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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And Fido Flip-flop (4/31)

Well, as soon as Uncle Wiggily found himself inside the bear's den—oh, just listen to me! That was in the other story, wasn't it? Yes, we left him in the funny little house in the woods, with the clawy creature grabbing him.

Now, what do you suppose that clawy creature was? Why, a great, big owl, to be sure, with round, staring, yellow eyes, and he had grabbed Uncle Wiggily in his claws, and pulled him inside the house.

"Now, I've got you!" cried the owl. "I was just wishing some one would come along, and you did. Some of my friends are coming to tea this afternoon, and you'll do very nicely made up into sandwiches."

Wasn't that a perfectly dreadful way to talk about our Uncle Wiggily? Well, I guess yes!

"Now you're here, make yourself at home," went on the owl, sarcastic-like, as he locked the front door and put the key in his pocket. "Did you see the sign?"

"Yes," said Uncle Wiggily, "I did. But I don't call it fair. I thought I would find my fortune in here."

"The sign says you'll be surprised, and I guess you are surprised, aren't you?" asked the owl.

"Yes," answered the rabbit, "very much so. But I'd rather have a nice surprise party, with peanuts and lemonade, than this."

"No matter," said the owl, snapping his beak like a pair of shears, "here you are and here you'll stay! My friends will soon arrive. I'll now put the kettle on, to boil for tea."

Well, poor Uncle Wiggily didn't know what to do. He couldn't look in his valise to see if there was anything in it by which he might escape, for he had dropped the satchel outside when the owl grabbed him, and he only had his barber-pole crutch.

"Oh, this is worse and worse!" thought the poor old rabbit.

But listen, Johnnie Bushytail is outside the owl's house, and he's going to do a wonderful trick.

As soon as he saw the door shut on Uncle Wiggily, that brave squirrel boy began to plan how he could save him, and the first thing he did was to gather up a lot of acorns.

Then he perched himself in a tree, right in front of the owl's door, and Johnnie began throwing acorns at it.

"Rat-a-tat-tat!" went the acorns on the wooden panels.

"Ha! Those must be my friends!" exclaimed the bad owl, opening the door a little crack so he could peek out, but taking care to stand in front of it, so that Uncle Wiggily couldn't slip out. But, of course, the owl saw no one. "It must have been the wind," he said as he shut the door.

Then Johnnie Bushytail threw some more acorns at the door. "Pitter-patter-patter-pit!" they went, like hailstones in an ice cream can.

"Ah, there are my friends, sure, this time!" thought the owl, and once more he peered out, but no one was there. "It must have been a tree branch hitting against the door," said the owl, as he sharpened a big knife with which to make the sandwiches. Then Johnnie threw some more acorns, and the owl now thought positively his friends were there, and when he opened it and saw no one he was real mad.

"Some one is playing tricks on me!" exclaimed the savage bird. "I'll catch them next time!"

Now this was just what Johnnie Bushytail wanted, so he threw a whole double handful of acorns at the door, and when the owl heard them pattering against the wood he rushed out.

"Now, I've got you!" he cried, but he hadn't, for Johnnie was up a tree. And, for the moment, the owl forgot about Uncle Wiggily, and there the door was wide open. "Run out, Uncle Wiggily! Run out!" cried Johnnie, and out the old gentleman rabbit hopped, catching up his valise, and away into the woods he ran, with Johnnie scurrying along in the tree tops above him, and laughing at the owl, who flew back to his house, but too late to catch the bunny.

"That's what you get for fooling people so they'll come into your house," called the squirrel boy. "It serves you right, Mr. Owl. Come on, Uncle Wiggily, we'll get away from here."

So they went on together until it was time for Johnnie to go home, and he said he'd tell Uncle Wiggily's friends that he had met the old gentleman rabbit, and that he

hadn't found his fortune yet, but that he was looking for it every minute, and had had many adventures. Well, Uncle Wiggily went on some more, for quite a distance, until it was noon time, and then he sat down in the cool, green woods, where there were some jacks-in-the-pulpit growing near some ferns, and there Uncle Wiggily ate his lunch of lettuce sandwiches, with carrot butter on them, and gnawed on a bit of potato. Just as he was almost through, he heard a rustling in the bushes, and a voice exclaimed:

"Oh, dear!"

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Uncle Wiggily, thinking perhaps an adventure was going to happen to him. "Who are you?"

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed the voice again.

Then, before the old rabbit could jump up and run away, even if he had wanted to, out from under a big bush came a little white poodle dog, with curly, silky hair. He walked right up to Uncle Wiggily, that dog did, and the rabbit wasn't a bit afraid, for the dog wasn't much bigger than he was, and looked very kind.

"What do you want, doggie?" gently asked Uncle Wiggily.

The dog didn't answer, but he gave a little short bark, and then he began turning somersaults. Over and over he went, sometimes backward and sometimes frontward, and sometimes sideways. And when he was finished, he made a low bow, and walked around on his two hind legs, just to show he wasn't proud or stuck up.

"There!" exclaimed the poodle doggie. "Is that worth something to eat, Mr. Rabbit?"

"Indeed it is," answered Uncle Wiggily, "but I would have given you something to eat without you doing all those tricks, though I enjoyed them very much. Where did you learn to do them?"



"Oh, in the circus where I used to be, I always had to do tricks for my dinner," said the doggie.

"What is your name?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"Fido Flip-Flop," was the answer. "You see they call me that because I turn so many flip-flops," and then Uncle Wiggily gave him some lunch,

and told the dog about how he, himself, was traveling all over in search of his fortune.

"Why, that's just what I'm doing, too," exclaimed Fido Flip-Flop. "Suppose we travel together? and maybe we'll each find a fortune."

"That's just what we'll do," agreed Uncle Wiggily.

And then, all of a sudden, before you could open your eyes and shut them again, two savage foxes jumped out from behind a big stump.

"You grab the dog and I'll grab the rabbit," called the biggest fox, and right at Uncle Wiggily and Fido they sprang, gnashing their teeth.

But don't worry. I'll find a way to save them, and if the canary bird doesn't take my lead pencil and stick it in his seed dish I'll tell you in the following story about Uncle Wiggily doing some tricks.