

Fox story

Of all the animals in The Great Wood
The fox is perhaps the most misunderstood
He is often made out to be sneaky and sly
But the truth is he's really just awfully shy

It is true he's been known to dine out now and then
On squirrels and rabbits or even a hen
By nature, the fox is a true carnivore
But this fox, in fact, would prefer nothing more
Than to scavenge for food you or I throw away
In our household waste, in our wasteful way

So, at night, when the city is falling asleep
The woodland around starts to sound and to creep
With a swish of a tail and a flash of red locks
Out from his den flies Frankie the fox

He heads straight for the bins in the park where he finds
Lovely titbits and scraps and he joyfully dines
And then, once a fortnight, more gifts in black sacks
Appear on the streets where he gleefully snacks

The food we throw out, to a fox, is too tempting
But less so the packaging we have it wrapped in
He makes sure before his great banquets begin
To leave all the rubbish right there in the bin

One evening, mid meal, our fox was disturbed
Loud shouts and jeering and cheering he heard

With a swish of a tail and a flash of red locks
Back to his den flew Frankie the fox

On return to his woodland he found, in dismay
A fresh pile of litter lining his way
Bottles and cans and plastic from sweets
Crisp packets, wrappers from all kinds of treats
Take away packaging, nappies and wipes
Poo bags and cigarettes, gosh what a sight.
Now, previous dropped litter he's managed to shift
But this lot was too great for one fox to lift

To tidy this up would need teamwork, but who
Would listen to what a fox told them to do?
With a droop of his tail and a sigh of red locks
Into his den slunk Frankie the fox

Next morning, our fox vowed to go out and try
To talk to his neighbours and not be so shy
He would ask them for help, in his friendliest tone,
To clear up the litter and tidy their home

With a flick of his tail and a flash of red locks
Once again from his den flew Frankie the fox

Hester the hare would never have guessed
In the bright light of day as she lay there at rest
That a fox would approach with a "How do you do
May I possibly ask for a favour from you"
Now hares are quite strong and they know how to box
But this hare didn't dare pick a fight with a fox

Instead, she listened to what fox had to say
And her vast ears pricked up, in a hare kind of way

“Dear fox, all this litter has caused much upset
Poor badger had broken glass dropped near his sett
The birds have found plastic caught up in their nest
And the squirrels have nuts buried under this mess
If you know how to fix it, I promise I can
Assemble a team to help you with your plan
Though the birds may need some assurance from me
That you won’t try to nab them and grab them for tea”

The fox gave his word so hare gathered a team
The unlikeliest group that you ever have seen
They put aside differences and there where they sat
A plan formed to tidy up their habitat
But from under the litter, behind where they sat
popped out the long snout (and the hat!) of a rat
Ronnie the rat cleared his throat and began
to tell all the woodland to throw out their plan

‘I’m sure you mean well but I have to confess
I’m really quite fond of this beautiful mess
Why should we pick up what others have dropped?
And what’s wrong with littering? Why should they stop?
Where’s there’s rubbish, we rats tend to gather in force
to take over the world, and to rule it, of course
So, leave all this trash, let it double in size
let this mountain of junk tower up to the skies
And then I will climb up above this old wood

to gaze over my litter-strewn neighbourhood

'If I may', offered Frankie, 'I must disagree

This litter is not just unsightly to me

But worse, and I don't mean to cause great alarm

But it carries the risk of doing us harm'

'Well!', said the rodent, 'the fox disagrees!

But we rats are the ones who will thrive on disease

So, give it your best shot to tidy this wood

But take my word, it won't do you any good

The rubbish you clear will return soon enough

And rats will run rampant amongst all this stuff

Follow the fox and I bet, when you're through

With his dirty work done, he'll eat all of you!'

With a slither of tail and a tip of his hat

Under the junk scampered Ronnie the rat

'He has a point', Frankie said, 'why should you trust'

But Hester piped up, 'because we simply must!

I suggest that we all take no heed of this sermon

Delivered with spite from the miserable vermin

We must all learn to work as a team, if we can

to trust one another and stick to our plan

So, the birds took the small bits and bobs in their beaks
And dive bombed the bins in the park with loud shrieks
(That way, they felt, the message would land
For humans to pick up their trash with their hands).

Bin bags were brought by the mice, for they said
They saw sacks through the cracks in a nearby shed
The squirrels hung them from a branch as a bin
And the animals shovelled the rubbish right in

“Don’t throw it all” cried out Frankie the fox
“The humans place some of this junk in a box
Of a different colour” and he took off in haste
To fetch a green box labelled ‘recycled waste’.

Soon all the big pile of litter was clear
But Hester the hare said “dear Frankie, I fear
This may happen again if we don’t try to stop it
These humans will still come and litter, then hop it

Fox twiddled his whiskers and thought for some time
Then finally exclaimed “what we need is a sign
Grab some sticks and bright wrappers and then we’ll begin
To make a word I’ve seen on many a bin”

They all began winding bright wrappers round sticks
And the bees offered honey as glue for to fix
These sticks to a tree trunk the humans could spy
A large ‘T’ and an ‘I’, a ‘D’ and a ‘Y’

The animals gazed on their work with great pride

Their woodland was tidy, their sign could be spied
For Frankie, yet more pride as his day's work ends
He overcame shyness by making new friends

With a wag of his tail and a bow of red locks
(And a yawn that is born from changing your clocks)
Once again to his den staggered Frankie the fox

But just when we think that our tale's at an end
That all's well that ends well with our woodland friends
That everything's perfect in their habitat
Out pops the snout (and the hat) of the rat

'Ooh goody, it seems that you fixed things, for now!
Those animals all worked together somehow
But in case you assume that all is now well
Let me remind you to follow the smell

Litter is everywhere, can't you all see
That litter is scattered across land and sea
And when there is too much for you lot to bear
That is when me and my rats will be there
To take over this planet, to flourish and thrive
While all other creatures will barely survive
You think that I'm wrong? Just walk down the street
And count all the litter that's strewn at your feet'

So, with that bleak message the rat disappears
Leaving the listeners facing their fears
Of rubbish that threatens to grow over time
Not every human will notice the sign

Will this all happen? We must wait and see
But maybe it's all down to you, and to me.

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