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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Old Granny Fox: Why Bowser The Hound Didn't Eat His Dinner (18/29)

The thing you've puzzled most about
Is simple once you've found it out.

—Old Granny Fox.

Bowser The Hound dearly loves to hunt just for the pleasure of the chase. It isn't so much the desire to kill as it is the pleasure of using that wonderful nose of his and the excitement of trying to catch some one, especially Granny or Reddy Fox. Farmer Brown's boy had put away his dreadful gun because he no longer wanted to kill the little people of the Green Forest and the Green Meadows, but rather to make them his friends. Bowser had missed the exciting hunts he used to enjoy so much with Farmer Brown's boy. So Bowser had formed the habit of slipping away alone for a hunt every once in a while. When Farmer Brown's boy discovered this, he got a chain and chained Bowser to his little house to keep him from running away and hunting on the sly.

Of course Bowser wasn't kept chained all the time. Oh, my, no! When his master was about, where he could keep an eye on Bowser, he would let him go free. But whenever he was going away and didn't want to take

Bowser with him, he would chain Bowser up. Now Bowser always had one good big meal a day. To be sure, he had scraps or a bone now and then besides, but once a day he had one good big meal served to him in a large tin pan. If he happened to be chained, it was brought out to him. If not, it was given to him just outside the kitchen door.

Granny Fox knew all about this. Sly old Granny makes it her business to know the affairs of other people around her because there is no telling when such knowledge may be of use to her. So Granny had watched Bowser the Hound when he and his master had no idea at all that she was anywhere about, and she had found out his ways, the usual hour for his dinner and just how far that chain would allow him to go. It was such things which she had stored away in that shrewd old head of hers that made her so sure she and Reddy could take Bowser's dinner away from him. It was just about Bowser's dinner-time when Granny and Reddy trotted across the snow-covered fields and crept behind the barn until they could peep around the corner. No one was in sight, not even Bowser, who was inside his warm little house at the end of the long shed back of Farmer Brown's house. Granny saw that he was chained and a sly grin crept over her face.

"You stay right here and watch until his dinner is brought out to him," said she to Reddy. "As soon as whoever brings it has gone back to the house you walk right out where Bowser will see you. At the sight of

you, he'll forget all about his dinner. Sit right down where he can see you and stay there until you see that I have got that dinner, or until you hear somebody coming, for you know Bowser will make a great racket. Then slip around back of the barn and join me back of that shed."



So Reddy sat down to watch, and Granny left him. By and by Mrs. Brown came out of the house with a pan full of good things. She put it down in front of Bowser's little house and called to him. Then she turned and hurried back, for it was

very cold. Bowser came out of his little house, yawned and stretched lazily.

It was time for Reddy to do his part. Out he walked and sat down right in front of Bowser and grinned at him. Bowser stared for a minute as if he doubted his own eyes. Such impudence! Bowser growled. Then with a yelp he sprang towards Reddy.

Now the chain that held him was long, but Reddy had taken care not to get too near, and of course Bowser couldn't reach him. He tugged with all his might and yelped and barked frantically, but Reddy just sat there and grinned in the most provoking manner. It was great fun to tease Bowser this way.

Meanwhile old Granny Fox had stolen out from around the corner of the shed behind Bowser. Getting hold of

the edge of the pan with her teeth she pulled it back with her around the corner and out of sight. If she made any noise, Bowser didn't hear it. He was making too much noise himself and was too excited. Presently Reddy heard the sound of an opening door. Mrs. Brown was coming to see what all the fuss was about. Like a flash Reddy darted behind the barn, and all Mrs. Brown saw was Bowser tugging at his chain as he whined and yelped excitedly.

"I guess he must have seen a stray cat or something," said Mrs. Brown and went back in the house. Bowser continued to whine and tug at his chain for a few minutes. Then he gave it up and, growling deep in his throat, turned to eat his dinner. But there wasn't any dinner! It had disappeared, pan and all! Bowser couldn't understand it at all.

Back of the shed Granny and Reddy Fox licked that pan clean; licked it until it was polished. Then, with little sighs of satisfaction, and every once in a while a chuckle, they trotted happily home.