

RABBIT AND BOBCAT

A Native American Tale

Told by Laura Gibbs / LauraGibbs.net

[web version](#) - [document version](#) - more at Scripts.LauraGibbs.net

Adapted for reader's theater from "Bobcat" in *Here Comes Tricky Rabbit* by Gretchen Mayo, [available at the Internet Archive](#).

[CC-BY license](#). This license allows reusers to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format (CC) with author attribution (BY).

PREVIEW: Bobcat has Rabbit trapped inside a hollow tree. How on earth will Rabbit get away this time?

GENRE: Folktales

CULTURE: Native American (Shawnee and Kickapoo)

THEMES: trickster, origin story

LENGTH: 9 minutes

READERS: 3

ROLES: Narrator, Rabbit, Bobcat

NOTES: **spoilers; read afterwards** Here is Mayo's note on the story: "Both the Kickapoo and the Shawnee tell stories explaining how Bobcat, also known as Wildcat, got his spots. A version told by Charles Bluejacket was recorded around 1859 when he was a leader of the Shawnee nation." If you look at Charles Bluejacket's version recorded in the [Journal of American Folklore](#) in 1909, the story is connected to Shawnee clans, as he explains: "This

story was told by a member of the Rabbit Clan as a good joke on the Wildcat Clan."

NARRATOR: Rabbit was running for his life, with Bobcat close behind.

RABBIT: (panting) I've got to get away!

BOBCAT: I've almost got you, Rabbit! Almost! Almost!

RABBIT: (panting harder) Got to... got to find a place to hide!

NARRATOR: Then, to Rabbit's delight, he saw a hollow tree ahead, and jumped right inside. The hole was big enough for Rabbit to squeeze through, but not Bobcat. So Bobcat skidded to a stop in front of the tree, growling and snarling.

BOBCAT: (growling) (snarling)

NARRATOR: But Rabbit just laughed.

RABBIT: You'll never fit through that itty-bitty hole, Bobcat! Better luck next time, ha ha ha.

BOBCAT: I haven't given up yet, Rabbit. Sooner or later, you're going to have to come back out eventually... and I'll be here waiting when you do.

NARRATOR: Rabbit knew what Bobcat said was true. There was no way out of the hollow tree except through that hole! So Rabbit caught his breath and then started thinking about what to do next. As he felt around in the tree, he found an acorn some squirrel must have left there.

RABBIT: (speaking softly to himself) Aha, an acorn! This could be useful. I just need one more...

NARRATOR: And so Rabbit felt around until he found another acorn.

RABBIT: (still speaking to himself) Perfect. Bobcat might be bigger than me, she might even be faster than me... but she is definitely not smarter than me.

NARRATOR: Have you figured out what Rabbit is going to do with those acorns? I think you'll be surprised! So, armed with those two acorns, Rabbit was ready to lure Bobcat into his trap.

RABBIT: Well, Bobcat, I guess you're right. It's probably better for me to admit defeat now rather than dying of thirst here inside this tree.

BOBCAT: I knew you'd see sense, Rabbit! So come on out, and I promise I'll be quick about it. I'll gobble you up just as fast as I can.

RABBIT: Oh no, Bobcat, please don't eat me raw! That's my one request, and surely you'll grant me one last request before I die.

NARRATOR: Bobcat was suspicious and said only...

BOBCAT: Well, I might. I just might. It depends. Tell me first, and then I'll decide.

RABBIT: I want to go out in a blaze of glory, Bobcat! Instead of eating me raw, I want you to roast me to perfection so that I will be the most amazing, fantastic, unforgettable meal of all time. I want to be a meal you will never forget!

BOBCAT: (slobbering with anticipation) Go on! Tell me more, Rabbit!

RABBIT: Just build a fire right here, a big, hot, blazing fire, and roast me until I am tender and delicious. And then, before you eat me, please say, "Oh Rabbit, you are a meal I'll never forget! Thank you for being the best meal I've ever eaten." Do that, Bobcat, and I'll die happy.

BOBCAT: Well, when you put it like that, Rabbit, how can I refuse?

RABBIT: Does that mean you'll grant my wish?

BOBCAT: I will, Rabbit, I will grant your wish, roasting you to perfection so that you'll be a meal that I'll never forget. I'll make you the best meal that I've ever eaten, I promise!

RABBIT: Thank you, Bobcat. I don't know why I ran from you in the first place, seeing as you're so good-hearted. Thank you! Thank you for doing me this honor! Just gather up the twigs and grass and branches from all around the tree here and get that fire going, nice and hot.

BOBCAT: Well, don't you go trying to sneak out, Rabbit! There's plenty of fuel right here; I'm not going far.

RABBIT: I know there's plenty of fuel right there, Bobcat. That's what gave me the idea! So get to work now, quick as you can. You're hungry, and I'm ready for my moment of glory. Hurry up and get that fire started!

NARRATOR: So Bobcat gathered the twigs and grass and branches and piled them in a heap in front of the hole, and then she set it all on fire.

RABBIT: Oh, I can feel it already, Bobcat! It's getting hot in here. Fan those flames to make them go even higher!

BOBCAT: (huffing) (puffing)

RABBIT: Oh, that's good, Bobcat! That's very good! It's getting hotter and hotter! It's SO HOT, Bobcat! In fact, I think one of my eyes is about to pop out from the heat.

NARRATOR: And as he said that, Rabbit threw one of the acorns out of the hole and into the fire, where it exploded with a loud pop.

RABBIT: Oh no, Bobcat! There went my left eye. And now my right eye... my right eye... oh no, I think it's going to pop out from the heat too! Watch out!

NARRATOR: Then Rabbit threw the other acorn out of the hole and into the fire. POP!

RABBIT: Oh Bobcat! There went my other eye! I'm blind! Both my eyes are gone! I can't see a thing in here! I can't find my way out! Help me, Bobcat! You're going to have to reach in here and show me how to get out of this hole.

BOBCAT: Hang on, Rabbit! I'm coming! Hang on!

NARRATOR: And then, as Bobcat was reaching her paws up towards the hole, Rabbit jumped out, landing hard on Bobcat and knocking her down.

RABBIT: Oh, sorry about that, Bobcat!

NARRATOR: Then Rabbit jumped to the ground and kicked at the fire with his strong back feet so that sparks and ashes from the fire went flying towards Bobcat, landing on top of her.

RABBIT: Oh, sorry about that too, Bobcat!

NARRATOR: But Rabbit wasn't sorry at all! Just for good measure he gave the fire one more good kick so even more sparks and ashes came raining down all over Bobcat.

BOBCAT: Ouch! That hurts, Rabbit! Stop hurting me! Ouch!

NARRATOR: Bobcat then started rolling this way and that way on the ground, beating herself with her paws to put the sparks out. Meanwhile, Rabbit had run off, but Bobcat could hear him shouting from a distance:

RABBIT: Now wasn't that a meal you'll never forget, Bobcat? Ha ha ha.

NARRATOR: And when Bobcat looked at her fur, she saw she was covered with spots.

BOBCAT: (growling) (snarling) I'll get you yet, Rabbit! You best keep on running because I'm running right after you, and next time when I catch you.....

NARRATOR: And so Bobcat went chasing after Rabbit again, and as far as I know, Rabbit's running still. Meanwhile, you can see those spots on Bobcat's coat even now. Not only that: the coats of Bobcat's children all have spots on them, and so do the coats of her grandchildren, and her great-grandchildren, and her great-great-grandchildren... well, you get the idea!

RABBIT: Yep, that was me! I did that; I put the spots on Bobcat's coat.

BOBCAT: Run, Rabbit! Run! Or else I'm going to catch you again...

NARRATOR: Oh look, there they go! Run, Rabbit, run! Run, Bobcat, run! And let's thank Rabbit and Bobcat for taking time to read to us today; we hope you have enjoyed our little play!