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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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## The Tale of Fatty Coon: A Terrible Fright (8/20)

It was the very next night after old dog Spot had treed Fatty Coon in the big oak near the cornfield. They had finished their evening meal at Farmer Green's house. The cows were milked, the horses had been fed, the chickens had all gone to roost. And Farmer Green looked up at the moon, rising from behind Blue Mountain.

"We'll go coon-hunting again to-night," he said to Johnnie and the hired man. "The corn has brought the coons up from the swamp. We'll start as soon as it grows a little darker."

Well—after a while they set out for the cornfield. And sure enough! old Spot soon began to bark.

"He's treed!" said Farmer Green, pretty soon. And they all hurried over to the edge of the woods, where Spot had chased a coon up into a tall chestnut tree. In the moonlight they could see the coon quite plainly.

"Another little feller!" cried Farmer Green. "I declare, all the coons that come to the cornfield seem to be young ones. This one's no bigger than the one we saw last night."

Now, although Farmer Green never guessed it, it was Fatty Coon who was up there in the tall chestnut. He

had run almost to the woods this time, before he had to take to a tree. In fact, if Spot hadn't been quite so close to him Fatty could have reached the woods, and then he would have just jumped from one tree to another. But there were no trees near enough the big chestnut for that. Fatty had to stay right there and wait for those men to pass on. He wasn't afraid. He felt perfectly safe in his big tree. And he only smiled when Johnnie Green said to his father—  
"I wish I had that young coon. He'd make a fine pet."



"A pet!" exclaimed Farmer Green.

"You remember that pet fox you had, that stole my chickens?"

"Oh, I'd be careful," Johnnie

promised. "Besides, don't you think we ought to catch him, so he won't eat any more corn?"

Farmer Green smiled. He had been a boy himself, once upon a time, and he had not forgotten the pet coon that he had owned when he was just about Johnnie's age.

"All right!" he said at last. "I'll give you one more chance, Johnnie. But you'll have to see that this young coon doesn't kill any of my poultry."

Johnnie promised that nothing of the sort should happen. And then his father and the hired man picked up their axes; and standing on opposite sides of the tall chestnut tree, they began to chop.

How the chips did fly! At the very first blow Fatty knew that this was an entirely different sort of chopping from that which Johnnie had attempted the night before. The great tree shook as if it knew that it would soon come crashing down upon the ground. And as for Fatty Coon, he could not see but that he must fall when the tree did. He, too, shivered and shook. And he wrapped himself all the way around a limb and hung on as tight as ever he could.