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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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## Old Granny Fox: Farmer Brown's Boy Sets A Trap (26/29)

The trouble is that troubles are,  
More frequently than not,  
Brought on by naught but carelessness;  
By some one who forgot.

—Old Granny Fox.

Granny Fox had hoped that those two hens she and Reddy had stolen from Farmer Brown's henhouse would not be missed, but they were. They were missed the very first thing the next morning when Farmer Brown's boy went to feed the biddies. He discovered right away that the little sliding door which should have closed the opening through which the hens went in and out of the house was open, and then he remembered that he had left the henyard gate open the night before. Carefully Farmer Brown's boy examined the hole with the sliding door.

"Ha!" said he presently, and held up two red hairs which he had found on the edge of the door. "Ha! I thought as much. I was careless last night and didn't fasten this door, and I left the gate open. Reddy Fox has been here, and now I know what has become of those two hens. I suppose it serves me right for my carelessness, and I suppose if the truth were known, those hens were of more real good to him than they ever could

have been to me, because the poor fellow must be having pretty hard work to get a living these hard winter days. Still, I can't have him stealing any more. That would never do at all. If I shut them up every night and am not careless, he can't get them. But accidents will happen, and I might do just as I did last night—think I had locked up when I hadn't. I don't like to set a trap for Reddy, but I must teach the rascal a lesson. If I don't, he will get so bold that those chickens won't be safe even in broad daylight."

Now at just that very time over in their home, Granny and Reddy Fox were talking over plans for the future, and shrewd old Granny was pointing out to Reddy how necessary it was that they should keep away from that



henyard for some time. "We've had a good dinner, a splendid dinner, and if we are smart enough we may be able to get more good dinners where this one came from," said she. "But we certainly won't if we are too greedy."

"But I don't believe Farmer Brown's boy has missed those two chickens, and I don't see any reason at all why we shouldn't go back there to-night and get two more if he is stupid enough to leave that gate and little door open," whined Reddy.

"Maybe he hasn't missed those two, but if we should take two more he certainly would miss them, and he would guess what had become of them, and that might get us into no end of trouble," snapped Granny. "We are not starving now, and the best thing for us to do is to keep away from that henhouse until we can't get anything to eat anywhere else, Now you mind what I tell you, Reddy, and don't you dare go near there."

Reddy promised, and so it came about that Farmer Brown's boy hunted up a trap all for nothing so far as Reddy and Granny were concerned. Very carefully he bound strips of cloth around the jaws of the trap, for he couldn't bear to think of those cruel jaws cutting into the leg of Reddy, should he happen to get caught. You see, Farmer Brown's boy didn't intend to kill Reddy if he should catch him, but to make him a prisoner for a while and so keep him out of mischief. That night he hid the trap very cunningly just inside the henhouse where any one creeping through that little hole made for the hens to go in and out would be sure to step in it. Then he purposely left the little sliding door open part way as if it had been forgotten, and he also left the henyard gate open just as he had done the night before.

"There now, Master Reddy," said he, talking to himself, "I rather think that you are going to get into trouble before morning."

And doubtless Reddy would have done just that thing but for the wisdom of sly old Granny.