



CHAPTER SEVEN – THE CHASE

The serial story “Fly-In Fox Tales” continues each Monday in the Accent section. It’s written by local author Marian Strong Tomblin and illustrated by local artist Tom Bull.

The story so far: Wildfires force a family of humans and a family of foxes from their homes in Central Florida. While adjusting to life in their new homes, Rico and Kit come face-to-face with some of the dangers in the woods.

Mrs. Rodriguez looked up from the sink. She wiped her soapy hands on a nearby towel and called softly to Rico, “Take your sister with you, okay?”

Rico frowned; he was headed back into the Spruce Creek Preserve where he had seen the stranger in the canoe. Marisol, an enthusiastic four-year-old, would spoil everything crashing through the woods.

He opened his mouth to complain, but shut it when his mother reached up and wiped her forehead wearily with the back of her hand. Living at Aunt Carmen’s house was hard on everybody. “Okay.” He sighed. “Where is she?”

“Here!” Marisol ran up and pulled Rico toward the front door. “Take me to see some airplanes!”

“Remember the rules,” Mrs. Rodriguez called after them. “Stay off the taxiways and runways!”

Spruce Creek Fly-In could have passed for any other upscale neighborhood except for the metal buildings that looked like oversized garages, located in many of the yards. The structures looked tall enough and wide enough to hold two school buses side by side, but they were intended for aircraft. Some of the hangar doors were open. Marisol skipped down the path pointing out the airplanes. “There’s one! There’s two! One’s yellow! One’s blue!” she sang at the top of her lungs.

Rico hung his head and hoped no one noticed his silly little sister.

A soft whir came up behind him. “Good morning,” a voice said.

Rico stepped aside and waved to a man on a bicycle. The man grinned as he passed Rico’s singing sister, and continued on his way.

Kit and his sisters were sunning themselves near the same path. The sister closest to him dabbed her paw

against her brother’s snout. “You’re it.”

“Nuh-uh.” Kit pounced on her head. “You’re it!”

Another sister joined in. “You’re both it!” she cried.

The young foxes tussled in the grass, nipping and growling with delight. They had become so accustomed to the sound of aircraft taking off and landing on the nearby runway that they didn’t pause when a small jet touched down and taxied past. They did notice, however, when the man on the bicycle pedaled by on the path.

Kit hunched down in the grass. “What’s that?” he whispered.

His littlest sister, still caught up in their game, darted toward the cyclist. “You’re it!” she called to him.

The man saw the fox and swerved; Kit’s sister followed him.

The man regained control of his bicycle; the fox fell behind him.

Kit sat up. He called sternly to his sister, “Come back!”

But she just ran faster.

Rico pointed across the runway. “Look at that!” he said to Marisol.

His sister laughed. “He’s playing a game with his dog,” she said.

Rico watched the man on the bicycle grin over his shoulder at the small, reddish animal running behind him. When the man zigged, the animal zigged; when he zagged, the animal zagged. But, Rico realized, narrowing his eyes: “That’s not a dog! That’s a fox!”

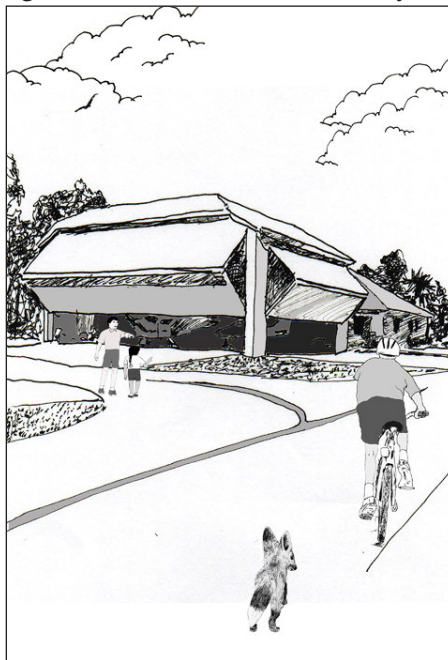
“¡Un zorro!” Marisol exclaimed. She began to run toward the pair. “I want to pet it!”

Rico caught his sister’s arm and yanked her back from the edge of the taxiway. “You’ve got to be careful around here. Or you’re gonna get hurt!”

When Kit finally caught up with his sister, he pushed her back onto the greenbelt. “You’ve got to be careful,” he growled. “Or you’re gonna get hurt!”

Next Week: More Adventures

Author Marian Strong Tomblin has also written *The Mystery at Hotel Ormond*, *Where’s Capone’s Cash?* and *Manatee Moon*, all selected for community-wide literacy campaigns. Award-winning illustrator Tom Bull currently teaches art at Mainland High School; his artwork is exhibited by Very Special Arts Volusia. “Fly-In Fox Tales” is presented by The News-Journal’s Newspapers in Education program.



Newspaper activities – things to think about and do

1. In this chapter, there are many references to outdoor activities popular in Florida. Clip from The News-Journal photos and articles about such activities and arrange them into a montage. Conduct a survey of students in your school to find out the most popular outdoors activities. Create a graph or chart of your findings and share it with your class. (PE.A.3.2.3)

2. In this chapter Marisol uses the Spanish word for “fox.” Using the weekly TV Journal or daily TV guide, find a program in Spanish. As you watch it, write down 5 words in Spanish that are new to you. Find their meanings by using an online translation site, asking a Spanish-speaking friend, or using a Spanish dictionary. Create a crossword puzzle with the words and their meanings and share it with friends and classmates. (FL.C.2.2.3)

For more information and fun activities, go to www.nieworld.com

