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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Tale of Fatty Coon: Fatty And The Green Corn (6/20)

It was mid-summer when Fatty Coon had what he then believed to be the finest time in all his life. And later, when he was older, he still thought that nothing had ever happened to him that was quite so enjoyable as that surprise his mother gave him when he was a young coon.

Of course it was something to eat—the surprise. You must have guessed that, knowing Fatty Coon as you do.

"Come, children!" Mrs. Coon said. "Come with me! I'm going to give you a treat—something specially nice."

"Is it something to eat?" Fatty asked, as they started off in the direction of Farmer Green's fields.

"Yes—and the best thing you ever tasted," Mrs. Coon said.

Fatty was greatly excited. His little bright eyes turned green in the moonlight. He wondered what the surprise would be. And, as usual, he was very hungry. He walked close beside his mother, for he wanted to be the first to taste the surprise. You would think that he would have wanted his two sisters to taste it first, and his brother Blackie, too. But you must not forget that Fatty was greedy. And greedy people are not thoughtful of others.

When Mrs. Coon turned out of the lane and crawled through the fence, Fatty squeezed between the rails very nimbly, for him.

"Here we are!" said his mother.

Fatty looked about him. They stood in a field grown high with tall stalks of some sort, which turned to green, ribbon-like leaves half way up from the ground. Fatty grunted. He was very impolite, you see.

"Well—what is there to eat that's so fine?" he asked.

"This stuff isn't good. It's like eating reeds." He had already bitten into one of the stalks.

"What do you call that?" Mrs. Coon asked. She showed Fatty a long roll of green that grew out of one of the stalks.

"That's something like a cattail," said Fatty. "It isn't good to eat."

"Have you ever tried one?" asked his mother.

"N—no," Fatty said. "But Freddie Bluejay told me they weren't good."

"He did, did he?" Mrs. Coon said nothing more. She stood up on her hind legs and pulled one of the tall stalks down until she could reach that long, green thing that grew there. In a jiffy she had torn it from its stalk. And then she stripped the green covering off it.

"Try that!" said Mrs. Coon with a smile.

Of course it was Fatty who tasted it first. He took a good mouthful of the white kernels, and he was overjoyed. Such sweetness! Such delicious, milky juice! It was a moment that Fatty never forgot.

Fatty began tearing down the stalks for himself and he never said another word until at last he simply had to stop eating just to catch his breath.

"What's its name, Mother?" he inquired.

"Corn, my child."

"Well, why doesn't Freddie Bluejay like it?" Fatty asked.

"He's probably very fond of corn," said Mrs. Coon. "And I've no doubt he was afraid that you would eat up this whole field, once you started."

"I'd like to," said Fatty, with a sigh. "I'd like to eat all the corn in the world."

