

Aesop's Fables

19. THE FOX AND THE GOAT

By Lavinia Murray

One day a rather clever Fox went out for a stroll. The sun was shining, clouds bumped along in the sky and - well, better than that - the great cloud shadows raced across the fields.

'Whoo hooo!' barked the Fox as he chased after them. 'What fun! It's a very good day to be a Fox.'

The not-quite-looking-where-he-was-going Fox laughed and - whoops! Splish! Splosh! Fox fell into a well that he just hadn't noticed.

'That's all right! I'll jump back out again. Look at me, I can leap over hedges and fences and sleeping dogs! I'm the best jumper there ever was!' said the rather hopeful Fox.

However, the walls of the well were much too high. They were also slippery with moss. So, a rather soggy Fox doggy-paddled to and fro and tried to come up with

another plan. After he had swum one hundred times around the well, and back again, the rather tired Fox had to admit he was trapped.

'I never thought I'd end up down here,' he sighed. 'No more racing in the sunlight and chasing shadows for me!' And a rather sad Fox floated quietly in a patch of water that reflected the sky. Just then a goat's head appeared over the edge of the well.

'Hello,' she bleated. 'I thought I heard a voice. What are you doing?'

'Hello,' said the rather quick-thinking Fox. 'Actually, I'm having a wonderful time. This is the best water in the whole wide world.

Drinking it makes you happy, paddling in it makes you healthy - and it tastes delicious! It's wonderful!'

Fox smiled and dipped his face into the water and blew bubbles. Then drank and drank and drank.





'Oh, where are my manners,' Fox said as the Goat leaned down, stretched her neck, stuck out her tongue and tried her hardest to reach the water.

'Would you like some?'

'Yes, please,' said the Goat.

'Well jump straight in and help yourself. I'll move over here so there's room for two.'

'I am very thirsty,' said the Goat. 'I've just eaten thistles!' And in she leapt.

'Slurp, gargle, gulp,' went the goat. 'This water is perfect – cool and sweet and delicious. Thank you for letting me share it. Now I'll be off, there are lots of thistles waiting to be munched.' Then the Goat looked up and frowned. 'Excuse me for asking, Fox, but how do we get out of here?'

The Fox pretended to think about it for a minute, then clicked his paws.

'I know, lean up against the side of the well and I'll climb up your back, onto your shoulders then step on your head and I'll be out.'

'Ohhhh what a good idea! You are clever,' said the goat, standing on

her hind legs and leaning against the mossy well wall. 'There you are, my friend – a goat ladder!'

'Upsadaisy!' the Fox giggled as he scrambled out of the well. Then he shook his coat. Water flew off him and the warm sunlight made his fur steam. 'Hello sky!' he cried and chased his tail before running off across the wide, green field.

'Hello?' bleated the Goat. 'What about me? How do I get out?' Fox shouted back over his shoulder, 'You should have thought about that before you jumped in!'

'Wait!' wailed the goat.

'It was good to see you but I wouldn't want to be you!' the rather clever Fox sang, as he followed a cloud shadow over the hill.