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"Little Stories for Bedtime"
by Thornton W. Burgess

THE BOLDNESS OF TERROR THE GOSHAWK

For peace and safety pray beware,
And never take a foolish dare.

NEVER in his life had Reddy Fox felt more uncomfortable than he did as he stole up through the Old Orchard toward Farmer Brown's henyard in broad daylight. Terror the Goshawk had dared him to visit the henyard and steal a hen while Farmer Brown was about. All the way there Reddy hoped that Farmer Brown would not be about. He hoped that no one would be about. He wished with all his heart that he had kept his tongue still



Before Farmer Brown Could Move He Was in the Air Again Carrying Away That Fat Hen.

when he had met Terror, and so have avoided this unpleasant scrape.

The truth is, Reddy didn't dare visit that henyard when Farmer Brown or Farmer Brown's Boy was about. He knew that he wouldn't dare go beyond the old stone wall on the edge of the Old Orchard if he should find that anyone was near that henyard. So he hoped and hoped that when he got there the way would be clear, for he knew that Terror the Goshawk was sitting in the top of a tall tree where

he could watch all that went on.

When Reddy reached the old stone wall on the edge of the Old Orchard and peeped over, his heart sank, for Farmer Brown himself was in the henyard feeding the hens. Reddy stopped right where he was. Nothing could have induced him to go a step nearer. "Anyway," muttered Reddy to himself, "Terror won't dare go any nearer, and so we'll be even. No one would dare visit that henyard and steal a hen right under Farmer Brown's nose. No one is bold enough to do a thing like that."

Reddy looked back to where Terror the Goshawk was sitting. Suddenly Terror spread his great wings and shot out from that tree straight toward Reddy. Reddy could not but admire the speed with which he flew. Straight over the Old Orchard he came, and swooping down just above Reddy's head, he cried, "Coward!" and then shot up into the air and over Farmer Brown's henyard. There he made a little circle and then shot down like a thunderbolt, seizing a hen in his great claws only a few feet from where Farmer Brown was standing. Before Farmer Brown could move he was in the air again carrying away that fat hen. Farmer Brown yelled. All the hens screamed and raced for the henhouse. Terror paid no attention either to Farmer Brown or the frightened hens. Once more he flew low just over Reddy's head and once more cried, "Coward!" then swiftly disappeared over in the Green Forest. He had made good his dare.

As for Reddy Fox, he sneaked away toward the Old Pasture. In his heart he admired the boldness of Terror the Goshawk, but he hated him more than ever, and that hate grew as he thought of the fine breakfast Terror was enjoying while he himself could find nothing to put in his empty stomach.

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