



# Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

## The Four Footed Club

*Abbie Phillips Walker*

Mr. Fox went over to Billy Possum's one morning and told him a plan he had, and then they went to Tim Raccoon and told him about it. "We think if we could get Mr. Dog to come over here to the woods," said Mr. Fox to Tim Raccoon, "that we would find it easier hunting up on Mr. Man's farm."

"But who is going to get Mr. Dog to come?" asked Tim. "I do not want to be the one to carry the invitation to him."

"Oh! I am going to send it over by Jim Crow," said Mr. Fox. "That is safe enough, and I shall have Jim tell him that we think it's time all of us were friends; we all belong to the four-footed race."

So off the three went to find Jim Crow, and they found him in good humor, for he had just dined on the corn Mr. Man had planted.

"Yes, I'll take your invitation to him," said Jim. "But what do I get out of it? Do I get invited, too?"

"Why, of course," said Mr. Fox. "You are invited to the party, and you shall have all the corn you can eat. I'll get a bagful from Mr. Man's barn this very night. No one else will like it, so you will have all you can eat."

"Hope he chokes, too," whispered Mr. Fox to Tim Raccoon. "Did you ever see such a greedy fellow? Wouldn't do a little thing like that for a friend without asking for pay."

"Well, what shall I tell him?" asked Jim Crow, with his head cocked on one side to listen.

"Tell him we want him to come to our party. It is going to be at my house tonight," said Mr. Fox.

"You can't get the corn for me until tonight," said Jim.

"Oh, well. I'll get it as soon as it is dark, before the party begins," said Mr. Fox.

"Did you ever see such a fellow, afraid he won't get his pay?" whispered Mr. Fox to Tim and Billy Possum. "And tell Mr. Dog that we have decided that we shall not go over to Mr. Man's anymore," said Mr. Fox. "We want to be friends with him and have him belong to our Four-Footed Club."

"But I thought you said you were going over there to get my corn, so how can I tell Mr. Dog that you are not going to Mr. Man's anymore? Don't you intend to pay me?" asked Jim Crow, sticking out his head in a very angry manner.



"Of course you will be paid," said Mr. Fox, going closer under the tree and looking up at Jim with a smile, "I just meant that we three were not going to bother Mr. Man's hen coops anymore, don't you see?"

"Oh," said Jim Crow, stretching his wings, "well, I'll tell Mr. Dog what you say, but don't forget the corn."

"No, I won't forget it," said Mr. Fox, "and I won't get it either," he added to Tim and Billy Possum, "the old greedy bill, let him caw for the corn; he will tell Mr. Dog, and that is all we care."

They watched Jim Crow out of sight and sat down to wait for his return, and then Mr. Fox told Tim and Billy Possum how he intended to keep Mr. Dog away from the farm for one night at least.

"You see, they always play games at a party," said Mr. Fox, as they sat waiting for Jim Crow to return, "and we will play blind man's buff; then, after a while, we will blind Mr. Dog, only we will put on the blinder so he can't get it off, and there he will have to stay. The rest is easy; we will run over the hill and help ourselves to the fowl without having to think about Mr. Dog barking and waking everybody up."

Tim Raccoon and Billy Possum thought Mr. Fox was the very wisest fellow they knew, and they were laughing about the trick they would play Mr. Dog when Jim Crow returned.

"He says he will be glad to come to your party," said Jim Crow; "he says he is tired of staying awake nights to chase you fellows and will be very glad to be friends and join the Four-Footed Club."

Mr. Fox thanked Jim, and away he flew, but he called back, "Don't forget my corn; I'll be there early."

"We must change the place to have the party," said Mr. Fox as soon as Jim Crow

flew away. "If we don't, he'll make a great fuss when he finds out there is no corn for him, and there isn't going to be any.

"And then, you see, he might help Mr. Dog to get off the bandage after we run off, so we must meet Mr. Dog at the edge of the woods and take him over to your house, Tim."

That night, just as the moon came up and shone very faintly through the trees into the woods, Tim Raccoon and Billy Possum and Mr. Fox waited to meet Mr. Dog. He was all dressed up in his red coat and green trousers, so the three waiters felt safe.

Off they all trotted to Tim Raccoon's house, but if they had looked up, they might have seen over their heads a little behind them Jim Crow.

Jim Crow happened to be sitting in the tree right over their heads as the three waited for Mr. Dog, and he heard that the party was to be at Tim Raccoon's instead of at Mr. Fox's.

"That is strange," he thought. "I'll just watch. If they try to play any tricks, I'll fool them."

When they reached Tim's house, Jim Crow flew to a tree and watched. He could hear them laughing and running, so he flew in the pantry window and looked about.

When he found there was no corn in the pantry, Jim Crow was pretty angry. He flew back and waited, and pretty soon the door of Tim Raccoon's house opened, and out ran Tim and Billy Possum and Mr. Fox, and away they flew through the woods.

"Now, what does that mean, I wonder," said Jim. "I wonder where Mr. Dog can be. I'll look in the window and see."

When he looked in, there was Mr. Dog, with his eyes bandaged, walking around the room on his hind legs and trying to find the others, and then Jim Crow saw that Mr. Dog's front paws were tied behind him.

"They played it on you, too," said Jim, flying in and picking at the bandage over Mr. Dog's eyes.

"Where are they?" asked Mr. Dog, looking around when the bandage was off. "We were playing blind man's buff."

"But why have you got your paws tied behind you?" asked Jim Crow.

"That is the way they play at the Four-Footed Club," explained Mr. Dog.

"Well, you run over the hill and see what those three rogues are doing, and you

will understand more about this game than you do now," said Jim Crow. "I think I understand more than I did this morning, and you tell them I sent you, Mr. Dog."

Very much in a hurry, Tim Coon and Mr. Fox and Billy Possum came over the hill soon after, and when he saw them, Jim Crow called out:

"Been after my corn?"

But they did not answer. They ran right on, never stopping until they were in their homes, and the doors locked behind them.

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