

## Hiring the Fox as Shepherd

An old woman needed someone to watch over her sheep when they were out in the fields. The bear volunteered for the job.

"Well, I don't know. You seem very gruff. How would you call my sheep if you were their shepherd?"

"I would call them like this... Grouff! Grouff! Grouff!"

"Oh, no no no! That would frighten my sheep. They would all run away! I do not want you to be my shepherd."

The wolf applied for the job. "You seem rather snarly. How would you call my sheep, if you were their shepherd?"

"I would call them like this... Waooooo! Waooooo! Waooooo!"

"Oh, no no no! That would scare my sheep to death! They would all run away! I do not want you to be my shepherd."

Next came the fox to apply. "Well, you seem like a respectable fellow. How would you call my sheep, if you were their shepherd?"

"I will call them very gently, And the sheep will all come right to me.

I will call like this...*Little sheep...little sheep...It's time to sleep!*

*Gili-bome...gili-bome...Come home...come home!"*

"Oh, how sweet!" said the old woman. "You are just the one to take care of my sheep. You can be my shepherd."

So the fox took the sheep out to the fields next day. And when he brought them back...The old woman did not notice that one was missing.

And the next day... And the next day...

On the fifth day, the old woman suddenly noticed that. Where she once had had ten sheep...She now had only five! And looking closely, she saw sheep's wool and blood on the fox's muzzle.

"So, that's how it is!" she thought. And picking up her heavy churn full of milk, she heaved it at the fox. "You cannot work for me anymore!"

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow!" the fox ran off.

But since that day many foxes have white spots on the end of their tails.  
That is where the old woman splashed him with her churn full of milk.  
And of course everyone knows...If you want your sheep to come home  
safely...Do not hire a fox for a shepherd!

## King of the Birds

In a time long ago, when the world was young, the birds decided they needed a king. A meeting was called. They had lots of ideas on how to choose a king. Some wanted to take a vote. Others thought the king should be the best hunter. In the end they determined that the bird who could fly the highest would be king.

They wanted the weather to be perfect for the contest. Otherwise, they knew some birds would later say, "I could have flown much higher if it hadn't been so windy," or something of that sort. Luckily, the next day was a fine one. All the birds met in a big meadow. Many of them lined up to try. Even one of the tiniest birds, the wren, got ready. When Eagle saw him, he said, "Wren, surely you don't expect to be crowned King. Everyone knows I'm the strongest flyer of all."

Wren didn't say a word. He knew he couldn't fly the highest, but he wanted to take part in such an important event. He was so mad at Eagle that when the birds soared up into the air, Wren hopped on Eagle's back. Since he was so light, Eagle didn't even know Wren was there.

Up and up Eagle soared till he'd left the other birds far below. At last, when Wren saw that Eagle could fly no higher, he flew off Eagle's back. Wren circled above Eagle and called down, "Is that as far as you can go? Surely, a great eagle can fly higher than a tiny wren."

Although Eagle tried, he was too exhausted and was forced to fly back down to earth. When they landed, Wren called out, "I am the winner ! I am the king !"

The other animals couldn't believe it. They didn't want to be ruled by such a tiny, insignificant bird. But what choice did they have ? Wren seemed to have won the contest fair and square.

Eagle, however, knew that Wren had cheated. With his keen eyes, he had seen Wren fly off his back. The enormous eagle looked at the tiny bird and angrily demanded, "Wren, it's time you told everyone the truth."

Wren didn't have to be told twice. He announced to the birds, "My friends, I'm sorry , but I must admit that I tricked you. I just wanted to have some fun. There's only one bird who deserves to be king, and that's Eagle. He's strong, has sharp eye-sight, and can soar to the heavens. I give up my claim to be king."

The birds cheered and prepared to crown Eagle their king. Even Wren cheered. But since that day, Wren loves to tell the story of how, for a short time, he was king of all the birds.

## The Frog from Osaka and the Frog from Kyoto

A frog who lived in Osaka once decided to travel to Kyoto. He had heard that Kyoto was a marvelous city, and he was eager to see it. Meanwhile, a frog from Kyoto decided to travel to Osaka. He had heard that Osaka was a fantastic city. He was eager to visit there.

It took these tiny frogs a long time to climb the mountain road. For days each kept up their struggle, higher and higher on the mountain road they climbed. It happened that the two frogs met right at the top of the mountain. How amazed they were to see each other!

"I am going to Kyoto!" said the frog from Osaka. "I've heard it is marvelous!"

"I am going to Osaka!" responded the Kyoto frog. "I've heard the same thing about Osaka!" "It's too bad we aren't taller," said the Osaka frog. "If we were just a bit taller we could look ahead at our destinations. This had been such a hard journey. I hope it is worth it."

"But I have an idea!" said the Kyoto frog. "Why don't we hold onto each other and stand up on our hind legs? Then we could each see the city that lies ahead."

"What a great idea!"

The two frogs grasped each other around the shoulders. Each stood wobbling as tall as possible on its hind legs. Facing toward the city it hoped to visit.

"What!" exclaimed the Kyoto frog. "Osaka looks just like Kyoto!"

"Imagine!" said the Osaka frog. "Kyoto looks exactly like Osaka!"

"It's a good thing we checked this out. We might as well save ourselves the long trip and go back home."

So the two bid each other farewell and each started hop...hop... hopping back down the mountain.

They had forgotten just one thing. The frogs' eyes were at the back of their heads. Thus the Kyoto frog was really staring back at the city he had just left. And the Osaka frog was staring at his hometown.

Still each frog lived out his days happily, content in the knowledge that the other city was just like his own!