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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Old Granny Fox: Reddy Fox Is Afraid To Go Home (5/29)

Yes, Sir, a chicken track is good to see, but it often puts nothing but water in my mouth.

—Old Granny Fox.

Reddy Fox thought of that saying many times as he hunted through the Green Forest that night, afraid to go home. You see, he had almost dined on Quacker the Duck over at the Big River that day and then hadn't, and it was all his own fault. That was why he was afraid to go home. From his hiding-place on the bank he had watched Quacker swim in and in until he was almost on the shore where old Granny Fox was whirling and rolling and tumbling about as if she had entirely lost her senses. Indeed, Reddy had been quite sure that she had when she began. It wasn't until he saw that curiosity was drawing Quacker right in so that in a minute or two Granny would be able to catch him, that he understood that Granny was anything but crazy, and really was teaching him a new trick as well as trying to catch a dinner.

When he realized this, he should have been ashamed of himself for doubting the smartness of Granny and for thinking that he knew all there was to know. But he was too much excited for any such thoughts. Nearer and nearer to the shore came Quacker, his eyes fixed

on the red, whirling form of Granny. Reddy's own eyes gleamed with excitement. Would Quacker keep on right up to the shore? Nearer and nearer and nearer he came. Reddy squirmed uneasily. He couldn't see as well as he wanted to. The bushes behind which he was lying were in his way. He wanted to see Granny make that jump which would mean a dinner for both.



Forgetting what Granny had charged him, Reddy eagerly raised his head to look over the edge of the bank. Now it just happened that at that very minute Quacker chanced to look that way. His quick eyes caught the movement of Reddy's head and in an instant all his curiosity vanished. That sharp face peering at him over the edge of the bank could mean but one thing—danger! It was all a trick! He saw through it now. Like a flash he turned. There was the whistle of stiff wings beating the air and the patter of feet striking the water as he got under way. Then he flew out to the safety of the open water. Granny sprang, but she was just too late and succeeded in doing no more than wet her feet.

Of course, Granny didn't know what had frightened Quacker, not at first, anyway. But she had her suspicions. She turned and looked up at the place where Reddy had been hiding. She couldn't see him.

Then she bounded up the bank. There was no Reddy there, but far away across the snow-covered Green Meadows was a red spot growing smaller and smaller. Reddy was running away. Then she knew. At first Granny was very angry. You know it is a dreadful thing to be hungry and have a good dinner disappear just as it is almost within reach.

"I'll teach that young scamp a lesson he won't soon forget when I get home," she muttered, as she watched him. Then she went back to the edge of the Big River and there she found a dead fish which had been washed ashore. It was a very good fish, and when she had eaten it Granny felt better.

"Anyway," thought she, "I have taught him a new trick and one he is n't likely to forget. He knows now that Granny still knows a few tricks that he doesn't, and next time he won't feel so sure he knows it all. I guess it was worth while even if I didn't catch Quacker. My, but he would have tasted good!" Granny smacked her lips and started for home.

But Reddy, with a guilty conscience, was afraid to go home. And so, miserable and hungry, he hunted through the Green Forest all the long night and wished and wished that he had heeded what old Granny Fox had told him.