

I froze when I stepped out of the coop — half in fear, half in amazement.

An animal I had never seen before stared at me. It looked a lot like a dog, but it had to be something else. It wasn't very big — the size of a Scottish terrier like our neighbor in Orlando had. It was a bright brown color — almost orange. The end of its tail was white, just like its chest. All four paws were black.

There were two things about this animal I would never forget. It had the bluest eyes I had ever seen, like the ocean. And it was smiling at me.



I bent down slowly and picked up a stick. I wasn't afraid of the animal. I had always wanted my own dog and this was my chance. I tossed the stick to the side and shouted, "Fetch!"

The animal jumped like it was going to run away. Then it looked over at the stick and back at me. I don't want to sound like a crazy person, but I'm telling you this creature shook its head no at me.

"What are you?" I whispered. "You're not a dog. If you were then you'd have a collar." I took a step toward the animal with my hands out to show I wasn't a threat. Something told me this creature could be my friend. "This is nuts. You've got to be some kind of dog. Where's your collar?"

I stopped a few feet in front of the animal I hoped was a dog. It stared at me with its blue eyes, and then looked around like it wanted to make sure no one else was watching. It stood up slowly on its two hind legs — just like a human! What it did next took my breath away.



“I don’t know,” the animal said like a child. “Where’s *your* collar?”

I fell flat on my butt and scooted backwards with my hands. My great-grandma had said Old Nelly talked to her. Now that dog-like animal was talking to me. Maybe that land made people crazy.

“Jonah!” my mom screamed from the back door. “Where are you? You better not be in the outhouse!”

I couldn’t move anymore when the animal walked up to me like a human. “I’m a fox,” he said. “Don’t tell anyone you saw me here.” It winked at me and raced toward the fence. I stood up and watched in disbelief as it jumped over the fence and ran out of the yard.