



# Aesop's Fables

## 37. THE TOO FAT FOX

By Nicky Grischotti

A bitter wind blew the last leaves from the trees as Fox made his way across the fields in search of food. The lake had been frozen for weeks and the livestock were tucked up safe and warm in the farmer's winter barns.

Fox couldn't remember when he had last eaten. His skinny ribs stuck through his patchy, moth-eaten coat, his teeth chattered and the hard frosty ground hurt his paws as he walked.

'Not a chicken, not a bird, not a puny little rabbit...not a scrap of food for a fox to eat...I shall surely die of cold and hunger,' he muttered miserably, as he huddled up against a gnarled old tree trunk for shelter.

Earlier that morning, not far from where our Fox was crouching, Mrs Tom Cobbler was busy fussing around her husband and shooing him out of the farmhouse.

'Here's yer shopping list, Mr Tom Cobbler. One nice, juicy leg of pork, two kilos of potatoes, half a bag of carrots, two onions and some big, firm cooking apples for our Sunday lunch. Now don't you go forgetting anything, Mr Tom Cobbler. You're the most forgetful man I ever knew!' and she waved a dishcloth at him.

'Yars, Mrs Tom Cobbler...er I mean... no dear, I won't forget.' And he stuffed the shopping list in his trouser pocket and walked off to market.

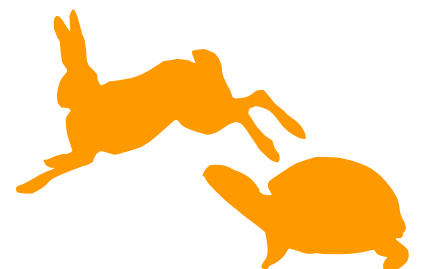
It was a long, cold walk to market and it was a long, hard walk back with his rucksack full of his wife's Sunday shopping.

Mr Tom Cobbler decided to sit down for a moment's rest beside a tree. (The very tree our Mr Fox was going to huddle close too later on.)

After his rest and before he set off down the lane he looked about for a place to hide his shopping bag and saw a hollow in the tree trunk.

'Ah, that'll do', he said. 'That'll keep it safe from foxes - that hole's far too small for a plump ol' fox to climb through.' And off he tramped up the hill towards the farmyard.

Well...what a nice surprise for our Mr Fox crouching beside that very same tree later that morning. His sly foxy nose began to twitch...and he sniffed the cold wintry air... there was a whiff of FOOD nearby! And it seemed to be coming from the hollow of the very tree he sat against.





And because he was so very starved and thin - our too thin Mr Fox was able to slip easily through into the hole. And what did he find inside? That's right! All Mrs Tom Cobbler's Sunday dinner!

And what did he do with it? That's right! He gobbled it all up, lickity-quick.

And he felt very full indeed...so full in fact that our too thin Fox had become too *fat* fox in a matter of ten minutes flat! Too fat in fact to fit back through the hole.

So our Mr Fox had to wait and wait for days and days until his plump little tummy turned thin once more...and he could climb back out through the hole of the tree again and off in search of food.

Which just goes to show - that if you wait long enough - the problem might go away.

And what happened to old Mr Tom Cobbler that day? Well, Mrs Tom Cobbler wasn't happy at all that he'd lost the Sunday roast - so he had turnip soup and potato peel pie instead!