

The Fifth Tail

Story By Andrew Pringle

At first, it was my destiny to become more than the dog I had been born as. It was about collecting tails as I learned important lessons, and with one made me different and gave me more abilities. I'd already collected four, and I'd learned many important lessons along the way. So far, I'd learned to outsmart humans and dogs. I'd also learned what it was like to be a dog, and how dogs and humans are sometimes similar. I had more lessons to learn and more powers to gain, but nothing prepared me for this one.

Since gaining the fourth tail, I'd begun to feel strange. I'd woken up many times from a nap or sleep to find myself with human hands. I tell you, that's like I'm a dog. You just supposed the four hands are? If they are, I'm not just any old dog. I do have four tails after all, and I'm getting smarter by the day.

My hands came in useful sometimes. I didn't always have them, but I found myself running around in the upright position sometimes. It felt very odd to be like the two-legged humans that wandered aimlessly around the forest. Running upright began to feel normal though, and I enjoyed the use of hands. I found I could open things. I could climb trees. I could do all manner of things I'd never thought about before, and this was important.

These new human abilities made me want to explore the nearby village again. I could remember the last time I'd gone there, how I'd taught the boys that I was not so different from humans after all. I wondered what I would learn this time, but mostly I hoped they had more chickens. You see, humans and foxes alike can't get enough chicken. The only difference is that humans like theirs cooked.

So I walked to town, knowing that, right I'd walked into town, keeping my head down through the hedgerows that bounded a ranch house on the edge of the village. Once there, I decided to knock it to make sure no-one was around, and then I went right to the door, only discovering too late that there were no dogs inside or out. I might be getting cleverer and getting smarter, but I didn't want to play with dogs any more than I had to.

When I could hear and smell that no-one was home, I walked up onto the front porch and tried the door. I landed on my poor ruffed toes something resembling a hand, and I tried the doorknob. It was locked! Fortunately, the windows were out. That was foolish of them, wasn't it?