



Shall we trade legs?

This is the story of two animals that weren't a bit happy with their own bodies, especially with their legs. And it's about how they decided to trade legs and what happened when they did.

In a great big forest there lived an elk that had very large antlers, a very furry back and very, very long legs.

The elk had a neighbor who was a fox, who had very sharp, pointed ears, a very silky coat and very, very short legs.

One day they ran into each other and, as they were chatting away, the elk said to the fox:

"How I would love to have short and fast legs like yours! My legs are so long that when the hunters chase me, my antlers get tangled in all the tree branches!"

And the fox answered,

"Oh, my heavens, you have no idea how jealous I am of your legs. Mine are so short that when the hunters chase me I can only see what is at ground level. If I had long legs like yours, I'd have a view from up high and could get away from them faster."

So that's when the elk said to the fox:

"Shall we trade legs?"

"Yessiree!" said the fox to the elk.

And pleased as two peas in a pod, they traded legs. The fox got the long, thin legs and the elk got the short stubby legs.

"Great! That was definitely a good idea!" they said to each other.

And each one headed off in a different direction, eager to see what it would be like to have the legs they had envied for so long.

The fox strutted along on his long legs, looking all around from his high vantage point:

"Nobody is guarding the henhouse," said the fox. "Ha ha ha! It's all mine. Let's see if I can catch myself a hen!"

He approached the henhouse and, as always, stuck one of his legs through the fence to try to catch a hen. But that leg was so big that it was hard to get through the space in the chicken wire.

And once he managed to get it through, since it had a hoof on the end of it instead of claws, there was no way he could catch his prey.

That's when the farmer appeared and the fox had to run away, without any lunch and with those long

legs that kept him from being able to hide in the brambles.

The elk, in the meantime, was very happy with his short legs which let him make his way through the shrubs without being spotted by any hunter. But, of course, with such short legs he had to walk for a long time to cover the same distance that, with his long legs, had taken him no time at all. And this made him really hungry.

As always, he stretched his neck up towards the tree branches to nibble on some leaves, his favorite food, but "oops", he couldn't reach anything with those stubby legs of his.

"Oh dear, I'm going to die of hunger!" said the elk.

And he started to cry, thinking that trading legs hadn't been such a good idea, after all. Just then he heard the approaching sound of twigs and branches breaking underfoot.

"Oh no, here come the hunters!" thought the elk. And he tried to run away as fast as he could, but those legs of his couldn't run, or take long strides, or support his weight.

"Well, that's the end of me!" thought the elk. But it wasn't the hunters stepping on twigs and branches, it was the fox, who tripped and fell right in front of the elk and whined:

"These legs are useless! I try to walk quietly through the forest, but these hoofs crush all of the broken branches and make so much noise that I scare away all of my prey. And they're no good for catching hens, either. It's just lucky that I wasn't caught by the hunter."

The elk answered,

"Your legs didn't work for me either. I can't reach up to the trees to eat the leaves, and if the hunters come after me, I try to run and I get nowhere. Shall we trade back our legs?"

The fox jumped for joy, because he had been wishing the same thing for awhile. So they made the trade and both of them were happy as they could be. As he stamped his hoof on the ground, the elk just kept saying over and over,

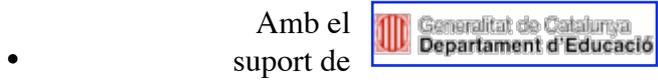
"Having long legs and strong hooves is a great idea."

And as he sharpened his claws on a tree trunk under his feet, the fox said to the elk,

"Having sharp claws and short legs is perfect for a fox."

And that's why, from that day on, the two animals have been happy with what they have and nobody wants to trade anything for anything.

Script: Jaume Esquiús



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