

Because of the Fox

Once upon a time, there was a very charming, although cunning and manipulative fox. He lived in a tiny underground foxhole that without his presence would look very welcoming, in a side of the forest that the other animals had long stopped to go, and not because they did not like it; because of the fox. Everyone had been manipulated by the fox before: Mrs. Owlienne, the snowy owl, once got her eggs stolen; Mr. Mousset, the mouse, was once tricked into falling into the pond; David, the little duck, almost drowned once, trying to save someone he believed was drowning, when there was actually no one. And all because of that fox.

On the other side of the forest, far away from the fox's foxhole, where some animals lived in perfect harmony with each other, there was a bunny called Beredith. She was a young, kind, and lovable little bunny, although she was also very brave. "I wonder why all of the other animals, from the butterflies in the air to the crocodiles in the pond, talk so fearfully about this charming and cunning fox", she thought. Beredith got so curious about this fox, and so angry that he was manipulating, and eventually, scaring animals from her village that she decided to go to his foxhole and have a talk.

After riding on the back of a crocodile through the river and flying with an owl through the air, she arrived at a beautiful area, with fresh green grass, beautiful fruitful trees, and a shining blue pond. "Maybe I am at the wrong place," Beredith thought. "How could such a fearsome creature live in a place like that?" she wondered. However, her doubts were answered when she saw a tiny hole on the ground nearby, and those furry paws coming out of it. Suddenly, Beredith got scared. She started to hop, as fast as she could, away. But the fox saw her. And instead of trying to eat her, the fox just shouted:

"Wait! Stop! I am not going to hurt you!" Beredith stopped. She could perfectly know when someone was lying. And he definitely was not. He sounded more like concerned.

"I am not going to hurt you" he restated. "Would you like a cup of tea?" he asked politely after an awkward silence. The bunny just nodded.

When they entered the foxhole, Beredith's mouth flew open. She could not believe how a creature like the one described in the village could live in a place like this: it was the neatest place ever. A little wooden tea table near a fireplace, and most shocking, pictures of a younger version of the Fox with many different animals.

"Who are all these animals? I've heard you are famous by..." Beredith said, but couldn't finish the sentence.

"Because I manipulate other animals?" he asked. "Yes, I manipulated some animals in the past. But did anyone tell you what happened before that?"

"I..."

“No”, he said sharply. “I have been manipulated, not once or twice. My whole life.” His eyes gleamed with coldness, his beautiful fluffy red fur shook with rage. “I was so kind to everyone that the others started to take advantage of it” he stated.

“That doesn't mean you have to do the same, does it?” Beredith said when the fox was about to go on. “What you need is to find the balance between being so kind that other animals take advantage from you or so cruel that you live alone because everyone else is too scared to interact with you. What do you think?”

The fox did not answer. He was already tired of making people feel bad, or endangered around him. Beredith approached the whole to go away, when:

“Yes”, he said. “I want to have friends again”.

When they arrived back on the part of the forest where Beredith lived, all animals came to greet her, since she was a very lovable bunny.

“Hi, guys, this is Mr. Fox!” she said excitedly.

Chaos. Animals shouting, screaming, running in panic.

“I am not going to manipulate any of you!” Mr. Fox said loudly. He was not very sure he had convinced everyone he didn't mean any harm yet. “Or eat you!” he completed, and many sighs of relief filled the forest. Like Beredith, they knew when someone was lying. And he definitely was not.