

Hettie La Greem and the Fox

Hettie La Greem is my very best friend.
No truer words could ever be said!
I admit that it's true, she would take to her bed,
Red bows taped to her elbows, a fox on her head,
Much to the distress of her Mummy, you see.

It was ever the case, perhaps ever shall be,
That the fox would climb nimbly as if down a tree.
The fox would descend from the head of my friend
And engage in a habit that Mummies despise –
Worse than tickling your goldfish or spilling on ties.
For the fox was an expert, an absolute wiz
At filling his pockets with things that weren't his –
Some coins and a pencil, a bottle of glue,
A small can of cat food, a tube of shampoo,
A skateboard, a hot dog, a tuba or two,
Three hair clips, a sneaker – but only the left.
His skill was uncanny, his fingers so deft,
But this was the story – it can't be denied –
His fingers were sticky, but he never lied.
If something went missing, one never need guess.
One would just ask the fox, and he'd always confess,
And quickly return it, no more and no less.

That was why Hettie's Mummy, despite all her doubt,
Allowed him to visit, for truth must come out!
At least, Hettie's Mummy wished that someday it would,
For the truth of the thing – and I can't say it's good –
You know, Hettie's my friend! I'd praise her to the skies!
But her Mummy thought Hettie was telling big lies!
Her Mummy said, "Lies, they start small, but no matter.
Yours always get bigger and taller and fatter."
Hettie's stories, it's true, were fast-growing and strange.
No matter the topic, her thoughts fit that range.

Why, she told me one time of a bad case of mange
On her darling pet turtle, Felicia Rosemary,
Whose shell one fine day grew remarkably hairy.
The turtle's odd hair was first blonde, and then red,

And a week after that, the poor turtle looked dead!
But before you cry out in surprise and dismay,
It turns out Hettie managed to quite save the day.
She rubbed down the turtle with Reptile Hair Cream,
And the turtle let out an incredible scream!
It wiggled its tail, and its shell hair fell off.
And the turtle, it burped, and it let out a cough,
And the next thing that happened was also quite weird:
Hettie said that the turtle then grew a green beard!

Oh! But, back to the fox, no, we can't forget him!
One day he decided, perhaps on a whim,
To work out an hour or two at the gym.
He tried every sport, and his little heart pounded,
But his skills were so great that all watched him, astounded
As he filled up his pockets, already quite brimming,
Adding baseballs, a gym bag, a noodle for swimming,
Two rackets, a whistle, a bottle of water,
A towel, a dumbbell, a small teeter totter.

Then he hurried to Hettie's, for she'd promised lunch,
And she always had something delicious to munch.
Hettie set out two drumsticks, three large rounds of cheese,
Biscuits with honey, a bowl of green peas,
Some carrots and celery sticks for good crunch,
Chocolate chip cookies, bananas, and punch.
The fox stuffed his pockets, as quick as you please,
With both of the drumsticks and all rounds of cheese,
The biscuits with honey, the bowl of green peas,
The carrots and celery sticks for good crunch.
Then he crammed in bananas, each one of the bunch,
Every last cookie, so tempting to munch,
And poured into his pockets a good bit of punch!
He put down the pitcher, then grabbed it instead.
Hettie lifted him up to the top of her head.
Then up creaking stairs the two of them fled.

Meanwhile, in the parlor, some friends and her Mummy
Had formed several teams and were playing gin rummy.
Of a sudden, they heard both a crack and a roar,
And it's lucky they ran all at once to the door

For the ceiling fell in, crashing over the floor,
Spreading junk of all manner and kind, and lots more!
The cards and card tables were mixed in there too,
Under coins and a pencil, a bottle of glue,
A small can of cat food, a tube of shampoo,
A skateboard, a hot dog, a tuba or two,
Three hair clips, a sneaker – but only the left –
A green-bearded turtle who looked quite bereft,
A tuft of blonde hair and another of red,
The crumpled headboard of my friend Hettie's bed,
A mattress, a quilt with a lilac lace trimming,
Three baseballs, a gym bag, a noodle for swimming,
Two rackets, a whistle, a bottle of water,
A towel, a dumbbell, a small teeter totter,
Two drumsticks, three crumbling great rounds of cheese,
Biscuits with veggie sticks, honey and peas,
A whole lot of cookies, some crumbly, some wet,
All the bananas, some bruising, I'd bet,
A pitcher affixed with some red bows and tape
And I do not know why, there was also a grape.
But right in the center, with a fox on her head,
Was Hettie, my friend. And her Mummy then said,
"Hettie, what happened? What did you do?"
Hettie looked down at her dusty right shoe,
Retaped a bow to her elbow too,
Reached up to pet the fox perched on her head.
"I don't know," was all that she said.
But the fox, he spoke up, as quick as a wink:
"It was overly full pockets, I think.
Too much weight in them, maybe, a bit of excess.
I'm sorry I've made such a terrible mess!"

The fox, Hettie tells me, returned, as was right,
All those things that he'd taken, sewed his pockets closed tight.
Not again will he take anything but what's his!
And that is simply the way that it is.
Hettie told me herself, as all honest friends do,
"Every word of this story is nothing but true!"

Hazard in a Contemplative Life

Contemplating Plato by the foxglove,
I feel a sudden slap from a stranger's black glove
Which he says is in defense of the honor of his love.

He's demanding satisfaction,
But I'm not of any faction
To engage in such an action.

I'm seldom problematic,
Oft retreat up to my attic.
When confronted, I am subject to a tic!

"Sir!" I say with indignation,
"Such behavior in this nation
Is something that surely we do shun!"

His response gives me a terror,
And I hope I am in error,
But the sound is something like a lion's roar.

What base and evil menace does that awful roar portend?
Before he makes it clearer, to my attic I must tend!
So I'm really very sorry, but this verse has reached its end!

Heresy Number One

If she was anything like me
I can't see Eve being formed
from some guy's rib.
How do you get the high cheekbones,
the strong jaw,
the shifting power of the pelvis
from a puny rib?
To say nothing of the soft tissues,
the skeptical eyes,
the encompassing heart --
All that from one of Adam's skinny little ribs?
My ass!
(like hers, I'd wager)
is more substantial
and sways to its own rhythm.