

Foxy's Frustrations

Foxy was a young red fox who lived in a small village on the edge of town. He had just left his family home to start his own life in the wild. He was used to the busy road with streetlights that led into town. He trotted this way often as the sun set to explore the town by night.

One evening as he stretched and began to wake up, he noticed something was different. He couldn't tell what it was at first. The evening was very peaceful and still. He could hear birdsong and rustling a long way away. Then he realised how quiet it was. He walked to the side of the lane and listened. Where were the cars and the lorries that thundered along making the ground shudder and the puddle water spray his fur? Where were the brightly coloured cyclists whizzing along as though life was a race, and where were the dogs on ropes, pulling their people along? Something had changed.

Foxy felt the gurgle in his tummy and decided to set off into town for some food.

The journey along the road seemed somehow longer today, there were no familiar landmarks to show how far he had come. He always looked for the police car by the chip shop where the lovely smell of warm fish came from. It was not there, and the chip shop owner was washing the floor as though ready to close up for the night. Foxy slowed down as he passed the bins, there were no delicious treats amongst the rubbish tonight.

Foxy thought about the place where the young people met at night to chat. It was on a corner by the pizza shop on the other side of the road. This crossing could be a bit tricky as the cars raced by, but not tonight. Foxy stared with a puzzled frown at the empty road. He watched a hedgehog trundle across - no worries for his safety tonight. Foxy followed the hedgehog and as he neared the pizza shop, he noticed the silence. No young people laughing and chatting, no fancy bike moves or skateboards to avoid. The pavement was bare. He trotted towards the shop. It was closed, no pizza for tea today.

Foxy decided to journey on to the busy road by the park, there were usually lots of tasty treats on this route, but today as he neared the park, he noticed the gates were closed. He glanced up, they were very tall, he could not get over them. He squeezed his face against the rails, they were too close together, how had the rails got so close together - he used to run through these with his brothers only a few months ago to play all night in the park. He stared through the rails and noticed small creatures racing across the grass in the fading light.

Rabbits! He recalled his Mum talking about how she used to eat rabbits when she was young, how the adult foxes would show them the best places to find them, and the best ways to catch them. Foxy could feel the end of his nose wrinkle up as he thought about it. It seemed like a lot of hard work, chasing, and catching every time you wanted to eat. Surely bins outside takeaways were a much better option.

He glanced back at the rabbits - he couldn't get them anyway, as they were the

wrong side of the rails. Foxy felt his tummy rumbling and his frustration building. He thought about his young friends, other foxes who were making their own way in the world, perhaps a run about with them might help him feel better. He sighed as he realised that they were usually found on the waste ground the other side of the park. The other side of the locked gates.

For a few minutes Foxy felt very lost and alone. Where was everyone, and what would he have to eat tonight? As he stared into the silence he heard a high screech above him. In a tall tree sat a white owl. Foxy crouched for a moment, unsure if he was safe. The wise old owl spoke kindly, it's ok you are safe here'. Foxy puzzled over these words, 'what do you mean safe here?' The Owl replied 'the humans are all inside their homes, they have to stay there to keep safe from an illness they might catch if they come onto the streets'. Foxy looked worried. 'Don't worry Owl continued, foxes don't catch it'.

'I'm hungry' Foxy grumbled. 'Then you must get your own food' instructed the owl, like

foxes would have done in the past. Here, watch' ... the owl sat a moment then swooped down into the undergrowth and snatched a tasty mouse for his tea. After he had finished munching he continued 'beside the railings is a track, if you follow it you will come to the other side of the park, near the wasteland, there will be lots of rabbits along the edges of the fields.

Foxy was unsure, he didn't like being told what to do, and he felt cross that he would have to feed himself. He wanted to run and play with his friends in the park, but the gates were locked. He didn't want to take a new path, that he didn't know. He could feel his body getting very tense and grumpy. The owl watched him and reflected 'what you can't know Foxy, is how good you will feel when you have found your way along a new path and caught your first meal. You will have a tummy full of food and a heart full of pride!'

Foxy thought about this, he didn't know how to feel proud of himself or pleased with what he had done - he had never stopped to say 'well done' to himself, or to notice

how he had grown. 'That's it' he thought suddenly - I've grown - that's why I wouldn't fit through the railings, I've grown'. He glanced anxiously at the dark path beside the owl's tree and with a deep breath he set off to find a new way to take care of himself. He couldn't change the locked gates and the closed shops, but he could change how he took care of himself.

Well done Foxy!