here unless he is a monk."

"But you yourself——"

"I am a monk, and this is the monastery of the Order of Maupertuis."

"Indeed? I didn't know that. And . . . is there no means of getting in?"

"Not unless you are either a monk or a hermit."

"Let me in all the same. I'm so hungry! What are you eating there?"

"Cream cheese and fish."

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THE ADVENTURE OF THE EELS

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"Is it good, the fish? Do give me a little, just to taste!"

Very obligingly Reynard brought a bit of the eel and poked it through the crack of the door to Isengrin, who ate it up and thought he would like some more, at any price, it was so good.

"If I were a monk, could I have all the fish I want?"

"Indeed you could, and plenty of other things, too, for you are so clever and strong you would soon rise to be abbot. Believe me, all you need is to have your head shaved in a tonsure!"

"Is that all? I'll have it done at once, if I can."

"Of course you can. I'll do it for you. Wait a minute, and I'll fetch the razor and warm water."

Reynard took the pot of boiling water off the



fire and, going close to the door, said: "Now, just stick your head through the crack!"

Isengrin obeyed. Reynard poured the boiling water on the wolf's head, scalding off skin and hair together. Isengrin, groaning with pain, said, "Reynard, are you sure you haven't made the tonsure too large?" He didn't dare to complain, for he still hoped to get the eels as reward for his suffering.

Then Reynard said: "Now, friend Isengrin, you must pass your first night of initiation according to the rules of the order. And first of all you must catch enough fish for the whole monastery."

Isengrin agreed, whimpering all the time.

It was a terribly cold winter. Not far off was a lake, frozen over so solidly that people could walk and dance on the ice. It was here that Reynard led Isengrin, to a hole which some men had broken in the ice to make a

place for the cattle to drink. Near the hole was a pail. Reynard took this pail and tied it firmly to Isengrin's tail. Then he said to him:

"Now you must let down your tail through the hole, and the pail with it, and to-morrow morning you will find the pail full of eels and trout. Just keep up your courage, and you'll be well rewarded. Good night! And whatever you do, don't pull the pail up before to-morrow morning or you'll frighten the fish! You must keep perfectly still."

Off he went, laughing in his sleeve, and while Isengrin continued to sit there, chattering his teeth and shivering with cold, Reynard, together with Hermeline, Sharpnose and Brighteyes, enjoyed themselves thoroughly eating up all the rest of the eels, which by now were cooked to a turn.

All night long, poor Isengrin sat there, perfectly still. From time to time he twitched his



tail a tiny bit. It felt very heavy, for it was already getting frozen into the ice, and as the hours went by and he found it harder and harder to stir, he thought: "Now the pail must



be getting full! How heavy it is! They must be fine fish to weigh so much as all that!"

Time went on, and the pail grew so heavy that, pull as he might, Isengrin could no longer move it. He began to think a little and realized that it was not because the fish in the pail were too heavy that he could not move his tail, but because it was frozen hard and fast into the ice!

He pulled and he pulled, but to no avail. All his efforts were useless, and the harder he pulled the more it hurt. Giving up all hope of getting free by himself, he waited for the warmth of the sun to release him, meanwhile gnashing his teeth, threatening all sorts of revenge on Reynard, and bewailing his own folly—not too loud, however, for fear the village people might hear him and come running out.

Day broke, a pale gray dawn, with no sun-



shine, and Isengrin knew that before long the villagers would come to the lake, and as soon as they found him there helpless, they would kill him. He bewailed his fate more bitterly than ever, and as time went on all his hopes of delivery vanished.

Presently he heard the barking of dogs. Poor Isengrin! It was Squire John, setting out on a hunting party.

The unhappy wolf crouched down as flat as he could, but that black patch on the white ice could be seen for a long distance, and soon the dogs came bounding toward him, followed closely by their master. The hounds began to attack Isengrin, who defended himself as boldly as he could, but he was almost helpless, and his ears were soon bitten till the blood ran down.

Squire John drew near, flourishing his sword to kill the wolf. Isengrin bent his head

to await the blow, but as luck would have it, the hunter slipped on the ice, fell down, and the sword, instead of cutting off Isengrin's head, cut off his tail, thus setting him free. With one mighty leap he dashed away and he soon outdistanced the dogs.

Squire John picked himself up and stood staring shamefacedly at his only trophy, the wolf's tail sticking up out of the ice! But already the owner of the tail was far away in the forest, where, sore and smarting from his wounds, he lay and reflected on all the mean tricks that Reynard had at various times played upon him, of which this last, which had cost him his fine bushy tail and nearly cost him his life as well, was certainly the worst of all. And very bitterly did Isengrin swear vengeance.





TYBERT THE CAT



## TYBERT THE CAT



T was a fine spring morning. Rain had fallen, and everything in the country looked brilliant. The turf was bright emerald, the flowers all shining, and the dew drops on the leaves and grass glittered as they caught the sunlight.

Master Reynard was already abroad in the fields, and, as he was not feeling very hungry yet, he had leisure for once to admire the morning in his own fashion, thinking: "Such a fine day as this can only bring good fortune! It is tempting weather to take a little stroll, and sooner or later something or some one will be sure to come within reach of my paw. So meantime I'll just saunter about and enjoy the fresh air. But who is this coming? Ah, it is



my dear good Tybert! How do you do, cousin? And what good wind brings you out to-day?"

These friendly words were addressed to Tybert the cat, who was one of Reynard's distant relatives. From their common ancestor they had each inherited malice, slyness, and greed, and it would be hard to say which of them had more to be proud of in that respect. They were both of them lithe and supple, given to fawning and cringing, both had quick paws, a sly mind, and a pitiless heart. And to make them even more alike, both had the same tawny fur, pointed ears, and feathery tail.

Tybert, surprised at first by his relative's unusual cordiality (for Reynard was not always in such a pleasant humor), drew near, and replied in a friendly tone that he was going hunting and was delighted to have met Reynard on the way, thinking meanwhile to

himself: "If we go together it will be to our mutual advantage. Reynard is a companion worth having. If I flatter him he may be willing to join me."

And Reynard, for his part, was thinking much the same. Each said to himself: "If I find some chance to get rid of him, once the prize is secured, trust me!"

It was with this idea in mind that Reynard said to Tybert: "Well, cousin, if you promise to act fairly by me you shall have half of all we catch. Both together, we can help each other and get plenty of game, even mice, too, if you like. Help me, and I'll help you."

"Agreed," said Tybert, and he swore to behave honestly.

Chatting pleasantly together, the two rogues set out, each meditating some good trick to play on the other when the right moment came, for cheating had become second nature with



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REYNARD THE FOX

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them both, and neither could resist the pleasure of getting the better of some one else.

As they strolled along through the tall grass, Reynard caught sight, under some branches, of a trap, one little corner of which had been left unhidden and happened to glitter in the sun. Without appearing to do so, he managed to lead Tybert in the direction of this trap, anticipating the fun he would have in seeing the cat caught and trying vainly to get free.

But Tybert also had seen that glitter through the branches, and Tybert was very sly. So he followed his companion, without seeming to notice anything suspicious, but at the very moment when Reynard felt quite sure his little plot had succeeded, Tybert gave him a sudden push, jumped to one side himself, and was delighted to see the tables turned on his crafty friend. Then, smothering his laughter, he put

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TYBERT THE CAT

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on a very sad and doleful face at the sight of Reynard, who, with one paw caught in the trap, was yelping, snapping, and struggling in vain to get loose. At this Reynard's fury redoubled, for he knew very well that Tybert had played a trick on him.

All at once there was a sound of footsteps on the path near by. Tybert ran away and scrambled hastily up a tree, from whence he could see without being seen. A farmer drew near and, delighted at the prize he had caught, was just about to kill Reynard with one blow, when, aiming badly in his excitement, he struck the trap with his ax instead of the fox. Dazed for a second by his good fortune, Reynard lost no time in escaping, content to postpone his revenge on Tybert till another time.

It was not long, however, before he met him again. The cat awaited his approach uneas-





ily, not certain whether to run away or not and measuring in his mind the leap he would have to take to avoid his dear relative's clutches.

Reynard, however, did not seem at all angry.

His expression was, in fact, quite pleasant and cheerful as he drew near and said to Tybert: "Well, you played me a fine trick, didn't you, but, thank goodness, I escaped all right! Don't be alarmed; I'm not a bit angry with you really. If you think I bear malice, you are very much mistaken. You know, I have always had a soft spot for you in the bottom of my heart! Come on, let's go hunting again."

Rather surprised, Tybert agreed to renew his vow of faithfulness, and the two companions set out once more just as though they were the very best of friends. Each, however, was on his guard.

They had just left the fields to take to the highroad when Reynard saw before him, lying right in the middle of the road, a fine big sausage which some countryman had undoubtedly lost from his cart on the way to mar-



ket. It looked very tempting, and Reynard, quick as lightning, snapped it up.

Tybert said: "If it's all the same to you, we'll divide that according to our agreement!"

"Certainly," replied Reynard at once. "But wait till we get to some quiet spot where we won't be disturbed."

Tybert followed his companion anxiously, keeping as close as he could for fear of losing his share.

Now Reynard was carrying the sausage in his mouth, by the middle, and as it was very long the two ends trailed down in the dust of the road. Tybert, feeling that the sausage would be much safer with him than with Reynard, said:

"My, Reynard, how careless you are, letting that good sausage trail all through the mud! Give it to me; I'll show you the proper way to carry it, so it won't get all dirty like that."

A little uneasy, Reynard gave up his prize to Tybert, for he did not wish to appear afraid of a mere cat. He thought: "I am the stronger, and I can easily force him to give it back if necessary. It is only a question of waiting till the right moment."

Tybert took one end of the sausage in his mouth, and with a quick jerk threw the rest of it over his back. In this way it could not trail on the ground.

Reynard still felt he would much rather carry it himself, but he was patient, for perhaps, after all, Tybert wasn't really trying to trick him.

Just at the turn of the road there stood a cross, which had been erected by the dwellers in the neighboring village years ago. It was a tall cross, very old, overgrown with moss at the base and all worn and roughened by wind and weather. Tybert paused and considered



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REYNARD THE FOX

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this cross with peculiar satisfaction; he gave a malicious glance at Reynard, who for his part could not take his eyes off the sausage. Suddenly, with a single bound, the cat sprang up and, clinging tightly with his claws, scrambled to the top of the cross, where he perched himself, a little pressed for space, perhaps, but quite comfortable, and stared down triumphantly at Reynard, who was completely taken by surprise at this new move.

Recovering from his stupor, Reynard saw Master Tybert preparing to eat the sausage at his leisure. The sight made him furious, but he controlled his temper enough to ask: "Well, and how about my share now? Just hand it down."

But Tybert had no intention of dividing the spoil. He said: "I've found the quiet spot you were talking about a little while ago. No one is likely to disturb us here. Climb up, my

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TYBERT THE CAT

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dear friend; I am only waiting for you to begin our meal!"

Reynard saw that Tybert, feeling quite safe up there, was only making fun of him. He grew still more furious, and fairly wept with rage.

"What, are you weeping?" said Tybert. "I am rejoiced to see that the thought of your sins can move you so deeply!"

Reynard could not speak for rage. Lucky for the cat that he was beyond reach, otherwise he would never have seen his home and family again!

Suddenly, seized with an idea, Reynard said: "Well, the sausage will only make you thirsty, and then you'll have to come down to drink, and I shall catch you all right. I don't care if I have to sit here all night!"

Tybert stopped eating to reply: "You'll have to wait a long while, then, for there's a



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REYNARD THE FOX

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hollow in the stone up here with enough rain water in it to last me a month."

Reynard began to gallop round and round the cross like a crazy thing, but after a while he calmed down, thinking: "It's not by running and jumping that I shall catch him, this time; I must think of some other way."

So he thought and thought, and presently an idea came into his head.

He settled himself down quietly at the foot of the cross and stared straight in front of him at the field which bordered the road. He assumed a resigned and indifferent expression. From his perch above, Tybert gazed down on him. Presently Reynard abandoned his indolent pose; he pricked up his ears, began to sniff hard with his fine pointed nose, while his eyes became fixed and his whole body was gathered together to make a spring—not up at the cross,



*Tybert stared down triumphantly at Reynard*



but into the field there in front of him. Tybert, puzzled by all this, stopped eating the sausage to watch Reynard, who now paid no attention to either the sausage or the cat. Tybert saw him leap forward, then, with his nose to the ground, dash rapidly off into the grass. He seemed to have forgotten the sausage completely. All at once he called out excitedly: "A mouse! A mouse!"

At the word "mouse" Tybert, without stopping to think, leaped immediately to the ground, dragging down the sausage with him, and Reynard, turning promptly back, snatched it and began to swallow it down in hasty gulps.

Tybert hunted about, but could find no trace of the mouse. He returned to the cross and saw Reynard eating.

Now it was his turn to be furious. But



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REYNARD THE FOX

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knowing this to be useless, he approached Reynard quietly and begged him to divide the remainder with him. At which impudence Rey-

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TYBERT THE CAT

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nard said: "Here, you may have the string, if you like!"

And he made off, delighted at having got the better of a friend, made a good meal, and at the same time maintained his reputation for trickery.





THE HAYCOCK



## THE HAYCOCK

**S**OME little time after his adventure with Tybert the cat, Reynard happened to be again wandering in the fields. He had been afoot since early morning; hunting here and there unsuccessfully without so much as a squirrel or a rabbit to reward him, he had gradually strayed further and further from Maupertuis. At length he found himself in a large meadow where the hay had been already cut and raked, and was now piled into tall haycocks, dotted here and there. After stopping a moment to roll about on one of these mounds and amuse himself with bits of hay which clung to his red fur and made him look almost like a hedgehog, he said to himself: "Now, Reynard, play-



time is over and we must begin to think seriously about food."

So he slid down from the haycock on his back and, giving himself a good shake to get rid of the hay that still stuck to him, set off for the far end of the field. Here there was a little brook flowing, which was pretty enough at ordinary times, gay and rippling, but which now, on account of the recent heavy rain storms, was deep and muddy, full of dead branches and other débris.

All at once, as Reynard strolled along, he heard a tomtit singing. Suspecting that there must be a nest near by, he thought it might be a good chance to secure a meal.

So he kept on his way toward the tree whence the song came and as he drew nearer called out: "Good morning, friend tomtit, where are you?"



"I am here!" And a tiny head was poked out from between the leaves.



"Tomtit, do you know that Noble, the King, has commanded a general peace? From now on the wolves will no longer devour the sheep, nor the cats the mice."

"Nor the foxes the birds?" asked a tiny voice.

"Never again! I am delighted to obey the King's orders, and it is as his faithful subject that I have come now to make peace with you. Hop down, my dear, so that we may kiss and be friends!"

Now Reynard hoped, when the tiny bird came near him, to be able to snap her up in a twinkling, as he had done with many other birds before. But the tomtit is no fool, as she now showed.

"Reynard, my friend, I will do so willingly, but on one condition; you must shut your eyes tight."

Reynard thought: "That's a funny idea!

All the same, I shall hear the rustle of her wings and catch her."

So he said aloud: "Willingly, my dear!"

He crouched down under the tree and shut his eyes, looking as gentle and affectionate as he could.

The tomtit took a little bit of moss in her beak and let it drop gently on Reynard's nose. Thinking it was a feather that tickled him, he made a quick snap, but to his surprise caught nothing.

He opened his eyes and saw the tomtit perched just above him on the branch.

"You must begin again, my dear; you were so quick I hadn't time to kiss you. See, I'll shut my eyes once more."

Again the tomtit dropped a little piece of moss; again Reynard snapped at the empty air.

But when the tiny bird, very much amused at her trick, tried it the third time, Reynard



opened his eyes, saw the bit of moss floating down, and knew the little bird had been playing a joke on him. He realized that it was no use trying to catch the tomtit, who was cleverer than he, so in a very cross mood he took himself off.

Hungry, and much annoyed by his failure, he turned to the bank of the stream; but no sooner had he cast a glance up and down it than he hastily drew back, crouching against one of the trees that grew close down by the water's edge. Coming toward him, with his usual grave and dignified air, was Longbeak the heron.

Now Longbeak the heron would be a fine quarry, though a bit tough; Longbeak, moreover, was stupid and Reynard was very hungry. So Reynard began to busy himself with the question: what was the best way to catch Longbeak and make a meal off him? And

there by the stream, where within a few paces he could see the heron standing motionless on his long legs, he scratched his head and settled down to think.

It was not so easy. First of all, Longbeak was inclined to be suspicious. Secondly, on account of the distance, Reynard could not creep up on him without being seen, for they were both on the same side of the bank and there were very few trees to hide behind. As soon as the heron saw him coming he would fly away, and then good-by to Reynard's dinner. He must find some means that would not arouse so much suspicion.

Reynard didn't waste much time in thought. Still hidden behind his trees he began to gather together some branches of dry fern. With these he made a raft, none too solid, but tied together firmly with strands of grass, and this he launched on the stream. After turning



about a few times the raft was caught by the current and floated down toward the heron, who waded over to it and began to pull it about inquisitively with his long bill. Meantime Reynard had made a second raft, which he launched in the same way. Again the heron pulled it to pieces, and then turned away, disgusted. When Reynard sent a third raft down Longbeak paid no attention to it at all, but went on quietly poking about in the mud without even turning his head.

Now Reynard set about making a really solid raft, much stronger than the others, which he lashed firmly together. On this he installed himself, pulling some loose fern over him to hide his red fur, and floated down the stream. Longbeak, seeing only a floating mass of fern that looked just like the other three, paid no heed to it. He went on watching for fish and never lifted his eyes to the raft which

was drifting nearer and nearer. This was just what Reynard wanted; his little scheme was turning out exactly as he had hoped. At the moment when the raft glided beside Longbeak, he sprang out from the fern, seized the heron by the neck, and snapped him up before he had time to struggle.

Equally pleased with his victory, and the good meal which followed it, Reynard felt himself at peace with all the world. It was one of those rare moments when he no longer felt even the desire to play a mean trick on any one; in his heart there was only contentment and good fellowship. It is a pity no one was there to profit by this momentary change of character!

His feast ended, he thought of returning to Maupertuis, but while all these things were happening, time had passed rapidly and now it was almost nightfall. Moreover, he had



wandered further from home than usual, and in the dark it might be hard to find his way. So he decided instead to pass the night somewhere near by. But where?

All at once he remembered the haycocks in the field where he had rested a little while ago. One of these would, he thought, make a nice comfortable bed. So he went back to the meadow, climbed up on the softest and most comfortable-looking one that he could find, curled himself up with his nose on his paws, and was soon sound asleep.

Had he slept a little less soundly, during the night, he might have been surprised to hear a strange little lapping sound, as of waves, all around the haycock on which he was lying, and to see the moonbeams reflected in something bright and clear, like a mirror. What strange thing had happened?

When he opened his eyes in the morning, there, instead of the hayfield, was a shining lake! That quiet little stream, swollen by the rain, had overflowed its banks and flooded all the neighboring fields with water.

And the water kept rising!

With horror Reynard saw his haycock,





which was now like a little island, already getting smaller and smaller, as were all the others. Now the water was deep enough to float a boat. Reynard was terribly frightened.

Any one else might have thought: "This is a judgment for all my wicked deeds!" and have repented forthwith. But Reynard, on the contrary, was very determined not to die, and instead of thinking of his sins he racked his brains to invent some way of escape from his unpleasant situation.

Never had he been in such a difficult plight; in fact nothing like it had ever happened in the whole of his family history. As a matter of fact, when he was calm enough to consider a little, he saw that the haycocks were very high and in no immediate danger of being submerged. But suppose they were carried away by the flood. And in any case he would escape drowning only to die of hunger, for

he could not possibly get away till the water had all subsided.

The sun was now high above the horizon, and Reynard began to feel very sad and discouraged. He thought: "Good-by, Hermeline! Good-by, Sharpnose and Brighteyes! I shall never see Maupertuis again!"

Just at this moment a farmer, who had come out to look at the flood, caught sight of something moving on one of the haycocks. He took a boat and rowed toward it, thinking it might perhaps be some child who had played truant from home and had been overtaken by the flood.

But as he drew nearer and nearer, he began to rub his eyes and stare, for that red object he saw was certainly no child. All at once he burst out laughing, exclaiming: "Here's a prize! Ah, Master Fox, you are going to have



a lively time; I'll soon pay you back for all the damage you have done in my chicken yard. Now you are going to be punished, and no mistake!"

Reynard showed his teeth. He was not caught yet, and was ready to put up a hard fight.

The good man steered his boat right for the haycock. He stood up and began to strike at the fox with his oar. But as he struck on one side, Reynard leaped to the other and, being quicker and nimbler than the farmer, always managed to escape. Soon the man lost his temper and began to deal blows right and left at random, and his rage redoubled when Reynard, forgetful of danger in his delight at outwitting and infuriating his enemy, began to mock at him.

"Aren't you clever, my friend! I never saw

any one as quick as you are. Look out, you're really going to hit me this time! There, I'm dead!"

This time the farmer really thought he had hit him; he had already put out his hand when he heard a laugh, and saw Reynard jump up again. Thinking it was high time to put an end to this game of hide and seek, he left his boat and climbed up on the haycock.

Now he would have his revenge! Reaching the top, he saw his enemy at the farther end and made a dash at him. But Reynard didn't wait a second; he took one leap, knocking the man down, jumped into the boat and, snatching up the oars, rowed away, leaving the farmer in his turn marooned on the haycock. Soon he was on solid ground again, and, without losing any time, he galloped away home.





AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL



## AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL



BOVE all, Pussy, don't touch my cheese! If you do——”

The old woman was speaking to her cat who, with twitching whiskers and round unblinking eyes, sat solemnly staring up at the fresh cheeses, round, white and tempting, set out on a wicker tray to dry in the sun.

“If you dare touch them,” the old woman continued, “woe betide you!” Then deciding, after all these threats, that it would be far safer to shut the cat up, she picked him up in her arms and, putting him into the house near by, shut the door and turned the key to make sure. Then, her mind easy about the fate of her cheeses, she set out to do her washing at the brook.

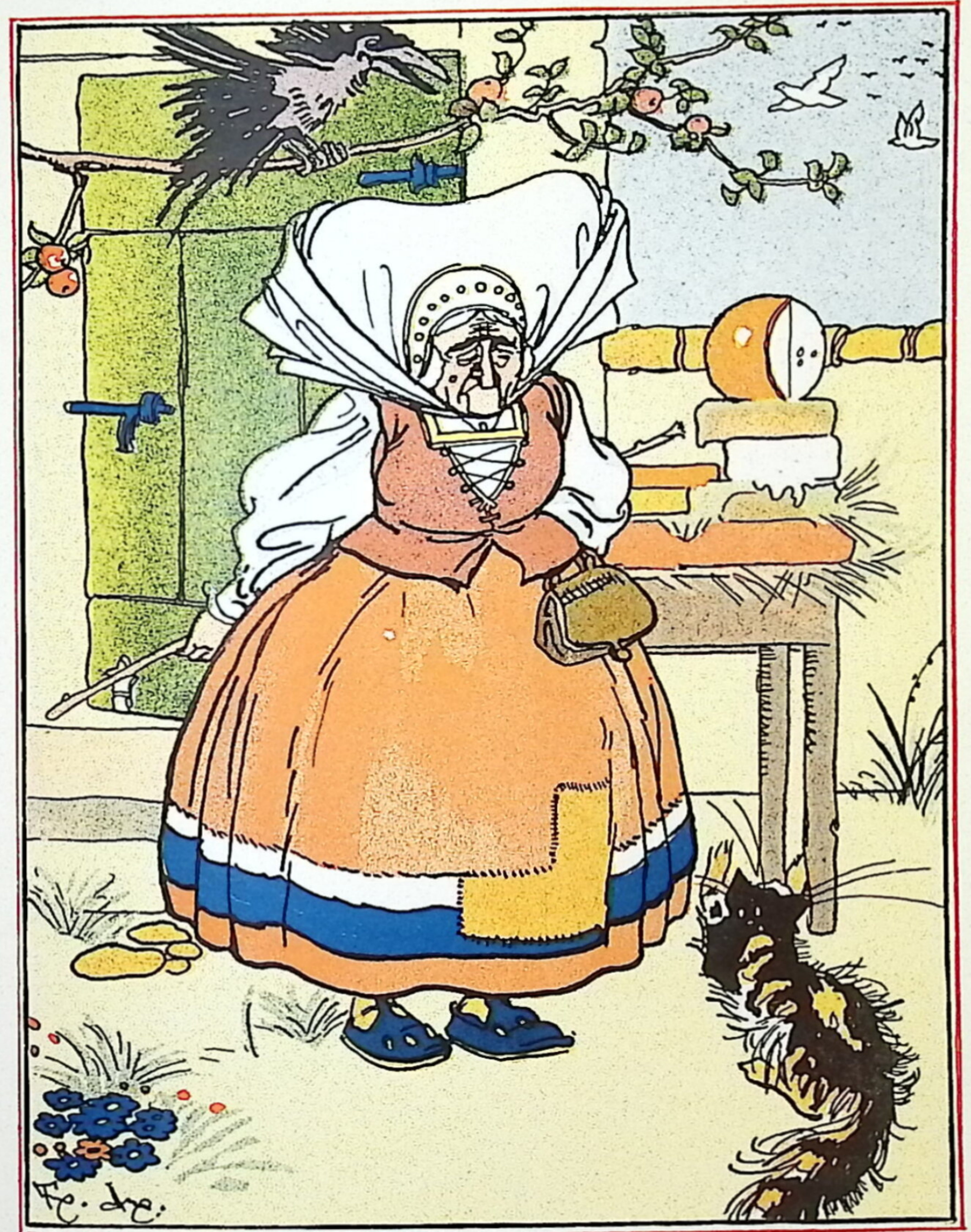


But alas, those cheeses were very far from safe! Master Raven, hidden in the branches, had been watching the whole scene, only controlling his impatience till the old woman was out of sight. Scarcely was her back turned before he swooped down on the wicker tray as quick as a flash, picked up the biggest, roundest, and whitest of the cheeses in his beak, and flew off with it to a tree some distance away. Here he settled himself down comfortably and prepared to peck away at his leisure.

A voice interrupted him, however.

"Good morning, my friend! What a pleasure to meet you! And what are you doing up there?"

Master Raven looked down from the branch and saw Reynard with his bushy tail just below. He was none too pleased at this sight, for it so happened that a number of his friends and relatives had, at one time or another, mys-



"Above all, Pussy, don't touch my cheese!"



teriously disappeared, and their disappearance had always dated from just such a chance meeting with Reynard as this. The lord of Maupertuis, however, was a person to be respected, so he replied pleasantly enough:

“You can see, Sir Reynard, I am just eating a nice cream cheese!”

Reynard bent his head, thinking how much he liked cream cheese himself, and that this would be a very good chance to get some without too much trouble, for he knew that the raven was both vain and stupid, and could be very easily tricked. Seeing him so absorbed in thought, Master Raven asked a little uneasily: “You are very silent, Sir Reynard; what are you thinking about so seriously?”

“To tell the truth, I was thinking that I would very much like to ask a favor of you, but I hesitated, because it might seem to you rather strange.”



"Speak! Don't be afraid."

"Well then, what I would really like is to hear you sing, for once. I know that all your family are famous for their voices, and I have heard yours in particular praised so many times that it would give me the greatest pleasure to listen to you."

The raven began to think that Reynard was, after all, very polite and friendly, and wonder whether all those dreadful tales one heard about him could be true. He seemed such a pleasant person, and quite intelligent. So, both flattered and condescending, he replied immediately: "Is that all? I will sing for you with pleasure!"

And opening his big black beak, he gave a harsh, discordant "Caw—caw—caw!"

Reynard seemed overcome with admiration.

"Wonderful!" he said. "Wonderful! But

couldn't you make it a little louder, and longer?"

The raven shook out his feathers and prepared to open his beak again. Reynard longed to stop up his ears, for the sound was really terrible, but instead he put on an expression of delight, and when the raven had finished croaking the second time said:

"That is splendid, really! But they tell me your cousin Blackplume can sing for longer even than that at a time."

This was too much for the raven. He said in an annoyed tone: "What? My cousin sing better than I do? Wait a moment!"

Once more he opened his beak, and a prolonged "Caw—caw—caw—caw-w-w" even louder and hoarser than before, burst from his throat, while Reynard almost rolled on the ground with laughter. In his wild efforts the



raven let go his hold on the cheese, which slipped from his claws and rolled to the ground near to where Reynard was sitting. But Reynard made no movement to pick it up, for he hoped to get not only the cheese but the singer as well.

The raven, who had stopped croaking when he felt the cheese slip from his grasp, peered anxiously down, but did not dare to fly after it, for the cheese was lying within reach of the fox's paw. Reynard, seeing his hesitation, said at once:

"If you had any friendship for me, Master Raven, you would come and take that horrid cheese away from under my nose! It smells so strong it makes me quite sick, and I can't pick it up myself for I have the cramp in my paw."

The raven was still very wary. He hopped a little bit nearer. He scratched his head,

thinking: "If Reynard is really telling the truth I might as well pick my cheese up and eat it." So he flew boldly down and alighted quite close to the cheese. But Reynard, as soon as he saw him within reach, struck out with his paw, and the bird had barely time to flutter back to his high branch, leaving three of his black shiny feathers in Reynard's grasp.

Recovered from the fright, he called out from his safe perch:

"So, Mr. Reynard, you thought you were going to eat me up, did you, just like the rest of my unfortunate family! Luckily for me, I had my suspicions. You can keep my three feathers and the cheese, too, and I hope it makes you ill! Never again will I listen to a liar like you. Good-by!" And he flew away.

Reynard, contented with the cheese but disappointed of the bird, sat down, and murmur-



ing: "Cheese is the best cure in the world for cramp!" he began to eat.

But after eating, one must drink. The cheese was salty, and soon Reynard's throat began to feel very dry. Where could he find some water? There was no well near, and the brook was a long way off. Feeling thirstier every minute, he crossed the road and, coming to a long white wall, followed it till at last he saw a small doorway. The door was ajar; evidently some one had forgotten to close it, and Reynard, poking his nose through the crack and looking cautiously about him, exclaimed: "Ah, this is where my good friends, the monks, live, from whom I stole so many chickens last year. Excellent! If I remember right there ought to be a well somewhere in this courtyard."

He slipped inside. There was no one about. There at the end of the garden, covered with



climbing vines, stood the well. With one bound Reynard jumped on the stone coping.



He leaned over and sniffed at the moist cool odor that rose from the water below. From the pulley above the well was suspended a rope, with a pail at either end. Reynard pulled on the rope so as to let down the empty pail and draw up the full one that was below, but, being very thirsty, he was in such a hurry that he lost his balance and so fell into the well himself. Luckily he kept hold of the rope, and instead of falling straight into the water fell into the empty pail that was going down.

If any one had looked down the well at that moment he would have seen Reynard's head just sticking up out of the water. Although with the pail under him he was safe from drowning, he felt anything but happy. Now, though he had all the water he wanted to drink, he was in no mood to enjoy it. It was so cold down there that his teeth chattered, and he was terrified that from one moment to another the

monks might come and catch him there. He had robbed their chicken roost so many times that they would have small mercy on him. Altogether Reynard's thoughts were far from gay, and at that moment he would willingly have changed places with his worst enemy. Study as he might, he could devise no means of getting out.

"Hullo, what are you doing there, Reynard?"

Reynard gave a start, and a gleam of joy came into his eyes. Fate had not abandoned him, for there, leaning over the edge of the well, was the pointed head of Isengrin, Isengrin the stupid, Isengrin the easiest of all dupes!

"Why, can't you see, Isengrin? I am meditating."

"You are meditating? But what a funny place to meditate in!"



"Funny? Don't you know what place this is?"

"What is it, if you please?"

"It is the threshold of Paradise," said Reynard solemnly.

Isengrin did not quite understand. But he was so stupid that he believed everything Reynard told him as trustfully as though Reynard had always been his most faithful and devoted friend.

"What's that you say? Paradise? But how did you come to get there?"

"How? Don't you know that I died two days ago, at Maupertuis, bitterly lamented by Hermeline and my two poor children!"

"Oh, my poor Reynard!"

"Don't weep for me," said Reynard in the same solemn voice, "I am in the land of happiness. One is a thousand times happier here than on earth, let me tell you. The softest of

breezes, the clearest of skies, good things to eat without end—such fine fat chickens and ducks, my friend, as you have never dreamed of! Here you will find the tenderest lambs imaginable, and fine fat sheep with no shepherd or dog to guard them. Whenever you are hungry all you have to do is to choose whichever one you like and eat it! Sticks are unknown here. And when you feel sleepy there are beds of grass as soft as the softest silk. One is gay and happy all day long; all sorrow is left far behind. What a marvelous place!"

Poor Isengrin! To offer him such a prospect when he was dying of hunger! Before his eyes there flashed a vision of fine sheep, fat poultry, all waiting to be devoured. And he felt a twinge of jealousy, too, for what had Reynard done to deserve all these good things? Why shouldn't he share this luxury as well?

Meantime night had fallen. The stars had



come out one by one; the moon shone softly, encircled with light. The whole sky was reflected in the well, so that to the eyes of the poor foolish wolf Reynard seemed to be surrounded by a miraculous sparkling halo.

"Reynard, I believe you. Oh, how I would love to be in such a wonderful place! Tell me, how can I get there?"

"Nothing simpler. Do you feel any regret for your wife, Hersent, for your children? Would you be sorry to leave this earth?"

"Not a bit!" exclaimed Isengrin.

"Very well then. You must manage to die."

"Oh, but that wasn't what I meant, Reynard. What I mean is, can't I join you there at once, without any suffering?"

"Oh, that's quite impossible!"

Isengrin looked very disconsolate.

"However," Reynard continued, "in the case of such an old friend as you——" Isen-

grin became hopeful again. "As you are such an old friend," Reynard went on, smiling in his sleeve, "we might be able to find a way, as a great exception. But on one condition only. Have you any sins at all on your conscience? No murders? No robberies?"

"Nothing—nothing at all of that kind!" cried Isengrin impatiently, for he was feeling hungrier and hungrier, and didn't very much care whether he told the truth or not, so long as he could join Reynard. Remorse might come later!

"Very well. Then I'll tell you the secret I discovered, in order to get here right away. You see that pail hanging just in front of you, on the rope there? Get inside it. Quick! Don't be afraid. That's right!"

Reynard decided there was no need of further explanation. He felt himself lifted abruptly out of the water. Isengrin, being



heavier than he was, began to go down in the well and Reynard came up, delighted at the



success of his trick. Midway the two pails crossed, each with its passenger. Isengrin stared at Reynard in astonishment. "But where are you going to?" he cried out.

"Somewhere where you will never return, I fancy!" Reynard laughed and, leaving Isengrin to meditate at leisure on the dangers of believing everything that other people tell one, he leaped over the edge of the well and ran off at top speed to Maupertuis, where his wife and children were anxiously awaiting him. Here, safe once more by his own fireside, he told them his adventures, and the whole family laughed till they cried.

Meantime the unhappy Isengrin was shivering at the bottom of the well, where he seemed to feel already the fearful beating he would catch when he came out again. And he was not far wrong, for as soon as the monks rose, first thing in the morning they came to draw



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REYNARD THE FOX

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water. They pulled and they pulled, but for some strange reason the pail was too heavy to draw up. At last one of them had the bright idea of looking down the well to find out what was the matter. When they saw Isengrin at the bottom, with his eyes blazing, they thought for a moment it was Satan himself crouching down there, but they soon found out their mistake, and then they ran to fetch sticks, spades, pitchforks—whatever came nearest to hand. Five at a time they began to pull heartily on the rope, and when the pail rose to the top with poor Isengrin in it, he received the worst beating he had ever had in his life.

The monks left him for dead in the courtyard, and when he came to his senses, it was with the greatest difficulty that he at last made his way home, bruised and bleeding, and angrier than ever with the faithless Reynard.



THE LION AND THE WOLF



## THE LION AND THE WOLF

**G**R-R, gr-r, gr-r!" sang Frobert the cricket. There he sat, chanting his litany, right by the oven door. He felt very cheerful, for his conscience was clear and he had not a trouble in the world.

"Ah, really," said a gentle voice close by, "you must be a cleric to sing as well as all that! Don't stop; go on, I beg you! It is a pleasure to hear you, and there is nothing that soothes my spirit so much as devout music."

Frobert, taken by surprise, nearly dropped his psalm book. It was Reynard speaking, his voice full of sentiment and affection. "Why don't you go on, my good little hermit? Those psalms do so much good to my poor wicked



soul, it is cruelty to interrupt them! I only wish you would lend me your psalm book so that I could sing them for myself."

"Willingly, if it would help to bring you back to the right path!"

Frobert trotted up to Reynard, simple-mindedly and without suspicion, to lend him the book, when all at once he felt himself smothered under something dark and heavy and furry. Reynard, the villain, had brought down his great paw on the poor little hermit to crush him, but luckily Frobert was so tiny and Reynard in such a hurry that he missed his aim, and the cricket, caught under the thick fur only, struggled out, stumbling with surprise and shock, and was safely back in his hole again before Reynard, staring here and there, could see where he had disappeared.

"Ah, you wicked robber! So you even call

on the saints to help you in your evil deeds! Begone, you dishonorable wretch!"

"Why are you so angry, Frobert?"

"What, you deny that you just tried to catch me and eat me up?"

"As if I would dream of such a thing! Heavens, why must I be treated like this? If I did jostle you a little, it was only because I was in a hurry to read the book."

Now Frobert was a good little soul, and ready to forgive almost anything, but this time Reynard had gone too far. Furious, he told him to leave, and Reynard, seeing there was nothing to be gained by further explanation, slunk off without another word, looking very much ashamed of himself.

For a long time he wandered here and there without seeing anything worth his attention. Presently, passing through a field, he paused



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REYNARD THE FOX

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to admire from a distance a fine bull which, together with a cow and her calf, was grazing peacefully under the watchful eye of a herdsman. But this happy sight only filling him with sadness, he plunged again into the forest where, as though by persistent ill luck, even the birds took flight hastily at his approach. This dread that he inspired everywhere at the same time pleased Reynard and annoyed him; pleased him because it flattered his vanity, and annoyed him because it interfered sadly with his chances of getting a good dinner.

All at once he heard the sound of voices near by, one fierce and imperative, the other low and full of respect. Before he had time to hide Reynard found himself with Noble, the King of all the animals, who was accompanied by Isengrin. Isengrin, very proud that his enemy should thus see him arm-in-arm with the King, drew himself up and stared at Rey-

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THE LION AND THE WOLF

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nard insolently, but Noble, much to the wolf's surprise, seemed inclined to regard this upstart of Maupertuis with actual interest. The King was in a good humor, for Isengrin had just that minute been telling him about all the



mean tricks that Reynard had played on him—not forgetting the story of the well—and Noble, very much entertained, had even given one or two gentle little roars of amusement which shook the forest from end to end and sent every squirrel and rabbit leaping to its hole. But if Isengrin wanted to rouse the King's anger against Reynard, he was ill repaid, for he only succeeded in exciting in the lion's mind a great curiosity and interest in this strange person, of whom so much scandal was told and who played such amusing pranks. And whenever the King laughed Isengrin felt obliged to laugh too, which didn't please him at all, for it really meant that he was laughing at himself, and no one likes to do that.

Finally the King said:

"Reynard, I have been quite amused by hearing of your tricks. I will do you the honor of allowing you to hunt with me."

Things were not turning out at all as Isengrin liked. He scowled, while Reynard began to stammer his thanks for this unexpected favor. But the King thought it would be amusing to bring the two enemies face to face and enjoy their discomfiture. So he added:

"It is my pleasure that you become reconciled with Isengrin. Up to now you don't seem to have been able to get along together very well, but I insist that you make friends."

"Oh, if it please your Majesty, *I* am delighted; I have really nothing against Isengrin at all!" replied Reynard instantly.

The King appeared to forget that all the injuries had been on Reynard's side and turning to Isengrin he added a little maliciously: "You surely won't refuse to accept such a friendly advance? Come, kiss one another and be friends! You must both of you swear friendship here before me, and promise to for-



get all the ill turns you may have played one another up to now."

"For my part," said Reynard very officiously, "they are already forgotten!"

There is no refusing a royal command, so they both had to obey the King's wishes, though with a very bad grace, Isengrin especially.

"And now," said Noble, "we will turn to serious matters. We have been out hunting since dawn, Isengrin and I, without any success at all. And you, Reynard, have you had any luck?"

Reynard reflected an instant.

"Yes, Sire, near the edge of the forest here, in a meadow, I saw a fine bull, a cow, and her calf all grazing side by side. If your Majesty will deign to listen an instant, you may hear the jingle of cow bells from here."

A faint jingle was borne to them on the breeze. The King nodded.

"Reynard, stay with me. We will have a little chat. You, Isengrin, go over there and bring the three animals back with you. Hurry up!"

"But, Sire, the cattle are guarded by a herdsman armed with a big stick. Isengrin will be killed and the man will escape with his beasts to safety."

"Good. I understand. We must act warily. Isengrin, you stay here. Reynard, who is much cleverer, will go in pursuit. I will wait for you here."

Reynard made a mocking salute to Isengrin, who was very vexed at the King's preference, and disappeared between the trees.

He thought: "Now, Reynard, my friend, is the moment to distinguish yourself. Your



position at court will depend upon your success to-day. You will need all the cleverness you possess, believe me!"

He came out into the meadow. The cattle were still in the same place, the herdsman, too, close to his little herd. Reynard noted with satisfaction that there was no dog. But how should he manage to draw the man away? There he lay stretched out under a large tree, asleep in the shade. He lay snoring, his mouth wide open and his arms crossed under his head, and for some reason he had neglected to lay his hat over his face before going to sleep, as most peasants do. Reynard's quick eye, which missed nothing, took note of this, and also of a very deep ditch which bordered one side of the field.

He first thought of springing out on the cattle and driving them into the woods. But the herdsman would have ample time to wake up,

and then good-by to Reynard's chances. No, that plan was no good.

Then another idea came into his mind. He strolled over carelessly toward the ditch, and saw that the water, which was very clear, was several feet deep. Satisfied, he drew near the tree beneath which the man was sleeping. But before doing this he took care to scrape up from the edge of the ditch a quantity of black and sticky mud. When he reached the foot of the tree, slinking quietly through the grass, he climbed up the trunk and crawled out on a big branch which hung just over the man's head.

He took some of the mud he had brought and let it fall drop by drop on the sleeper, who only made a drowsy movement as though to brush away a fly. Reynard waited a moment, then began again. This time the mud dripped down on the man's eyes, his mouth, and all



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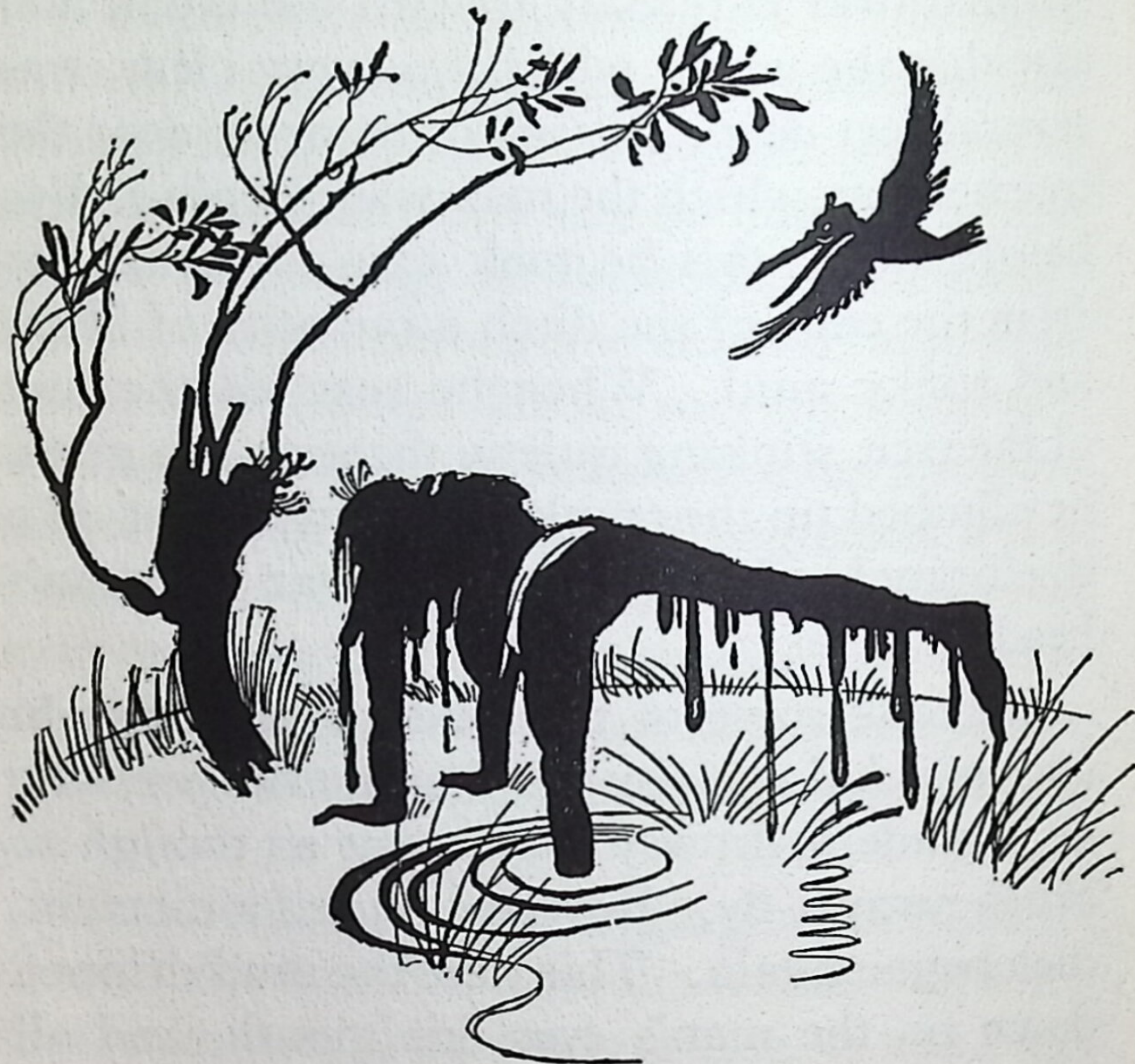
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REYNARD THE FOX

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over his face. He leaped to his feet. But the mud blinded him, and in trying to rub it off he only made it worse. Bewildered, he left



[ 118 ]

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THE LION AND THE WOLF

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his hat, his stick, his herd, and rushed off to wash himself in the stream.

Reynard followed him very quietly, and when he saw him on his knees stooping over the edge of the ditch he gave him one push which sent the poor man rolling over into the water before he had even time to know what had happened.

While he was struggling there Reynard hurled lumps of earth at him, and finally picking up a big stone flung it straight at his head and ran away, leaving him to make his way out of the water and the slippery mud as best he could. By the time he had reached the bank his cattle had disappeared. Turning back to the field Reynard found himself face to face with the King and Isengrin.

Noble, impatient at Reynard's long absence, had set out in search of him. Arriving with

[ 119 ]



Isengrin at the edge of the forest they saw his messenger at the ditch occupied in some performance which they could not very well distinguish, but which appeared, from the way in which Reynard was leaping about, to be some sort of game.

“Look, Sire!” cried Isengrin at once. “You see what a fine obedient subject Reynard is! All the while you were waiting for him he has been here amusing himself with no regard for you at all. He is a thoroughly bad person, and if your Majesty will allow me to offer my humble advice, prompted only by devotion, I think you should certainly put him to death for his lack of respect!”

This was how Isengrin kept his oath of friendship.

When Reynard came up to them he was surprised to see the King frowning with anger

and looking furious enough to frighten the boldest heart.

“Villain, what have you been doing?”

“But, Sire, I was only obeying your orders . . .”

And without delay Reynard began to relate his adventure to the King, who little by little unbent his stern expression and presently began to laugh. When Reynard finished by saying: “And now, Sire, the cattle are at your royal disposal!” Noble replied: “Well done, Reynard! You are a person of great intelligence, and I hope to see you often at court.”

Needless to say the lord of Maupertuis was overjoyed at this fulfillment of all his dearest ambitions, and could hardly contain his delight.

Then, addressing Isengrin, Noble added:

“As for you, who have done nothing at all



up to the present, you may make a fair division between us of these three beasts which we owe to Reynard's cleverness. Hurry up!"

The wolf, much embarrassed, scratched his head and then said:

"You, Sire, who are the most noble and powerful, will take the bull and the cow. As for me, I will take the little calf. Reynard will doubtless find something to eat for himself, as he is so good at the job! There must be plenty more about."

The lion drew down his brows, shook his mane in anger, and drawing back gave Isengrin a tremendous slap on the head, bang! Poor Isengrin! Where the royal claws had passed his scalp was torn open and the blood ran down. He whimpered with pain.

"Reynard," said the King, "this stupid person has no idea how to make a fair division. You had better do it yourself."

Reynard knew that if he wanted to keep on friendly terms with the King he must act prudently. So he determined to profit by his enemy's misfortune, and said:

"Sire, it is only just that you should take the bull. This cow, which is young and tender, shall be for her Majesty the Queen. As for the calf, it belongs by every right to the young prince, your son, whom we all love. He"—pointing to Isengrin—"and myself, we will go and hunt for food somewhere else."

The King was delighted.

"Reynard," he said, "who taught you to divide so admirably?"

"That big stupid there with the red head," replied Reynard, smiling as he pointed to the wound on Isengrin's forehead.

"Excellent, Reynard," said the King. "Be sure I shall not forget you!" And he went his way with the spoils.



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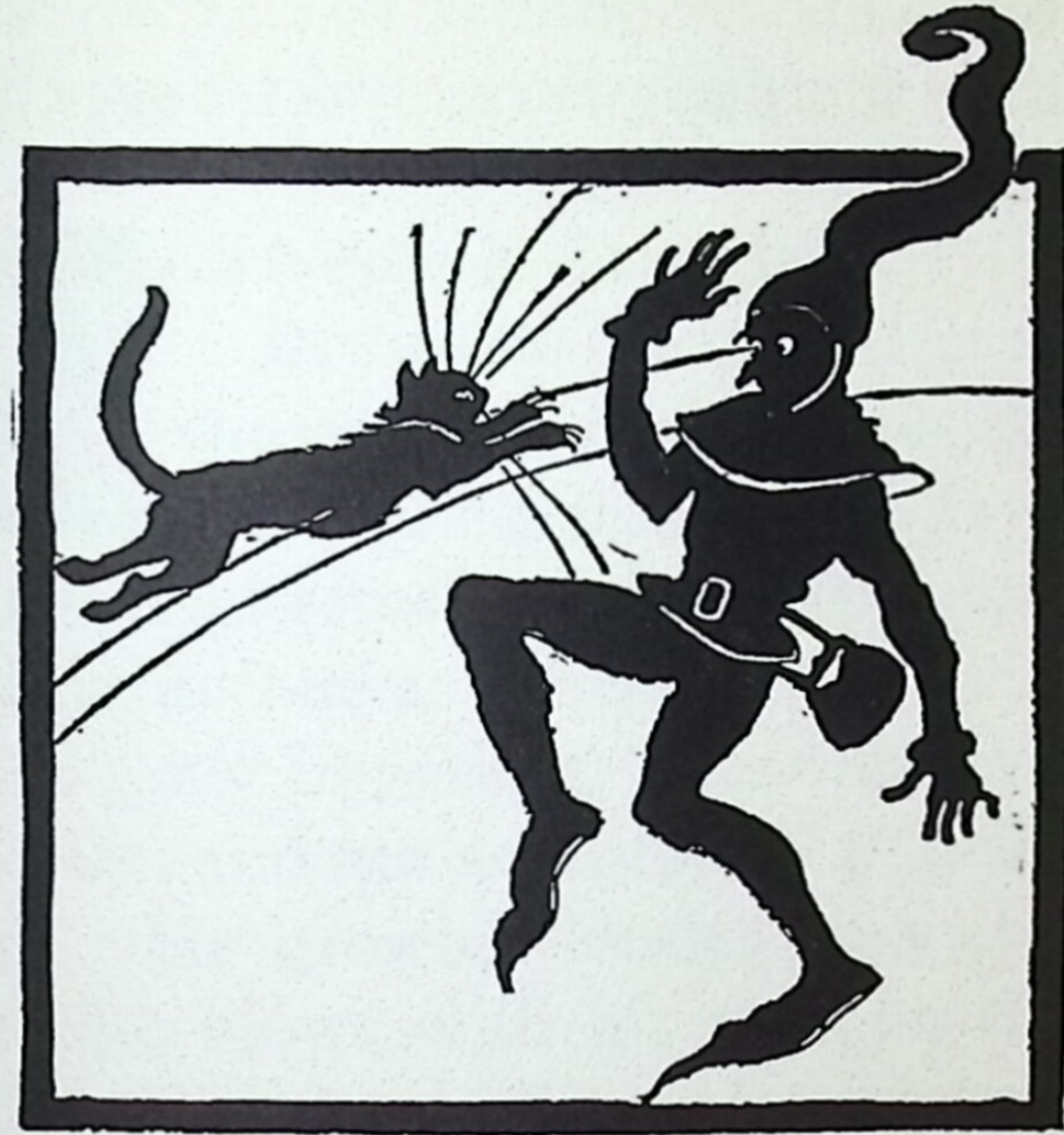
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REYNARD THE FOX

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You can imagine how happy Hermeline, Sharpnose, and Brighteyes were that evening when they learned all that had happened to Reynard. As for Isengrin and his wife, Hersent, they spent the whole night weeping with rage.



BRUIN'S ADVENTURE



## BRUIN'S ADVENTURE

**R**EYNARD, Reynard!"

Bruin the bear stood in front of the castle of Maupertuis, shouting with all his might. So far, no reply. The door remained shut, the house silent. Was there no one at home?

Bruin grew impatient. He was an important person and not accustomed to being kept waiting. He growled louder than ever, giving terrific blows with his paw on the iron-bound door and waddling along by the wall to try to look in through one or other of the small windows. But big as he was, he could not reach high enough to get a glimpse inside.

Reynard meantime was indoors all the while with his family. He was very suspicious of



prowlers and held that when one is safe within one's own house there is no sense in exposing oneself to dangers that can just as well be comfortably avoided. Very prudently, therefore, he merely cocked an eye out of the window to see who it was shouting and hammering outside. He recognized Bruin and, feeling a bit easier in his mind, thought:

"Well, it's a good while since I played a trick on any one, and my dear uncle"—for they were actually very distant relatives—"my dear uncle has arrived just at the right moment. He is good-natured and none too clever. We'll have some fun with him."

He went down to the room where Hermeline, Sharpnose, and Brighteyes, having just finished their dinner, were sitting round the fire, a big sparkling fire whose flames reached right up the wide chimney, and told them that

they must welcome Bruin with great cordiality. Then he went himself to open the door.

"Well, nephew, you took a long time opening to me! I thought you were all out and I was just going away again, though I am so hungry and tired that I really do need to sit down and rest a while. And how are your dear wife and children?"

"You shall judge for yourself, dear uncle, how well they are looking and how glad they are to see you!"

He led Bruin into the room, where they all bade him welcome with every sign of affection. None the less Bruin felt at first a slight uneasiness at finding himself in Reynard's castle, of which so many unpleasant stories were told. But he thought to himself: "Nonsense; I am much stronger than they are, after all." His nephew and the whole family moreover



seemed so amiable that it was difficult to believe all the bad things said about them; so, feeling himself more at ease, he stretched out in the big comfortable armchair before the blazing fire and, thinking to give pleasure to these kind relatives, said:

“Really, you have received me so hospitably, my dear nephew, that I must come and visit you more often. I did well not to believe all those stupid stories that people tell about you. In future, you may count on my support. But meantime don’t let me die of hunger, will you? I have been fasting since the morning. What can you give me to eat?”

“Alas, my dear uncle, I really can’t say! For to-day we have been obliged to make our meal off the only article of food we could find in the whole countryside, and which has such a horrible taste I would be ashamed to offer it to you.”

“And what is it?” asked Bruin, beginning already to make a wry face.

“Honey. Can you imagine! It’s perfectly awful. Ugh!”

“What? Honey? But that’s the very thing I like best of all! Bring me some, quick! My dear nephew, you must be living in an absolute paradise!”

“I have none here. But if you would like to come with me I can give you as much as you like and more. If I had only known you were coming I would have had so much pleasure in having it all ready for you!”

“I know your kindness, Reynard, and I shall bear it in mind. Let’s set out.”

Reynard smiled to himself as he made a secret sign to his family, and followed the impatient Bruin outside. Meantime Hermeline, Sharpnose, and Brighteyes, suspecting that Reynard had some trick up his sleeve, were



already giggling together at the thought of the funny story he would have to tell them when he returned.

Slim and quick-footed, Reynard picked his way easily through the woods, while Bruin lumbered along at his heels. Presently he paused and, pointing with his paw, said:

“Do you see that clearing over there? That’s the place; you’ll find so much honey to eat over there that you’ll never want to look at it again.”

And he laughed as he spoke, while Bruin fairly trembled with impatience.

Reynard knew that in this particular clearing the woodcutters had just been felling some trees. He knew also that in one of the biggest of the fallen trunks, which they were going to split open, had been left some large wedges driven in to hold the crack apart. Between these wedges there was just enough space

for Bruin to force his nose into the crack.

Reynard turned to his uncle and told him: “You see that crack? Stick your nose inside; you will find the honey at the bottom. But don’t eat too much of it. You might make yourself ill.”

Bruin threw himself greedily on the tree trunk, braced his two paws against it, and thrust his head into the crack, pushing his nose deeper and deeper in search of the honey which naturally enough he didn’t find.

“Well, uncle,” Reynard asked, “how do you like it?”

He only got a growl in reply. Bruin was too busy to talk. Seeing that his attention was fully occupied, Reynard leaned over him and, pulling quickly with all his strength, drew out the two wedges. When Bruin, taken by surprise, tried to free himself, he found that the crack, released from the wedges, had sprung



together again and now held him fast by the nose. Poor Bruin! The more he struggled the worse it pinched, and soon his rage knew no bounds, for now the fine charming nephew who had received him so kindly was



dancing about in delight at his vain efforts.

"My dear uncle," Reynard cried, "you really shouldn't eat so much! Leave a little for next time. Isn't it good? Come, we must be getting home now; I'm sure you've had enough by this time and my wife will be getting quite anxious!"

Bruin struggled and struggled with the tree, but he could not get away. He must either stay there and die of hunger or leave the greater part of his nose behind.

At that moment the woodcutter, whose hut was quite near, was awakened by all the growling and confusion. He rose, lit a lantern, and came to see what all this noise was about.

"The bear! The bear!" he cried at once. "There's a bear caught in the tree!"

And he ran to wake the whole village. Lights appeared in all the cottages, and the people came out armed with clubs and axes.



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REYNARD THE FOX

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They were making their way toward the clearing and already Bruin could see their torches shining between the trees. Reynard, who had only waited for this moment, made a deep bow to Bruin, and saying: "I am sorry, uncle, you are such a glutton that there is no means of stopping you! Well, good-by!" he trotted off with a dignified air. Much as he would have enjoyed seeing the end of the adventure, prudence suggested his going home.

Bruin heard the shouts. Desperate, he made one last great effort and, seeing it was better to lose part of his skin than to lose his life, tugged his nose out. Bleeding and smarting as he was, he made straight for the royal court to demand justice. By the time the woodcutters arrived on the scene he was already far away.

Weak from pain, he dragged himself along as best he could and at last, after much diffi-



*"Tell Reynard to Appear in Court"*



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BRUIN'S ADVENTURE

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culty and with many groans, arrived at Noble's court, where he was met with exclamations of horror, pity, and anger.

"Why, Sir Bear, who has treated you like this?" demanded the King, who knew Bruin for one of his most faithful and loyal subjects.

"It was Reynard, the criminal," gasped Bruin, almost at the end of his strength. "Sire, I demand justice!"

The King's indignation knew no bounds. Now he could no longer doubt Reynard's treachery. He made Bruin tell him the whole story, then, shaking his mane with fury, he called Tybert the cat.

"Tybert, you who have such a clever tongue, go at once to Maupertuis and tell Reynard he must appear immediately at court!"

Noble did not tell Tybert why he was so angry with Reynard, nor did he tell him of the trick the wicked fox had played upon Bruin.



Poor Tybert!

He was forced to obey, for it was a royal command. But he set out very unwillingly. He knew that Reynard hated him and would show him small mercy if he once got him in his power. He met a crow on the way, and called out to him, "Crow, fly to the right!" (for that always means good luck), but the crow flew to the left instead, and Tybert felt more discouraged than ever. None the less he determined to put up a good fight if necessary and, summoning all his courage, soon found himself within sight of Maupertuis.

Reynard was at home, looking out of the window. He recognized Tybert and, coming down at once, welcomed him with every appearance of good will.

"Good day, dear cousin! To what do I owe the honor of this visit?"

"Reynard, his Majesty commands your im-

mediate presence at court to answer certain charges that have been brought against you. He says you are to set out at once, without any delay."

Reynard, with a very innocent air, exclaimed:

"I can't imagine what the King wants to see me about, but be sure I will set out as soon as I possibly can. . . . What? You are not going away again already? Won't you stay just a few minutes? We'll set out together, just as soon as we have had a good meal. What do you say? Come, I'll give you something that you like very much. Can't you guess? Mice, my dear . . . nothing less than mice!"

Tybert was delighted. There was nothing he adored more than mice. But he hesitated all the same. He had no great confidence in Reynard. Still, mice were so good! He began to weaken.



"But . . . where are they?"

"Just near here; you see that house down there with the pointed roof? In the granary there Farmer Martin has just stored a lot of corn, which has attracted a number of mice to the place. They have been feasting for days, and are as fat as butter. Come and see."

Tybert was persuaded. His greed overcame him. He forgot that Reynard had already tricked him more than once before. If he could have looked inside Reynard's mind at that moment he would have seen what Reynard himself knew very well: namely, that there were no mice at all in the granary, but that there was a running noose there set by the farmer for Reynard himself, who had been in the habit of passing through on his way to steal in the kitchen. Reynard, always wary, had managed to avoid the snare, but he hoped to see Tybert caught in it. Thus he would be

finally rid of the cat, who was his only rival in trickery and whom he had long wished to destroy.

The two thieves climbed up on the roof and crept into the granary. There was a hole in the wall. Reynard whispered to Tybert: "It is through that hole that you get into the other granary where the mice are. Stoop down and crawl in."

Tybert hesitated an instant, but Reynard exclaimed: "Why, how slow you are, Tybert! Hurry up!" Still cautiously sniffing, the cat crawled into the hole, but just as he was about to come out on the other side he felt the noose tighten about his neck. Realizing Reynard's treachery too late as usual, he mewed with rage, struggling and rolling on the ground, but the more he struggled the tighter he pulled the noose. Reynard shrieked with laughter. The noise that Tybert made soon brought the



farmer and his son running to the granary and, thinking they had at last caught the real thief, they fell upon Tybert with sticks and gave him a sound beating. Reynard meantime had already fled, feeling confident his enemy would be killed.

Tybert defended himself as best he could and at last, after much scratching and biting, succeeded in breaking the noose, flew straight at the faces of his two assailants, clawing them severely, and made his escape.

He ran for a long time, in spite of the pain of his wounds, and at last reached the royal court, where he joined his complaints to those of Bruin, exclaiming:

“Your Majesty must render justice! There is no limit to Reynard’s wickedness. Not content with killing, murdering, and stealing, he has now outdone himself by maltreating even your Majesty’s own messenger. This is an

insult to your dignity and that of the whole court. Sire, we demand that he perish in punishment for his crimes!”

All the courtiers approved of this, and the lion, rising on his throne and roaring loudly, ordered that Reynard be at once found and brought to trial on the charges of murder, robbery, and contempt of court.





REYNARD'S TRIAL



## REYNARD'S TRIAL



**I**N the great hall of the royal palace were assembled all the principal members of the court. One could see among the crowd surrounding the throne of Noble and of the Queen, Isengrin the wolf, and his wife Hersent, Bruin the bear, Tybert the cat, both in very bad shape from their wounds; the son of Longbeak the heron, Tiecelein the crow, Frobert the cricket, Couard the hare, one of the most timid and gentle of beings, the tomtit, and many others. The leopard was easily distinguished by his beautiful coat and the great friendliness shown to him by the King, whom he always flattered. They were waiting only for Chanticleer to complete the gathering, when all at once



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REYNARD THE FOX

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Noble rose with a very majestic air. A great silence fell on the gathering and all eyes were turned to the throne.

Noble's mighty voice broke the stillness.

"Which among you will undertake to convey to Reynard our royal command, bidding him present himself before the tribunal to be tried on the following charges: namely, murder, robbery, and contempt of court?"

"I, Sire!" cried Grimbert the badger, the only person to answer. Grimbert perhaps felt encouraged by the fact that he was a near relative of Reynard's and had always been on friendly terms with him, as though Reynard were likely to care anything about relationship or friendliness either!

Noble accepted his offer. As a matter of fact he had no other choice.

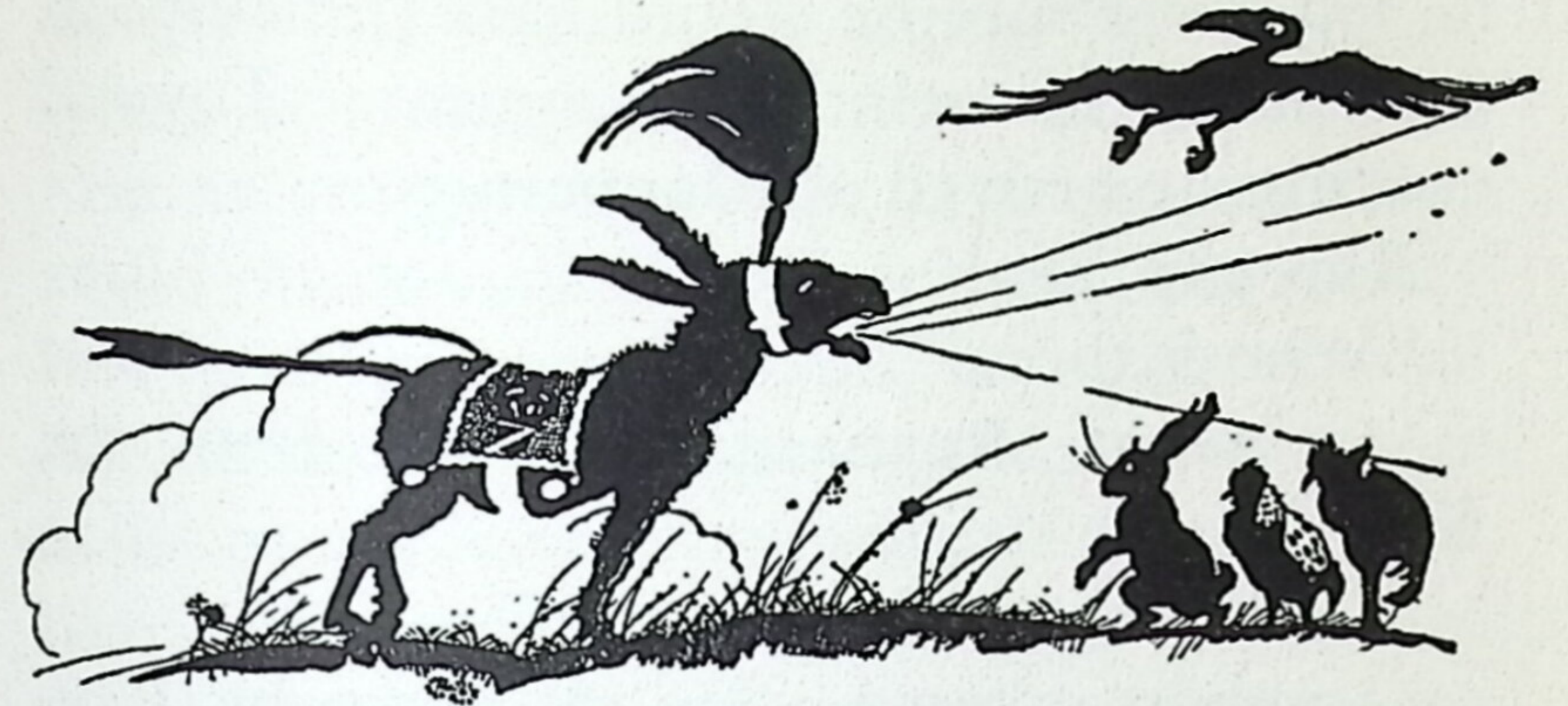
Grimbert, bowing deeply before the royal throne, set out for Maupertuis.

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REYNARD'S TRIAL

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Meantime the King called Longears the donkey, who was his chief herald, and ordered him, together with all his assistants, to call every one together for the morrow, the day appointed for Reynard's trial. All day long the countryside echoed to the loud braying of the heralds, announcing the important and much-desired event.

Grimbert traveled all day, going over in his mind the various arguments which he should use to induce Reynard to present himself, for



he felt quite sure he would have difficulty in persuading his relative to appear. Toward evening he arrived at Maupertuis.

Rap, rap, rap!

"Who is there?"

"Grimbert, Reynard. I come from the King."

"Come in, my dear cousin."

Grimbert entered. He sat down by Reynard and explained his errand. Reynard refused flatly to appear at court.

"I have no friends there," he said. "They are all my enemies except you, dear Grimbert. I am sure to be condemned, and once in their clutches I shall never escape. Why should I run straight into danger? I am quite content here. I shall stay where I am, and let what will happen."

"The course you suggest sounds very prudent, but let me point out that it has also many

dangers. If you do not appear for trial, the King, according to his firm intention, will raise an army and lay siege to you here. What could you do against a whole multitude? They will have no mercy on you, nor on your wife and children. If, on the contrary, you appear at court, you have every possible chance. You have a clever tongue and you know how to use it to advantage. What's more, you know very well that the King has really quite a soft spot for you in his heart and will be very ready to believe anything you tell him. What more do you want? What are you complaining of? Come without any more delay and don't irritate the King by keeping him waiting, which would only be another insult and make your case all the worse."

Reynard listened to reason. He took his wallet, went to find Hermeline, and said to her: "Wife, I am in great danger. Perhaps



I shall come home again to-morrow; perhaps I shall never return at all. In any case, take good care of the children. Good-by!"

And Grimbert and Reynard set out together.

Grimbert, who was really quite an honest soul, lectured Reynard all the way, trying to make him see the error of his ways. The wily fox, in order not to make an enemy of the badger, who was the only friend left to him, pretended to be convinced by his arguments and actually to repent. He went so far as to swear that he would never catch another chicken for the rest of his life!

After resting a little while in the fields, they took to the road once more, and by morning reached the appointed place, where a great crowd was already gathered to attend the trial. It was a happy day for all these poor animals who at one time or another had suffered at Reynard's hands. The fox was greeted with

jeers and hisses. He thought: "Wait a bit, my friends; I am not hanged yet!" But he could see the gallows already erected near the place of trial and, in spite of his bravado, he felt very much afraid.

Almost immediately the trial began. The King read out the accusations and called the witnesses. Tybert and Bruin came forward, both saying: "See what this villain has done to us! This is his work!"

The heron stood up and complained of the murder of his father. Roosters and hens filed past; crows, tomtits, wood thrushes, all brought charges of murder or theft. The King roared with anger. A growl of hatred came from the crowd, and Reynard alone remained calm. He was preparing his defense.

When every one seemed to have finished his complaint he stepped forward.



“Sire, I count upon the inexhaustible bounty and great wisdom which your Majesty alone possesses to distinguish the base spirit of calumny which animates all these unjust people alike. When they see an unfortunate victim attacked, above all one who has once enjoyed your favor and confidence, they hasten to overwhelm him with their spiteful lies and revenge themselves for what little power he may once have possessed. What villainy! Tybert and Bruin, whom I once loved, stand there now to accuse me of having led them into an infamous trap. I assure you it is false. Both of them—they will admit it themselves—were trying to steal, Bruin some honey, and Tybert the mice. Punishment overtook them before they were able to commit their theft and their punishment was just. They are trying to put the blame of their thrashings on me, who am ignorant of the whole affair.

“Isengrin, who just now witnessed against me, is the worst robber in your Majesty's realm, Sire, and yet he accuses me of having stolen some hams from him, of having scalded him with boiling water and tried to drown him. Let him bring proof. It is very easy to make accusations without proof. As for the hams, I have plenty without stealing from him. I threw hot water on him, certainly, one day when he was trying to break into my castle by force. You will admit that he deserved punishment and that I showed myself very lenient. He accuses me of having tried to drown him, in order to hide his own clumsiness and stupidity in falling down the well while he was trying to catch the moon that he saw reflected there. I know that story very well, and how he told every one who would listen to him that it was I who dragged him into the well, all to keep people from laughing at his foolishness!



“Sire, judge for yourself whether they or I am in the wrong, and do not listen to their base and infamous lies.”

Reynard continued for some time in this vein. He knew very well how to excuse himself, and make black appear white. He cast all the blame on his accusers and tried to appear, hypocrite that he was, as the most virtuous and misunderstood of beings. In fact he only just fell short of making himself out an absolute saint!

The crowd began to waver, and his accusers felt that the day was lost. Isengrin, Bruin, and Tybert pawed the ground with rage, whispering to one another: “What bad luck for us! We shall never get our vengeance to-day! Once he is free Reynard will make us pay dearly for all this.”

And they were almost in despair.

Just as Reynard was in the very midst of

glorifying himself, there rose a sudden confusion of shouts, of crying and weeping, of tragic cluckings and cock-a-doodle-doo's. Through the crowd there advanced a strange procession.

Four young roosters came forward carrying a bier on which lay the corpse of Dame Scratchfoot, the most famous hen in the country, her head bitten off from her body.

Chanticleer marched in front, drooping his wings and expressing the deepest grief. He approached the King, followed by the four pallbearers and escorted by the entire barnyard tribe of the country.

“Justice, Sire, justice! Reynard has killed my daughter, my unhappy daughter Scratchfoot! He has bitten off her head. I once had twenty children, Sire, and there are only four left alive. All the others have been strangled or carried off by that miserable



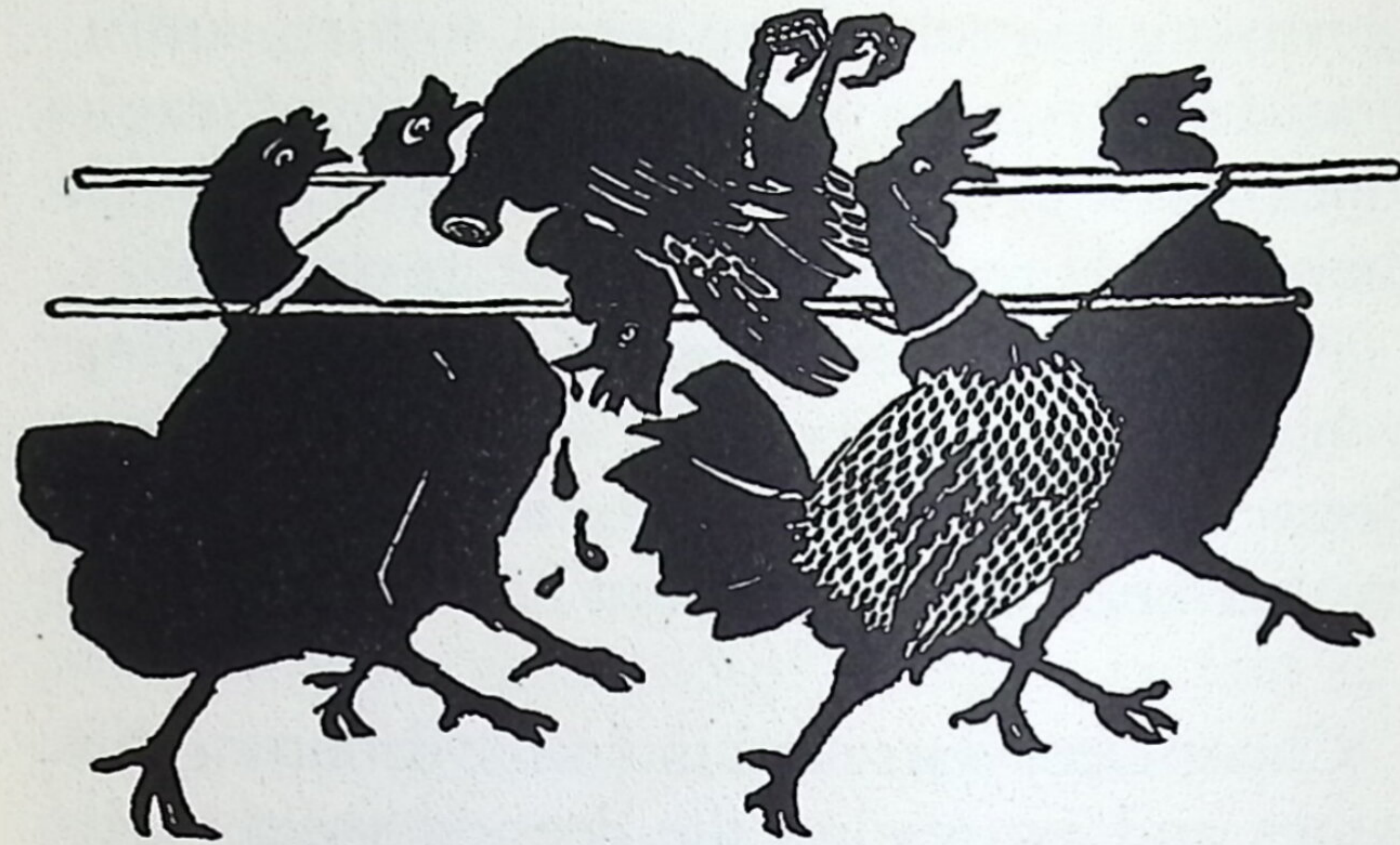
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REYNARD THE FOX

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villain. I myself only escaped by a miracle!"

"Boo! Boo! Death to Reynard!" cried the crowd, once more changing their sympathies.

Chanticleer stood motionless, bowed down with grief. Tybert and Bruin began to feel more hopeful, for once more the King was roaring with indignation. Reynard alone was in despair, feeling that nothing less than a miracle could save him now. Already he seemed

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REYNARD'S TRIAL

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to feel the rope around his neck, and saw himself hanging there lifeless while his enemies gathered around rejoicing and pulling his tail.

He racked his brain for some plan. Suddenly he gave a start, for he heard the King giving orders to the executioner to seize the prisoner and hang him then and there. This



time all was over! He saw with rage how the cat, the wolf, and the bear stepped forward and begged, as a special favor, permission to execute the sentence themselves, while the King willingly agreed, considering this only slight compensation for the injuries they had suffered.

His three enemies drew near, sneering at him without pity.

"Hurry up," whispered Tybert. "Quick while we have the chance! Don't give the King time to change his mind again. You, Bruin, are the strongest; keep tight hold of Reynard. Isengrin, you hold the ladder for me while I run up and fix the rope!"

Reynard made no attempt to struggle. He knew that if anything could save him now it would be wit, not strength. All at once, in despair, he broke away, and springing to the platform on which the scaffold was erected,

begged leave to address one last word to the King. In spite of the murmurs which rose from the crowd, Noble gave his permission, and Tybert muttered to his two friends: "Our preparations are useless; all is lost!"

Reynard, forced to play his last card, hesitated at nothing that might possibly save his skin. Calumny was his most powerful weapon, and he resolved to spare no one.

"Sire, now that I am face to face with death and nothing can save me, I only desire, with my last dying breath, to confess my sins—all my sins—so that after I am dead no one may suffer uneasiness or be accused of any crime which I myself have committed, unknown to you all. I will conceal nothing, and I hope by this act of confession to obtain mercy for my soul!"

There was a murmur of astonishment and approval. Tybert bent toward his companions



and whispered: "Let us be wise and run away while there is time!"

"Why? He is going to confess. What harm can that do us?" said the two stupids, who did not realize, like Tybert, that Reynard's fine preface was only meant to disguise some new treachery. "We'll stay and listen to him."

Tybert, however, slipped noiselessly away.

Reynard had already begun his confession. His crimes were more numerous even than any one had imagined. The listeners were so stupefied at the recital that they even forgot their indignation. On every side one heard exclamations: "Ah, *now* I know where those hams went to that I hunted everywhere for!" "My poor little sister! And all the time we thought she had been drowned!" Mystery after mys-

tery was now explained for the first time.

And still Reynard held forth. He stood there on the platform with contrite air and trembling voice, but an eye that sparkled more and more hopefully as he went on.

"And now," he concluded, "I must confess to my shame that I would have killed and robbed even more widely, have committed many more crimes than these, had it not been for my secret treasure-hoard which has enabled me, more or less, to live."

At these words the King, who was very avaricious—as Reynard well knew—fairly bounded on his throne with excitement.

"A treasure? What treasure? Where is it? How did you get it?"

"An immense fortune, in fact. A whole cavernful of jewels and gold! How did I come by it? That, Sire, I will confide to your



ear alone, and then you will see how I have been libeled when they dared to doubt my loyalty to your Majesty."

The King, in his haste, ordered Reynard to be liberated at once. This was done. Now at least he was very nearly free!

He withdrew to talk privately with the King and Queen in one of the rooms of the palace, out of earshot of the crowd, who were boiling with curiosity.

"Sire," he began, "I will tell you the whole truth, no matter what it cost me to accuse my own father and my cousin Grimbert. My father entered into a conspiracy with Grimbert, Isengrin, Tybert, and Bruin. They proposed to murder you and to make Bruin king in your place. For that, an army was necessary. My father had discovered a treasure which enabled him to pay the soldiers. All was ready. By chance I happened to hear of

this plot; I say by chance, for my father, aware of my loyalty and devotion to your Majesty, had kept everything from me. I knew that, without money, they would be unable to carry out their plans. So I followed my father secretly, and one day I was lucky enough to discover him shoveling earth into a hole in the ground. As soon as he had gone I dug it up again, and found the treasure, which I carried away and hid in a safe place. The conspiracy failed, the soldiers refusing to fight without pay. My father went mad from despair! And now see how I am rewarded for my devotion! I saved your Majesty's life, and yet I was going to be hanged while Isengrin, Tybert, Bruin, and Grimbert, who have been plotting your death, would live on, happy and rewarded!"

Reynard paused, seemingly plunged in melancholy reflection. Actually, he was watching the effect of his speech. The rascal



had not hesitated to libel even his father and best friend in support of his lies. And his wickedness was crowned with success.

Both the King and the Queen were deeply moved. Both were really thinking of the treasure.

“Reynard, you are freely pardoned! Your crimes are forgotten.”

Reynard thanked them humbly, on his knees, enjoying this little comedy. Then, suspecting the King’s desire and his real motive, he added:

“Ah, Sire, please deign to accept this treasure which for me can only have unhappy associations. Take it. It will be better in your hands than in mine. It lies across the valley, not far from here, buried under a poplar tree. I would gladly lead you there myself and give it to you. But your bounty is infinite, and you know how deeply anxious my unhappy family

are at this moment. Think, Sire, of the despair of my poor wife and children! Show me one further kindness; allow me to go and reassure my poor children of my safety. Your Majesty the Queen will understand their anxiety and plead for me, I beg of you. I swear to return at once and deliver up the treasure to you!”

“All right,” said the King. “But in return for all you have told me, Reynard, and as a sign of reward, I wish you to go in state, escorted by two of my gentlemen-in-waiting. As for Bruin, Tybert, Grimbert, and Isengrin, they shall be thrown into a dungeon to perish. I have spoken!”

As the King said, so it was done. Tybert, thanks to his prudence, was nowhere to be found. As for Isengrin, Grimbert, and Bruin, they wept and lamented in their prison, but without avail.

Reynard, like a grand nobleman, was es-



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REYNARD THE FOX

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corted to the gates of the town by the King's gentlemen-in-waiting.

Needless to say, the treasure had never existed. How did Reynard manage to overcome this little difficulty? We shall see. A little matter like that did not worry him. He was free; that was the main thing. The rest could take care of itself.



THE DEATH OF COUARD



## THE DEATH OF COUARD



THE road was long and white. Between the thick leaves of the trees spangles of sunlight fell on the ground. "Life is good," Reynard thought. "If, at this moment, my enemies had their wish, I might be hanging by my neck on the gallows, with every one jeering at me. Instead, just a little lie or two, that no one but the King would be stupid enough to believe, and here I am safe and sound, paws, tail and all, for the present at all events! And now let's see what we can do to amuse ourselves."

Reynard was accompanied by two of Noble's gentlemen-in-waiting, Bellyn the ram, and the hare, Couard, whom the King had appointed to escort him home to Mau-



pertuis. Bellyn was good-natured and stupid. He saw no further than the end of his nose, and Reynard had already fixed upon him as his next victim. Couard was very gentle, considerate of others, and so peace-loving that every one made fun of him, calling him timid. This was not true, but he was extremely prudent.

In company with these two good folk, who were too upright themselves ever to suspect evil in others, Reynard made the most of the occasion to play the part of a really repentant criminal. The King in his royal bounty had pardoned him, but he was conscious of his wickedness and could not sufficiently deplore his past crimes. In future he would show his gratitude to the King by leading the most blameless of lives.

But all the while he talked, his mind was already busy plotting a new piece of villainy.

His two companions consoled him, being easily taken in by lies and thinking to themselves: "This Reynard cannot be as bad as they say, if he is so repentant." They encouraged him earnestly to lead a better life and follow the path of virtue, and all the while they were preaching to him Reynard thought: "You both bore me to tears, but never mind; I'll make you pay for it all right, later on!" But he kept up his contrite air and pretended to be very grateful for all the good advice they gave him.

Soon they came in sight of Maupertuis. Reynard could hardly contain his joy at the familiar view, which he had never hoped to gaze on again. The sun being hot, his companions also were not sorry to find their journey nearly over, and all three were in gay spirits as they drew near. Reynard said: "Wait for me here a moment, in this room. I



will join you as soon as I have embraced my wife and children."

He scampered upstairs, where Hermeline, Sharpnose, and Brighteyes jumped with joy to see him once more among them, safe and sound. There was quite a touching meeting between them, and Reynard told them briefly all that had taken place since he left. All three were overcome with admiration for his cleverness.

At last he said: "Well, let's sit down to table. I'm terribly hungry! What is there to eat?"

"Alas, my dear husband, the children were in no state to go out hunting, and our pantry is quite empty! We have had scarcely a bite to eat since you left us!"

"I'll soon see to that. I already have a plan in my mind. But you must help me."

He went to the door.

"Couard, Couard, my dear friend, come



*Hermeline and Sharpnose Danced with Joy*



here. My wife tells me that you are a distant relative of hers. She would be so delighted to have a little chat with you and renew your acquaintanceship. Bellyn, do you mind waiting a moment? I will come down at once."

Quite unsuspecting, Couard came. He entered the room, waiting for Reynard to introduce the pretended relative. But Reynard only burst out laughing and exclaimed:

"Good Couard, how simple he is! What did you suppose we wanted you for? Come, I'll give you your choice: what kind of sauce would you like to be eaten with?"

Poor Couard! The hungry looks, even more than the words, convinced him of the fate in store for him. He ran here and there, leaping about on his long hind legs and searching vainly for some loophole of escape. But the doors were shut fast. He cried out desperately: "Help, Bellyn! Help!"



But could Bellyn hear him?

Four against one, they cornered him at last. Reynard leaped upon him, and in the twinkling of an eye Couard was no more.

"Now," said Reynard, "we must manage to get rid of that other stupid without rousing his suspicions!"

And he went in search of Bellyn.

Entering the room with the cordial air of a host whose only anxiety is to make his guests thoroughly happy and at ease, he at once detected a rather worried look on Bellyn's face. Thinking to himself: "Goodness, I wonder if he heard Couard calling out!" Reynard assumed his most engaging air and came forward, wreathed in smiles.

"Excuse me, Bellyn, if I kept you waiting! But you understand that in the joy of seeing one's family again, especially when you thought you had lost them for ever, and in

seeing whether everything has gone all right in one's absence, time passes sooner than one thinks! But I really didn't mean to keep you waiting so long!"

Bellyn interrupted him abruptly.

"Where is Couard?"

"My dear friend, what a tone to take! Are you finding fault with my hospitality? Couard is with my wife, his cousin. You know what women are like; they are worse gossips than magpies! And as for Couard himself—not to give any offense—he is quite a chatterbox; there they are both together, chatting away at such a rate that it's positively tiring to listen to them. They have so many friends and relatives in common that before they have finished the whole story of births, deaths, and marriages it will be another hour at least. I had to stop my ears and run away!"

"But," Bellyn insisted, still suspicious but



taken aback by Reynard's natural air, "why was some one calling out 'Help' just now?"

"Goodness!" thought Reynard. "Now we're in for it!" He said aloud:

"You are so suspicious, my poor Bellyn, that your ears deceive you. Perhaps, after all, it's not surprising, for both my wife and Couard were shouting quite loudly. You probably heard their voices, but misunderstood them."

And to overcome the last trace of doubt which he still saw on Bellyn's face he added quickly: "After all, there's no harm in interrupting them. I will go and call Couard at once. But all the same I don't see why you should be so anxious."

But before Reynard had time to call, Bellyn, now entirely convinced, stopped him. "That's all right. I quite believe you."

"Thank goodness for that!" thought Rey-

nard. "My, what a nuisance he is! Why can't he hurry up and go?"

At that moment, as if in reply to Reynard's thoughts, Bellyn continued: "My dear Reynard, I'm afraid I must be leaving you. It is getting quite late, and much as I would enjoy staying with you, I have duties at home. Don't forget the good resolutions you made a little while ago, will you? And is there any little commission I can do for you at court?"

"Why, certainly there is, and to the King himself. He could find no more faithful messenger than you, I am sure. Wait just a moment, if you don't mind."

He went to the room where Couard had been killed. There he found his family busily engaged in roasting the hare's body. The head lay in a corner, forgotten. He took it and put it in a large wallet, which he tied firmly with cord, explaining to his wife, who



stared in surprise, the idea which had just occurred to him. Amid bursts of laughter he returned to the ram, who was waiting with his usual impressive and dignified air.

"Here you are," said Reynard. "You see this wallet? It contains some very important papers and documents which I promised to the King and of which he is very much in need. He is very anxious to have these papers, and they will help to establish me in his good graces. Listen; I am very fond of you. Tell the King that you helped me with your good advice, and then you will share his favor and gain importance in his eyes. It will bring you wealth and honor, too. Say boldly that it was really you who were largely responsible for giving him these documents, and he will see to it that you are well rewarded.

"But whatever you do," he added, "don't undo this knot. It is a secret sign agreed upon

between the King and myself, and if you meddle with it, he will think you have been unfaithful to his trust and punish you, because you could never re-tie it again yourself in the same way!"

"Why, Reynard, you are the best friend I ever had!" cried Bellyn. "I don't know how to thank you! I will certainly do my utmost in recommending you to the King, as the best proof of my gratitude."

"Yes . . . yes . . ." said Reynard, smiling in spite of himself at Bellyn's enthusiasm. "Well, good-by and a good journey to you! Aren't you taking Couard with you?"

"After all you said I wouldn't like to disturb him. Give him my best regards. Good-by."

"The idiot! He little knows what he is carrying with him!" said Reynard, laughing. "And now, let's see how Couard tastes! He ought to be good. If he wasn't much use dur-



ing his lifetime he will at least be useful after his death."

And rejoining Hermeline, Sharpnose, and Brighteyes, he dined comfortably and at ease on the remains of the poor hare.



Meantime Bellyn went on his way, full of importance. He would certainly be congratulated by the King! Noble would reward him

before all the assembled court. Every one would bow down to him, and people would whisper everywhere: "Do you see that person over there? He is one of the richest and most powerful nobles at court, and extremely intelligent." As you may have gathered, Bellyn's great fault was vanity, and though naturally unimaginative, once his vanity carried him away there was no end to the castles in Spain that he would build and furnish.

His heart was full of gratitude to Reynard. He never thought of looking in the wallet.

Arriving finally at court, he asked for a private audience with the King. This being granted, Noble at once asked:

"And where is Couard, whom I sent with you?"

"He stayed at Maupertuis, Sire, delighted to have found a relative in the wife of Reynard, your faithful subject. I bring you, Sire, some



documents which Reynard and I together placed in this sealed wallet, and which I strongly advised him to send to your Majesty. I know that they are of great value to you."

Noble opened the wallet. Out rolled Couard's head. He stared at it for a moment speechless, while Bellyn was struck dumb with stupor. Then, bursting out in his wrath, the King cried:

"Traitor, you have killed your companion and you dare to accuse Reynard of the crime! Coming into my presence with that assured air! You shall be richly punished for your treachery and wickedness! Poor Couard!"

"But, your Majesty—it was not I——"

"What, you dare to say it was not you, after boasting just now that you actually helped Reynard with your advice! This is too much! Guards, seize this wretched criminal and throw him into a dungeon. No . . . I have

perhaps treated Isengrin too harshly. Give up this traitor to him to be devoured, and let all his race be henceforward the prey of wolves. I have spoken!"

This was done. And thus it is that ever since that day the wolves have devoured the sheep.





THE SECOND TRIAL



## THE SECOND TRIAL

**S**HORTLY after the death of Couard, the poor hare, Noble sat in judgment, enthroned under a canopy of crimson velvet lined with ermine. Several plaintiffs had already appeared before him, and there were a few others still waiting their turn, when all at once, amid a general murmur of sympathy, the rabbit entered. The poor creature, who had one ear torn, approached the King and said in a clear voice that could be heard by all the assembled crowd:

“Sire, I demand justice! This morning on my way to your court, where I had business to transact, I saw Reynard on the road just in front of his house. I was going to turn back



and go another way, for I am very much afraid of him, when I remembered that you had pardoned him and that consequently he must be innocent of all the crimes laid at his door, which have given him such a bad reputation. So instead I went on. He saw me from a distance and came to meet me. I thought it was only out of politeness, to say good day, but the villain had no sooner reached my side than he flung his paws around my neck and began to squeeze me so hard that I lost my breath. As soon as I found that, instead of greeting me, he wanted to strangle me for good and all, I began to struggle and succeeded in getting away. But his claws tore my ear and have left their mark as witness. Justice, Sire, for there is no crime that this rascal is not capable of! The peace which we all thought assured is lost forever if Reynard is left at liberty!"

All his hearers, except one or two of Rey-

nard's relatives, expressed by their eager cries that they shared the opinion of the poor rabbit.

Noble reflected.

"Reynard," he thought, "has deceived me. By this grand tale of a treasure that he was going to give up to me he managed to secure his liberty. Unless he is punished once and for all I shall lose all my prestige and there will be no peace for me." Aloud he said:

"We have decided that Leopard collect some soldiers and go instantly to Maupertuis, where he will seize Reynard and hang him immediately without trial."

By chance, Grimbert the badger was among the group of courtiers. In spite of the trick that Reynard had played on him he still had a surprising affection for his hypocritical relative. As soon as he heard the King's edict he set off rapidly for Maupertuis. He arrived before nightfall and found Reynard sitting



tranquilly before his doorway, enjoying the fresh air.



“Reynard, Reynard, while you sit peacefully there at your ease, an order has been given at court for your execution! No later than tomorrow Leopard will arrest you and hang you. Fly while there is yet time!”

Hermeline, who came running, began to weep and lament. But Reynard said: “There is no place where I should be as well off as I am here. Here I have my own ways of living, my own places to hunt, my own servants. Who knows if I should fare better by taking flight elsewhere? No, it will be better for me to go myself to court and, relying on my innocence, forestall the judgment. Hermeline, you stay quietly here. On my way I shall think up enough clever excuses, and danger always sharpens my wits. So Leopard will set out tomorrow morning to arrest me. Good. By tomorrow morning I shall be already at court. Come with me, Grimbert, and you



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REYNARD THE FOX

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can give me all the details about this affair."

Both Grimbert and Hermeline tried to persuade Reynard not to run into certain danger. But their words were only wasted, and Reynard and his companion set out that same night so as to arrive at court by daybreak.

They reached the royal palace just as Leopard was setting out on his mission. They were brought into the presence of the King, who, filled with fury at sight of the lord of Maupertuis, cried out:

"Miserable wretch, I was just sending for you to have you hanged, but I see you have come yourself for punishment! Now I shall have the pleasure of witnessing with my own eyes the chastisement which your crimes deserve!"

"Sire, I came here, aware of my innocence, to submit myself to your sense of justice and equity. I know that I am accused. But of

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THE SECOND TRIAL

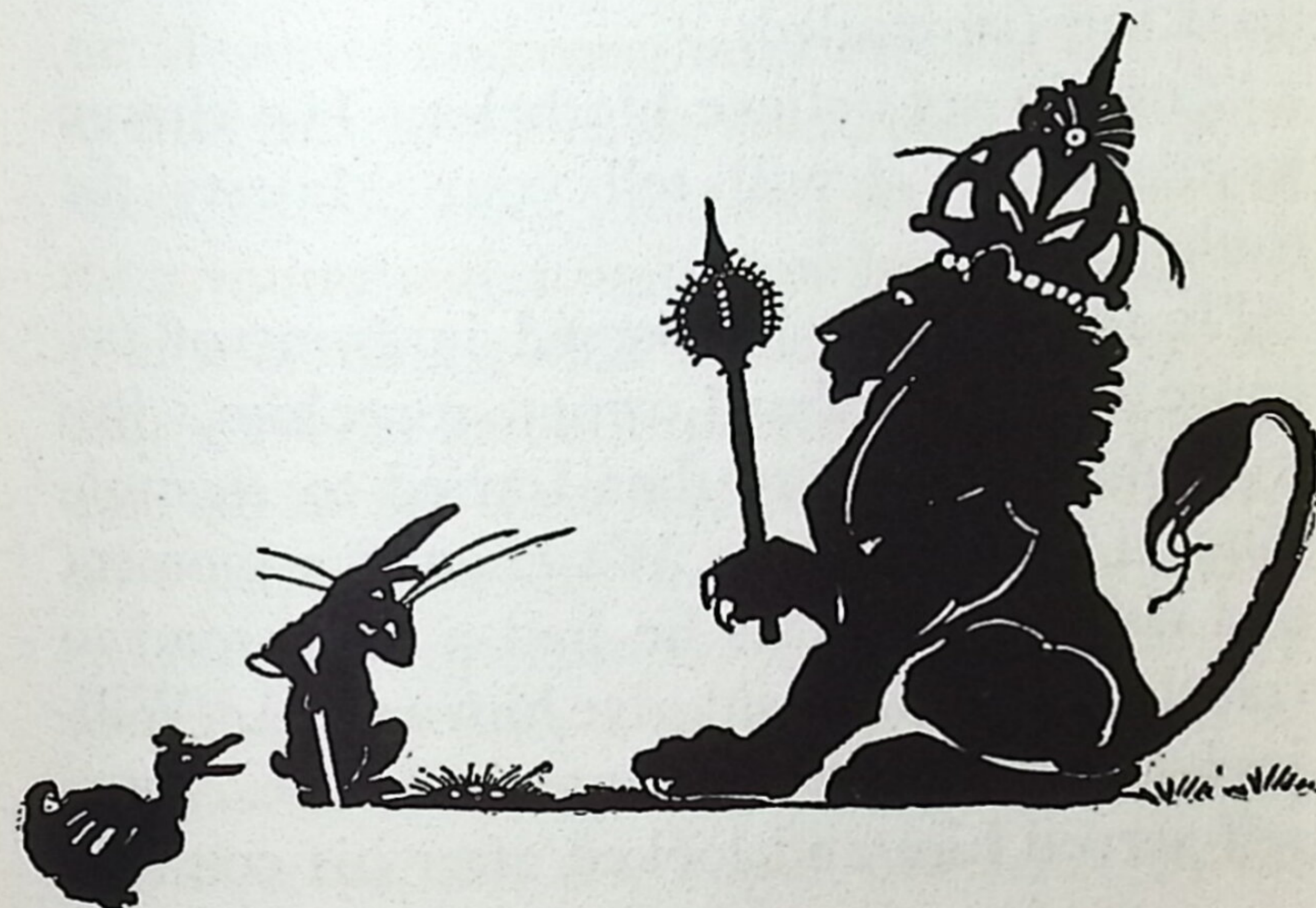
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what do they accuse me? Since I left your presence last I have not committed a single punishable act."

"Let the rabbit appear!" cried Noble to his guards, infuriated at Reynard's audacity.

While they awaited the appearance of the rabbit, who, if I remember well, was called Herbelot, Reynard considered his defense.





Though uneasy, he still had faith in his lucky star.

Herbelot entered, amid murmurs of sympathy. He came forward and, on the King asking him to repeat what he had said the night before, he recounted the attack that had been made upon him.

"Can you answer this charge, Reynard?" the King demanded.

"Sire, do not believe Herbelot. His charge is infamous. I will tell your Majesty the truth.

"It is true that he passed in front of my house. It is true that I went to meet him. But it is absolutely false that I tried to strangle him. I greeted him. We chatted a moment and he asked me, as he had a long road to travel, whether I could give him a meal. 'Willingly,' I said. He came into the house. I myself served him and looked after his comfort,

for I know what is due to a guest. At a certain moment Sharpnose, my youngest son, came into the room, and having very bad manners, which I admit, he put his paw into Herbelot's plate. At this Herbelot gave him such a slap that it took the skin off his nose. Brighteyes, my other son, believing his brother to be in danger and wanting to defend him, leaped upon Herbelot and caught him by the ear. Just at that moment I came back and, very much upset as you may imagine, scolded the children roundly and made my best apologies to Herbelot, doing what I could for his ear. He did not seem at the time to hold any grudge against us for what had happened, but I see now he was merely hiding his feelings so as to take this opportunity of revenging himself for what was only a childish indiscretion on the part of my son, who, Sire, I would have you observe, did not attack Herbelot in the



first place but was actually attacked by him."

Noble, very much unsettled in his mind by Reynard's truthful tone, considered a moment, then said: "But who can prove that you are telling the truth?"

"What proof has your Majesty that Herbelot is truthful?"

"True. . . . Herbelot has no witnesses."

"Alas, no, Sire, unless it be this wound on my ear! But it seems to me that Reynard's well-known bad character pleads more strongly in my favor than in his, and that an honest person should be believed sooner than a criminal."

"But, Sire," said Reynard, "they accuse me of all the crimes that have been committed on the pretext that I committed them. I try my best to lead an honest life and they won't let me. Although there has not been a single thing to reproach me with since your Majesty

pardoned me, they all continue to accuse me simply because they were in the habit of accusing me before; quite justly then, I admit. But now, in the strength of my innocence, I protest. Why believe Herbelot sooner than Reynard, when there is absolutely no proof on one side or the other?"

"True . . ." said the King, very much divided in his mind. "True . . . there's a great deal in that. . . ."

At this moment Herbelot, seeing that his enemy was gaining ground, disappeared, sure that there would be no real justice for him.

"You see, Sire," said Reynard, taking instant advantage of his flight, "he knows he was in the wrong, and he doesn't like to be caught out telling a lie!"

The rabbit was very foolish to run away, for the King was now practically convinced. He



wished, however, to relieve the last doubt upon a point which seemed to him rather obscure. Hoping to catch Reynard off his guard, he asked him abruptly: "What do you know about Couard's death?"

Reynard looked amazed.

"What are you saying? Couard dead? Impossible! He was the best of friends, so good, so trustworthy! It is a terrible loss to me, for he was the only one who gave me really sensible advice. When did he die? What happened to him? I implore you to tell me, Sire!"

Reynard seemed quite sincere. The King was not very shrewd. He fell into the trap and in a few brief words told of the death of Couard and of Bellyn's punishment.

"What, Sire, you only found Couard's head in the wallet?"

"Nothing else."

"Then I cannot wonder that you doubted

my loyalty and devotion! In that wallet, which I entrusted to Couard, there were some very valuable jewels; diamonds, pearls, rubies, and above all a magic mirror, very richly and delicately chased. This mirror was cut out of a single aquamarine. Whoever looked at it would see himself without a defect, every blemish disappeared in it. For you, Sire—for I intended the mirror for her Majesty the Queen—for you, I say, I had put in a simple gold ring, plain and without any ornamentation. But whoever wears that ring on his finger is secure from illness, accident, or sudden death.

"Miserable Bellyn, then it was he who killed Couard in order to possess these jewels, taken from the treasure which I promised to your Majesty! Through his avarice he was led to commit a terrible crime. But before dying he must have hidden the contents of the wallet in some secret hiding place. Sire, if you al-



low me my liberty I will devote the rest of my life to finding those treasures, and by their value you will be able to judge of my devotion to your Majesty, to whom I have never failed in loyalty or obedience!"

Noble was by this time completely convinced and would have set Reynard at liberty immediately, if only in the hope of securing all these wonderful treasures for himself. He still hesitated, however, fearing the discontent of his people.

Very much perplexed, he said: "Reynard, stay here a moment. I am going to think things over and will tell you my decision later."

When Noble had retired, saluted by all his courtiers, Grimbert came up to Reynard and said:

"Bravo! Your defense was very clever. But is all that true that you were saying, or not?"

Reynard, after making sure that no one could overhear them, burst into laughter. "How could you possibly imagine it was true! My poor friend, how simple-minded you are! In any case, we mustn't rejoice too soon, for I am not out of the woods yet."

"You are more than likely to be, for I was just talking to Mrs. Monkey, who is an intimate friend of the King and Queen, and I asked her to put in a good word for you. With her wit and intelligence she has a great deal of influence over them both and I feel sure she will be successful."

"You are a real friend," said Reynard.

During this time Mrs. Monkey, who had already persuaded the Queen, was trying to persuade the King, too, who still hesitated a little.

"Sire, think of Reynard's wisdom, and of what a good adviser he has always been. He



is very faithful, and he has the greatest respect for your Majesty. Moreover, he is quite powerful, and all his relatives will rebel if you condemn him. But the most important thing of all, which you should never forget, is his prudence and cleverness, of which you had such proof a little while ago in that dispute between the man and the snake, which was so difficult that even you with all your wisdom were unable to decide it."

"What was that? I don't remember very clearly."

"Two years ago, a snake that was wriggling through a hedge got caught in a snare. The noose tightened about his neck and he was nearly strangling when a man happened to pass by. The snake called out: 'Take pity on me, traveler! Set me free and I swear not to do you any harm.' The man set him free. They went away side by side. Presently the

snake began to feel very hungry. He sprang on the man, but the man asked him to wait till they found some one capable of deciding the question whether he should be eaten or not, the man declaring that the snake had sworn not to hurt him and the snake arguing that he was hungry, and that if he did not eat he would die of starvation.

"Presently they met a raven and submitted the question to him. The raven scratched his head and said: 'The snake may certainly eat the man, for the right to live is stronger and more important than gratitude or promises.' Very much frightened by this the man cried out: 'Wait a minute! I refuse to admit the raven as judge.' They went on, and met a wolf, and also a bear, both of whom were of the same opinion as the raven. The man wanted to take the case before the Royal Tribunal. The snake agreed. They told you the whole story, and



you were very much puzzled how to decide it.

“‘Undoubtedly,’ you thought, ‘the snake has promised, and out of gratitude alone he should spare the man who saved his life, but if the snake took this course, then he would die of hunger. One or the other must die; how should one decide?’ Then you called Reynard and asked his opinion. He studied the question. Then he asked every one to accompany him to the place where the snake had been caught in the hedge. Here he put the snake back in the hedge, in the very same spot and in the very same position. ‘Now,’ he said, ‘justice can take its own course. If the man chooses, he can set the snake free again, or he can leave it to perish. Since the snake has already shown himself to be both treacherous and ungrateful the man is quite free in his choice.’

“Every one admired Reynard’s wisdom and

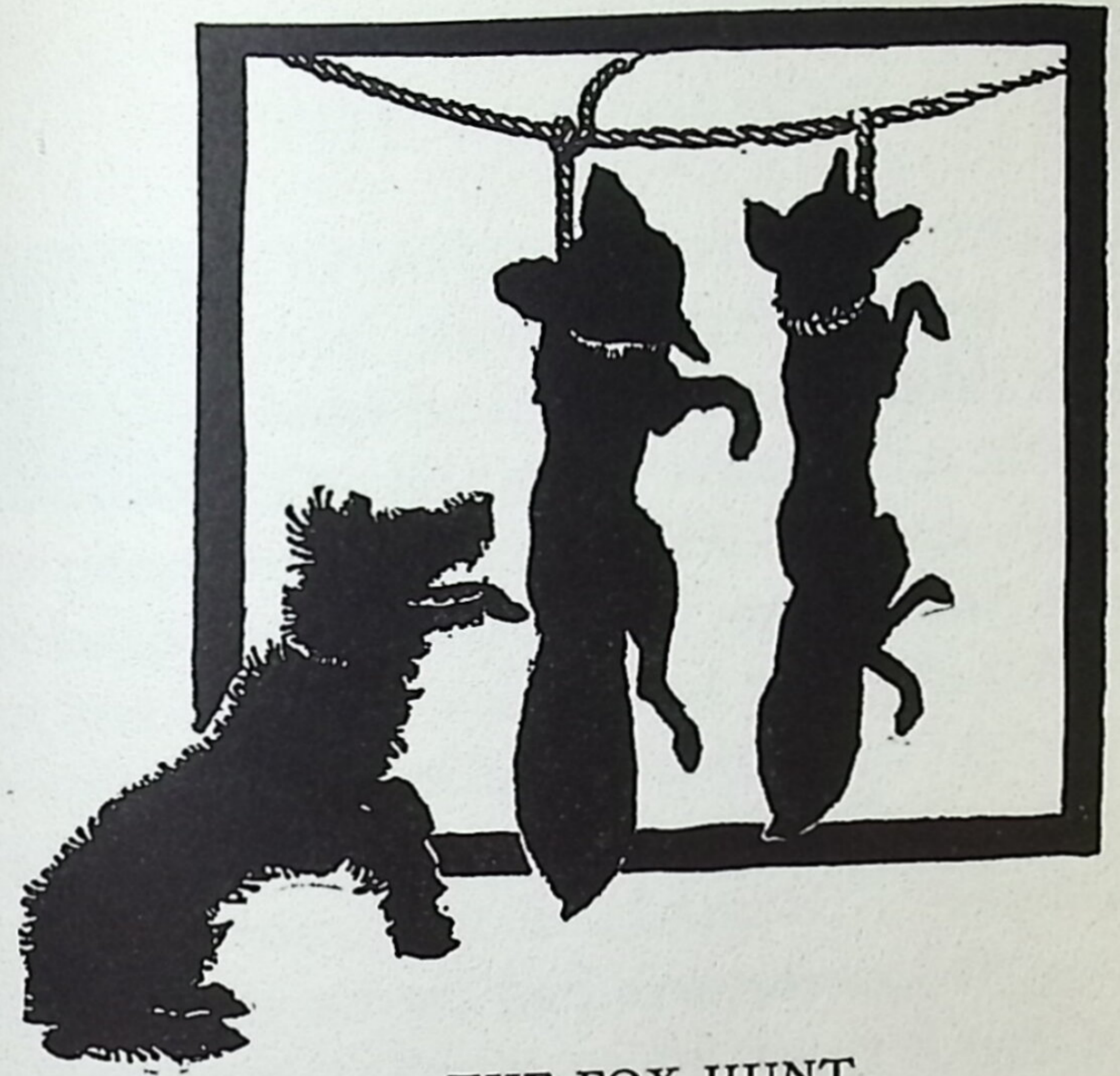
you, yourself, Sire, praised him for it. A brain like his is of the greatest assistance and not once only, but twenty times, he has helped your Majesty out of a difficulty.”

The King thought for a moment; then he entered the room where Reynard was anxiously waiting for him.

Calling Reynard forward, he announced that he once more pardoned him all his former crimes, and agreed that he had committed no new ones since his last trial, in spite of all the untruthful suspicions that had been cast upon him, and that he gave him his full liberty on the understanding that he would immediately do his best to recover the treasures that had been stolen by Bellyn.

Poor Bellyn! Poor Couard! Poor Herbelot!





THE FOX HUNT



## THE FOX HUNT

**R**EYNARD returned to Maupertuis, more cheerful than ever. Now he felt quite easy in his mind. The King, convinced that his help was necessary to recover the treasure Bellyn was supposed to have stolen and hidden away, watched over his safety and paid no heed to the spiteful gossip of the court.

The lord of Maupertuis, however, was by no means reformed in character. Since his return, many a fowl had disappeared from the chicken yard, many a rabbit from the hutch. But Reynard laid his plans so carefully that it was impossible to make him responsible.

At home with his family, Reynard spent much of his time playing with the children



and teaching them the many tricks in stealing and robbing that he had himself discovered. The little cubs showed themselves very clever and were the joy and admiration of their parents. They adored their father and were never tired of listening to his adventures.

"Father, tell us a story!" they cried one day, when they were all gathered together round the fire.

"What story do you want? One about Bruin, or Tybert, or Isengrin?"

"About Isengrin! About Isengrin!" cried both the little cubs at once.

"Do you want the story about the time he went fishing through the ice and got his tail caught?"

"We know that one. Tell us something else."

"How Isengrin pulled me out of the well and fell in himself?"

"We know that, too."

"Do you know the story about Isengrin and the mare?"

"No. Tell us that. Begin quick!"

"Well, there was once a mare in a meadow with her foal. There were also two poor wretches wandering about the country, very hungry; they were Isengrin and myself. As it happened we were very friendly that day, at least to all appearances, and as we were both very hungry we had decided to keep together and try our luck. Presently we came to a charming little lane, with hedges on either side, and Isengrin, peeping through the leaves, caught sight of the mare and her foal in the field beyond. 'There's something wonderful to eat!' cried Isengrin. 'Reynard, go and ask that mare what price she wants for her foal. Do you think she would be willing to sell it to us?'



“‘I can always find out,’ I answered, and I slipped through the hedge and went up to the mare where she was grazing. ‘Madam,’ I began, ‘what price do you want for your foal?’ The mare looked at me. ‘If you want to know the price,’ she said, ‘it is written on my hind foot!’ I said no more, but seeing that she was very hostile to me I ran away and rejoined Isengrin, who was waiting impatiently. But on the way an idea came to me. So I went up to Isengrin, who is, as you know, the stupidest person living.

“‘Well,’ he said, ‘how much does she want?’

“‘Ah, my dear Isengrin, I am sorry now I never went to school. The mare told me that the price was written on her hind hoof, and I don’t know how to read. You have had a good education; you had better go and look for yourself. I will wait for you here.’

“Isengrin, feeling very proud and impor-

tant, ran off at once. I watched him through the hedge, laughing to think of what was going to happen. Isengrin went up to the mare and said to her:

“‘Madam, I would like to know the price of your foal, which I understand is written down on your hoof. My friend does not know how to read, so he sent me. Which hoof is it? The right or the left?’

“‘The right,’ replied the mare, who, cleverer than Isengrin, was already laughing to herself. He stooped down; the mare watched him out of the corner of her eye, and at the right moment she gave him one kick that stretched him senseless. If the price *was* written on her hoof she certainly printed it on Isengrin’s head!

“Contented with having revenged herself for his impertinence, she trotted off, followed by her foal. Everything had turned out as I



expected, and I fairly rolled on the ground with laughter. One almost feels sorry for people who are as stupid as Isengrin! When, after a minute or two, I went up to him with a very sympathetic air, he was only just beginning to recover his senses. But the pain in his head soon brought him to, and then he began to groan and reproach me with what he called my treachery! I told him he was quite mistaken, that I was the best-hearted person in the world and that if I had suspected what was going to happen I would far sooner have gone myself. After a little more talk of this kind we were soon just as good friends as before.

“This should teach you, my children, that in the kind of life we foxes are obliged to lead, one must never give way to curiosity or foolhardiness. Act very prudently till you have decided what you are going to do; then be as bold as you like. A quick paw, a ready brain,



*A Large and Wealthy Castle*



and a clever tongue will always save you from danger."

Reynard never wearied of telling them about his past exploits, nor of engaging in new ones. Not contented with worrying the animals, his trickery even extended to man himself, as you shall hear.

Not far from Maupertuis there stood a large and wealthy castle, with many towers. A deep moat ran at the foot of the walls, which were reflected in its still depths. Several times a day the big drawbridge was let down, with a great clanking of chains, and the portcullis lifted to let the owner of the castle ride in or out, attended by his train of servants and sometimes by his wife, the beautiful Lady Flora. Sometimes the knight went out to look at his fields or farms, sometimes he rode to the town, but more often still he went out hunting in the deep forest which bordered the castle grounds.



Then one saw an imposing retinue. All his household were there, gentlemen-in-waiting, grooms, and lackeys, and the forest echoed to the blowing of horns and the galloping of hoofs.

The knight was a great hunter, and in the course of time he had killed nearly all the boars, stags, and wolves in the forest near by, for nothing escaped his lance. Reynard alone knew how to keep him at a distance, and you shall hear how he did so.

One fine morning the knight decided to go a-hunting. Immediately grooms and stablemen were busy, the dogs were brought out, and with a great flourishing of lances the company crossed the drawbridge and set out into the forest. Here, before long, the hounds caught sight of Reynard, who happened to be wandering about there, and gave the alarm. Reynard

began to run, and the whole hunt followed on his track. But he seemed to act like a crazy thing, for instead of plunging into the forest he ran straight toward the castle itself. With one bound he crossed the drawbridge and disappeared under the huge door.

"We've got him!" cried the hunters. "Now we've got him!"

And they all galloped back over the drawbridge, regretting that the chase was so soon over and would come to such a tame finish. Imagine a fox surrendering to the hunters like that! What stupidity!

Ah, my fine gentlemen, don't be so sure of your victory; you haven't caught your fox yet.

Astonished not to see the fox in the courtyard, they thought he must have run into the castle, but a rapid search failed to find him. Much annoyed, they began to hunt for him everywhere about. If Reynard thought he



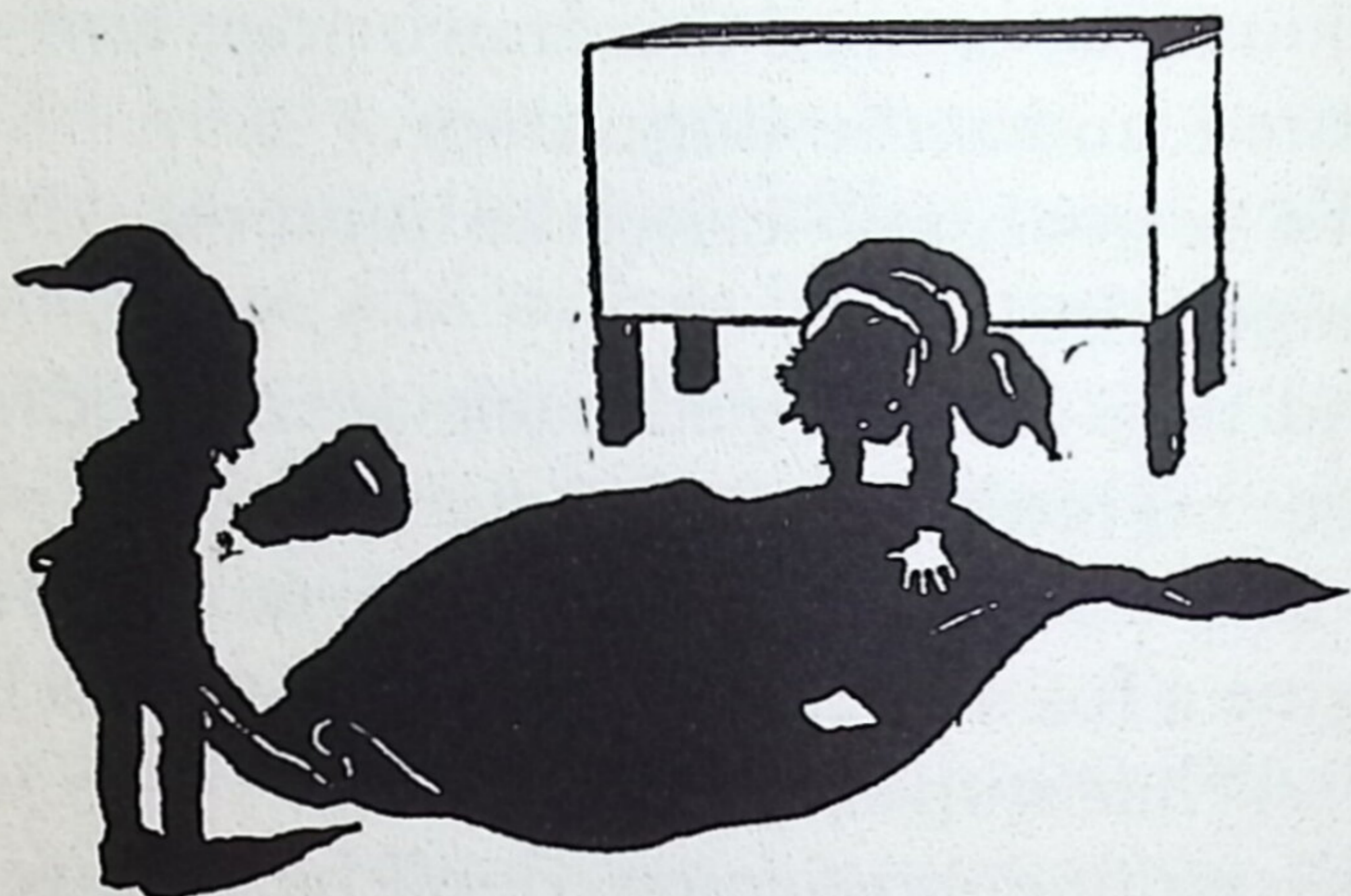
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## REYNARD THE FOX

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could trick them, let him try! He laughs best who laughs last. So they went through the stables, turned out the straw, looked in all the corners of the rooms, even under the beds;



shook out the curtains and tapestries. The little pages bumped their heads crawling under the tables. Every corner was thoroughly searched, the furniture moved, the big chests emptied. They hunted from cellar to attic. No trace of him. There wasn't a nook or cran-

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## THE FOX HUNT

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ny overlooked, where the fox might have hidden himself. But no Reynard. The hunt, which began with laughter, became more and more surly, for the lord of the castle was in no mind to be tricked by a simple little fox.

At last, tired of the chase, they said: "Bah! He will show himself fast enough as soon as we forget all about him. Let's leave him alone and go to our supper."

They all met in the great hall where the meal was served. At the head of the table sat the knight with his wife, Lady Flora. While the talk still centered about Reynard, the guests were served with roast venison and wild boar, accompanied by beakers of wine. Little by little the conversation shifted and the fox was forgotten.

What had become of him? All the while they were hunting through the castle he was safely hidden away in a certain hole he knew



of, in the courtyard, which had been made for draining the rain water away and which led down to the moat. Here he could safely mock at the chase going on above him. Presently when all was quiet he came out from his hiding place and, as calmly as if he were in his own house, strolled into the hall where all his persecutors were feasting. He slipped under the table, almost between the feet of the guests, and, resisting a strong desire to bite their ankles, he waited for a chance to snatch something to eat.

On the sideboard, in silver platters, were partridges, golden brown and cooked to a turn, inviting a snap of the teeth. Reynard judged that, if he wanted to get one, he had better not wait until they were put on the table. So, making a spring, he snatched up a roast partridge in his mouth and had disappeared again through the open door before the company

had time to recover from their astonishment.

In the twinkling of an eye the table was deserted. Every one dashed out in pursuit of the bold robber, determined to make him pay dearly for his audacity. Meantime Reynard, once more safe in his hole, was making a fine meal off the partridge, which tasted every bit as good as it had looked. Tired out, the guests returned once more to table to finish the meal which they had scarcely begun, and supper ended with every one nodding in his chair with fatigue, so thoroughly had Reynard wearied them all out.

When all the household was in bed Reynard came out from his hiding place again and ran to Maupertuis.

Next morning the blare of bugles announced visitors to the castle. Two handsome young squires entered, bearing presents. They



came to tell the owner that his grandfather, with his brothers, would arrive the following day. The knight gave orders that a suite of rooms be prepared for them. The next morning, accompanied by Lady Flora and an escort, he went out to meet the visitors on their way and ride back with them to the castle.

They were all on their way home, talking gayly together, when suddenly a small red animal ran across the road and bolted between the trees.

"Reynard! Reynard! He shan't escape us this time! He played a trick on us yesterday, but we won't be taken in again!"

"What is this?" asked the grandfather, very much interested. "Why are you making all this fuss about a mere fox?"

The knight told him the story of Reynard, how they had searched the entire castle for him and how he had suddenly appeared again and

snatched a partridge from under their very noses, and how again they had failed to find him.

The grandfather, delighted at the idea of such a wily adversary, wanted to set out at once on the chase, and the whole party once more galloped along on Reynard's track. Reynard, luckily, had a good start and, taking to his heels as he had done before, he slipped under the castle door and disappeared in the courtyard, where the hunters, arriving shortly after, could find no trace of him. Furious at being tricked again, they searched every hole and corner as before, but with no success.

"It is unbelievable!" they declared. "We have never seen anything like it! This fox is cleverer than we are. He must be a wizard to escape like that!"

This time they gave up the hunt more readily than before, experience having taught



them that when Reynard chose to hide himself it was useless to search.

Returning to the banqueting hall, they chatted until dinner time. Amid jokes and laughter the fox was soon forgotten. Lady Flora, gracious and charming, presided at table.

Against the wall, above the sideboard, were hung the skins of several foxes which the lord of the castle had hunted and killed. That evening the hounds, which usually lay quietly dozing on the floor while their masters dined, seemed curiously uneasy. They kept lifting their heads toward the fox skins, sniffing restlessly. Their behavior was so unusual that the knight was puzzled by it. He stared at the fox skins and presently called one of his squires:

“How many fox skins have we got, altogether?”

“Nine, sir.”

“It seems to me there are ten there. How is this?”

The squire went closer to look. He stared closely at the fox skins, and it seemed to him that one of them moved very gently as if it were breathing. He stretched out his hand to touch it. But Reynard—for it was actually he who had chosen to wait in this uncomfortable position for the chance of stealing something to eat—immediately let go of the peg to which he was hanging by his teeth, gave a sharp bite on the finger to the squire, who cried out with pain, and disappeared. At his cry every one rose, but Reynard was already far away, furious at having been discovered before he had a chance to steal anything, but also delighted at having twice so cleverly tricked the hunters who were keen on his track.





BROWNIE'S VENGEANCE



## BROWNIE'S VENGEANCE



FROM the branch of the big tree came an incessant chirping. Up there in their leafy nest nine little baby birds were calling for their father to come and bring them something to eat. The father was Brownie, the good little sparrow, friendly with all the world and loved by every one who knew him. Up to now the tiny family had lived happily enough together, in spite of a little recent illness among the children which had caused Brownie some worry.

Reynard, that incurable prowler, wandered by. It was not merely the fine morning which had brought him abroad; nothing less than hunger, as usual, had driven him forth. He



had had no luck with the chicken yards, which were stoutly bolted and barred, and now he began to feel starving. With his head drooping and his tail between his legs, very disconsolate, he was on his way back to Maupertuis, having already dispatched Sharpnose and Brighteyes by different paths to try their own luck in hunting, which they were now quite old enough to do.

By chance Reynard found himself under the tree at the very moment when Brownie flew back to his little ones. He saw the sparrows perched up there in the nest and thought to himself that they would make a very good mouthful for a hungry fox. So counting on his luck to aid him, he greeted Brownie with every sign of friendliness.

“Good morning, Brownie, my dear!”

“Good morning, Reynard. May peace be with you!”

To say that Brownie was really pleased to see Reynard would be an exaggeration. The fame of his reputation had already come to the sparrow's ears. But he was himself such a good-hearted little bird that he gave small heed to these tales, and if he felt a momentary fear for his little ones his natural confidence soon overcame it. They began to chat together amiably enough, talking of the weather and other things, and as Reynard seemed to become pleasanter and pleasanter in his manner Brownie grew quite confidential, and even ended by telling Reynard how troubled he had been on account of the children's health.

“I don't know what it is. They grow thinner and thinner. Nothing does them any good. I am really very worried about them.”

“Have you called in the doctor?”

“Why, no. There is no doctor near here, and as the poor children haven't learned to



fly yet I can't take them out with me. Oh, dear, *what* a worry it all is!"

"Well, it's lucky I happened to come by, for I am a doctor myself and can easily prescribe for them."

"You? A doctor? And since when?"

"For a long time. If you don't believe me I can fetch you my diploma from Maupertuis. I don't mind the trouble of fetching it, but if your children die in the meantime it won't be my fault."

"What can one do? Do you really think they are in great danger?"

"I can't tell. It may be. I haven't been able to examine them yet because I haven't seen them close to, but from what you tell me I should say they are suffering from a very grave illness. I won't tell you what it is, because it has a very long difficult name and you would be none the wiser if I told it to you. But

believe me, you should be very careful. If you like I will have a look at the children. Send them to me and I will cure them, for I have a special kind of treatment which will not only make them well, but prevent their ever falling ill again. So make up your mind, for I have very little time to spare. I have an appointment somewhere else now."

"My poor children! My poor children!" murmured Brownie, unable to make up his mind.

At last, deciding to risk it, he flew up to the nest, took the smallest and weakest fledgling, and dropped it gently on the moss in front of Reynard. Then he went to fetch another, let it drop in the same way, and, no longer seeing the first one, cried out: "Reynard, Reynard, what have you done with my child? Give me my child!"

"Gracious, Brownie, be quiet! I do a kind-



ness to you and you start shrieking out as if you were being murdered. I am studying your child's condition and you disturb me, making all that noise! You don't suppose I've eaten him?"

Very much ashamed, Brownie kept silence. He told himself that he was very foolish and had probably offended this clever doctor who was so kind as to interest himself in the children's illness. A third fledgling followed the second, a fourth and then a fifth. And still Brownie, with growing uneasiness, could see no trace of them once he had let them fall. In a trembling voice he asked:

"Well, Reynard, what is the matter with them? Are they cured?"

"They are cured, my dear Brownie, and cured forever! Come down. Come and join them!"

"Reynard, I am very uneasy. What have

you done with my children? Where are they? I want them back! Let me see them!"

"I told you they were cured. Come down and see!"

"Reynard, you frighten me! I believe you have eaten them! I want them back. Answer me: have you eaten them, or haven't you?"

"Yes, I've eaten them, and you are a little stupid to have been so long finding it out! Imagine thinking that I was a doctor! If it's any consolation to you, I don't mind telling you that they were very good, and I enjoyed them thoroughly! All I regret is that their father was not with them. I could have eaten you, too, with pleasure, but never mind; I still expect to do it one of these days. Good-by and thanks!"

And the wretch went away, leaving the poor sparrow in tears. He wept and he cried, but very soon his sorrow turned to anger and he



began to think how he could best revenge himself upon Reynard for his treachery. But how could he, a weak little sparrow, hope to overcome the powerful lord of Maupertuis? He thought and thought, made a hundred plans and abandoned them one by one, for he did not want to risk being killed himself.

Day after day passed by, and still he pondered. But justice chooses strange instruments. One fine morning, hopping sadly along the road, Brownie came upon a miserable starved dog lying in a ditch, too weak to move. Having a kind heart, the little sparrow, seeing his condition, stopped to speak to him.

"Well, my friend, what is the matter with you?"

"It is so long since I last ate that I have forgotten the taste of food! I was abandoned by my master, and now there is no one to feed me. I am so weak I can hardly stand."

"Can you drag yourself just a little further? Perhaps there is something I can do for you."

"I don't know," said the dog, "but I'll try."

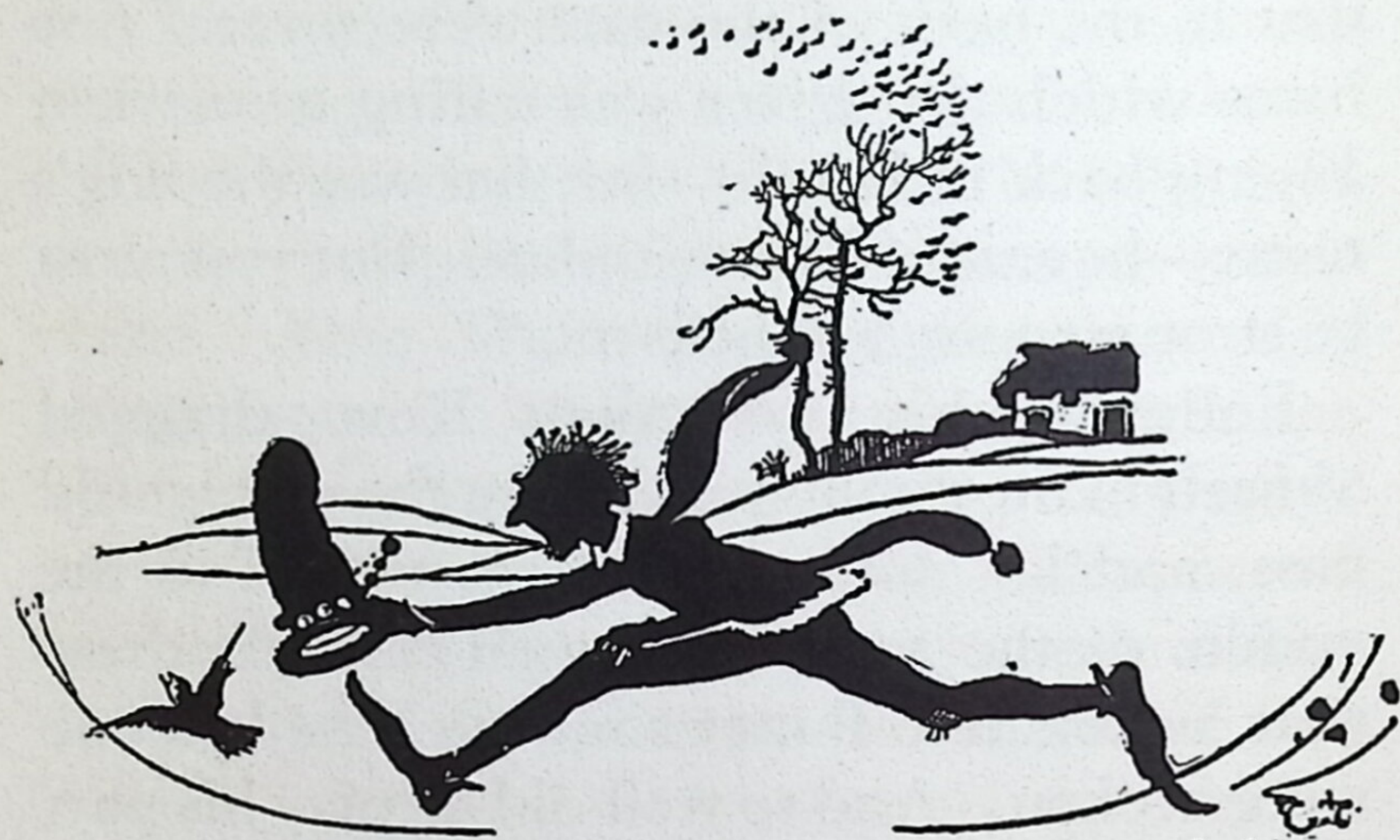
At this moment a cart appeared on the road. Brownie flew off to take a look at it, and saw that in the back of the cart were several fine hams which the driver was taking to market. Flying back to Rover—for that was the dog's name—he said: "I have a plan. But you must be strong enough to help me."

Following his instructions, Rover dragged himself to the ditch, near where the cart would pass, and lay down. Brownie waited in the middle of the road, and when the cart drew near he began to flutter about as if he had one wing broken. And so well did he play his part that the driver, noticing him, exclaimed:

"Ah, there is a bird with a broken wing! I'll take it back to my little girl to put in her cage!" And stopping his horse, he jumped



out and ran to pick the sparrow up. But this was easier said than done, for the instant he stretched out his hand Brownie fluttered away, always keeping just a little distance ahead, and after doing this several times he got the driver



so annoyed that he began to run here and there, snatching at the bird whenever it stopped but only getting a handful of grass or earth each time, till he lost all patience. At last Brownie

flew up into a tree and perched there, and the driver, seeing it was useless trying any longer to catch him, gave up the chase and turned back, only to find to his surprise that he was now several hundred feet away from the cart which he had left standing in the road. Running back, he jumped in, whipped up his horse angrily, and was off down the road without thinking to look in the back of his cart.

If he had, he would have seen that his load had mysteriously disappeared!

Rover had employed his time well, and when Brownie flew back to him he was busily engaged in gnawing a huge ham bone which he had picked almost clean.

Not such a poor trick for a simple little sparrow!

When the dog had recovered his strength a little he thanked his friend warmly, swearing eternal gratitude and promising in return to



do Brownie any service he might desire. "But," he added, "I am very thirsty now, for those hams were terribly salty. I must find something to drink."

Together they went in search of some spring or brook, but there was no water to be found anywhere.

"In any case, better hide the hams that are left over," Brownie advised, "and then you can come back and get them later."

In two or three trips Rover managed to hide the remainder of his booty in a safe place, and then returned to Brownie. They set out together along the road.

Presently Brownie said: "A little while ago you told me that you would do me any service that I wished. Are you serious about it and can I really count on you?"

"Absolutely," replied Rover, who had never betrayed a friend in his life.

"Then this is what I ask of you. Reynard, of whose wickedness you have doubtless heard, has killed my five children. I want to avenge them, but I am not strong enough to do it alone. Will you help me?"

"Willingly, with all my power. But what shall we do?"

"Listen. To begin with, you must do nothing at all for some time except to eat, drink, and get back your strength. The important thing is that within four or five days you must be feeling really strong and active. Then I will hide you among some bushes at the foot of a certain tree I know. I will manage to lead Reynard there, and then you will jump out on him and kill him. Are we agreed?"

"Perfectly."

"Thank you," said Brownie.

They were about to separate when Brownie again saw a cart coming along the road,



loaded, this time, with some large barrels.

"Didn't you say you were thirsty, Rover?"

Brownie flew ahead and saw with satisfaction that the driver had gone away for a moment, leaving the horse and cart alone. So he flew down and began to peck at the horse's nose with his tiny beak till the animal began to plunge and rear, and at last kicked about so much that he dashed cart and contents against a tree. Freed from his load he galloped away, leaving the wrecked cart behind. One of the barrels was broken, letting a little stream of fresh wine trickle out on the ground, where Rover set himself eagerly to lap it up.

Then the two companions separated; Brownie full of hope, Rover full of gratitude.

During the next few days Rover employed himself in growing fat and strong, Brownie in laying his plans for revenge. Reynard, who knew nothing of what was being plotted

against him, went his way as usual, robbing and stealing wherever he could.

No one would have recognized now in Rover the miserable starved dog whom Brownie had found in the ditch. He had followed the sparrow's instructions faithfully and with good result.

The lord of Maupertuis had long since forgotten the little fledglings he had eaten, and had not a regret in the world. Besides, any idea of vengeance would have seemed absurd to him, for he had never dreamed that any one would dare to attack him. Up to now hatred had shown itself only in accusations and complaints to the King. He had no fear of private vengeance and so felt as easy as one with a perfectly clear conscience.

When the day set by Brownie arrived, the sparrow went to see Rover. Satisfied with his appearance, he led him to the thicket at the



foot of the tree where his little ones had been killed. Then he went to Maupertuis, where he saw Reynard at the door of his house.

“What? Brownie, I declare! What has become of you all this time? It is ages since I saw you last.”

“Reynard, stop joking. If you see me here before you it is because I have suffered too much, and now I am determined to join my poor children. I wish to die like them. Devour me. Come, don't lose time!”

Reynard, delighted at these words, was quite ready to open his mouth and swallow him then and there.

But Brownie made a little hop to one side.

“Wait, Reynard! Follow me to the tree where you devoured my little ones. It is there I want to die!”

It was not far to go. A little exercise is good before a meal. Reynard trotted along after

Brownie. But just as he dashed forward to devour the little sparrow he felt instead a sharp set of teeth in his own throat, strong teeth which closed like a vise!

The battle was soon over. Rover was far stronger than Reynard. While Brownie, full of joy, cried: “Bite him, Rover! Bite him! Eat him up!” Rover did his best to avenge in a few minutes all the wrongs that Reynard had ever committed. He bit him, he worried him, he shook him to and fro like a rat, and finally flung him on the ground, where Reynard lay senseless, giving no sign of life.

Then only did the two friends, satisfied, turn away, feeling that for once justice had been properly administered.

And how about Reynard? Did he die?

Not a bit of it. He recovered, as he had recovered many times before, and went back to



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REYNARD THE FOX

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his career of wickedness as cheerfully as ever. If you look well and very quietly, some morning when you are alone in the woods, you will very likely see him, going about his business as usual.



