From Enemy to Saviour: The Story of a Girl and a Fox

As Violetta trudged toward her chicken coop through an immaculate layer of crystalline snow, she was surrounded by the hush of winter’s peace. Peace did not last long, however. Closer to the hen house, a trail of blood and feathers stole Violetta’s breath, making the muscles in her chest strain and ache with despair. The shocking streak of scarlet on the bright white snow gave way to her worst fears. All of her beloved Speckled Seabright beauties lay slain and lifeless before her, encircled by a trail of tiny fox prints leading back into a gloaming of spruce and firs. The fury and ire that followed came from somewhere so deep inside of her, it felt animalistic, as if Violetta was becoming a creature of the woods herself, ready to defend her brood.

Her grandfather’s golden knife pulsed with vengeful purpose beneath her shift, and as she held it up to the pale winter light, she knew what she must do. Grey foxes had always plagued Bracken Wood Farm. Gathering ground elder and pineapple weed for her mother’s tinctures the week before, Violetta had felt the presence of something sprightly and mischievous, but hadn’t actually spied anything lurking. Blinded by grief, she skimmed and skated, as if propelled a dark magic, across the frozen woodland range in search of the guilty fox.

A familiar charcoal coloured feather was at her feet—no doubt plucked savagely from the tail of her favourite Seabright, Genoa. An ice chime from the ancient spruce halted time as a blur of pale grey leapt in a pristine arc over Violetta’s head. It was her enemy. It was the fox. He landed gracefully, his tail whipping around him just as Violetta’s head whipped around to face him. At the ridge’s crest, the fox paused and stared with a haunted longing in his eyes—a stare Violetta felt in her bones, the force of which rendering her stone-stopped as a statue.

Then he was gone, skittering across Siren stream. Once she’d recovered, Violetta struggled to catch him. The shadowed twilight fell fast and Violetta decided to hunker down and wait for the fox to emerge, which he soon did and she was ready with her knife to exact her revenge. Holding down the fox she glared at him, willing him to understand that his time in this world would soon be over. The fox’s gaze was full of words unsaid and Violetta’s rage turned soft; her grip on the knife and the fox loosened. Once again, he was gone—off into the now-dark night just as the snow began to fall.

Violetta had followed the fox deep into the woods and was now utterly lost. Her lantern gave up its last light as she fell to the ground weakened by the day’s events and the crippling cold. The fox had not gone far. The fox was waiting in the evergreen wings. Closer he crept to the freezing child, nuzzling and nudging her with the wondrous warmth of his thick silken fur, encircling her just as his fox prints had encircled the Speckled Seabrights he’d slaughtered that morning.

A night of petrified searching by Violetta’s parents brought them to her just as she awoke in the fox’s soft embrace. Upon hearing their footsteps, the fox knew it was time for him to go. Scooping up their precious one, Violetta’s parents began carrying her home. She looked back over her mother’s shoulder (bewildered but grateful) at the fox who hours before had been her nemesis, but who had transformed during the frozen night into her saviour.