

# THE KIND DEEDS MESSENGER

THE LATHAM FOUNDATION STORY SERVICE  
FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



He climbed up on her shoulders and curled himself around her neck with his little face close to hers.

## HOW JEALOUSY LOST JOHNNY SILVER FOX A GOOD HOME

A TRUE STORY

by

E. M. S. FITE

**Y**OU remember how Tom and Virginia got their father, Mr. Mann, to tell them about the birds? Well soon after that Tom came running in, all excited, with the news that their neighbor, Mrs. Moore had a wee baby fox and that it was so frail it would most likely die. This baby fox was one of two that had been born to a beautiful fox mother at a Fox Breeding Farm close by. And it seems from what Mrs. Moore had told Tom, these two babies were "Silver" foxes and considered of great value, worth about \$5,000.00 apiece; but her little Johnny Silver Fox as she called him, was so sick and weak that the men who owned the Farm said there would be no use to keep him as he couldn't get well. When Mrs. Moore heard this she begged to have him, so that the sick baby fox was given to her. Mrs. Moore is a woman with a kind heart and loves all animals, and she wanted to give little Johnny Silver Fox a chance for his life through careful nursing.

So day after day Tom became more greatly interested in Johnny Silver Fox. After school he ran next door to find out if Johnny was still alive. He was given such tender care in the way of nursing and feeding, that it was not long before Johnny Silver Fox began to show signs of wanting to play and run about like other little foxes.

Johnny Silver Fox loved his mistress with grateful devotion. He would follow her about the house and yard just as a devoted dog would have done. He loved to have her take him in

her arms and pet him and he was very playful, and he would cry a peculiar little cry whenever she would leave him. He loved Tom too and would play with him but only when his mistress was not near.

Now what I am telling you is a true story; Johnny Silver Fox loved his mistress so much that he was very jealous of her attentions to any one else, and because she showed attention to her husband, Mr. Moore, when Johnny Silver Fox was in the house, Johnny became very jealous of Mr. Moore, and was ugly to him and would not make friends with him.

Johnny Silver Fox grew to be very handsome; his coat of fur was long and fine and silky and he was indeed a beautiful creature, but as he grew in size so did his dislike for Mr. Moore grow, until the home was made a very uncomfortable and unpleasant place for Mr. Moore, and he told his wife that she would have to give up Johnny Silver Fox if she wanted him to remain at home, that he would no longer have the fox on the place. Poor Mrs. Moore was heart broken at the idea of giving up Johnny Silver Fox; but what else could she do? while she loved her pet, she loved her husband too and wanted him to be happy in their home.

Tom Mann was much cast down when his Father came home that evening and he told how Mrs. Moore had decided to take Johnny Silver Fox back to the Farm. He asked his Father to tell him what he knew about foxes for he had been so surprised to learn that this wild animal showed the same kind of affection for a human being that a domestic animal does, such as a dog; and he wanted to know why Johnny was called a "Silver" fox when he was coal black except for the white tip on his tail. So when Mr. Mann settled himself in his large chair after dinner with Tom on a stool at his feet, and Virginia on his knee, he told them some of the things he knew about this beautiful wild creature we call the Fox.

"Perhaps you do not know, Tom, that the fox belongs to the dog family, so you will understand why when he is treated with love and kindness he will show the same kind of gratitude and devotion that we think are peculiar to the dog. The fox is one of the craftiest of wild animals, made so by man who has hunted him so unmercifully that he has had to learn to protect himself in every way possible. Unlike man however the fox never kills for the love of killing, he kills only for food. He hunts for his food night and day but mostly at night, and he eats a little of everything; mice, squirrels, quail, fish, eggs, and some fruit. When he is hard pressed for food and is near a home where there are chickens, our friend fox will help himself to a hen without any hesitation and that is why many persons call him a chicken thief and think that he deserves to be killed. The farmer who would kill a fox for taking one or two of his fowls doesn't stop to think that it may not be a regular thing with the animal. He will kill the fox and by so doing will often lose his whole crop of alfalfa or something else, worth possibly \$1,000.00."

"Daddy," asked Tom, "How would the killing of a fox cause the farmer to lose his crop of alfalfa?"

"How? Why through the active little field mice who eat the plants and the roots of the plants. It is said that \$80,000,000 damage is done each year to crops and fruit and forest trees by field mice, pocket gophers (field rats), moles, ground squirrels and the like, and they are all hurtful to the farmer. So an intelligent farmer today encourages a fox to live near his fields for he knows that he will be fully repaid for the few fowls he may lose. And it is found that as a rule when a fox does steal a hen it is the mother fox who is nursing her young and who needs more food than she can ordinarily find."

"But Daddy, I should think a fox would be afraid to come into a man's yard, isn't he afraid of men?" asked Virginia.

"No Virginia, the fox seems to be afraid of nothing except a gun and he has learned how to steer clear of guns for the most part. He frequently lives near the homes of men. A pair of foxes will make their home in a pasture by digging a hole under a large rock, so that there will be but the one entrance, sometimes they will have an extra room to it in which they store food when they have more than they need for their meal. Then again they will dig their hole in a gravelly bank in or near a forest. The gray fox likes the forest best; he isn't as smart as the Red fox, and he usually makes his home in a hollow log or tree.

"But Tom you asked why Johnny Silver Fox is called "Silver" when his fur is all black except for the tip of his tail. This Black or Silver fox as he is called is really a Red fox, his parents are the Red foxes, and when these black baby foxes with white tips to their tails are born, they are very rare and are considered to be of extra value; they are called "Silver" because of the white tip to their tails; and some of them have white hairs here and there throughout their fur. When the fur is only marked with black then he is called the "Cross" fox; but the "Silver Fox" and the "Cross Fox" are really the Red Fox with different coats."

"Well Daddy, why do we hunt and kill the fox if he can be tamed and isn't harmful?" Tom asked.

"The farmers are at last beginning to fight against the killing off of the foxes Tom, because they have learned that the part they have to play in nature is helpful to the farmer; and if let alone the fox will keep the farm clear of rodents thus saving the farmer thousands



**ABOLISH STEEL TRAPS**  
 Drawing by James Giorgad, thirteen-year-old student of Pleasanton Grammar School.

### TO A FUR SCARF

By **FREDERICK F. VAN de WATER**  
 Courtesy of the Author and The New York Tribune

The trap jaws clanked and held him fast;  
 None marked his fright; none heard his cries.  
 His struggles ceased; he lay at last  
 With wide, uncomprehending eyes.

And watched the sky grow dark above  
 And watched the sunset burn to gray,  
 And quaked in anguish while he strove  
 To gnaw the prisoned leg away.

The day came rosy from the East,  
 But still those steel jaws kept their hold  
 And no one watched the prisoned beast  
 But Fear and Hunger, Thirst and Cold.

Oppressed by pain, his dread grew numb;  
 Fright no more stirred his flagging breath.  
 He longed in vain to see him come—  
 The awful trapper, bringing death.

The day flapped past on heavy wing,  
 He saw the shadow longer grow,  
 A hopeless, wracked and dying thing  
 Encircled by the trampling snow.

Then through the gloom that night came One  
 Who set the timid spirit free.  
 "I know thy anguish, little son;  
 So once men trapped and tortured me."

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of dollars a year. We are told that one fox will keep several acres clear of field mice, gophers, and similar pests. In some places there are as many as 12,000 field mice to the acre, so you see that the fox is a true friend to the farmer."

"Oh dear! Oh dear!" exclaimed Tom. "I wish there wasn't so much killing everywhere. I don't see why women want these lovely foxes killed so that they can hang the skins around their necks. Why not try to make them friends?"

The following day Mrs. Moore took Johnny Silver Fox back to the Fox Farm, and two weeks later Tom went with her to visit him. When he returned late in the evening he told his father that Johnny Silver Fox was so happy when he saw his mistress that he was almost wild with joy; when she took him in her arms he climbed up on her shoulders and curled himself around her neck with his little face close to hers. Mrs. Moore stayed with him until it was quite dark and when she had to leave to go home, Johnny Silver Fox cried and cried for her as far as he could be heard.

## OUR LETTER BOX

### Appreciation

Livermore, California, December 10, 1926.

My dear Miss Latham:—

I wish to extend my thanks for the Christmas Kind Deeds Story you sent.

One of the boys who graduated last year kindly consented to read it at our Christmas entertainment last evening. The audience showed its intense interest and appreciation by perfect attention. I was afraid that it would be rather long but I soon discovered my mistake.

I only wish you could have been there to appreciate the power of such a beautiful story. Again, please accept my sincerest thanks.

With best wishes for a Merry Christmas to you and Mrs. Tebault, I am,

Yours respectfully,

Signed—LOIS E. JOHNSON.

Hayward, California, December 8, 1926.

Dear Miss Latham:—

The KIND DEEDS COUNCIL held its regular monthly meeting Tuesday, Dec. 6th. I read your kind letter to the members. Our Council is growing. Several representatives were present from the second and third grades. All the other members were present except Betty Anstey, and Albert De Costa came as her substitute.

The Council members reported many new members for the KIND DEEDS CLUB. They also reported that the children are beginning to plan their posters for the contest. Dorothy Clark from Room 5 of the B Street School said that the children from her room were going to give the birds a Christmas treat. They are going to scatter crumbs and tie food to the trees in their yards on Christmas morning.

Marjorie Oakes reported that Room 4 of the John Gamble School had made posters during the month. She brought one for you.

Several members reported that more bird houses had been made.

A great many kind deeds were reported: a few of them are: Ruth Strutz found a wounded bird. She picked it up and fed it until it was well. Then it flew away.

Norma Oliver helped a small boy across the street.

Herminia and Lucille Lawrence found a cat on the way to school. They kept it until they found the owner.

A cat had been hurt. Kenneth Whitengar took it home and gave up his meat for the cat.

Evangeline Sherwood saw some boys take a dog from a neighbor. She made them bring it back.

David Sherwood took a thorn out of a dog's foot.

Harry Adamson took care of a dog that had been shot. He fed the dog and washed its wound every day until it got well.

Joe Sedra helped an elderly lady carry her bundles.

Rosaline Caires gave a home to the little kitten that Miss Latham tried to catch the last time she was at Orchard Ward School.

Keith Anstey took matches away from two little boys.

The children of the Hayward School send best wishes to you and Mrs. Tebault for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

WILLIE MIRANDA, Secretary.

San Leandro, California, November 22, 1926.

Dear Kind Deeds Club:—

Our teacher has told us how you won your KIND DEEDS button, and I want to tell you of a kind deed I once did for a kitten.

There was a little kitten out in the street and a machine was coming toward it; I thought the kitten was not going to get out of the way so I ran out to help it but I was too late as the machine had run over one of the kitten's paws.

I took the kitten in my house and my Mother telephoned to the kitty doctor and he came from Oakland with things to fix the kitty's paw. When he left he said the kitty would soon be well. About ten months afterwards the kitty was all right. He is now a year old and is very well, but he never goes out in the street.

I am in the low fourth grade at the Washington School.

We enjoyed Miss Latham's stories and pictures, when she and her friends came to see us a few weeks ago, and I hope they will come again.

Sincerely yours,

BETTY LANDON.

