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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Green-and-Red Rooster

Farmer Jones wanted a weather vane, and when a peddler came along, he bought a green-and-red tin rooster and put it on the shed where he kept his hay. One morning, Miss Henny Penny was scratching around for worms when she happened to look up at the top of the shed. She dropped the big worm she had found, and Speckled Hen picked it up and ran. But Henny Penny did not notice her, for she was standing with mouth wide open, staring at the green-and-red rooster on the top of the shed.

"Isn't he handsome!" she said, and she clucked and scratched, but the rooster on the shed did not lower his lofty head.

Henny Penny was a trim-looking little brown hen, around whose neck were a few white feathers that looked like a linen collar. She might have been called a tailor-made hen, so prim did she look. Henny Penny walked up and down in front of the shed, and every now and then she cast a sly glance at the green-and-red rooster. He swung round a little, but never a glance did he give her. Henny Penny flew up to the fence and flapped her wings, then she walked up and down. She thought he surely would notice her there and crow, if nothing more.

"Oh dear," she sighed, "if only he would crow! I am sure he has a lovely voice." Still, the rooster did not notice her.



"The woodpile is higher," she thought. "I'll try that." So she flew to the top of the highest pile of wood. She walked about and flapped her wings, but the green-and-red rooster did not lower his gaze.

"He has the most beautiful comb I ever saw," said Henny Penny, more anxious than ever to attract his attention. A thunderstorm came up, and Henny Penny ran under a bush, but she made a peephole through which she could watch her sweetheart.

"He will fly down now," thought Henny Penny. The thunder rolled and the lightning flashed around him, but aside from moving back and forth, he did not stir from the end of the shed. "Oh, isn't he brave!" thought Henny Penny, and when the shower was over, she looked at him again. "How lovely his feathers look after the rain!" she said. "So smooth, and how they shine. Any other rooster would look ruffled." And then she walked into the shed. "Just to think," she sighed, looking at the roof, "he is just beyond those rafters."

Suddenly, she flew up to a shelf on the side of the shed. From there, she flew to the hayloft, and after resting awhile, up she flew to the rafters. She sat there looking at the window that was broken, just above her

head. If she could get out of that, she could reach her idol. She spread her wings, and swish! She was out on the roof.

Henny Penny held her head down and scratched the roof with her toes. Then she gave a sidelong glance at her idol, but he held his head high. She grew bolder and walked to the end of the roof. But she stepped back, her wings half-spread, and her eyes looked as though they would pop out of her little head. "What!" she screamed. "My idol is tin, not only his feet, but all of his beautiful green-and-red feathers are tin."

Poor Henny Penny, she did not stop to go back the way she came. She went to the edge of the roof, spread her wings, and swish! Thump! She was on the ground again. All the hens and roosters rushed to where she landed, their necks outstretched and making a great deal of noise. The pigs squealed, and the dog barked.

Henny Penny jumped up and shook her feathers. "My goodness!" said the old gray hen, "what ever were you doing on the top of the shed? Do you want to break your legs?"

"I wanted to see the view from there," said Henny Penny, turning her head to hide her blushes.

"I think she went up to visit the weathercock," said the white rooster, who more than once had tried to be friends with Henny Penny. "You'd better be satisfied with us live roosters," he continued, "and not fly so high." Henny Penny walked away with her head held very high, but her heart was sad. "Anyway," she said to herself, "he is handsome, and if he were alive he very likely would love me."