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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Old Granny Fox: A Twice Stolen Dinner (20/29)

No one ever is so smart that some one else may not prove to be smarter still.

—Old Granny Fox.

Listen and you shall hear all about three rogues. Two were in red and were Granny and Reddy Fox. And one was in gray and was Old Man Coyote. They were the slyest, smartest rogues on all the Green Meadows or in all the Green Forest. All three had started out to steal the same dinner, but the funny part is they didn't intend to steal it from the same person. And still funnier is it that one of them didn't even know where that dinner was or what kind of a dinner it would be.

True to his resolve to know what Granny and Reddy Fox were getting to eat, and where they were getting it, Old Man Coyote hid where he could see what was going on about Farmer Brown's, for it was there he felt sure that Granny and Reddy were getting food. He had waited only a little while when along came Granny and Reddy Fox past the place where Old Man Coyote was hiding. They didn't see him. Of course not. He took care that they should have no chance. But anyway, they were not thinking of him. Their thoughts were all of that dinner they intended to have, and the smart trick by which they would get it.

So with their thoughts all on that dinner they slipped up behind the barn and prepared to work the trick which had been so successful before. Old Man Coyote crept after them. He saw Reddy Fox lie down where he could peep around the corner of the barn to watch Bowser the Hound and to see that no one else was about. He saw Granny leave Reddy there and hurry away. Old Man Coyote's wits worked fast.

"I can't be in two places at once," thought he, "so I can't watch both Granny and Reddy. As I can watch but one, which one shall it be? Granny, of course. Granny is the smartest of the two, and whatever they are up to, she is at the bottom of it. Granny is the one to follow."



So, like a gray shadow, crafty Old Man Coyote stole after Granny Fox and saw her hide behind the corner of the shed at the end of which was the little house of Bowser the Hound. He crept as near as he dared and then lay flat down

behind a little bunch of dead grass close to the shed. For some time nothing happened, and Old Man Coyote was puzzled. Every once in a while Granny Fox would look behind and all about to be sure that no danger was near, but she didn't see Old Man Coyote. After what seemed to him a long time, he heard a door open on the other side of the shed. It was Mrs. Brown carrying

Bowser's dinner out to him. Of course, Old Man Coyote didn't know this. He knew by the sounds that some one had come out of the house, and it made him nervous. He didn't like being so close to Farmer Brown's house in broad daylight. But he kept his eyes on Granny Fox, and he saw her ears prick up in a way that he knew meant that those sounds were just what she had been waiting for.

"If she isn't afraid, I don't need to be," thought he craftily. After a few minutes he heard a door close and knew that whoever had come out had gone back into the house. Almost at once Bowser the Hound began to yelp and whine. Swiftly Granny Fox disappeared around the corner of the shed. Just as swiftly Old Man Coyote ran forward and peeped around the corner. There was Bowser the Hound tugging at his chain, and just beyond his reach was Reddy Fox, grinning in the most provoking manner. And there was Granny Fox, backing and dragging after her Bowser's dinner. In a flash Old Man Coyote understood the plan, and he almost chuckled aloud at the cleverness of it. Then he hastily backed behind the shed and waited. In a minute Granny Fox appeared, dragging Bowser's dinner. She was so intent on getting that dinner that she almost backed into Old Man Coyote without suspecting that he was anywhere about.

"Thank you, Granny. You needn't bother about it any longer; I'll take it now," growled Old Man Coyote in Granny's ear.

Granny let go of that dinner as if it burned her tongue, and with a frightened little yelp leaped to one side. A minute later Reddy came racing around from behind the barn eager for his share. What he saw was Old Man Coyote bolting down that twice-stolen dinner while Granny Fox fairly danced with rage.