

### ***It Is Only Fitting***

A few years after Angela's death, Tammy, the rabbit, became more and more restless. She carried out her days as usual; she made new friends; and she even learned new cooking and food combination skills. And yet for some reason she felt that there was something missing in her heart. It was as if her spirit was not fulfilled.

One warm spring night, she decided that it was time for her to learn Angelo's new way of healing, "Perhaps helping others will help me feel fulfilled," she said to herself.

A few months later, when Tammy felt the chilly wind in her bones, she said goodbye to Emma, the deer, and Sally, the fox, and went searching for Angelo.

Tammy did not know where Angelo was or how to find him, the only thing she did know was that when she was mourning for Angela, she frequently visited the little stream deep in the forest and there she would meet Angelo. So she walked to the stream, sat at her usual spot, closed her eyes and thought of Angelo. She started talking as if he was in front of her, just like a few years ago, but Angelo did not appear.

When Tammy finally gave up and opened her eyes, a little baby fox was staring at her.

"Hi," Tammy said, "What can I do for you?"

With a smile that melted Tammy's heart, the fox replied, "I, I, um, I had a dream that Angelo would be here to heal me. But in my dream *he* is a *deer*. Are you Angelo?"

"Oh no, I'm no Angelo," Tammy said with a laugh, "but I also came to this stream a few years ago when my best friend Angela died. Angelo helped me then. What is it that troubles you?" Tammy thought the least she could do was to listen to the fox.

"Well, my best friend Richard decided that he wants to be a vegetarian and we all disagree with him. I feel as if I had lost him as a friend. You know foxes are not vegetarians, we are just not born that way. It is wrong to be one...." The fox cub went on and was soon sobbing.

"So what you are really saying is that you do not like his choice of food, and you all want to make him change, to be just like any other fox. Is that it?" Tammy asked gently.

After a look of shock and a long silence, the fox said, "I guess. But I'm, um, we are convinced that we are right. And he just won't listen to anyone. He is also convinced that not eating chickens or any other meat makes him happy. He claims that he enjoys vegetables and we should leave him alone."

Tammy didn't quite know what to say anymore. So she told the fox her own story, starting from how she met Angela, to how they established their own family with another fox and a deer, to how after Angela died, and to how Angelo helped her heal....

The little fox became pensive after hearing Tammy's life experience.

When the night fell upon them, both Tammy and the baby fox went to sleep by the stream. The next morning, when the warm sunlight shone upon them, Tammy woke up to the little fox's eager words, "I think I understand what you were trying to say yesterday. We really have no reason to fear that our whole pack will become 'un-fox-like' just because one of us is a vegetarian. After all, Richard is not forcing anyone to be like him and we have no reason to force him to be like the rest of us. Each of us should be able to choose what we want to eat."

The baby fox walked away with a kind of calmness that touched Tammy deeply.

Day after day, Tammy stayed by the stream. Night after night, she closed her eyes and talked to Angelo in her mind. Even though she felt as if she could see Angelo in her mind's eye, Angelo did not come to Tammy in person. Yet one after another, beasts and fowls of all kinds came to visit Tammy. They brought their problems to her and she listened to them just like Angelo had listened to her. She felt content in some ways, "At least I am doing what Angelo did for me and I suppose this is one way of meeting him and learning his way of healing," she comforted herself.

Tammy settled into listening and healing in Angelo's way. After a while she even developed her own method—she would sometimes have a group of animals together and they would learn to listen to each other, without preconceived notions of how the other should feel, or do.

Years went by. Life by the stream became a fulfilling life for Tammy.

One day, in the middle of one of her group sessions, a deer approached the outer edge of the circle and sat down. For some reason, Tammy took one look at him and proclaimed, "Oh, my dear, you are Angelo!"

Nodding his head slightly, Angelo silently sat with the group until the session was over. He then took Tammy aside and said that he needed to talk to her. Tammy was stunned. "But Angelo," she cried, "You are the inventor of this new way of healing. You do not need me. You are the one who healed me, remember?"

Angelo smiled and then replied gently, "Yes, I started this way of healing. And if I truly believe the method, it is only fitting for me to go through it as well."

Not fully comprehending what Angelo meant, and yet at the same time knowing that somehow he was right, Tammy replied, "What has been bothering you, Angelo?"

And that was how Angelo's own healing began.