

# The Hard Truth

Legs stinging, heart pumping, she bolted down the side street, clutching in her palm the treasure she knew was rightfully hers. Just because her grandmother had passed away didn't give them the right to take all her things for their own gain! She spotted an owl whooshing past the building beside her and jerked to the side so it wouldn't catch a glimpse of her, though she knew she wouldn't get caught. She'd been planning this for too long.

She forced her lungs to stop heaving, though she desperately needed a breath from her mad dash, and sidled into the nearby shop where everyone had gathered. She silently slipped inside and to the back counter where the owner was.

“Hello, girl,” he said, recognizing her.

“Hello,” she said nicely, smiling on the inside from her success. “Sir, I just saw people robbing the antique shop down the road. Someone must catch the culprits!”

He became angry. “You are absolutely right!” he said. “I won't stand for this in my town!” He and a few other men ran out the door after the imaginary thieves. The girl slipped through behind them, grinning under her cloak at this clever diversion she had created.

She walked through the dusty street on her way home, with cute little shops on either side of her. As she was about to turn left on a fork in the road, she spotted one of the grimy foxes that wandered the town. She watched it sidle to the back of the baker's shop, steal a loaf of bread laid out to cool, and quickly dart back to the forest with it. She shook her head at the fox, and kept walking. Suddenly the owl was back, perched on a post next to her.

“You resent the fox?” The owl asked.

“Of course. He is a dirty trickster,” she responded.

“Perhaps you are too hasty in judging others before you have a good look at yourself,”  
the owl hooted softly, and flew away.

She watched it angrily until it was out of sight, but knew what the owl had meant. She was much like the fox herself, even if she thought she deserved this trinket held tight in her hand. Tears filled her eyes. She didn't need this, and she no longer wanted it. Her grandma wouldn't want this either.

She sighed at herself, and slowly began to walk back the way she'd run before, pushing her hood off and readying herself for what she knew she had to do.