

The Fox and the Wreck

By DraVulMep

As he lay there, Gary Little mulled things over in his mind.

He'd been on his regular patrol when he received an APB that an RV that had been driving erratically had fled when asked to pull over, and units were in pursuit. He was on his way to join the chase when he'd found out that the RV had lost its pursuers behind a level crossing. He'd realized that he was in a position to cut off the stolen RV, and found a position in front of a bridge over a small creek where he could lay down his spike strip. He'd laid it so that the RV would pass over the spikes and road to the cruiser's left.

Stupid rookie error, he thought. He should've laid the spikes down over the bridge, so that the RV would have no choice but to go over them.

Gary then remembered seeing the RV barreling towards him. To his shock, the RV didn't stop, or even slow down. It just swerved to the left, where he had retreated after laying down the spikes, hoping to evade Gary's cruiser and the spikes by cutting across the shoulder. The last thing he remembered was trying to dodge the RV, but it just kept coming until Gary could make out the expression on the driver's face. He tried to jump out of the way, but it was too late.

Next thing he knew, he was lying in the stream, next to the bridge, feeling nothing but pain.

His walkie-talkie kept crackling, demanding a response, the voice becoming more and more desperate. He would've responded, but he found he couldn't move his arms, and he couldn't quite get words out of his mouth.

Lord knows how long he'd been lying there. It was a quiet road, so it wasn't likely that any passing motorists would help. By this point, he'd resigned himself to bleeding out in this spot.

Just then...

"What on earth is all that racket?!" growled a strange voice from the woods on the other side of the creek. Gary didn't have it in him to turn his head to see where the voice was coming from, and his vision was blurry..

Then the voice turned to shock and alarm. "Oh, *no!* Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!"

Sound of something running through the stream. Gary then felt something wet touching his face and chest, prodding experimentally. Must've been some passerby walking his dog. Rather a far out place to be walking one's dog though...

“Ooooooh, I’m gonna hate myself in the morning for this, but...!” the voice said. Funny. It sounded awfully close. Not like someone standing over him. Almost like it came from... the dog?!

“Let’s turn this thing off. I’ll need to concentrate!”

The demands for a response from the walkie-talkie ceased.

Then a shape loomed over Gary and weight pressed down on his chest. The shape had pointed ears. At first he thought it was the dog. Then his vision cleared and he realized that there was no dog. Now he was looking at a red-orange fox, its forepaws placed on his bleeding chest, concentrating intently on his wounds.

“Dear, oh dear! Why is it that I keep having to rescue you humans?!” No mistaking it, that voice definitely came from the fox. “No other way for it! I’ve restored your eyesight and speech for now. I’ll need to hear some things from you if I’m to do this!”

At first Gary thought he was hallucinating. He closed his eyes to see if the talking fox was there when he opened them again.

“No! Don’t go under!” yipped a voice. Gary opened his eyes again. Now the fox was up close and personal, looking him directly in the eye. “Talk to me! It’ll keep you awake! I need to know more about you anyway. For starters, what’s your name?”

Gary wasn’t sure what was going on. Half out of reflex, he willed his mouth to move.

“C-Constable Gary Little, RCMP K Division.”

The fox then closed its eyes, then seemed to mutter a few things at a speed too fast to make out.

“Okay, your *full* name?”

“...”

“Talk to me, Gary! Talk to me!”

“Gary Carver Little...”

The fox then did more of that high-speed muttering.

This continued as the fox asked Gary more about himself, where he lived, where his family lived, if he was dating anyone, that sort of thing. Gary responded to each question honestly, and then the fox would do more of that high-speed muttering. It sounded like he was reciting the complete works of Shakespeare in three-seconds!

As this happened, Gary’s vision cleared even more, as did his mind. He reached to shield the sun from his eyes. It was then that he realized, something was wrong with his arm. It had grown a coat of fuzzy, orange-brown fur, with white hands, and his fingernails had turned black and had expanded to cover his entire fingertips.

Gary screamed and reared up, staring at his arm.

"Calm down, Gary!" said the fox. Gary's arm hadn't been the only thing that had changed. The fox was now in a human-shaped form, complete with jeans, a collared shirt, and a vest, and was using his now-human-shaped arms to pin Gary onto the ground. "I'll need you to keep still in order to heal!"

"Wh-what the hell are you?!"

"Right now, I'm the only thing keeping you alive. Now, *breathe*."

"Y-you're turning me into a... a... *thing*!"

"With wounds this bad, I'll need to conduct alterations to make sure it heals in time. Don't worry, you'll change back once the process is complete."

"B-b-but..." Gary then realized he wasn't feeling so much pain anymore. His altered hands flew to his chest. The blood was still there, but he wasn't feeling any wounds under his uniform. In fact, it felt like he had grown extra body hair underneath it.

"Sorry about that," said the fox. It closed its eyes, then did more of that high-speed muttering. The blood vanished.

"What was that?!" said Gary.

"I'm editing astral data."

Gary stared blankly.

The fox sighed. "I'm warping reality."

Gary's eyes widened.

"Just a teensy bit! I don't want anyone panicking when they see what's become of you."

The fox then turned its attention to Gary's legs. It... no... *he* closed his eyes, did a little more muttering, then Gary felt a tingling sensation as his boots vanished, exposing his bare feet to the air before something utterly unbelievable happened to them.

Gary's legs reshaped themselves; calves and thighs shortening, more of that brown fur growing over them. His feet grew longer, with the second-smallest toes on each foot shrinking into nothing. His big toes and pinky toes seemed to move onto the underside of his foot, and the two remaining toes on each foot grew to make up for the other toes' absence. The nails on all of the remaining toes turned black before completely encapsulating each toe.

Hooves. Gary now had hooves. The whole thing had been absolutely painless, though it looked like it shouldn't have.

"Like I said," explained the fox, "your human self would've died if I hadn't acted. It needs time to heal, so I'm going to give you a little vacation from your humanity while that happens."

"You're turning me into some kinda deer?" said Gary.

"A whitetail to be exact, and like I said, once your human body has had time to heal, you'll turn back into a human automatically. Still, I'm going to let you keep *some* of your humanity so you can function in a world of opposable thumbs. Now could you turn over?"

The fox then rolled Gary onto his stomach. The life-threatening wounds were gone, but it hurt when Gary felt pressure on his chest.

"Ow!"

"My apologies." said the fox, "I let you keep some bruising. I figured that it'd look suspicious if you came out of *that* wreck unscathed."

Gary then felt the area above his buttocks be exposed to the air briefly. He looked over his shoulder as he saw a growth extend through the newly made hole in his pants. He could feel it was an extension of his spine as it suddenly puffed up into a short, cervine tail.

"You should be able to stand now..." said the fox, helping Gary to his feet- no, to his *hooves*. Gary looked down at them. He was now standing on what had once been the balls of his feet.

"This is crazy..." said Gary, raising a hoof.

"No, Gary. This is magic with a few extras." It was then that Gary noticed that the fox had four tails wafting behind him. "Now, you were telling me about how you grew up in Halifax. That's a long way from here, isn't it?"

Gary then remembered that the fox had asked him somewhat personal questions. Out of panic and rage, Gary's hands flew for his gun, but the unfamiliar experience of "hoof-fingers" startled him, and he dropped it. Before he could pick it up, the fox literally pounced on it.

"Whoa! No need for violence, *please!* This thing probably won't be able to kill me, but I'd rather not experience getting shot." he said, ejecting the gun's magazine and handing the emptied weapon back to the bemused Mountie.

"Why were you asking me those questions?!" demanded Gary.

"As I said, I'm editing astral data. I'm reshaping your form to save you, so I need to help you reshape your life accordingly. In order to do that, I'll need to know what needs to be edited. Now, I *could* read your mind, but *I* am an honorable fox, so I'll just ask nicely. Now *breathe in...*!"

The fox suddenly put its hand-paws on Gary's shoulders. Gary gasped. The fox then covered his nose and mouth.

"...and breathe out..." the fox removed his paw from Gary's face. As Gary exhaled, everything in his face shifted. His nose and mouth exploded in front of him, ballooning outward into a black-tipped snout. His ears grew and perked upwards, now ending in points. The brown fur crept up, encapsulating his entire head, and a bizarre

tingling sensation came over the top of his head. He reached up and felt what could only be a pair of antlers.

"There! That's finished the physical changes. Now how about those life changes, Constable?" said the fox, taking a step back.

Gary couldn't believe what had happened to him. His ears twitched every which way. His nostrils flared open and shut. His fingers reached into his mouth to find differently shaped teeth. He looked at his rear, and found that now his uniform had a hole to accommodate his tail, as if it had been made that way. He looked to where his cap now lay after the fall. He tried putting it on, and found that somehow it fit amongst his antlers.

"Impressed with my work on the uniform?" said the fox, "That's what I'm essentially doing to your life. This way, Donna won't go screaming about a 'deer-man' when she sees you."

"How'd you know about-" Gary cut himself off when he realized he'd told the fox about his long-distance girlfriend himself.

"Now why'd you leave Halifax?"

"I..." Gary was surprised by the fox's earnest face, as if he was just chatting to an old friend in a bar. He then remembered how the fox had been in such a rush to come to him when he was bleeding by the creek. It was then that it truly came to Gary; that fox had saved his life.

Gary gave in. "I left Halifax 'cause city life just felt too cramped for me. I wanted to get out in the great outdoors. I didn't want to be a lawyer like Dad, but I realized I'd learned a thing or two about law by osmosis from him, so I figured, why not join the RCMP? I still Skype with my parents and sister from time to time."

"That's more like it!" said the fox, taking a break to mutter a little more, "...and that *should* finish the lifestyle changes! D'you like it out here in the mountains?"

"I'd say so-"

Suddenly the fox doubled over.

"Are you alright?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. It's just that between changing you, adjusting your lifestyle, and slowing down time, I'm using up a lot of energy."

"Slowing down time?!"

"Yes, you're probably wondering why none of your fellow officers are coming for you. I had to make sure we weren't interrupted. I'm only slowing it down by a two-fifths of a second, but even teensy bits of reality-warping take it out of me! *Ughn!*"

Suddenly, Gary's longer ears picked up the sound of the creek running a little bit faster.

"You're a particularly nasty example because I essentially had to give you a bit of my powers to make you seem normal to the people around you," panted the fox, as if he'd just run a marathon.

"So, they'll see me as a human still?"

"No, they'll see you as a deer. They just won't think anything of it."

Gary felt his antler again. "You know, I have to ask, why a deer and not a moose or a beaver?"

"Why those?"

"'Cause I'm a Mountie?"

"Would being turned into a beaver or a moose be advantageous to a Mountie?"

"Uh... well... I'd just look the part is all!"

"You humans...!" said the fox, shaking his head, then talking faster. "Anyway, time's running normally now, so I'll be quick. Any clothes you try to put on will automatically adjust to your new form, but I'm not sure if shoes will adapt properly (they're overrated anyway). Continuing the edit takes a lot of energy, so once in a while, you may find yourself feeling hungrier than normal. Once you turn back to human, any photos or drawings made of you while you were transformed will remain of a deer, but the edits *should* continue to apply to them. Also, stick to plants. You're a vegetarian now."

"Ummm... okay. How long will this last?"

"Given the extent of your injuries, six or seven weeks at the outset."

"*Six weeks?!?*"

"Would you rather bleed out?! Anyway, if anything else comes up, you can reach me at this number." the fox jotted something down on a sheet of paper, then handed it to Gary. Gary looked at it.

"Wait, your actual name is Fox?!"

"Yes."

"Just 'Fox'?!"

"*Yes!* Now give me your number, email address, or whatnot in case I need to check up on you! *Hurry!*"

Gary reluctantly gave Fox his number and email address.

"*Little!*"

A voice had rung out from the woods near the bridge. Gary recognized it as that of Corporal McCutcheon. Fox quickly dashed off, turning back into a regular, four-legged fox as he vanished into the woods on the other side of the creek.

Corporal McCutcheon was on the bridge now. "Little!" He shouted down at him. "Y'alright?!"

"I-I'm fine, sir!" said Gary, nervously, clambering up the side of the embankment that he had tumbled down earlier. McCutcheon helped pull him up.

"What happened to you?! We were worried when you didn't respond!"

"Took a nasty spill, sir." said Gary, lying through his flattened teeth, "The suspect came right at me. I jumped to get out of the way and fell in the creek right on the back of my head. Lost consciousness for a while."

"Yikes!" muttered McCutcheon, looking down at the stream, "I'm surprised you didn't lose an antler!"

Gary chuckled nervously. So *this* was what Fox had meant when he said nobody would find it odd that he was a walking, talking deer.

Still, Gary was eager to change the subject. "Did you get the suspect?"

"Yep!" said McCutcheon, "Would you believe it, he fled because his license was suspended! His run-in with you must've slowed him down. He probably didn't get out of *that* unscathed!"

McCutcheon gestured to the front end of Gary's cruiser, which had a nasty dent on its front left fender, and there were tire marks on the road indicating the car had been abruptly shifted. There were also scrapes on the end of one of the bridge's guardrails.

"More importantly, are *you* alright?" said McCutcheon.

"I'm just fine, sir!"

"Little, you just took a tumble right onto your eight-point head!"

"Really, sir! I'm alright! It's just a few bumps!"

"I'm gonna radio for someone to get you to hospital while I take care of your car!"

"But--"

"No buts, Little! Siddown!"

Gary reluctantly got on the passenger-side seat of McCutcheon's nearby cruiser as the Corporal used the radio. It was only then that he finally got a good look at his face in McCutcheon's rearview mirror. Sure enough, he was an eight-point buck. His eyes still seemed human. His cap looked incongruous amidst his antlers, but it still stayed on somehow. He'd have to remember to get a look at himself in a full-length mirror the first chance he got.

Gary then put his head back in the seat and thought about what he'd just been through. He soon heard a rumbling from his belly. Guess Fox wasn't kidding about the hunger. He'd have to remember to call that number, just to see what other side effects

there were, and ask how on earth Fox had changed him. Still, he'd have to get a bit more experience in this anthropomorphic deer body to really know how well the veil was working.

On that note, what did it mean to be a deer, anyway? Gary imagined it was pretty basic. *"I mean, deer eat plants, they're fast enough to run from predators, and they occasionally use their antlers to get out of problems. What more do I have to know about them?"*

"...and get him a salad before he has to eat dandelions from the side of the road, will ya?" said McCutcheon into his radio, "I can hear his stomachs rumbling from here!"

Stomachs?!