

One evening, Mother missed her little seven-year-old son, **Joel**¹. She looked for him **through the house and through the yard**², and she heard the sound of voices in the old man's cabin. She looked through the window, and saw her child. He was sitting by **Uncle Remus**³. Uncle Remus was telling him interesting tales. This is what Mother heard:

Brother Fox and Brother Rabbit

Brother Fox⁴ was chasing and chasing **Brother Rabbit**⁵ all day long, but he could not catch him. Brother Rabbit was very sly and ran away every time.

¹ **Joel** — Джоэль

² **through the house and through the yard** — по всему дому и во дворе

³ **Uncle Remus** — дядюшка Римус

⁴ **Brother Fox** — Братец Лис

⁵ **Brother Rabbit** — Братец Кролик

“Well, no luck today,” Brother Fox told to himself.

And when these words came from his mouth, lo! Jumping Brother Rabbit appeared on the road!

“Wait, Brother Rabbit!” says the Fox.

“I have no time, Brother Fox,” says Brother Rabbit.

“I want to talk to you, Brother Rabbit.”

“All right, Brother Fox. But do not approach to me, cry from the place you where you stand; I’m full of fleas today, fleas!” says Brother Rabbit.

“I saw **Brother Bear**¹ yesterday,” says the Fox, “and I got a scolding from him for our quarrel. ‘You are neighbors,’ he said, ‘you must be friends’. I promised to him to talk to you.”

So the Rabbit scratches his ear with his foot, and says:

“Excellent, Brother Fox. Come to me tomorrow, we will have dinner together. We will treat you well.”

“With pleasure,” says the Fox.

“Well, see you tomorrow,” said the Rabbit.

Brother Rabbit came home.

“Hello, dear. Why are you so sad?” Miss Rabbit asked him.

“Brother Fox promised to come,” Mr. Rabbit answered, “and he will come to see us tomorrow. It is necessary for us **to be on the alert.**”²

¹ **Brother Bear** — Братец Медведь

² **to be on the alert** — держать ухо востро

So they went to the garden and got some cabbages, carrots, and asparagus, and after that they cooked a great dinner.

Suddenly a little rabbit who was playing in a yard, shouted:

“Oh, mum! Ma! Brother Fox is coming!”

The Rabbit took the kids by the ears and made them sit down, and began to wait for the Fox. They were waiting and waiting, but no Fox came. Then he looked out the door, and noticed the tip of the Fox’s tail. Then Brother Rabbit closed the door, sat down and began to sing:

*“If you drop the plate today,
It will break, my dear.
If you see the Fox’s tale,
Then the Fox is near”.*

So Mr. Rabbit, Miss Rabbit, and all their children have their dinner, and nobody brings them trouble. After that Brother Hedgehog comes and says:

“Brother Fox asks to forgive him: he is ill, and he could not come. He invites Brother Rabbit to come to his place for a dinner tomorrow.”

The next day the Rabbit jumped to the Fox’s house.

He ran to the door. Oh! Someone was groaning. Brother Rabbit opened the door and saw Brother Fox. The Fox was sitting in an armchair, he was

wrapped up with a blanket¹, and looked very, very weak. Brother Rabbit **looked around**², but did not see a dinner on the table. Only a bowl and a sharp knife.

“Brother Fox, we will have some chicken for a dinner?” the Rabbit asks.

“Yes, Brother Rabbit, nice and fresh and tender!” the Fox answers.

The Rabbit **sorted his moustaches**³ and has told:

“You used no dill, Brother Fox? I can’t eat chicken meat without dill.”

The Rabbit leaped out of the door and dodged behind the bushes. He sat down and began to wait for the Fox. He did not wait long, because Brother Fox threw off the blanket and ran after the Rabbit. And the Rabbit shouted to him:

“Hey, Brother Fox! Here I put some dill on the stump. Run faster while it’s fresh!”

And Brother Rabbit jumped away. The Fox did not catch him.

¹ **wrapped up with a blanket** — закутан в одеяло

² **looked around** — осмотрелся

³ **sorted his moustaches** — разгладил усы

The Wonderful Tar-Baby¹

“Didn’t the fox ever catch the rabbit, Uncle Remus?” asked the little boy the next evening.

“Nearly caught, honey, nearly caught. Do you remember how Brother Rabbit gave him some dill?”

Soon after that Brother Fox went for a walk, gathered some tar and made from it a little man. He called that man Tar-Baby.

Then he placed Tar-Baby on the big road, and lay off in the bushes. Lo! **Lippity-clippity**², clippity-lippity, Brother Rabbit appeared. Brother Fox was lying silently, and the Rabbit saw the Tar-Baby. He was very astonished.

“Good morning!” the Rabbit says. “Nice weather, isn’t it?”

Tar-Baby says nothing, and the Fox lies silently.

“Why are you so silent?” the Rabbit asks.

Old Fox winks his eye slowly, and the Tar-Baby says nothing.

“Are you deaf, or what?” the Rabbit says. “If you don’t hear well, I can shout louder.”

The Tar-Baby is silent, and Old Fox lies silently.

¹ **Tar-Baby** — Смоляное Чучелко (чучело из смолы и скипидара; в современном языке термин *Tar-Baby* применяется для обозначения проблемной ситуации, которая усугубляется при попытке решить ее радикальными способами).

² **lippity-clippity** — скок-поскок

“**Listen, my fellow**¹, you are quite rude, I will give you a good lesson! Yes, yes, I will teach you a very good lesson!” the Rabbit says.

Fox chokes with laughter, and the Tar-Baby says nothing.

“When someone asks you, it is necessary to answer,” the Rabbit says. “Now take off your hat and greet me!”

The Tar-Baby stays still, and Brother Fox lies silently.

Then the Rabbit jumped back, and knocked the Tar-Baby on a head with his fist!

His fist got stuck. And he can't pull it away—the tar holds it.

But the Tar-Baby is silent, and Old Fox lies silently.

“**Set me free**², now, or I'll hit you more!” the Rabbit says.

He hit the Tar-Baby with his other hand, and that one also got stuck.

And the Tar-Baby stays still, and Brother Fox lies silently.

“Release me, or I'll crash all your bones!” Brother Rabbit shouts.

But the Tar-Baby tells nothing. Then the Rabbit pushed the Tar-Baby with his feet, and feet got stuck as well.

And Brother Fox lies silently.

The Rabbit shouts:

¹ **listen, my fellow** — послушай, приятель

² **set me free** — отпусти меня