

This story is brought to you by Ririro.com for free. Our mission is to give all children in the world free access to a variety of stories. The stories can be read, downloaded and printed online and cover a wide range of topics, including animals, fantasy, science, history, diverse cultures and much more.

Support our mission by sharing our website. We wish you a lot of fun reading!



Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

Ririro

Old Granny Fox: Reddy Fights A Battle (15/29)

'Tis not the foes that are without
But those that are within
That give us battles that we find
The hardest are to win.

—Old Granny Fox.

After the last of his three foolish wishes, Reddy Fox left the Smiling Pool and headed straight for the Old Pasture for which he had started in the first place. He wished now that he had gone straight there. Then he wouldn't have seen the suet tied out of reach to the branch of a tree in the Old Orchard; he wouldn't have seen the Bob Whites fly away to safety just as he felt almost sure of catching one; he wouldn't have seen Billy Mink bring a fine fish out of the water and eat it right before him. It is bad enough to be starving with no food in sight, but to be as hungry as Reddy Fox was and to see food just out of reach, to smell it, and not be able to get it is,—well, it is more than most folks can stand patiently.

So Reddy Fox was grumbling to himself as he hurried to the Old Pasture and his heart was very bitter. It seemed to him that everything was against him. His neighbors had food, but he had none, not so much as a crumb. It was unfair. Old Mother Nature was unjust. If

he could climb he could get food. If he could fly he could get food. If he could dive he could get food. But he could neither climb, fly, nor dive. He didn't stop to think that Old Mother Nature had given him some of the sharpest wits in all the Green Forest or on all the Green Meadows; that she had given him a wonderful nose; that she had given him the keenest of ears; that she had given him speed excelled by few. He forgot these things and was so busy thinking bitterly of the things he didn't have that he forgot to use his wits and nose and ears when he reached the Old Pasture. The result was that he trotted right past Old Jed Thumper, the big gray Rabbit, who was sitting behind a little bush holding his breath. The minute Old Jed saw that Reddy was safely past, he started for his bull-briar castle as fast as he could.

It was not until then that Reddy discovered him. Of course, Reddy started after him, and this time he made good use of his speed. But he was too late. Old Jed Thumper reached his castle with Reddy two jumps behind him. Reddy knew now that there was no chance to catch Old Jed that day, and for a few minutes he felt more bitter than ever. Then all in a flash Reddy Fox became the shrewd, clever fellow that he really is, he grinned.

"It's of no use to try to fill an empty stomach on wishes," said he.

"If I had come straight here and minded my own business, I'd have caught old Jed Thumper. Now I'm

going to get some food and I'm not going home until I do."

Very wisely Reddy put all unpleasant thoughts out of his head and settled down to using his wits and his eyes and his ears and his nose for all they were worth, as Old Mother Nature had intended he should.

All through the Old Pasture he hunted, taking care not to miss a single place where there was the least chance of finding food. But it was all in vain. Reddy gulped down his disappointment.

"Now for the Big River," said he, and started off bravely. When he reached the edge of the Big River, he hurried along the bank until he reached a place where the water seldom freezes. As he had hoped, he found that it was not frozen now. It looked so black and cold that it made him shiver just to see it. Back and forth with his nose to the ground he ran. Suddenly he stopped and sniffed. Then he sniffed again. Then he followed his nose straight to the very edge of the Big River. There, floating in the black water, was a dead fish! By wading in he could get it.

Reddy shivered at the touch of the cold water, but what were wet feet compared with such an empty stomach as his? In a minute he had that fish and was back on the shore. It wasn't a very big fish, but it would stop the ache in his stomach until he could get something more. With a sigh of pure happiness he sank his teeth into it and then—well, then he remembered poor Old Granny Fox. Reddy swallowed a mouthful and tried to forget Granny. But he couldn't. He swallowed

another mouthful. Poor old Granny was back there at home as hungry as he was and too stiff and tired to hunt. Reddy choked. Then he began a battle with



himself. His stomach demanded that fish. If he ate it, no one would be the wiser. But Granny needed it even more than he did. For a long time Reddy fought with himself. In the end he picked up the fish and started for home.