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Story of the fox who lost his mind

Translated by Helena Ragg-Kirkby

A fox. A clever, handsome fox.

Red and fast and ever hungry.

**A fox that knows everything
that a fox needs to know:**

1. How to set traps for goats.
2. How to dig holes to catch tasty hares.
3. How to roast a chicken.

Once a week just such a fox - our fox - invited all the young foxes. He cooked for them and showed them his best tricks.



Like this one:

**how a very cunning
fox evades the hunter's dogs.**

If you know everything, you can live for a long time, thought the fox. And he lived a long, adventurous life.

He had a long life and he grew old.
The fox's beard turned white;
he had a few scars here and there
and he also became **a little bit forgetful.**

At first, he muddled up the days of the week.
He went to church on a Wednesday and wondered
why the goose choir wasn't singing.

[background text: Sunday Thursday Monday Friday Wednesday Saturday Tuesday]

Then he forgot what he'd been thinking about
and had to go back to the place where he'd had the thought in the first place.

Or he forgot
the birthday of one of his friends
and didn't bring him a present.

Or he brought a present
When it was nobody's birthday.

All in all, this didn't unduly bother the fox.

One day, though, the fox
couldn't find his way home.
He climbed up a tree
and sat himself in a bird's nest.
A blackbird came along and asked:
Do you live here?
Then the fox remembered.
No, he didn't live there.

After that, the blackbird didn't ask anyone again.

On another occasion, the fox was out hunting
and forgot ... that he was hunting.

Since he was hungry, though,
he stopped and gobbled up
an entire branch of blackberries.

When he returned home
the little foxes looked at him
and immediately thought:

Oh, look at that fox!
He's eaten at least seven
little goats.



A couple of weeks later

the fox didn't notice the blackberries
and went swimming.
For the whole day.

He swam across the pond four times,
dived five times down to the bottom
and spat the water
six metres high
towards the sunlight.

He slept badly that night.

He was dreaming of eating
4 kinds of fresh meat,
5 courses and at least
6 sorts of red wine.

In short: he was **hungry**.

And so he woke up and went out hunting.
He went hunting and forgot that he was hunting.
He ran through the forest and forgot to run.
He stopped and didn't know why.

The fox had forgotten that he was a fox.

Then, in the distance, he heard ... yes, what was it? Then something came running, er ... thingumajigs. They were making quite a din as they came; their ... um, they had these red whatsits hanging out of their ... snouts? Yes, that's right, snouts ... and those things coming out of their snouts were **tongues**, that's it, tongues, and they were coming closer and were unbelievably **angry!** Who were they so angry with? More and more snouts and tongues were coming running, and they had tiny yellow ... ah, yes, **eyes**, thank you. Their eyes were squinting and their tongues were hanging out of their mouths and their teeth were sharp and you could hear what they were calling, because they were close enough for him to hear clearly what they were shouting: *The fox, the fox,*

the fox is red! The fox, the fox, the fox is dead! The fox? Which fox? Was it foxes that were coming running? No, they weren't foxes; they had to be ...

The old fox evaded the dogs one final time ...

The baying pack raced by beneath the tree
and the fox heaved a sigh of relief. He even managed a laugh:

Oh, those stupid, erm ... dogs. Ha ha ha!

Then he lost his balance and fell out of the tree,
a whole 4 metres 50.

The young foxes found him **two days later**.

They took him home
and made him better.



His mind was the only thing they couldn't heal,
for the fox had lost it, and nobody
knew exactly where ...

Before long, news of the ailing fox had reached the geese,
and whenever they saw him, the three of them sang:

I stole the fox's mind
I'm never giving it back, never giving it back!

I've stolen the fox's mind, heigh ho,
I'll never give it back, oh no.
A brainless fox we find so funny
For a brainless fox can't fill its tummy!
No: a brainless fox can't fill its tummy!

When the fox asked **the hens**: *What kind of strange creatures are you?*
they barked their best barks and cried: *Dogs, of course!*

The sheep told the fox he was one of them and would enjoy eating thorny roses.

When the fox went home after his meal, they all laughed at him. *Oh just look at that fox, that's surely seven more little goats he's gobbled up today!*

That made the fox angry, and he set off to gobble them all up as well.
But after a couple of steps he'd clean forgotten why he'd been so angry,
and just wished them all *good day*.

What the fox liked **best of all** was talking
to the friendly stranger -
down in the river.

Once upon a time
there was an old fox who lost his mind.

He knew nothing; he could only feel.
He could feel someone licking his wounds.
He could feel how it was, not to be hungry.
He loved it when the little foxes told him stories about hunting.
He liked their tricks, especially the one with the straw.

He found a couple of things difficult:
He couldn't remember names.
He couldn't find his way home.
He didn't like sleeping alone.

But he didn't have to.

