



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The plaid trousers of Mr. Raccoon

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Mr. Tim Raccoon had a pair of red-and-green plaid trousers and that was what made everybody in the woods envious.

But there was one who not only was envious—he was very jealous of his rights—and that one was Mr. Fox.

For Mr. Fox thought, and so did every one else in the woods, that he was the very smartest and nattiest fellow around until Tim Raccoon came along with those red-and-green plaid trousers.

Mr. Fox at first did not bother much about the trousers, for he felt sure that in a short time he could persuade Tim Raccoon to part with them, but here he was mistaken, as time proved.

Mr. Fox had called on Tim every day. He had carried the fattest hen or duck, and even two fat chickens, and each time he hinted that he might part with each or any of them if he were offered the right thing.

But Tim Raccoon was well supplied with the season's good things to eat and would not offer anything worth having.

And that was the reason that Mr. Fox sat on his steps one morning in deep thought while he smoked his old corncob pipe.

While he was thinking his eyes happened to alight upon a piece of paper on which there was some printing, and then he saw the word WOOL in big letters.

"Wool?" thought Mr. Fox; "that is what those red-and-green trousers are; all wool, Tim Raccoon says."

Mr. Fox got up from the steps and picked up the paper. He began to read, and as he read his eyes grew big. The more he read the bigger they grew, and at last he became so interested he dropped his pipe from his mouth without noticing it.

Mr. Fox read all the printing. Then he crumpled up the paper and threw it into the bushes.



"If he only would get them soiled," he said, "the rest would be easy; he would be sure to ask my advice.

"I know what I will do," he said, starting for his barn. "I'll paint the seat of my rocking-chair; he loves to sit in that."

Pretty soon Mr. Fox had his rocking-chair painted a nice shiny black, and then he sat down to watch for Tim Raccoon, who always passed by about that time. He did not have to wait long before Tim came along, wearing the plaid trousers. "Come in, Tim, and have a smoke," said Mr. Fox, in his most polite manner.

Mr. Fox went to the closet to get a pipe for Tim, and, just as he expected, down sat Tim Raccoon in the rocking-chair right on the wet paint.

"Oh dear, oh dear, how sorry I am!" said Mr. Fox, hurrying to Tim.

"Get up quick, Tim! I just painted that chair. I hope you have not got it on your plaid trousers."

Mr. Fox's eyes twinkled as he got behind poor Tim to look at the seat of his trousers, but that, of course, Tim Raccoon did not see, and when Mr. Fox told him there was a big black spot, but that he felt sure he could tell him just how to get it out, Tim thought he was a very kind fellow.

"Don't you bother at all, Tim. I read the other day just how to wash woolen garments. It said it was sure and safe, so I will help you, for I really feel to blame; I ought to have remembered that rocker was freshly painted.

"First, I must get you some white soap, and as I have none in the house I shall have to run over to Mr. Man's and get some; he has everything in his house."

Tim Raccoon thought Mr. Fox was the very kindest fellow he knew, and he ran right home to take off the trousers and wait for Mr. Fox to return.

"Oh, you might put on a kettle of water," called Mr. Fox as Tim was hurrying away, "and have it boiling; it must boil hard."

Mr. Fox had a harder time than he expected getting the soap from Mr. Man's, for Mr. Dog had gone to sleep right in the doorway of the barn, and that was where Mr. Fox wanted to go.

He had seen a piece of white soap on a box in the barn one day, where Mr. Man had been washing his best harness, and he hoped very much he would find it there now.

After a while Mr. Dog awoke and went away and Mr. Fox crept in. He was lucky enough to find the soap, and off he ran for Tim Raccoon's house just as the sun was going down.

"I risked a good deal, Tim, to get this soap," he said. "I do not like to go over the hill in the daytime—too risky.

"Now we must put the trousers in a pail," explained Mr. Fox, "and then very slowly pour the water on them. Are you sure the water is boiling hard?"

Tim said he was, and so Mr. Fox told him to bring it along, and as Tim poured it in the pail Mr. Fox shaved up the soap and dropped it in.

"Now get me a stick," he said, "so I can stir it and make a good suds, and now I will leave you, for I am sure you can do the rest, and I must get home, as it is getting dark.

"All you have to do is to let them soak overnight and take them out in the morning and hang them in the sun, and if that recipe for washing woolen is good for anything your trousers will be as good as new."

Off ran Mr. Fox for home, chuckling to himself all the way. "Yes, they will be as good as new," he said, "but not for you to wear, my friend Tim. They may fit a very young raccoon, but not a full-grown-up raccoon like you. Oh no."

Poor Tim Raccoon viewed his trousers as they hung on the line the next day with a sinking heart, for the black stain of the paint was of course still to be seen, but later when they were dry and he tried to put them on it was not a feeling of sadness which came over him. It was anger.



Tim looked at himself in the looking-glass and saw that his handsome plaid trousers were no longer fit for him to wear. They were well up to his knees, and so snugly did they fit him he could not bend, let alone walk.

It took some time to get out of them, but when he did he took them over to Mr. Fox's house and showed him the remains of what had once been his plaid trousers.

"It did not work right. That is all I can say," said Mr. Fox, trying hard to look sad. "You never can tell about those recipes you read in papers and magazines until you have tried them."

"I wish some one else had tried it first," said Tim, with a sigh, as he looked at his trousers.

"I might have worn a long-tailed coat and covered up the paint spot, but there is nothing I can do with these short legs."

“You could wear a skirt or put some lace on the bottom of the legs,” suggested Mr. Fox.

“Are you sure the water had to boil?” asked Tim.

“Sure as I am that the sun will shine!” replied Mr. Fox. “Are you sure, Tim, those trousers are all wool?”

“I thought they were,” said Tim.

“I know they are,” said Mr. Fox, looking after Tim down the path.

Of course the plaid trousers were of no use to any one, but Mr. Fox was satisfied so long as he did not have to see Tim Raccoon wearing them.

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