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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And The Butcher

It was raining in animal land, where Uncle Wiggily Longears, the nice rabbit gentleman, lived. It had been raining for several days; in fact, ever since the bunny uncle had helped Peter-Peter pick up the pumpkin seeds.

Uncle Wiggily had been caught out in the rain then, and had gone in the pumpkin shell, where Peter-Peter kept his wife very well. That rain was only a shower, which was soon over, but the storm began again and had lasted ever since. It was very wet in animal land.

"My!" exclaimed Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper. "If it doesn't stop soon I'll never get the clothes dry."

"Worse than that," said Uncle Wiggily. "If it doesn't stop soon there will be a flood, and our hollow-stump bungalow will be full of water. In fact, I think there is a little water in it now."

Well, it kept on raining, and there was a flood, so much so that Uncle Wiggily's cellar was full of water, almost up to the floor, and all about, outside the hollow-stump bungalow, there were little lakes and puddles and rivers of rain water in the woods.

"Will it ever stop raining?" asked Nurse Jane, as she stood at the window, looking out. "If it doesn't, I don't know what we shall do. I need some things from the store."

"I'll get them for you," said Uncle Wiggily, kindly.

"But how can you, in all this rain?"

"Oh, very easily," answered the bunny uncle, twinkling his pink nose to make himself bright and cheerful like.

"I'll put on my rubber boots, my raincoat, take an umbrella and go to the store."

"Well, I'm sure it's very brave of you to go out in this storm," said Nurse Jane, "and I hope your rheumatism doesn't catch cold. But we need some bread, sugar, salt and other things."

"I'll get them," said Uncle Wiggily, and off he started through the storm, well wrapped up so he would get no wetter than could be helped.

The rabbit uncle finally got to the store, and the monkey-doodle gentleman who kept it put in a basket the things Nurse Jane wanted.

He wrapped them in heavy paper, putting some over the top of the basket so in case Uncle Wiggily's umbrella blew wrong side out the groceries would not get wet.

"Well, I guess everything is going to be all right," thought Uncle Wiggily to himself, as he hopped along through the rain on his way back to the hollow-stump bungalow. "I don't believe I'm even going to have an adventure (except now and then splashing into a puddle) for all my coming out in the storm. And I haven't had an adventure in some time. I really wish something would happen!"

Uncle Wiggily had no sooner thought this than, all of a sudden, something did happen. He slipped into a big

puddle with his rubber boots. The water came nearly to the top of them, but that did not so much matter as did something else. For when the bunny uncle tried to pull his feet up out of the puddle he couldn't do it. No, sir, he could no more pull his feet up than you could get loose from sticky fly paper in case you happened to sit

down in it, which, I hope, you never do; though our cat did once. And such a time!



"My! This is quite too bad!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "I wonder what could have happened? My feet are caught fast!" He squirmed about a bit with his feet in the rubber boots. Then he said:

"I know what has happened. My feet are held tight in the

crooked, twisted old root of a tree that is down under the puddle. I'm caught as badly as if I were in a trap. Oh, dear! This is an adventure, all right, but not the kind I like. I wonder how I can get loose?"

And well might the bunny uncle wonder. His feet were caught fast in the root, away down under water and he could not reach down with his paws to loosen them, for he had his umbrella in one paw and the basket of groceries on the other, for there was water all around him.

"Oh, dear!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "I s'pose I could pull my feet out of the rubber boots and just leave them

caught in the puddle, but if I did that I'd have to go home bare-pawed, and I'd catch my rheumatism worse than ever. Oh, dear! What shall I do?"

Just then, through the woods Uncle Wiggily heard the sound of a drum. "Dub-dub! Dubbity-dubbity-dub!"

"Ha! I wonder if that can be Sammie Littletail, the bunny boy, coming along with his Christmas drum? If it is he can help me," said Mr. Longears.

Uncle Wiggily, still caught fast, looked through the trees, and he saw some one sailing along in a washtub. And it was the butcher man, in his white apron and cap, with a big knife in his hand, who was drumming, with the knife handle, on the sides of the tub. And the butcher sang this song:

"Rub-a-dub-dub! Three men in a tub;
The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker;
They all jumped over a hard baked potato."

"Why, that's in Mother Goose!" cried Uncle Wiggily, joyful like. "This butcher must be a friend of hers. I wonder if he could help me."

Just then the butcher saw Uncle Wiggily caught fast in the puddle, and, stopping his washtub ship, he asked:

"Are you in trouble?"

"Trouble? I should say I was!" cried the bunny uncle.

"My feet are caught fast in a tree root down under the water, and I can't get loose. Can you help me?"

"I can and will," replied the butcher. Then, with his long, sharp knife, he reached down under the puddle and cut the tree root that was holding Uncle Wiggily's feet fast, taking care not to cut the bunny uncle's rubber boots.

"There you are!" cried the butcher. "Now you're loose."
"Oh, thank you so much," said Uncle Wiggily, hopping out of the puddle. "But, excuse me, I thought there were three of you rub-a-dub-dub men in a tub. You are only one."

"Well, there were three of us," said the butcher. "But since Mother Goose wrote that verse about us, after we jumped out of the baked potato, we grew so large that three of us had hard work to fit in one tub. So now we each have a tub to ourselves. Now I must sail on. The baker and candlestick maker and I are having a tub-boat-race. I hope I win. Good-by!"

And on he sailed in his tub, while Uncle Wiggily, his feet no longer caught fast, went safely on to his hollow-stump bungalow through the rain with the groceries.