

ONCE, A FOX built her house near a hedgehog's cottage. The hedgehog tried to stay away from his new neighbor, but one day the fox crossed his path.

"Good day to you," said the fox.

"Same to you," answered the hedgehog, pulling his hood of spines over his head.

"Now that we are neighbors," said the fox, "we should get to know each other and become friends. To prove my friendship, I'll tell you a secret. Down in the village there is a vineyard with grapes so ripe they melt in your mouth. Would you join me there for dinner tomorrow?"

The hedgehog did not want to go, but the fox insisted, and in the end he agreed.

The next evening, they headed toward the village together.

"I wonder, dear neighbor," the fox asked, "do you have any tricks?"

According to this map, we head south through the old vineyard—the place where grapes are grown.



Retold by Elena Lelia Radulescu
Art by Lee Hodges

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"I have three," he answered.

"How can you get by on only three tricks?" cried the fox. "I have a bag full of tricks. If you want, I can sell you some."

"No, thank you," said the hedgehog. "I am happy with what I have."

Soon, they reached the vineyard. The vines were hanging low, heavy with grapes. The fox and the hedgehog ate their fill. When they turned to leave, the fox fell into an old dry well.

"This is the end of me!" she cried. "Dear neighbor, rescue me. Teach me one of your tricks."

"I have only three tricks while you have a full bag," said the hedgehog. "Use one of them and help yourself out."

"I left my bag of tricks at home. Please don't let me die at the bottom of this well," she begged.

"Lie down and be still," said the hedgehog. "When the vineyard owner comes, hold your breath. The man will think you are dead and throw you out."

In the morning, the vineyard owner passed by the well and saw the fox.

"What a beautiful fur collar for my wife's new coat," he said.

But when he got into the well, the fox was still and stiff.



Here, Thistle,
climb on my back.



Thanks, Ophelia.

And since I'm head knight,
Sam, you can be my
trusty horse!



I can't be your horse, Spider.
We don't have a saddle.



"The fox is dead. The tanner will not want to work with a smelly fur. I'd better get rid of it," the man said and threw the fox away.

Once out of the well, the fox ran as fast as her feet would carry her.

Before long, she began talking of sweet grapes again. She convinced her neighbor to return to the village.

They went and ate to their hearts' content. This time on the way out, the fox caught her leg in a trap.



"Oh, dear friend," she cried, "have pity on me! Give me one of your tricks and save me."

"But I am down to my last two tricks," said the hedgehog.

"Help me, and I'll never forget you as long as I live."

"The man will open the trap, tie your legs, and haul you into the cellar. His children will want to see you. When their father is asleep, they will sneak into the cellar. Wait until the youngest boy gets close, then kiss his hand. The child has a good heart, and he will untie you. Then, run out the door. Good luck to you," the hedgehog said and rushed home.

Everything happened as the hedgehog had said. The fox escaped by the hair of her head.

But not even a week passed, and the fox again asked the hedgehog to join her for dinner.

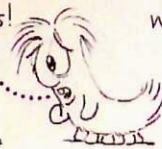
"But, neighbor, have you forgotten your misfortune?"

"Don't worry, my friend. Just come along."

Yeah, we do. Ta-da!



Pickles!



Among my many superpowers, I am a skilled tanner—one who works with leather and fur.



What a great fortune for Spider. And misfortune—bad luck—for you, Sam.





Now the vineyard owner was not a foolish man. Close to his gate, he dug a pit and covered it with twigs and leaves.

As they approached the vineyard, the fox and the hedgehog both tumbled into the hidden hole.

Once at the bottom of the pit, the fox turned to the hedgehog and said, "Now we are in this together. Quick, come up with a trick, and save us."

"Why me? You have a whole bag of tricks while I have only one left."

"I forgot my bag at home," said the fox. "We have no choice but to use your last trick."

"I am afraid we can't use it," said the hedgehog.

"Then I'll have you for my dinner," said the fox, showing her teeth.

"If you want to eat me, by all means, go ahead," said the hedgehog. "But we should have a proper farewell. You have been such a good friend to me. Let's kiss each other goodbye."

"As you wish," said the fox, and she lowered her snout.

*Whoopee-ti-yi-o, get along, little doggie.
It's your misfortune and none of my own.*



Steady, boy.
Good horse. Yah!



Hey! I said
no spurs!

The hedgehog quickly coiled up into a ball around the fox's mouth.

The fox couldn't breathe, so she started shaking her head. With a jerk, she threw the hedgehog out of the pit.

Once out, the hedgehog bent over the pit.

"I'm sorry. I had to use my last trick on you, dear neighbor. Now, I'll go to your home to fetch your bag of tricks. So long, and have patience."

And off he went, laughing, all the way through the woods. 🐿

