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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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## Old Granny Fox: A Midnight Visit (24/29)

By those who win 'tis well agreed  
He'll try and try who would succeed.

—Old Granny Fox.

It seemed to Reddy Fox as if time never had dragged so slowly as it did this particular night while he and Granny Fox waited until Granny thought it safe to visit Farmer Brown's henhouse and see if by any chance there was a way of getting into it. Reddy tried not to hope too much. Granny had found a way to get the gate to the henyard left open, but this would do them no good unless there was some way of getting into the house, and this he very much doubted. But if there was a way he wanted to know it, and he was impatient to start.

But Granny was in no hurry. Not that she wasn't just as hungry for a fat hen as was Reddy, but she was too wise and clever and altogether too sly to run any risks. "There is nothing gained by being in too much of a hurry, Reddy," said she, "and often a great deal is lost in that way. A fat hen will taste just as good a little later as it would now, and it will be foolish to go up to Farmer Brown's until we are sure that everybody up there is asleep. But to ease your mind, I'll tell you what

we will do; we'll go where we can see Farmer Brown's house and watch until the last light winks out."

So they trotted to a point where they could see Farmer Brown's house, and there they sat down to watch. It seemed to Reddy that those lights never would wink out. But at last they did.

"Come on, Granny!" he cried, jumping to his feet.



"Not yet, Reddy. Not yet," replied Granny. "We've got to give folks time to get sound asleep. If we should get into that henhouse, those hens might make a racket, and if anything like that is going to happen, we want to be sure that Farmer Brown and

Farmer Brown's boy are asleep."

This was sound advice, and Reddy knew it. So with a groan he once more threw himself down on the snow to wait. At last Granny arose, stretched, and looked up at the twinkling stars. "Come on," said she and led the way. Up back of the barn and around it they stole like two shadows and quite as noiselessly as shadows. They heard Bowser the Hound sighing in his sleep in his snug little house, and grinned at each other. Silently they stole over to the henyard. The gate was open, just as Granny had told Reddy it would be. Across the henyard they trotted swiftly, straight to where more than once in the daytime they had seen the hens come out of the

house through a little hole. It was closed. Reddy had expected it would be. Still, he was dreadfully disappointed. He gave it merely a glance.

"I knew it wouldn't be any use," said he with a half whine.

But Granny paid no attention to him. She went close to the hole and pushed gently against the little door that closed it. It didn't move. Then she noticed that at one edge there was a tiny crack. She tried to push her nose through, but the crack was too narrow. Then she tried a paw. A claw caught on the edge of the door, and it moved ever so little. Then Granny knew that the little door wasn't fastened. Granny stretched herself flat on the ground and went to work, first with one paw, then with the other. By and by she caught her claws in it just right again, and it moved a wee bit more. No, most certainly that door wasn't fastened, and that crack was a little wider.

"What are you wasting your time there for?" demanded Reddy crossly. "We'd better be off hunting if we would have anything to eat this night."

Granny said nothing but kept on working. She had discovered that this was a sliding door. Presently the crack was wide enough for her to get her nose in. Then she pushed and twisted her head this way and that. The little door slowly slid back, and when Reddy turned to speak to her again, for he had had his back to her, she was nowhere to be seen. Reddy just gaped and gaped foolishly. There was no Granny Fox, but there was a black hole where she had been working, and from it

came the most delicious smell,—the smell of fat hens! It seemed to Reddy that his stomach fairly flopped over with longing. He rubbed his eyes to be sure that he was awake. Then in a twinkling he was inside that hole himself.

“Sh-h-h, be still!” whispered Old Granny Fox.