

CHAPTER VII

Old Granny Fox Tries a New Plan

OLD Granny Fox kept thinking about Danny Meadow Mouse. She knew that he was fat, and it made her mouth water every time she thought of him. She made up her mind that she must and would have him. She knew that Danny had been very, very much frightened when she and Reddy Fox had tried so hard to catch him by plunging down through the snow into his little tunnels after him, and she felt pretty sure that he wouldn't go far away from the old fence-post, in the hollow of which he was snug and safe.

Old Granny Fox is very smart. "Danny Meadow Mouse won't put his nose out of that old fence-post for a day or two. Then he'll get tired of staying inside all the time, and he'll peep out of one of his little round doorways to see if the way is clear. If he doesn't see any danger, he'll come out and run around on top of the snow to get some of the seeds in the tops of the tall grasses that stick out through

the snow. If nothing frightens him, he'll keep going, a little farther and a little farther from that old fence-post. I must see to it that Danny Meadow Mouse isn't frightened for a few days." So said old Granny Fox to herself, as she lay under a hemlock tree, studying how she could best get the next meal.

Then she called Reddy Fox to her and forbade him to go down on the meadows until she should tell him he might. Reddy grumbled and mumbled and didn't see why he shouldn't go where he pleased, but he didn't dare disobey. You see he had a sore foot. He had hurt it on a wire barb when he was plunging through the snow after Danny Meadow Mouse, and now he had to run on three legs. That meant that he must depend upon Granny Fox to help him get enough to eat. So Reddy didn't dare to disobey.

It all came out just as Granny Fox had thought it would. Danny Meadow Mouse *did* get tired of staying in the old fence-post. He *did* peep out first, and then he *did* run a little way on the snow, and then a little farther and a little farther. But all the time he took great care not to get more than a jump or two from one of his little round doorways leading down to his tunnels under the snow.

Hidden on the edge of the Green Forest, Granny Fox watched him. She looked up at the sky, and she knew that it was going to snow again. "That's

good,” said she. “Tomorrow morning I’ll have fat Meadow Mouse for breakfast,” and she smiled a hungry smile.

The next morning, before jolly, round, red Mr. Sun was out of bed, old Granny Fox trotted down onto the meadows and straight over to where, down under the snow, lay the old fence-post. It had snowed again, and all the little doorways of Danny Meadow Mouse were covered up with soft, fleecy snow. Behind Granny Fox limped Reddy Fox, grumbling to himself.

When they reached the place where the old fence-post lay buried under the snow, old Granny Fox stretched out as flat as she could. Then she told Reddy to cover her up with the new soft snow. Reddy did as he was told, but all the time he grumbled. “Now you go off to the Green Forest and keep out of sight,” said Granny Fox. “By and by I’ll bring you some Meadow Mouse for your breakfast,” and Granny Fox chuckled to think how smart she was and how she was going to catch Danny Meadow Mouse.