

= The Fox and the Hound (novel) =

The Fox and the Hound is a 1967 novel written by American novelist Daniel P. Mannix and illustrated by John Schoenherr . It follows the lives of Tod , a red fox raised by a human for the first year of his life , and Copper , a half @-@ bloodhound dog owned by a local hunter , referred to as the Master . After Tod causes the death of the man 's favorite hound , man and dog relentlessly hunt the fox , against the dual backdrops of a changing human world and Tod 's normal life in hunting for food , seeking a mate , and defending his territory . As preparation for writing the novel , Mannix studied foxes , both tame and wild , a wide variety of hunting techniques , and the ways hounds appear to track foxes , seeking to ensure his characters acted realistically .

The novel won the Dutton Animal Book Award in 1967 , which resulted in its publication on September 11 that year by E.P. Dutton . It was a 1967 Reader 's Digest Book Club selection and a winner of the Athenaeum Literary Award . It was well received by critics , who praised its detail and Mannix 's writing style . Walt Disney Productions purchased the film rights for the novel when it won the Dutton award , though did not begin production on an adaptation until 1977 . Heavily modified from the source material , Disney 's The Fox and the Hound was released to theaters in July 1981 and became a box office success .

= = Plot = =

Copper , a bloodhound crossbred , was once the favorite among his Master 's pack of hunting dogs in a rural country area . However , he now feels threatened by Chief , a younger , faster Black and Tan Coonhound . Copper hates Chief , who is taking Copper 's place as pack leader . During a bear hunt , Chief protects the Master when the bear turns on him , while Copper is too afraid of the bear to confront him . The Master ignores Copper to heap praise on Chief and Copper 's hatred and jealousy grow .

Tod is a red fox kit , raised as a pet by one of the human hunters who killed his mother and litter mates . Tod initially enjoys his life , but when he reaches sexual maturity he returns to the wild . During his first year , he begins establishing his territory , and learns evasion techniques from being hunted by local farm dogs . One day , he comes across the Master 's house and discovers that his presence sends the chained pack of dogs into a frustrated frenzy . He begins to delight in taunting them , until one day when Chief breaks his chain and chases him . The Master sees the dog escape and follows with Copper . As Chief skillfully trails the fox , Tod flees along a railroad track while a train is approaching , waiting to jump to safety until the last minute . Chief is killed by the train .

With Chief buried and Master crying over a dead dog he trains Copper to ignore all foxes except for Tod . Over the span of the two animals ' lives , man and dog hunt the fox , the Master using over a dozen hunting techniques in his quest for revenge . With each hunt , both dog and fox learn new tricks and methods to outsmart each other , Tod always escaping in the end . Tod mates with an older , experienced vixen who gives birth to a litter of kits . Before they are grown , the Master finds the den and gasses the kits to death . That winter , the Master sets out leg hold traps , which Tod carefully learns how to spring , but the vixen is caught and killed . In January , Tod takes a new mate , with whom he has another litter of kits . The Master uses a " still hunting " technique , in which he sits very quietly in the wood while playing a rabbit call to draw out the foxes . With this method , he kills the kits ; then by using the sound of a wounded fox kit , he is also able to draw out and kill Tod 's mate .

As the years pass , the rural area gives way to a more urbanized setting . New buildings and highways spring up , more housing developments are built , and the farmers are pushed out . Though much of the wildlife has left and hunting grows increasingly difficult , Tod stays because it is his home range . The other foxes that remain become unhealthy scavengers , and their natures change ? life @-@ bonds with their mates are replaced by promiscuity , couples going their separate ways once the mating act is over . The Master has lost most of his own land , and the only dog he owns now is Copper . Each winter they still hunt Tod , and in an odd way he looks forward to it as the only aspect of his old life that remains .

The Master spends most of his time drinking alcohol , and people begin trying to convince him to move into a nursing home , where no dogs are allowed . One summer , an outbreak of rabies spreads through the fox population . After one infected fox attacks a group of human children , the same people approach the Master and ask his help in killing the foxes . He uses traps and poison to try to kill as many foxes as possible ; however , the poison also kills domestic animals . After a human child dies from eating it , the humans remove all of the poison , then the Master organizes a hunt in which large numbers of people line up and walk straight into the woods , flushing out foxes to be shot . The aging Tod escapes all three events , as well as an attempt at coursing him with greyhounds .

One morning , after Tod 's escape from the greyhounds , the Master sends Copper on the hunt . After he picks up the fox 's trail , Copper relentlessly pursues him throughout the day and into the next morning . Tod finally drops dead of exhaustion , and Copper collapses on top of him , close to death himself . The Master nurses Copper back to health , and both enjoy their new popularity , but after a few months the excitement over Copper 's accomplishment dies down . The Master is left alone again , and returns to drinking . He is once again asked to consider living in a nursing home , and this time he agrees . Crying , he takes his shotgun from the wall , leads Copper outside , and pets him gently before ordering him to lie down . He covers the dog 's eyes as Copper licks his hand trustingly .

= = Development = =

Desiring a realistic depiction of vulpine behavior and habits , Mannix spent more than a year studying the behaviors of a mated pair of foxes that he kept at his home . He stated that they were " so tame [that he] could turn them loose and watch them hunt , fight , make love , and live an almost normal life . " Additionally , he studied wild foxes and interviewed trappers , hunters , game wardens , and " Masters of Hounds " to learn what they felt foxes would and would not do . In the novel 's postscript , Mannix discusses this research . To defend his novel against charges of improbability , he recounts his observations of wild foxes and discusses other people 's stories about fox behavior . Regarding the actions Tod takes in eluding the hunters , he details both witnessing wild foxes performing such acts and stories others shared with him that he used as a basis for some of the story 's events . For example , he notes that while people have told him that foxes do not really run among sheep or cattle herds to escape hounds , he himself used to watch them do just that from his bedroom window . In the case of a fox running along train tracks as a train is approaching , Mannix drew on a story told to him by a master of hunting in the area of Whitford Sales ? near Thorndale , Pennsylvania ? who had to stop hunting in the area because of a fox who consistently killed pursuing hounds on the Trenton Cutoff using this method .

Mannix felt it was nearly impossible for any writer to escape imparting some anthropomorphism in such a novel , as a human must guess at the way an animal 's mind may work and what motivations it may have . He felt animals think differently from humans , though are capable of reason on a " rudimentary level compared to a human . " In explaining his descriptions of hunting , he said it was hard to decide how a hound with non @-@ human scenting ability interprets and responds to scents while tracking another animal .

The last chapter of the novel , covering Copper 's last hunt of Tod , was based on the story of Boston , a fourteen @-@ month @-@ old bloodhound ? foxhound mix , and Old Baldy , a red fox known by hunters for having outrun numerous packs of hounds put on his trail . Mannix originally read the story in a Recreation magazine article , which stated that in December 1887 , near the James River in Virginia , Boston hunted a fox referred to as Baldy for a day and a half , covering 50 miles (80 km) of terrain . According to Mannix , Boston and Baldy died together , and were buried together once found . In the Recreation article , although Boston survived he never fully recovered and died when he was only three years old . Copper himself was based on the favorite hunting dog of Bee Dee Adkins , a nationally renowned trainer of hunting dogs with whom Mannix hunted . Some of the novel 's human characters were based on the lives and mannerisms on locals living in Oro Valley , a suburb of Tucson , Arizona .

In 1967 , E. P. Dutton selected Mannix 's unpublished novel as the 1967 winner of its annual " Animal Book Award " ? an international competition open to new authors in which an editorial panel evaluates submissions to find the " best book @-@ length work of adult fiction or nonfiction on animals " . Along with a cash prize of \$ 10 @,@ 000 , the company obtained the publication rights for the novel , releasing it in hardback form on September 11 that year . The novel was published in the United States by Dutton and in Canada by Clarke , Irwin and Company , simultaneously . A reprint by Pocket Books followed in 1971 . The novel has been released in twelve other countries , including Finland in 1968 by Otava , and in Germany by Hoffmann und Campe .

= = Reception = =

The Fox and the Hound was selected as a Reader 's Digest Book Club selection in 1967 and an abridged version was printed in the fourth volume of the publisher 's Condensed Books series . The same year , it was awarded the Athenaeum Literary Award .

The Booklist called the novel one of " the highest level of books about animals " and praised its combination of " brilliant psychology , writing of rare beauty , and little @-@ known hunting and animal lore " . According to the Booklist , Publishers Weekly gave the novel its " highest recommendation " and referred to it as a " marvelous evocation of the animal world " . Reviewing the novel for Best Sellers magazine , William B. Hill considered it a " corking good novel " , praising it for its " simplicity and straightforwardness " with the dog and fox being " real " rather than allegories for social issues . While he felt the novel was overly detailed in a few places , as a whole he considered the story " credible , almost all fascinating " and the characters entertaining .

Robert Ramsey of the Placerville , California , Mountain Democrat thought the book worthy of winning the Dutton award , characterizing the narrative as " always interesting " and principal characters Tod and Copper as " unforgettable " , while praising Mannix 's " ability to enter into the world of animals and portray it " . A reviewer for the Catholic Library World considered it an " memorable and delightful reading experience " written by a man " who knows the ways of foxes " . Author and sportsman Richard Alden Knight praised the novel , stating that it " surpasses any writing I have ever encountered on the thinking processes of animals " and that the story of a duel between natural enemies is " told well and written with feeling " . A reviewer for the Reading Eagle felt Mannix wrote well enough to make a reader feel like they were the characters Tod and Copper and that the story was " really exciting " due to the " dramatic opposition " of the two animals .

= = Film adaptation = =

Walt Disney Pictures purchased the film rights to The Fox and the Hound when it was awarded the Dutton Animal Book Award . Production on a film adaptation began in 1977 and it would become the most expensive animated film produced at the time , at a cost of \$ 12 million . To craft the film , then Disney CEO Ron Miller decided to mainly use new talent to make their debuts with the film , as the pioneers of the company , referred to as the " Nine Old Men " , were nearing retirement . The animators and screenplay writers were primarily new , as were the film directors Art Stevens , Ted Berman , and Richard Rich . It would be the last film Ollie Johnston , Frank Thomas , and Woolie Reitherman , considered " legends " of Disney , would work on . However , the transition between the old guard and the new resulted in arguments over how to handle the film . Reitherman had his own ideas on the designs and layouts that should be used ; however , the newer team backed Stevens , except Don Bluth , who felt Disney 's work was stale . Bluth walked out , taking eleven others with him , and formed his own animation studio . The exodus of the animators forced the cancellation of the film 's original Christmas 1980 premiere while new artists were hired .

Along the way , the story was greatly modified to make it more suitable as a family film . By the time it was completed in 1981 , the film had changed into a chronicle of the unlikely friendship of two creatures , who should be natural enemies and who learn society sometimes tries to determine their roles despite their better impulses . In the original screenplay , Chief was slated to die the same as in the novel , but Stevens did not want to have an on @-@ screen death and modified the film so

that he survived .

The film premiered theatrically in the United States on July 10 , 1981 . It was an immediate success , grossing \$ 39 @ , @ 900 @ , @ 000 to become the 14th top film of the year . It was subsequently re @ - @ released theatrically on March 25 , 1988 , and saw its first home video release on March 1 , 1994 .