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□ The Fox and the Eagle □

Picture story



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Figs for a Stranger

High above a golden valley, Rumi the fox had a favorite place: a crooked fig tree beside the cliff. One afternoon—FLAP! FLAP! WHOOSH!—a huge eagle landed nearby. Rumi stepped back. “I am Arin,” said the tired eagle. “I have flown since sunrise.” Rumi carefully rolled him a purple fig. Arin tasted it. His eyes grew wide. Soon, the lonely tree had room for two friends.





A Frightening Request

Each afternoon, Rumi shared fruit. Arin shared stories of oceans, snowy peaks, and forests like green carpets. One evening, Arin carried figs home to his older brother, Vark. Vark gobbled one and narrowed his eyes. “A fox who finds such sweet fruit might make a fine supper. Bring him here.” Arin’s feathers tightened. “No,” he whispered. But Vark spread his mighty wings, and fear made Arin’s brave word feel very small.

Up into the Sky

The next morning, Arin visited Rumi. “You have always wished to see the valley from above,” he said. “Climb on.” Up they swept—WHOOSH! The river became a silver thread. The trees became tiny green dots. Then Rumi saw where they were going: not toward the bright mountains, but toward Vark’s dark nest. At last Arin whispered, “My brother told me to bring you.” Rumi’s paws trembled. Then his clever mind began to race.





The Golden-Tail Trick

Far below lay only hard rocks. Rumi could not jump. Suddenly he cried, “Turn around! I forgot my golden tail!” Arin blinked. “Your tail is behind you.” “This is my ordinary tail,” said Rumi. “Every fox keeps a secret golden tail somewhere safe. Mine is under the fig tree. Vark will want the very best part.” Arin slowed. He wondered. He turned. Back across the valley they flew.

Safe Beneath the Fig Tree

Arin landed beside the fig tree. Rumi sprang onto the soft grass—THUMP!—rolled once, and slipped behind a safe wall of bushes. “Where is the golden tail?” Arin called. Rumi peeked out and waved his one very ordinary tail. “Foxes have only one tail,” he said. “And friends must protect each other’s trust.” Arin lowered his head. “I was afraid.” “Fear is real,” said Rumi. “But betrayal is still wrong.”





The Bravest Word

Arin returned to the mountain alone. When Vark demanded, “Where is the fox?” Arin stood tall. “No,” he said clearly. “I will not betray my friend.” Far across the golden valley, Rumi watched from beneath the fig tree. His body was safe, though his trust would need a long time to mend. Rumi had learned that a clever mind can escape a trap. Arin had learned that courage can begin with one small, strong word: “No.”

THE END

Picture story

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