

The Fox-child and the River

“What are you so worried about?” said the howling moon to the fox-child. “Why do you suffer so? Why do you cry, and wail?”

“Because the sun might not come today!” shrieked the fox-child, far far below. “Because there might then be *snow*, or *wind*, or *rain* today then!”

“And so it shall be,” said the moon in its heaven. “So it shall be that you might see rain or snow – for the wind it does howl and the trees they do bend – but the sun does shine too, then, once and again.”

“I'd like to see it now, or tomorrow at least,” said the fox on its stump where it sat in a slump. “Suns should be shining, and beams should be glowing. I wish for warmth and the sun's gentle glow.”

“Gentle indeed, is not really the sun. Be wary your words, lest you try far too hard, to make that which is one, become that which is all. The moon and its beams, I, carry with me, a more gentle way than the blaring orb does. I shall not give you sunlight, but gentle guidance, perhaps. Yes, guidance perhaps, yes indeed.”

“Come back, oh sun,” cried the fox-child again. “Give me your warm and your rays. Fill me with light and the brightness of joy, forever, now starting today.”

“It is deaf to your cries!” shouted the moon in dismay, seeing this ignorant pup. “Can you not see it's the moon's time to shine, and that the sun, it will not come up?”

“But that does not stop me wanting the sun, from wanting its warmth and its rays. Wanting the sun and its beautiful rays, now and forever, beginning today. So should I not cry for it, while it is gone? Shall I not hold vigil today? For tomorrow in sunshine I'll play and I'll yelp, but for now... for now I will cry with the wind and the dark, till dawn comes again in the morn.”

“Why waste your time,” said the moon in disgust, “with these pitiful, mournful displays? Go, get things done, or else get to sleep, rather than pining away. The sun will be here, whether you pine or

no, so get thee away from this place. Go find a thing that is helpful to you, or else someone else who is stuck.”

“I suppose that I could,” said the fox-child in thought, “but I wonder what really I’ll do? Shall I track down lost children, alone in the dark? Or else listen to the heartbeats of trees? Maybe I should be quiet, and here now, just wait, and let my body and mind-self just be. But then *restless* am I, with *will* to be spent, and the time ticking ‘way one by one.”

“Fine, have your way,” said the moon in the sky, “find yourself something to do. I care not where you spend it, just don’t make so much noise! Some *do* enjoy quiet and peace.”

“I do like *peace*,” said the fox-child at once, still mulling over these thoughts. “But I can’t sit still forever, soaking in so much such ease, I must move around some, at once! Let me stir in the meadows, and dance in the streams – then maybe my cry will be ceased.”

“You can dance in the rivers and stir in the streams, but don’t do so with loudness unaltered. You make so much noise, the heavens they cringe, hearing your un-cordial displays.”

“I apologize, moon,” said the fox-child sincerely, and then, he just went on his way. But as he was playing, he started to wailing, and whiling the hours away.

Eventually, sitting, by the stream in a stupor, the fox-child wailed once again. But this time was different, the sun, it was rising, and it crowded his senses again.

“Ugh,” said the fox-child, “go away, you crowding sun, you’re taking up sensory space. I enjoy my indulgence in darkness and quiet, for there I can while my hours away.”

“Get up,” said the sun. “It is time to get into, the things for which this day was meant. Do not whine and collapse, do not cringe at the day, but get into those good things, at last.”

“Agh!” cried the fox-child, “The moon, it was right! I did waste my hours this day! I’m confused and perplexed, I’m lost and a mess, and the sunshine is too much for me, to even *want* it to stay!”

And the fox-child cried, by the riverbank dearly, for all he was missing and all he had lost. For even though it was only a day and a night, to him it was dire and chock full of cost.

“I’m sorry the moon, I’m sorry the sun, I am obviously a bad little child. I wanted to play and I wanted to dance, but now look at me, wasting away!”

And the water of the stream looked back at him, then, with kindly and most-wise old eyes. Her eyes knew of the fox-child and laughed with his laughter, and held no such judgment as he did for himself.

“Oh little one,” she said, “please, do not fret so much now, for tomorrow can be *so* filled with laughter. For now, rest your head, over there in the den, so that you can come back tomorrow, and dance. It’s alright to leave alone all the things in your life, to slink far away, and not stubbornly strive for a way of living and a condition of being, which is out of reach for the time and the position of life.”

“Okay,” said the fox-child. “I’ll take your advice, if only for the kindness you show.” And he slunk off away to the darkness of den, and slept away twenty-seven hours, and ten.

In his dreams he could see, the moon and the sun, fighting bitterly and brusquely in the sky. Their tempers did flare, their opinions were known, and battle lines, clearly, were drawn.

For the sun, it was better to dance and be seen, than to cower in darkness and quiet. For the moon, *he* shunned all activity, and thus, would rather exist in a place of passivity, calmness, and trust. For the moon he observed the world as it went, but the sun shined brilliantly, all the lighter. And each of them knew that *their* case was the best...

Except for the river, who went silently by them.

She sighed in the dream and kept to herself. And creatures like the fox-child came to drink from her side. She gave openly, endlessly, with welcoming kindness, giving each one their turn for that sustenance divine.

With that, the fox-child awoke in his darkest of dens, alone by himself in his thoughts. He listened and stirred, and he wondered, of course, about the state of the world left outside.

The sun, now, was setting, over off in its low place in the sky. And the moon it had risen, prematurely of course, to hover above – it could not be denied.

And so, with a little bit of nervousness, stirred by the dream of a conflict so dire, the fox-child watched warily overhead, with a small bit of dread, and arrived by the side of the stream.

There, others had gathered too, further off, and also across. Otters and bears and mosquitoes of course, as well as the squirrels and the beavers. All drank their fill, and left yet again, and the fox-child noted all this. They wanted a drink, so they took it and left, there wasn't much else to be said. Simple, simple things. Yet, for the fox-child, he wondered on the meaning of all that there was. For he had wandered off-course and then wandered back on, though even of that he was no longer sure.

“Sun?” he asked to the falling orb now, as it passed yet again out of sight. “What is the purpose, here, of my doings of the day, and why am I falling toward strife?”

The sun answered, in a far-off-sounding voice. “Life is what you make it. Isn't that just correct, of course?? I've got to just *shine*, and you've got to just *play*. There isn't much for it. Now, as you like it, good day!”

Of course, then he was gone, and now out of sight, flying below and away.

The fox-child sighed and looked up at the moon, flying so high up above. Another long day had gone by.

“I'm sorry, moon,” he said. “I've failed you and myself yet again.”

“You're not beholden to me,” said the faraway moon. “Yet your apology has well yet been noted. That said, you are better, and that much is welcome. You must do as you please once again.”

And the fox-child, for reasons he could not explain, sat by the river and cried. The tears ran past stones and over the rocks, welcomed in, by the river herself, yet again.

“Thank you, oh fox-child, for your most sincerest of tears. I have sustenance for you again. I see you are torn up by your thoughts and your fears, so rest here a while, and calm.”

“I’ve tried my dear best!” said the fox child in fright, indignant, distressed, and upset. “I tried to just live, I tried to just breathe, and yet here I am failing again!”

“I know,” said the river, “that tears are a failure, to you, or to your kind, yet again. Yet, let them fall, and yet, let them rest. For you are much more than a moment in time. For even if all that you are is yet now, there is not much of *that* you see now with your mind. So know then, right now, the *whole* fox-child you are, and return, yet again, to the knowing of things.”

Still teary-eyed, the fox-child remembered, the many days he’d spent laughing in spring. Time he spent playing, and chasing and running, time he had danced in the light of the moon. He remembered the laughing, the talking and playing, even with those who weren’t just himself. And though some had moved on, or made a new life their own, he still had continued alone.

Even so, the fox-child was not alone. He had the sun, the moon, and the stars. He had moments behind him, and moments before. And he had the company of a river, with kindness so dear. He had rest he could take, he had places to play, he had songs to sing and to dance to. And even more than that he had chances to cry, to think and to wonder... and call back to.

Yes, all of this was him, at least now all at once, for perhaps there was more yet to see. Yet to see now what he could, the happy and sad, the restful and willing, the lonely and glad – *that* was enough, at least for the fox-child, at least for the moment right now. And he walked beneath the moon on that glorious night, and talked with the river. About nothing at all.