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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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## Old Granny Fox: Granny And Reddy Fox Hunt In Vain (12/29)

Old Mother Nature's plans for good  
Quite often are not understood.

—Old Granny Fox.

Tommy Tit and Drummer the Woodpecker and Yank Yank the Nuthatch and Sammy Jay and Chatterer the Red Squirrel were not the only ones who were out and about as soon as the great storm ended. Oh, my, no! No, indeed! Everybody who was not sleeping the winter away, or who had not a store of food right at hand, was out. But not all were so fortunate as Tommy Tit and his friends in finding a good meal.

Peter Rabbit and Mrs. Peter came out of the hole in the heart of the dear Old Briar-patch, where they had managed to keep comfortably warm, and at once began to fill their stomachs with bark from young trees and tender tips of twigs. It was very coarse food, but it would take away that empty feeling. Mrs. Grouse burst out of the snow and hurried to get a meal before dark. She had no time to be particular, and so she ate spruce buds. They were very bitter and not much to her liking, but she was too hungry, and night was too near for her to be fussy. She was thankful to have that much.

Granny Fox and Reddy were out too. They didn't need to hurry because, as you know, they could hunt all night,

but they were so hungry that they just had to be looking for something to eat. They knew, of course, that everybody else would be out, and they hoped that some of these little people would be so weak that they could easily be caught. That seems like a dreadful hope, doesn't it? But one of the first laws of Old Mother Nature is self-preservation. That means to save your own life first. So perhaps Granny and Reddy are not to be blamed for hoping that some of their neighbors might be caught easily because of the great storm. They were very hungry indeed, and they could not eat



bark like Peter Rabbit, or buds like Mrs. Grouse, or seeds like Whitefoot the Woodmouse. Their teeth and stomachs are not made for such food.

It was hard going for Granny and Reddy Fox. The snow was soft and deep in many places, and they had to keep pretty close to those places where rough Brother North Wind had

blown away enough of the snow to make walking fairly easy. They soon found that their hope that they would find some of their neighbors too weak to escape was quite in vain. When jolly, round, red Mr. Sun dropped down behind the Purple Hills to go to bed, their stomachs were quite as empty as when they had started out.

"We'll go down to the Old Briar-patch. I don't believe it will be of much use, but you never can tell until you try. Peter Rabbit may take it into his silly head to come outside," said Granny, leading the way.

When they reached the dear Old Briar-patch they found that Peter was not outside. In fact, peering between the brambles and bushes, they could see his little brown form bobbing about as he hunted for tender bark. He had already made little paths along which he could hop easily. Peter saw them almost as soon as they saw him.

"Hard times these," said Peter pleasantly. "I hope your stomachs are not as empty as mine." He pulled a strip of bark from a young tree and began to chew it. This was more than Reddy could stand. To see Peter eating while his own stomach was just one great big ache from emptiness was too much.

"I'm going in there and catch him, or drive him out where you can catch him, if I tear my coat all to pieces!" snarled Reddy.

Peter stopped chewing and sat up. "Come right along, Reddy. Come right along if you want to, but I would advise you to save your skin and your coat," said he. Reddy's only reply was a snarl as he pushed his way under the brambles. He yelped as they tore his coat and scratched his face, but he kept on. Now Peter's paths were very cunningly made. He had cut them through the very thickest of the briars just big enough for himself and Mrs. Peter to hop along comfortably.

But Reddy is so much bigger that he had to force his way through and in places crawl flat on his stomach, which was very slow work, to say nothing of the painful scratches from the briars. It was no trouble at all for Peter to keep out of his way, and before long Reddy gave up. Without a word Granny Fox led the way to the Green Forest. They would try to find where Mrs. Grouse was sleeping under the snow. But though they hunted all night, they failed to find her, for she wisely had gone to bed in a spruce-tree.