

## **BLAZE THE BORDER COLLIE *and* THE FOX CUB**

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"I'm going for a ride down to Rainbow Creek," announced Christie one afternoon. The 14 year old whistled to Blaze, who came bounding over eagerly. Ashleigh nodded. "Ok, but don't be too long."

Christie grabbed her jacket and raced Blaze to her new dirtbike.

At the creek, Christie left her dirtbike in the shade and watched Blaze swimming out to fetch the sticks she threw. The air was fairly cool, but Blaze obviously didn't care that the water was freezing. After a while, Christie called Blaze. "Mum said not to be out too long," she reminded the wet border collie as he came over with his stick, "We'd better head back." Blaze dropped the stick at her feet. "Ok, fine, one more." Christie threw the stick and it landed out of sight in the trees. Blaze ran after it, and Christie headed back to her dirtbike. She was about to get on when suddenly Blaze was beside her, barking frantically, getting in front of her and barking some more. "What's wrong, Blaze?" asked Christie, following him into the trees. He led her to a tree with a hollow in the bottom of it. Christie looked in it. Curled up in the hollow was a fox cub. It shivered and raised its head, its dark eyes looking fearfully at Christie. "Oh, look at it, Blaze, he's so skinny." Christie reached in and picked up the little thing, tucking it inside her jacket. Blaze barked again and trotted off. Christie followed. "Now what?" She smelled something awful just as they rounded a corner, and stopped just in time to avoid standing on the body of a dead fox. She stepped back, holding her breath. The fox's paw was caught in one of those terrible bear traps. "The cub's mother?" Christie asked herself. Blaze whined. "Alright, let's take the little guy home and see if we can get him something to eat." Christie was more than happy to get away from the smell!

At home, Ashleigh called the vet while Robert got some warm blankets for the fox cub. It was weak and skinny. There was no telling how long its mother had been caught for, but it had to be at least three days. Tom, the vet, checked over the little thing and gave Christie some special milk for it. He said it would need feeding every two hours around the clock until it regained its strength, which could take two or more days. Christie felt tired just thinking about it! That night, as she fed the fox cub, she realized the poor thing didn't even have a proper name. She'd just been calling it the fox cub since she'd first found it. "I'll call you Fox. It's shorter than The Fox Cub, and it'll be ok for you even when you grow up." Fox, as the little cub was now called, didn't seem to care. He carried on sucking the teat, his little eyes closed.

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