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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Old Granny Fox: Old Granny Fox Is Caught Napping (6/29)

The wisest folks will make mistakes, but if they are truly wise they will profit from them.

—Old Granny Fox.

There is a saying among the little people of the Green Forest and the Green Meadows which runs something like this:

“You must your eyes wide open keep
To catch Old Granny Fox asleep.”

Of course this means that Old Granny Fox is so smart, so clever, so keenly on the watch at all times, that he must be very smart indeed who fools her or gets ahead of her. Reddy Fox is smart, very smart. But Reddy isn't nearly as smart as Old Granny Fox. You see, he hasn't lived nearly as long, so of course there is much knowledge of many things stored away in Granny's head of which Reddy knows little.

But once in a while even the smartest people are caught napping. Yes, Sir, that does happen. They will be careless sometimes. It was just so with Old Granny Fox. With all her smartness and cleverness and wisdom she grew careless, and all the smartness and cleverness and wisdom in the world is useless if the possessor becomes careless.

You see, Old Granny Fox had become so used to thinking that she was smarter than any one else, unless it was Old Man Coyote, that she actually believed that no one was smart enough ever to surprise her. Yes, Sir, she actually believed that. Now, you know when a person reaches the point of thinking that no one else in all the Great World is quite so smart, that person is like Peter Rabbit when he made ready one winter day to jump out on the smooth ice of the Smiling Pool,—getting ready for a fall. It was this way with Old Granny Fox. Because she had lived near Farmer Brown's so long and had been hunted so often by Farmer Brown's boy and by Bowser the Hound, she had got the idea in her head that no matter what she did they would not be able to catch her. So at last she grew careless. Yes, Sir, she grew careless. And that is something no Fox or anybody else can afford to do.

Now on the edge of the Green Forest was a warm, sunny knoll, which, as you know, is a sort of little hill. It overlooked the Green Meadows and was quite the most pleasant and comfortable place for a sun-nap that ever was. At least, that is what Old Granny Fox thought. She took sun-naps there very often. It was her favorite resting place. When Bowser the Hound had found her trail and had chased her until she was tired of running and had had quite all the exercise she needed or wanted, she would play one of her clever tricks by which to make Bowser lose her trail. Then she would hurry straight to that knoll to rest and grin at her own smartness.

It happened that she did this one day when there was fresh snow on the ground. Of course, every time she put a foot down she left a print in the snow. And where she curled up in the sun she left the print of her body. They were very plain to see, were these prints, and Farmer Brown's boy saw them.

He had been tramping through the Green Forest late in the afternoon and just by chance happened across Granny's footprints. Just for fun he followed them and so came to the sunny knoll. Granny had left some time before, but of course she couldn't take the print of her body with her. That remained in the snow, and Farmer Brown's boy saw it and knew instantly what it meant. He



grinned, and could Granny Fox have seen that grin, she would have been uncomfortable. You see, he knew that he had found the place where Granny was in the habit of taking a sun-nap.

"So," said he, "this is the place where you rest, Old Mrs. Fox, after running Bowser almost off

his feet. I think we will give you a surprise one of these days. Yes, indeed, I think we will give you a surprise. You have fooled us many times, and now it is our turn."

The next day Farmer Brown's boy shouldered his terrible gun and sent Bowser the Hound to hunt for the trail of Old Granny Fox. It wasn't long before Bowser's

great voice told all the Great World that he had found Granny's tracks. Farmer Brown's boy grinned just as he had the day before. Then with his terrible gun he went over to the Green Forest and hid under some pine boughs right on the edge of that sunny knoll.

He waited patiently a long, long time. He heard Bowser's great voice growing more and more excited as he followed Old Granny Fox. By and by Bowser stopped baying and began to yelp impatiently. Farmer Brown's boy knew exactly what that meant. It meant that Granny had played one of her smart tricks and Bowser had lost her trail.

A few minutes later out of the Green Forest came Old Granny Fox, and she was grinning, for once more she had fooled Bowser the Hound and now could take a nap in peace. Still grinning, she turned around two or three times to make herself comfortable and then, with a sigh of contentment, curled up for a sun-nap, and in a few minutes was asleep. And just a little way off behind the pine boughs sat Farmer Brown's boy holding his terrible gun and grinning. At last he had caught Old Granny Fox napping.