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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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# The Tale of Fatty Coon: Fatty Learns Something About Eggs (2/20)

When Fatty Coon started off alone to find something more to eat, after finishing the fish that his mother had brought home for him, he did not know that he was going to have an adventure. He nosed about among the bushes and the tall grasses and caught a few bugs and a frog or two. But he didn't think that THAT was much. He didn't seem to have much luck, down on the ground. So he climbed a tall hemlock, to see if he could find a squirrel's nest, or some bird's eggs.

Fatty loved to climb trees. Up in the big hemlock he forgot, for a time, that he was still hungry. It was delightful to feel the branches swaying under him, and the bright sunshine was warm upon his back. He climbed almost to the very tip-top of the tree and wound himself around the straight stem. The thick, springy branches held him safely, and soon Fatty was fast asleep. Next to eating, Fatty loved sleeping. And now he had a good nap.

Fatty Coon woke up at last, yawned, and slowly unwound himself from the stem of the tree. He was terribly hungry now. And he felt that he simply **MUST** find something to eat at once.

Without going down to the ground, Fatty climbed over into the top of another big tree and his little beady, bright eyes began searching all the branches carefully. Pretty soon Fatty smiled. He smiled because he was pleased. And he was pleased because he saw exactly what he had been looking for. Not far below him was a big nest, built of sticks and lined with bark and moss. It was a crow's nest, Fatty decided, and he lost no time in slipping down to the crotch of the tree where the nest was perched.



There were four white eggs in the nest—the biggest crow's eggs Fatty had ever seen. And he began to eat them hungrily. His nose became smeared with egg, but he didn't mind that at all. He kept thinking how good the eggs tasted—and how he wished there were more of them.

There was a sudden rush through the branches of the tall tree. And Fatty Coon caught a hard blow on his head. He felt something sharp sink into his back, too. And he clutched at the edge of the nest to keep from falling.

Fatty was surprised, to say the least, for he had never known crows to fight like that. And he was frightened, because his back hurt. He couldn't fight, because he was afraid he would fall if he let go of the nest.

There was nothing to do but run home as fast as he could. Fatty tried to hurry; but there was that bird,

beating and clawing his back, and pulling him first one way and then another. He began to think he would never reach home. But at last he came to the old poplar where his mother lived. And soon, to his great joy, he reached the hole in the big branch; and you may well believe that Fatty was glad to slip down into the darkness where his mother, and his brother Blackie, and Fluffy and Cutey his sisters, were all fast asleep. He was glad, because he knew that no crow could follow him down there.

Mrs. Coon waked up. She saw that Fatty's back was sadly torn (for coons, you know, can see in the dark just as well as you can see in the daylight).

"What on earth is the matter?" she exclaimed.

Poor Fatty told her. He cried a little, because his back hurt him, and because he was so glad to be safe at home once more.

"What color were those eggs?" Mrs. Coon inquired.

"White!" said Fatty.

"Ah, ha!" Mrs. Coon said. "Don't you remember that crows' eggs are a blueish green? That must have been a goshawk's nest. And a goshawk is the fiercest of all the hawks there are. It's no wonder your back is clawed. Come here and let me look at it."

Fatty Coon felt quite proud, as his mother examined the marks of the goshawk's cruel claws. And he didn't feel half as sorry for himself as you might think, for he remembered how good the eggs had tasted. He only wished there had been a dozen of them.