

Sister Foxy-Loxy and Brother Wolf

Once upon a time there lived an old man and an old woman. One Sunday the old woman baked some buns with poppy seeds. She took them out of the oven, arranged them on a plate and placed them on a window sill to cool off. A fox passed by and, sniffing with her long nose, smelled the buns. She stole quietly to the window, nimbly grabbed a bun and hurried away.

Reaching a field she sat down and took a big bite out of the bun. Then she filled it up with some dirt, pinched the ends together and scurried off again. She ran and ran until she met some boys herding cattle.

“Good morning to you, my fine boys!” she said.

“Good morning to you, Sister Foxy-Loxy,” they answered.

“Will you trade me one of your oxen for this poppy seed bun?”

“What do you mean—give you an ox for a bun!”

“But it is so very sweet, you should just taste it.”

After some coaxing, one of the boys finally said he would make the trade.

“Only take care, boys,” said the fox. “Do not eat the bun until I have gone into the woods.” So off she went, herding the young ox ahead of her. The boys waited until she had disappeared, then they turned to eat the bun. They bit into it and found it full of dirt.

The fox, meanwhile, chased the ox into the woods and tied him to an oak tree. As for herself, she went off to chop down some wood for a sled. As she chopped she repeated these words:

“Be hewn down, O tree,

Both crooked and straight.”

She cut down a tree and made a little sled. She hitched the ox to it, seated herself and went off.

Suddenly, who should come along but a wolf.

“Good morning to you, Sister Foxy-Loxy,” he said.

“Good morning to you, Brother Wolf,” she replied.

“Where did you get that ox and sled?”

“Where do you think? I earned the ox and made the sled and off I go now,” replied the fox.

“How about taking me along with you?”

“How can I take you? You would only break my sled.”

“I promise I won’t break it. See, I’ll just put one paw down.”

“Well, put it down then. There’s really no room for more,” answered the fox. So the wolf put his paw down. They went on a little way and the wolf said, “Sister Foxy-Loxy, let me put down another paw.”

“Eh, eh, Brother Wolf, you’ll break my sled.”

“No, I promise you I won’t break it.”

“Well, put it down then,” answered the fox. So the wolf put a second paw down on the sled. They drove on and on when suddenly there was heard, “Crackle, crackle.”

“Oh, woe is me!” said the fox. “The sled is breaking.”

“No, no, Sister Foxy-Loxy. It is only my bones crackling.”

“Well, no matter then,” replied the fox, and they went on again.

“Sister Foxy-Loxy,” said the wolf after awhile. “Just let me put a third paw on the sled.”

“And where are you going to lay it! You’ll break my sled for certain.”

“Come now: why should I break it?”

“Well, put it down then,” said the fox. The wolf had just placed it down when the sled once more went “Crackle, crackle.”

“Stop, Brother Wolf! The sled is cracking. Get off before you break it to pieces,” said the fox.

“Who said it is cracking? What are you talking about, sister Foxy-Loxy? I was only cracking nuts.”

“Give me some, then.”

“Sorry, but that was my last one,” answered the wolf. They went on a little farther.

“Sister Foxy-Loxy,” said the wolf after awhile, “let me put my whole self down.”

“Where can you sit? Can’t you see there is no room for you?”

“I’ll squeeze myself so there will be room.”

“You’ll be sure to break my sled into pieces. Then how will I be able to bring the wood home?”

“Really, now. Why should I want to break your sled? I am not heavy. I’ll just sit down gently, Sister Foxy-Loxy, for I am very tired.”

“What can I do with you? Sit down, then!” the fox said angrily. The wolf seated his whole self on the sled, which went “crack, crack” and broke into pieces.

The fox was furious and began to scold the wolf. Then she said to him, “You just march straight into the forest and cut me some wood for a new sled.”

“How can I cut wood, Sister Foxy-Loxy, when I don’t know how? What kind of wood should I cut?”

“You nasty, mean thing! When it came to breaking my sled you knew how to do it, but when it comes to chopping wood, you don’t know how! You stupid thing. You have only to repeat: ‘Be hewn down, O trees,

Both crooked and straight.’”

The wolf went off. He entered the forest and, going up to some trees, he said,

“Be hewn down, O trees,

Both crooked and gnarled.”

Then he chopped down a tree and carried it to the fox. She glanced at the tree all crooked and gnarled so that one couldn’t even use it to make a plough, let alone runners for a sled. The fox began to scold him again.

“Why did you chop down such stuff?”

“Because it chopped itself.”

“Well, why did you not repeat what I told you?”

“I said,

‘Be hewn down, O trees,

Both crooked and gnarled.’”

“Well you are a foolish one. Sit down here and look after the ox. I’ll go by myself and do some chopping,” said the fox. And off she went.

The wolf sat down and all he could think of was how hungry he was. He started to turn over everything that was on the sled, but there was nothing there. He thought and thought and then he said to himself, “I know what I’ll do. I’ll eat up the ox and then run away.” So he made a hole in the ox and ate the insides and into the hole he stuffed some sparrows and straw. He placed the ox near the fence and propped him up with a stick. Then he ran as fast as he could.

Later on the fox returned and saw some wisps of straw sticking out of the ox. She snatched at the wisps and the sparrows fell out. She took hold of the stick and when she removed it the ox fell down with a plop. She was furious when she realized she had been tricked by the wolf. “I’ll get even with you yet, you wretched creature! I’ll pay you back for sure.”

And she ran off down the street until she came to a string of sledges belonging to some ox drivers going by. The fox fell down in the middle of the street and threw up her feet. She kept very quiet as though dead. When the ox drivers saw her they shouted, "Look boys! What a large fox is lying on the road!" they surrounded her and turned her over.

"We really ought to take it and make caps for the children," they said. They threw her onto the last cart and set off once more.

When the fox saw that they were not looking back, she began to throw out the fish that was in the sledge. She threw and threw them one by one onto the road. After she had thrown off a goodly number she quietly jumped off the sledge. The ox drivers rode off and as for herself, she picked up the fish and sat down and had a real feast.

Whish! Who should come running by but the wolf.

"Good health to you, Sister Foxy-Loxy."

"Good health to you, Brother Wolf."

"What are you doing, Sister Foxy-Loxy?"

"I'm eating some fish."

"Give me some."

"Well, of all the nerve! I took so much trouble to catch this fish and now I'm asked to give it to him.

Go and catch some yourself!"

"How am I to catch it when I don't know how? You can at least teach me how to catch fish," said the wolf.

"How to fish? There's nothing to it. Go down to the ice and put your tail in the ice-hole. Sit quietly and repeat these words:

‘Be caught, O fish,
Both big and small.’

And they will bite.”

“Thank you for the lesson, Sister Foxy-Loxy.”

The wolf ran quickly to the river and onto the ice. He put his tail into the ice-hole, saying,

“Be caught, O fish,

Big ones and big ones only.”

He said this because he didn’t want any small fish.

The frost outside was so fierce that it made a loud noise. Meanwhile, the fox ran along the bank and kept saying,

“Freeze, freeze, O wolf’s tail.

Freeze, freeze, O wolf’s tail.”

And the wolf said, “What are you saying, Sister Foxy-Loxy?”

“Well now, I was only saying, ‘Be caught, O fish, both big and small,’” replied the fox.

“And as for me,” the wolf answered, “I am saying, ‘Be caught O fish, big ones and big ones only.’”

The wolf moved his tail, which was already very heavy with ice, and the fox said, “No doubt the fish have already started to bite.” In a little while she said, “Now Brother Wolf, pull hard.”

The wolf gave a hard pull, but the tail had already stuck fast to the ice-hole and he couldn’t get it out.

Then the fox began to scold him. “You foolish wolf, what have you done? I told you to say, “be caught, O fish, both big and small,’ but only the big ones have caught onto your tail and now you can’t pull it out. Now we’ll have to get some help. I’ll go call some people.”

And she darted off to the village. She ran up to some people and called out,

“Come people, come to the meeting,

Come people, give the wolf a beating.”

And a crowd of people rushed up. Some had axes, some had pitchforks, others had threshers. The women brought their oven forks and pokers and with all these things they began to beat the unfortunate wolf.

Meanwhile, the fox jumped into one of the empty houses. Nobody was home because the housewife had gone out to the river to beat the wolf. She had left behind a kneading trough full of dough. The fox took and spread some dough over her head. Then she went into the field where she saw the wolf hardly able to crawl because the people had given the poor wretch a proper beating. The fox immediately pretended that she was ill and started to groan. The wolf saw her and said, “Aha—that’s what you’re like! You certainly did me a fine turn, didn’t you? Because of you I lost my tail!”

And the fox replied, “O Brother Wolf, am I such a rascal, then? Don’t you see that my brains are running out? They hit me so hard that my head is all beaten up. Brother Wolf, please carry me.”

“Why, I can scarcely crawl myself,” said the wolf.

“But you only lost your tail and they beat my head. Oh, oh, oh! How will I ever get home?”

“Well, sit down then. What can I do with you?” so the fox climbed up onto the wolf’s back. Silently except for a few groans and moans the wolf carried her off, while the fox began to murmur to herself,

“The beaten one is carrying the unbeaten one.

The beaten one is carrying the unbeaten one.”

“What are you saying, Sister Foxy-Loxy?”

“I was only saying, ‘The beaten one is carrying the beaten one.’” But to herself she repeated quietly,
“The beaten one is carrying the unbeaten one.”

So the wolf brought the fox to her little house. “Get down, Sister Foxy-Loxy. We’re here.”

She then jumped down from the wolf’s back and began to sing out,

“The beaten one brought the unbeaten one home.

The beaten one brought the unbeaten one home.”

The wolf sprang at her and wanted to bite her with his great fangs, but the fox ran quickly into the house and closed the door. The wolf couldn’t get into the house and the fox peered through the window and teased him, repeating the words, “The beaten one brought the unbeaten one home.”

The wolf fumed and stamped outside the fox’s house, but couldn’t get in. “Isn’t that fox a wretched creature!” he said. “She certainly had me fooled.” And the wolf dragged himself home.

The fox is still around and enjoys a good living stealing chickens in the village.