A Fox in Florence

A 60-Minute Musical for the Stage (Ages 8–12)
Setting: Florence, Italy — Summer, 1970's
Set: multi-level, with rooms stacked vertically, ladders, sliding walls, pastel miniatures, retro train set. Navet style line drawing on white.

CHARACTERS

MAGGIE – studying fashion; bold, visionary. INKA

PERRY – studying art history; intense, brilliant. MEM

LOUIE – studying contemporary dance; calm, warm, expressive.

SERAFINA Red Fox (Vulpes vulpes) – stylish red fox fashion student. French. LILOU

MARCO lagotto romagnolo (domesticated dog) – friendly, welcoming, enthusiastic, water retriever– tailor's apprentice. Italian "Benvenuto to Firenze!" ALIRA

HASANI, Fennec Fox (Vulpes zerda) – acute hearing; energetic, music student. African. INDIA

Tina and Tiffany, Flying Foxes (Pteropus giganteus) – aerial acrobat, risk-taker. Aussie, NIAHM

BRAGI, Arctic Fox (Norse god of poetry)– (Vulpes lagopus) – cool-headed, hip, poet. Icelandic,

MAESTRO (Canis latrans) – clever, verbose, loud, singer, scavenger.

FRANZ, Wolf (Canis lupus) – leader, practical, architecture expert. German

Professor GABBIANO, Volapino (domesticated dog) – eccentric fashion professor. Italian.

MUM - INDIA

PAPA - ALIRA

GUARD -

SILVIO-

DONATA-

SCENE 1 — ARRIVAL BY TRAIN *The doll-house set opens like a storybook. A miniature train slides across the top tier. Steam. Lights. The trio steps out with luggage. Night time, Full moon.*

Song: Under my Thumb Instrumental

MAGGIE: We made it. Florence, the capital of elegance and fingers crossed, internships!

LOUIE: Yep, we're actually doing it. Firenze is what the Italians call it.

PERRY: Smells like *(sniff sniff)* stone, paint and.. is that..*(sniff sniff)* parmesan cheese?

LOUIE: Quick, let's find the school before Perry disappears.

Song: Dancing in the Moonlight

Foxes and other species bustle by - none with tails.

HASANI: Welcome to Florence.

MAGGIE: Whoa, am I mistaken, or is everyone… tailless?

HASANI: Oh yes, chic isn't it, and so very 1973.

PERRY: More like very disturbing.

SERAFINA: Everybody's doing it.

HASANI/BRAGI: No tail, no sorrow, dig the Arno glow,

Tailless, jazzed, I howl at the Florence moon. *(howls)*

MARCO: Benvenuto to Firenze! I'm Marco and this is Serafina. Can we offer you a ride?

SERAFINA: We are students at the academy too. I design moda.

MAGGIE: Oh groovy, a fellow fashionista. I start my internship at Fiorucci tomorrow!

MARCO: Andiamo. Let's ride!

They throw their suitcases on the back of the vespas and scoot off through the city past an old Roman statue of a dog - its tail chiselled clean off! Music plays.

Song: Walk on the Wild Side Instrumental

SCENE 2 — THE PHOTO-BOOTH *The doll-house set rotates to reveal a tiny osteria with checkered tablecloths. A vintage 1970s photo-booth flickers beside it.*

MAGGIE: Look! A photo-booth! We have to capture this moment!

PERRY: Those things capture souls. And awkwardness.

LOUIE: Bellisimo. Let's make memories.

They squeeze inside. The booth jerks violently.

Photobooth Voice (tinny speaker): Prepare! Smile!

The strip prints instantly—revealing a mysterious symbol in the background that wasn't there.

MAGGIE: Wait… what's that behind us?

MARCO: Oh! Sorprendente! I know that symbol. I've seen it on old underground maps.

PERRY: Great. So the photobooth is haunted.

MAESTRO: Or it's a clue.

PERRY: And you are?

MAESTRO: They call me Maestro.

They pocket the picture.

The set rotates to show Florence's domes. Actors ride prop Vespas attached to tracks.

LOUIE: Don't lean so far, Perry!

PERRY: Just hold on!

MAGGIE: This city is going to change us. I can feel it.

MAESTRO: And watch for trams—they never slow down.

A tram bell nearly clips them.

PERRY: Point proven Maestro.

SCENE 3 — MAGGIE: AT THE FASHION INSTITUTE *Professor Gabbiano paces dramatically as students work.*

Song: For Your Love Instrumental

GABBIANO: Fashion is experimento! Riska! Something betweena truffle ravioli and spiritual awakening!

Maggie finds scraps of cheap faux fur and holds it up to her behind.

MAGGIE: Scusi, Professor Gabbiano, with due respect, why lose our tails when we could reinvent them?

MARCO: There's a loom in my little apartment

On Via dei Servi, top floor

Threads of nettle, hemp and linen

Spilling wild across the door

SERAFINA: The others laugh, say "why bother?"

Fox fur rules the galleries

But I feel change like morning water

Running soft around my knees

MAGGIE: Faux is the future, can't you see?

A world where every tail runs free

MARCO: Where beauty's born from earth and leaf

Not stolen fur, not stolen peace

MAGGIE: Faux is the future, stitch by stitch

We rise above the hunter's itch

SERAFINA: I'll weave a Florence that won't flinch

Faux is the future—

And the future's lush and rich.

MARCO: I tried bamboo with citrus fibres

Dyed it gold like Tuscan hay

Cut a coat for Perry, he twirled it

Said, "Maggie, you've made a brand-new day."

MAGGIE: Louie danced in my samples

Let the fabric breathe with him

Said it moved like wind in wheat fields

Said it felt like freedom in his skin.

Faux is the future, can't you see?

A world where every tail runs free

Where beauty's born from earth and leaf

Not stolen fur, not stolen peace

Maybe they'll call me foolish

Maybe they'll call me wild

But fashion's just a revolution

Sewn by someone's fearless child

Faux is the future, sing it loud!

A runway woven for the proud

For every creature, every crowd

No more silence…

No more bowed.

Faux is the future, this I swear:

A kinder world is what we wear

From plant-spun threads to fresher air—

Faux is the future,

And we're already there.

GABBIANO: Absolutely not! The humans will never buy this idea. Not another word about it!

Now back to work!

SCENE 4. PROLOGUE — THE PACT (FLASHBACK)

Song: White Rabbit Instrumental

Lights rise slowly. Serfina enters, wearing a chic 1970s silk scarf, stage-perfect poise, and a calculating smile. She checks behind her, ensuring no other foxes are around.
A panel in the wall slides open — Silvio and Donata, human designers, emerge from the boutique upstairs.

SILVIO (relieved) Grazie. We thought you weren't coming.

SERAFINA: I said I'd meet you before the new semester. Before the new arrivals from abroad complicate things.

DONATA: You mean the scholarship foxes? The fashion girl… the art boy… the dancer?

SERAFINA: walks toward a display of fox tails pinned like brooches.

SERAFINA: Exactly. Tourists with ideas. They won't understand Florence. They won't understand fashion. And they certainly won't understand what we've built.

SILVIO: *(gesturing to the tails)* We need more of these for the spring line. The buyers in Milan are begging.

DONATA: If the local fox students hesitate, everything falls apart. Your job is— well— persuasion.

Serafina lifts a particularly beautiful tail and twirls it between her claws.

SERAFINA: Persuasion is a gentle word. I prefer… "curation." I simply show them the life they could have: glamour, admiration, influence. (pauses, icy calm) And in return, they give up something… sentimental.

SILVIO: You're certain you can convince them?

SERAFINA: *(whispering)* Foxes want to matter. Humans want artifacts. I'm merely the bridge.

The humans exchange a pleased look.

DONATA: And the newcomers? Maggie, Perry, Louie?

SERAFINA: *(flashes a fang)* Leave them to me. By the time they arrive in Florence, they'll be stepping into a world where tail-trading already feels… normal. And they'll never know who set it in motion.

SILVIO: *(toasting with a measuring tape)* To fashion. And to cooperation.

SERAFINA: *(smiling slowly)* To the future. La coda è moda.

Lights dim sharply — a foreboding chord. The mannequin tails shimmer under the last spotlight.

<u>Song: A Trick of the Tail Instrumental</u>

SCENE 5 — PHONE CALL HOME *In a tiny dorm hallway lined with rotary phones in pastel colours. A Vespa helmet hangs from Maggie's arm. The lights shift to warm oranges and browns—1970s domestic warmth.*

PERRY: *(pacing, anxious-flappy)* Do you think they're awake? What time is it back home?

What if the twins are crying? What if—

MAGGIE: PERRY:. Pick a phone and dial.

LOUIE: *(gently)* They'll be happy to hear from us.

PERRY: exhales, picks up an avocado-green rotary phone, and dials.

Lights split: stage left becomes the family kitchen back home. Papa enters holding TWO squirmy fox kits in swaddles. Mama follows, exhausted but glowing.

PAPA *(into phone)*: Warren residence—

PERRY: Papa!

PAPA: Perry! My boy! My brilliant, odd, wonderful boy! How's Italy treating you?

PERRY: Good! Mostly. But all foxes here have no..

MAMA *(leaning in)*: Hello, sweetheart! Don't forget to eat vegetables. And protein. And not just gelato.

LOUIE: Congratulations again. The twins look… extremely energetic.

The two baby foxes let out synchronised yips.

PAPA: They only sleep in shifts.

The baby foxes are played by small, expressive puppets cradled in Mama's arms—ears twitching, tails wiggling, occasionally squeaking.)

MAMA: Opposite shifts, naturally.

PAPA: Your mother and I haven't slept since—

MAMA: —Wednesday.

PERRY: We just wanted to check in. And… I miss you.

PAPA *(softening)*: We miss you too, son. But you're doing something grand, I can feel it. Bigger than digging tunnels. Bigger than my heist days. Keep going.

MAMA: And stay together. No wandering off alone. Especially you, Perry.

PERRY: I know. I'm trying, ciao!

PAPA: Good lad. And hey—send us a postcard! One without any of those strange Italian stamps that smell like truffle.

The babies begin wailing again. Papa juggles them.

MAMA: We love you, darlings!

Song: Melos

SCENE 6a— PERRY: AT THE UFFIZI *Gallery frames unfold from the set. Perry stares at Botticelli's Birth of Venus with chickens. He sketches*.

PERRY: Check out this line work. *(gets up close)*

GUARD: Scusi sir, do not lick the paintings

PERRY: I wasn't planning on it *(beat)* or was I?

SCENE 6b: THE ARNO *Perry exits the gallery swiftly and passes Hasani and a trumpet playing fox busking on the street.*

Song: Meet me Across the Arno Instrumental

HASANI: Hey man, can you lend me a few bucks?

Tonight, can you get us a ride?

Gotta make it through the tunnel

Got a meeting with a fox on the other side

PERRY: Hey man, this guy, he's the real thing

So if you want to come along

You gotta promise you won't say anything

'Cause this guy don't dance

HASANI: And the word's been passed, this is our last chance

We gotta stay cool tonight Perry.

PERRY: 'Cause man, we gotta help them remember what's true

Without a tail, I know I'd feel blue

They ain't gonna be looking for just me this time

And all we gotta do is hold up our end

HASANI: Here, stuff this in your pocket

It'll look like you're carrying a friend

And remember, just don't smile

Change your shirt, 'cause tonight we got style

Meet me across the river

SCENE 7 — THE VIDEO ALCHEMIST *Perry crosses the bridge and back to the academy, and bumps into Maggie.*

Song: Baby Britain Instrumental (interlude)

MAGGIE: Impeccable timing my furry friend. Come this way.

PERRY: *(pulls photo from pocket and inspects)* Is that the same symbol from the photo-booth!?

They enter a shadowy side gallery inside the Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze. Analog monitors glow softly. A hum of tape reels turning.

MAGGIE: Whoa… this room wasn't on the map.

PERRY: *(wide-eyed, flapping hands excitedly)* Look at those TVs! They're stacked like a shrine! The cables are all colour-coded—beautiful.

A man in his early twenties, calm, observant, stands adjusting a reel-to-reel video deck.

MAGGIE: Uh… scusi? Are we allowed to be in here?

BILL: If you found it, you're meant to be here.

MAGGIE: Are you…

BILL *(smiles softly)*: Bill.. I experiment with time. And water. And everything that moves slowly enough to matter.

PERRY: I LOVE that. I move slowly when I want to concentrate. Fast when I don't. Or both once.

BILL: Excellent. Then you'll understand this.

He presses a button. A monitor displays grainy, slowed footage of a fox's tail drifting through water, rippling like silk.

MAGGIE: But—Florence foxes have no tails.

BILL: Precisely. This image is from the past… or the possible future. Or an emotion you haven't had yet.

MAGGIE: Is this connected to the secret chambers we found?

BILL: Everything in Florence is connected. Renaissance artists built their studios like labyrinths. And someone is still using them.

PERRY: Can you help us?

BILL: I can give you a direction, not a destination.

He pulls a postcard from his pocket—blank except for a hand-drawn symbol matching the one from the photobooth.

BILL: Follow the symbol. Follow the light. Above all… observe.

PERRY: Thank you Billy boy.

BILL: Don't thank me yet. The chambers test everyone who enters.

MAGGIE: Come on. We've got a chamber to find.

Song: Hazey Jane II

SCENE 8 — UNDERGROUND RENAISSANCE ADVENTURE *discovers secret chambers under the Academia.*

PERRY: Check it out Maggie! Foxalangelo, Foxotello. All the masters! These paintings must have been down here for decades.

MAGGIE: Incredible - I have an idea! *(Whispers)*

Song: If I Had Tail Instrumental

Under Florence, down the marble stairs,

Dust on the air like forgotten prayers.

I strike a match — the room ignites,

Gold-leaf foxes glowing in the candlelight.

"Perry… look at this," I breathe,

Ribbons of pigment, secrets in the eaves.

Brushstrokes fierce as a comet's trail,

Foxalangelo, painting every tail.

Foxotello sketching rebels on the wall,

Back when no fox bowed to fashion's call.

My pulse is loud — a Renaissance roar,

Truth dripping from the painted floor.

We thought we knew our history,

But the colours tell another story…

Tails on canvas, wild and free,

Foxes painted how they're meant to be.

In a world that sold our pride for style,

These artists kept the truth alive a while.

Oh, the painted tails — they're calling us back,

To everything we lost along the track.

If beauty costs our bodies,

Then who's the art, and who's the thief?

But standing in this hidden chamber,

I feel the fire, the ancient grief.

And maybe we can change it —

Start a spark, ignite the night…

Tails on canvas, wild and free,

A secret truth in fox mythology.

We'll shout it from the rooftops, shake the city walls —

No fashion worth the price of what we lost.

Oh, the painted tails — rising again,

A revolution in a renaissance den.

SCENE 9 — WHY FOXES HAVE NO TAILS HERE. Osteria Outside *Louie, Serafina and Marco sit at a table along the Arno.*

Song: I Found a Reason Instrumental (interlude)

LOUIE: ah yes Maggie, I understand. More feeling. Less gravity. *(Clears throat)*

LOUIE: *(reciting a poem he wrote)*

A tail is not just fur and thread,

A quiet line from heel to head.

It sways our balance, marks our pace,

A compass for our fox-born grace.

Some wear them long, some keep them slight,

Some tuck them close on colder nights.

But tail or none, we're still the same—

Each heartbeat dancing in its frame.

So if you choose to wear one proud,

Or leave it off to please the crowd,

Remember what the tail once meant—

A story curved in elegance, bent.

A whisper left in fur and air—

Of who we were, and still are there.

He bows his head.

SERAFINA: Louie! That was..moving.

MARCO: Profound! *(Scoffs a plate of cantucci)*

SERAFINA: Fashion houses here pressured everyone decades ago. "No-tail couture" they called it. It stuck.

PERRY: *(appears with Maggie running back from the chamber)* And it was all a trick because humans wanted to wear the tails themselves.

MAGGIE: But we change that. I know how! Just give me a few more days.

SCENE 10 - POSTCARD MONTAGE — “Wish You Were Here (In Florence)”

A projection of rotating postcards appears: domes of Florence, the Arno River, gelato cups, truffle markets, the Vespa parking outside the academy, the photo-booth image, and the strange Renaissance symbol.

Song: The Letter Instrumental

MAGGIE: (voiceover, writing): “Dear Mom and Dad, Florence is everything I dreamed of, but there is one thing missing.

PERRY: *(voiceover, writing)* Mama, there is art everywhere you look in Florence. We rode past an old Roman statue of a dog - its tail chiselled clean off!

LOUIE: *(voiceover, writing)* Dear Everyone Back Home, we’ve met many great canine friends here from near and far. It certainly has been.. educational.

MAGGIE: *(voiceover, writing)* I’m going to launch my new collection of tails here in Florence, at the Space Electronic Nightclub

PERRY: *(voiceover, writing)* but I went back to that statue, and I restored it, as best I could. Tails are back baby!

LOUIE: *(voiceover, writing)* These friends feel like family now. Firenze feels like.. home!

Each postcard flips in time with the music: - A Vespa ride across Ponte Vecchio - Maggie sketching new faux-fur tail designs - Perry obsessively sketching the Renaissance symbol - Louie dancing in front of - A fennec fox classmate posing dramatically - Maestro eating too much cantucci.

The final postcard shows all three of them smiling by the photobooth—unaware of the shadowy figure in the background.

ALL: *(softly, overlapping)* Wish you were here.

SCENE 11 — FINALE - SPACE ELECTRONIC NIGHTCLUB *Neon lights flip out from inside the doll-house. Foxes of all species walk proudly in their new faux tails. Louie weaves dance between them.*

Song: This Will be Our Year

GABBIANO *(crying)*: Magnifico! Tail-nifico!

MAGGIE: Fashion shouldn't hurt. It should help us feel like ourselves.

PERRY: And sometimes chaos becomes the plan.

LOUIE: And friends become family.

Song: With a Girl Like You

It's the tail of a new tomorrow,

Where we stitch our hope from borrowed

Dreams that once were lost but now we'll sew.

And the world we'll shape together

Will be brighter, lighter, clever —

Let the winds of change begin to blow.

Oh, the tail of a new tomorrow —

We're letting go.

Curtain Call

Song: Looking for a Fox