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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And The Candlestick Maker

After supper, one night, Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, put on his tall silk hat, his fur-lined overcoat, and, taking his red, white and blue-striped barber-pole rheumatism crutch down off the piano, he started for the door.

"What! You are not going out to-night, are you?" asked Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper, in surprise.

"Why, yes, for a little while," answered the bunny uncle. "It has stopped raining, you know, and the ground has dried up. It is cold, but I have my fur coat, so I shall be nice and warm."

"Where are you going?" asked Nurse Jane.

"To call on Mr. Longtail, the mouse gentleman. He likes night visits better than day ones, so that's why I go in the evening. He's like an owl that way."

"Well, don't stay too late," said Nurse Jane, and Uncle Wiggily promised that he would not. Out into the night he went, but it was not very dark, for there was a moon shining. And as the rabbit uncle was hopping along through the woods he suddenly stepped upon something round, which rolled from under his paw and almost threw him down.

"Ha! I wonder what that can be?" Uncle Wiggily said. He looked and saw a brass candlestick on the ground. "This is queer," went on the bunny uncle. "I did not know that candlesticks grew in the woods. Some one must have dropped it. I'll take it with me, and perhaps Mr. Longtail will know whose it is."

With the candlestick in one paw and his rheumatism crutch in the other, Uncle Wiggily once more hopped on. Pretty soon he saw a little light flickering through the trees.

"Why, that looks just like a lightning bug," said the bunny uncle, "only they are not out this time of the year. I wonder what that can be?"

Then he heard a tum-tum-tum, drumming sound, and a voice sang:

"Rub-a-dub-dub, three men in a tub;
The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker,
And the baker has taken the hot baked potato."

"Why, that must be the last of the three, queer Mother Goose men, who went sailing a race in washtubs, when the weather was rainy," said Uncle Wiggily. "And this one must be the candlestick maker, for I have met the other two."

"But if this is the candlestick maker I don't see how he can be sailing in his tub when the rain has stopped, and there are no little rivers, lakes or even puddles in the woods," went on the rabbit gentleman. "Everything is frozen over. I don't see how he can."

Then the singing voice stopped, and Uncle Wiggily heard some one crying:

"Oh, dear! Ouch, how it burns! Oh, where can it be? Where can it be?"

The flickering light came nearer, and Uncle Wiggily, looking through the trees, saw that it was not a lightning bug, or firefly, but a little man, with a leather apron on, and a hammer and other tools hanging from his belt. The tools jingled and rattled. Behind the man, who was pulling it along as if it were a sled, with a rope through one the handles, was the washtub. In one hand the man carried a lighted candle, and, all the while, he kept on saying:

"Oh, dear! Ouch! How it burns me! Oh, my!"

"Excuse me," said Uncle Wiggily, politely, "but you seem to be in trouble. Perhaps I can help you. What burns you?"

"This candle," answered the man. "I ought to have a candlestick to hold it, but I dropped my nice brass

candlestick as I ran through the woods, and now I have to hold the candle in my bare fingers. And it is so short that it burns me. Ouch!"



"Ha! Then this is what you want," Uncle Wiggily said, and he handed over the candlestick he had picked up.

"The very thing!" cried the little man, in delight. "Thank you so much. Now my fingers won't burn any more."

He stuck the end of the lighted candle in the stick and spoke again.

"I'm the candlestick maker, as you can see; I make candlesticks, but just now I am not making any, as I am on a race with the butcher and baker to see who first will get to Mother Goose's house. We started out in a dreadful rain-storm, when we could float in our tubs like boats, but the butcher and baker seem to have gotten ahead of me."

"They have," said Uncle Wiggily. "I met them two days ago."

"Then there isn't much use in my keeping on," said the candlestick maker. "But it has gotten colder. It may snow, and if I come to a hill I can coast down it in my tub, which I made into a sled when I found the ground frozen and all the water gone. If I can slide down hill in my tub-sled I may yet get ahead of the butcher and baker and win the prize of a hot baked potato."

"Perhaps you may," said Uncle Wiggily, as he told how the baker had kindly thawed him off the frozen log with the hot baked potato and a hot loaf of bread.

"Well, I'll be getting on," said the candlestick maker, after a bit. "Thank you for being kind to me. If ever I can do you a favor I will. My fingers no longer burn." Then he hurried off through the woods, dragging his tub-sled after him.

Uncle Wiggily had a nice visit with Mr. Longtail, the mouse gentleman, but when the bunny uncle started home the moon had gone down and it was very dark. Soon Uncle Wiggily was lost in the woods. He could not

tell which way to go, and he hopped around, stubbing his paws and bunking into trees, until he was all sore and lame.

"Oh, I wish I had a light!" he cried. And, no sooner had he spoken than he heard a drumming sound, and along came the candlestick maker with the lighted candle.

"Here you are! Here's your light, Uncle Wiggily!" the candlestick maker cried. "I'll light you all the way to your hollow-stump bungalow."

"Good!" cried the bunny uncle. "But I don't want to take your time and delay you. I thought you were racing."

"I gave it up. The baker won and got there first. I just met Old Mother Hubbard and she told me. So I'm going to take you home." And he did, making the woods light with his candle, all the way to the bunny uncle's hollow-stump bungalow.