



Once upon a time, a fox was hunting for food along the bank of a river in the forest when he stumbled upon a rabbit hole in the ground. Just then, a plump, young rabbit darted out of the hole and bounded across the fox's paws. Quick as a mouse, he killed the rabbit with a swift bite to its neck and triumphantly brought it back to his den. The rabbit was delicious and he feasted on his prey until his stomach was comfortably full.

The next day, the fox decided to return to the rabbit hole where he had found his prey the previous day. "How clever I am," the fox thought smugly. "Why should I bother searching the woods for food when I know where a perfectly good meal is waiting for me?"

Weaving his way through the dense trees, the fox padded along the bank of the river until he found the rabbit hole. Settling under a shady tree nearby, he laid his long, bushy tail over his paws and waited, ears pricked and eyes wide alert.

The fox waited from sunrise to sunset, but much to his disappointment he didn't see a single rabbit emerge from the hole. Finally, when the glowing moon floated high in the sky and the stars glittered, the fox rose to his paws and stretched his aching limbs. He was unsatisfied that he hadn't caught any food for him to eat that day. "I'll come back tomorrow," he promised himself, stifling his empty, rumbling stomach.

The next day, he arrived at the rabbit hole early and settled down at the tree to wait. But for the entire day that he waited, he didn't find any prey—not even a whisker. Disappointment and frustration prickled beneath his pelt, and again he returned home with an empty stomach.

Day after fruitless day, the fox continued to wait by the rabbit hole instead of searching the woods for any other prey. Every day ended in the same defeat, and every day the fox grew thinner and thinner.

Finally, the fox realized that he was wasting his time trying to find a rabbit simply because he had gotten lucky once. Venturing into the woods, he found the trees rich with mice, squirrels, voles, and birds for him to eat. Never had he been so relieved to see such plentiful prey. He caught animals and feasted on them until his stomach was round and satisfyingly full. The fox had learned his lesson:

*You don't get anything for nothing.*