

The fox and the cat

It happened that the cat met the fox in a forest, and as she thought to herself, "He is clever and full of experience, and much esteemed in the world," she spoke to him in a friendly way. "Good-day, dear Mr. Fox, how are you? How is all with you? How are you getting through this dear season?" The fox, full of all kinds of arrogance, looked at the cat from head to foot, and for a long time did not know whether he would give any answer or not. At last he said, "Oh, thou wretched beard-cleaner, thou piebald fool, thou hungry mouse-hunter, what canst thou be thinking of? Dost thou venture to ask how I am getting on? What hast thou learnt? How many arts dost thou understand?" - "I understand but one," replied the cat, modestly. "What art is that?" asked the fox. "When the hounds are following me, I can spring into a tree and save myself." - "Is that all?" said the fox. "I am master of a hundred arts, and have into the bargain a sackful of cunning. Thou makest me sorry for thee; come with me, I will teach thee how people get away from the hounds." Just then came a hunter with four dogs. The cat sprang nimbly up a tree, and sat down on top of it, where the branches and foliage quite concealed her. "Open your sack, Mr. Fox, open your sack," cried the cat to him, but the dogs had already seized him, and were holding him fast. "Ah, Mr. Fox," cried the cat. "You with your hundred arts are left in the lurch! Had you been able to climb like me, you would not have lost your life."

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