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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Old Granny Fox: Quacker The Duck Grows Curious (4/29)

The most curious thing in the world is curiosity.

—Old Granny Fox.

Old Granny Fox never said a truer thing than that. It is curious, very curious, how sometimes curiosity will get the best of even the wisest and most sensible of people. Even Old Granny Fox herself has been known to be led into trouble by it. We expect it of Peter Rabbit, but Peter isn't a bit more curious than some others of whom we do not expect it.

Now Quacker the Wild Duck is the last one in the world you would expect to be led into trouble by curiosity. Quacker had spent the summer in the Far North with Honker the Goose. In fact, he had been born there. He had started for the far away Southland at the same time Honker had, but when he reached the Big River he had found plenty to eat and had decided to stay until he had to move on. The Big River had frozen over everywhere except in this one place where the water was too swift to freeze, and there Quacker had remained. You see, he was a good diver and on the bottom of the river he found plenty to eat. No one could get at him out there, unless it were Roughleg the Hawk, and if Roughleg did happen along, all he had to do was to dive and come up far away to laugh and

make fun of Roughleg. The water couldn't get through his oily feathers, and so he didn't mind how cold it was.



Now in his home in the Far North there were so many dangers that Quacker had early learned to be always on the watch and to take the best of care of himself. On his way down to the Big River he had

been hunted by men with terrible guns, and he had learned all about them. In fact, he felt quite able to keep out of harm's way. He rather prided himself that there was no one smart enough to catch him.

I suspect he thought he knew all there was to know. In this respect he was a good deal like Reddy Fox himself. That was because he was young. It is the way with young Ducks and Foxes and with some other youngsters I know.

When Quacker first saw Granny Fox on the little beach, he flirted his absurd little tail and smiled as he thought how she must wish she could catch him. But so far as he could see, Granny didn't once look at him.

"She doesn't know I'm out here at all," thought Quacker. Then suddenly he sat up very straight and looked with all his might. What under the sun was the matter with that Fox? She was acting as if she had suddenly lost her senses.

Over and over she rolled. Around and around she spun. She turned somersaults. She lay on her back and kicked

her heels in the air. Never in his life had he known any one to act like that. There must be something the matter with her.

Quacker began to get excited. He couldn't keep his eyes off Old Granny Fox. He began to swim nearer. He wanted to see better. He quite forgot she was a Fox. She moved so fast that she was just a queer red spot on the beach. Whatever she was doing was very curious and very exciting. He swam nearer and nearer. The excitement was catching. He began to swim in circles himself. All the time he drew nearer and nearer to the shore. He didn't have the least bit of fear. He was just curious. He wanted to see better.

All the time Granny was cutting up her antics, she was watching Quacker, though he didn't suspect it. As he swam nearer and nearer to the shore, Granny rolled and tumbled farther and farther back. At last Quacker was close to the shore. If he kept on, he would be right on the land in a few minutes. And all the time he stared and stared. No thought of danger entered his head. You see, there was no room because it was so filled with curiosity.

"In a minute more I'll have him," thought Granny, and whirled faster than ever. And just then something happened.