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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And Simple Simon

"There!" exclaimed Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper, who, with Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, was visiting at the Littletail rabbit burrow one day. "There they are, Uncle Wiggily, all nicely wrapped up for you to carry."

"What's nicely wrapped up?" asked the bunny uncle.

"And what do you want me to carry?" And he looked over the tops of his spectacles at the muskrat lady, sort of surprised and wondering.

"I want you to carry the jam tarts, and they are all nicely wrapped up," went on Nurse Jane. "Don't you remember, I said I was going to make some for you to take over to Mrs. Wibblewobble, the duck lady?"

"Oh, of course!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "The jam tarts are for Lulu, Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble, the duck children. I remember now. I'll take them right over."

"They are all nicely wrapped up in a clean napkin," went on the muskrat lady, "so be careful not to squash them and squeeze out the jam, as they are very fresh."

"I'll be careful," promised the old rabbit gentleman, as he put on his fur coat and took down off the parlor mantle his red, white and blue striped barber-pole rheumatism crutch, made of a corn-stalk.

"Oh, wait a minute, Uncle Wiggily! Wait a minute!" cried Mrs. Littletail, the bunny mother of Sammie and Susie, the rabbit children, as Mr. Longears started out. "Where are you going?"

"Over to Mrs. Wibblewobble, the duck lady's house, with some jam tarts for Lulu, Alice and Jimmie," answered Uncle Wiggily.

"Then would you mind carrying, also, this little rubber plant over to her?" asked Mrs. Littletail. "I told Mrs. Wibblewobble I would send one to her the first chance I had."

"Right gladly will I take it," said Uncle Wiggily. So Mrs. Littletail, the rabbit lady, wrapped the pot of the little rubber plant, with its thick, shiny green leaves, in a piece of paper, and Uncle Wiggily, tucking it under one paw, while with the other he leaned on his crutch, started off over the fields and through the woods, with the jam tarts in his pocket. Over toward the home of the Wibblewobble duck family he hopped.

Mr. Longears, the nice old rabbit gentleman, had not gone very far before, all at once, from behind a snow-covered stump, he heard a voice saying:

"Oh, dear! I know I'll never find him! I've looked all over and I can't see him anywhere. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! What shall I do?"

"My! That sounds like some one in trouble," Uncle Wiggily said to himself. "I wonder if that is any of my little animal friends? I must look."

So the rabbit gentleman peeked over the top of the stump, and there he saw a queer-looking boy, with a

funny smile on his face, which was as round and shiny as the bottom of a new dish pan. And the boy looked so kind that Uncle Wiggily knew he would not hurt even a lollypop, much less a rabbit gentleman.

"Oh, hello!" cried the boy, as soon as he saw Uncle Wiggily. "Who are you?"

"I am Mr. Longears," replied the bunny uncle. "And who are you?"

"Why, I'm Simple Simon," was the answer.

"I'm in the Mother Goose book, you know."

"Oh, yes, I remember," said Uncle Wiggily. "But you seem to be out of the book, just now."

"I am," said Simple Simon.

"The page with my picture on it fell out of the book, and so I ran away. But I can't find him anywhere and I don't know what to do."

"Who is it you can't find?"

asked the rabbit.

"The pie-man," answered the funny, round-faced boy.

"Don't you remember, it says in the book, 'Simple Simon met a pie-man going to the fair?'"

"Oh, yes, I remember," Uncle Wiggily answered. "What's next?"

"Well, I can't find him anywhere," said Simple Simon. "I guess the pie-man didn't fall out of the book when I did."



"That's too bad," spoke Uncle Wiggily, kindly.

"It is," said Simple Simon. "For you know he ought to ask me for my penny, when I want to taste of his pies, and indeed, I haven't any penny—not any, and I'm so hungry for a piece of pie!" And Simple Simon began to cry.

"Oh, don't cry," said Uncle Wiggily. "See, in my pocket I have some jam tarts. They are for Lulu, Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble, the ducks, but there are enough to let you have one."

"Why, you are a regular pie-man yourself; aren't you?" laughed Simple Simon, as he ate one of Nurse Jane's nice jam tarts.

"Well, you might call me that," said the bunny uncle.

"Though I s'pose a tart-man would be nearer right."

"But there's something else," went on Simple Simon. "You know in the Mother Goose book I have to go for water, in my mother's sieve. But soon it all ran through." And then, cried Simple Simon, "Oh, dear, what shall I do?" And he held out a sieve, just like a coffee strainer, full of little holes. "How can I ever get water in that?" he asked. "I've tried and tried, but I can't. No one can! It all runs through!"

Uncle Wiggily thought for a minute. Then he cried:

"I have it! I'll pull some leaves off the rubber plant I am taking to Mrs. Wibblewobble. We'll put the leaves in the bottom of the sieve, and, being of rubber, water can't get through them. Then the sieve will hold water, or milk either, and you can bring it to your mother."

"Oh, fine!" cried Simple Simon, licking the sticky squeegee jam off his fingers. So Uncle Wiggily put some

rubber plant leaves in the bottom of the sieve, and Simple Simon, filling it full of water, carried it home to his mother, and not a drop ran through, which, of course, wasn't at all like the story in the book.

"But that isn't my fault," said Uncle Wiggily, as he took the rest of the jam tarts to the Wibblewobble children.

"I just had to help Simple Simon." Which was very kind of Uncle Wiggily, I think; don't you? It didn't matter if, just once, something happened that wasn't in the book.