

The Fox, the Wolf and the Horse

La Fontaine
French

Easy
2 min read

A fox, though young, by no means raw,
Had seen a horse, the first he ever saw:
“Ho! neighbour wolf,” said he to one quite green,
“A creature in our meadow I have seen,—
Sleek, grand! I seem to see him yet,—
The finest beast I ever met.”
“Is he a stouter one than we?”
The wolf demanded, eagerly;
“Some picture of him let me see.”
“If I could paint,” said fox, “I should delight
T’ anticipate your pleasure at the sight;
But come; who knows? perhaps it is a prey
By fortune offer’d in our way.”
They went. The horse, turn’d loose to graze,
Not liking much their looks and ways,
Was just about to gallop off.

“Sir,” said the fox, “your humble servants, we
Make bold to ask you what your name may be.”
The horse, an animal with brains enough,
Replied, “Sirs, you yourselves may read my name;
My shoer round my heel hath writ the same.”
The fox excus’d himself for want of knowledge:
“Me, sir, my parents did not educate,—
So poor, a hole was their entire estate.
My friend, the wolf, however, taught at college,
Could read it were it even Greek.”
The wolf, to flattery weak,
Approach’d to verify the boast;
For which four teeth he lost.
The high raised hoof came down with such a blow,
As laid him bleeding on the ground full low.
“My brother,” said the fox, “this shows how just
What once was taught me by a fox of wit,—
Which on thy jaws this animal hath writ,—
‘All unknown things the wise mistrust.’”

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