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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And The Cow

This is a story about Uncle Wiggily and the cow. Not the cow with the crumpled horn, nor yet the one that jumped over the moon, when the dish ran away with the spoon.

This was a sort of a red cow which ate green grass and gave white milk that was churned into yellow butter to be eaten on brown bread. There is no use asking me about all those colors for I don't know—nobody knows. They're just there, and that's all there is about it.

Now for the story.

One day the bunny rabbit gentleman was hopping over the fields and through the woods on his way to the store for Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy. He was going to get his muskrat lady housekeeper a jug of molasses so Nurse Jane might make a cake.

Uncle Wiggily hopped on and on, wondering if he would have an adventure that day, and he was thinking how good the molasses cake would taste when, all of a sudden, down in a field he saw a red cow. Not exactly red like a rose, you understand, or red like a barn, but still somewhat between those colors—a brownish-red, I suppose it would be called.

"Moo! Moo! Moo!" called the cow, in such mournful tones that Uncle Wiggily right away said:

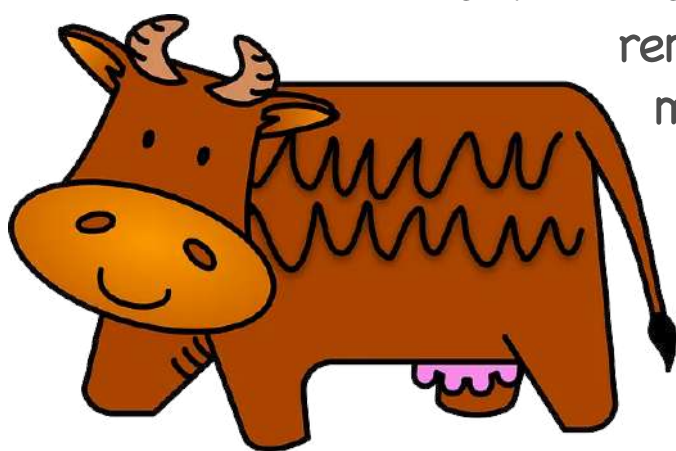
"Something must be the matter! I'm going down and see if I can help that poor cow!"

Down into the meadow hopped the bunny rabbit gentleman, and when he reached the cow he looked at her and she looked at him, and the bunny asked:

"What is the matter, Mrs. Cow?"

"Oh," was the sad answer, "I've lost the cud that I always chew, and now I don't know what to do! I'm so upset I'm sure I'll give sour milk to-night, instead of sweet!"

"That would be too bad," Uncle Wiggily remarked. "This cud of yours— may I ask what it is?"



"Well, it isn't gum, as many boys and girls suppose, when they see me chewing," spoke the cow

lady. "My cud is a bunch of grass, which I crop and pull up by winding my tongue about it, for I haven't two sets of teeth as have many animals. I only have teeth on my upper jaw. On my lower jaw I have no teeth, but the gums are very hard so I can chew grass, and that is what makes my cud. I only chew the grass a little bit, when I first pull it from the meadow. I swallow it down into my first stomach, and, when I have more time, I bring the cud of grass up into my mouth and chew it as long as I please, so it will be good for me to put into my last stomach."

"Well, well!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily in surprise. "So you have two stomachs and only one set of teeth."

"Yes," went on the cow, "but what is worrying me now is to know whether I lost my cud of grass in the meadow, after I had chewed on it a while, or whether it slipped down into my last stomach before it was time."

"What will happen if it did?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"I'm afraid I'll have indigestion," the cow lady answered.

"And that will make my milk bad and sour. Oh, dear! I wish I knew where my cud was!"

"How did you come to lose it—or miss it?" asked the bunny.

"Why, I was watching Bully and Bawly No-Tail, the two frog boys, hopping down by the brook," the cow lady said. "They were playing leap-toad, you know—or, perhaps, it was leap-frog; and Bully made such a funny jump over Bawly's back that I laughed right out loud. I was chewing my cud at the time, and when I stopped laughing I missed it. Now whether I swallowed it, or whether it dropped in the brook, I don't know. Isn't that dreadful?"

"Can't you tell by the way you feel—inside, you know," asked the bunny, "what became of your cud?"

"Not for some little time," answered the cow lady, "and then it will be too late. Oh, if only I could find my cud somewhere in this meadow I'd know I hadn't swallowed it, and I'd be all right."

"I know just how you feel," said Uncle Wiggily. "Once, when Susie Littletail, the rabbit, was a tiny baby, her mother gave her a big cake spoon to play with. She went out of the room, leaving Susie to play with the spoon, and when she came back it was gone."

"What was gone?" asked the cow lady, "Susie or the spoon?"

"The spoon," answered the bunny gentleman. "And as Susie was too little to talk, and tell where it was, her mother didn't know whether she had hidden, or dropped the spoon somewhere, or whether she had swallowed it."

"Just fancy!" mooed the cow. "How exciting! But what happened?"

"Why, finally," said Uncle Wiggily, "after I had hopped over to help, we found the spoon behind the piano where Susie had thrown it. Then we knew she hadn't swallowed it."

"And if I could find my cud I'd know I hadn't swallowed that," sadly said the cow lady.

"I'll help you look," offered Uncle Wiggily. "I'm a pretty good hopper, and I'll hop around the meadow and look for your cud of half-chewed grass."

The bunny set down his molasses jug and began looking all over the meadow for the cud. And the cow helped, but she could not move very fast. Besides, she was worried and nervous.

"Here it is! I've found it!" suddenly called Uncle Wiggily, and there on the grass, near the brook where the frog boys had been leaping, was the cow lady's cud.

"Oh, how glad I am to get it back!" she mooed as she began to chew it again. "Now my milk will be nice and sweet. You have done me a great favor, Uncle Wiggily. I hope I may do you the same some day."

"Do not mention it," said the bunny politely, as he hopped on with his molasses jug. "It was just a little adventure for me."

Uncle Wiggily hopped on to the store, had the jug filled with molasses and then went to his hollow stump bungalow.

"Well, you were gone a long time," said Nurse Jane. "I have been waiting to make the ginger cake."

"I had to help a cow lady find her lost cud," said the bunny.

"Oh, Wiggy! What next!" laughed Miss Fuzzy Wuzzy.

"Helping cow ladies! Oh! Oh!"

"That's all right," the bunny said. "Perhaps some day a cow lady may help us."

"I don't see how she can," spoke Nurse Jane, as she started to make the cake. But pretty soon she called to the bunny who had gone to sit outside on a bench and warm his rheumatism in the sun.

"Oh, Wiggy!" exclaimed Nurse Jane. "I can't get the cork out of the molasses jug. It's in so tight! I can't pull it out, and if I break it, and push it inside, then the molasses won't run out. Oh, what a lot of trouble!"

"Let me try!" offered the bunny. But he could not get the cork out of the molasses jug either, not even with his red, white and blue striped rheumatism crutch.

"I guess I'll have to break the jug!" said the bunny at last.

"Oh, don't do that!" spoke a voice behind him, and, turning, Uncle Wiggily saw the cow lady. "I am on my way home to be milked," she mooed, "and I saw you in trouble, so I came over. What's wrong?"

"We can't get the cork out of the molasses jug," answered Uncle Wiggily.

"Perhaps I can," said Mrs. Cow. "Please let me try."

"We have a corkscrew somewhere," remarked Nurse Jane, "but I can't find it."

"I shall not need it," went on the cow.

Then with one of her long, sharp horns she easily pried the cork out of the molasses jug, breaking nothing and making it very easy for Nurse Jane to pour out the sweet stuff for the ginger cake.

"Thank you, Mrs. Cow," said Uncle Wiggily, as the milk lady animal went on her way.

"Don't mention it!" mooed the cow. "Now we are even, as far as favors go!"

Uncle Wiggily looked at Nurse Jane, and the muskrat lady smiled at the bunny gentleman.

"You were right, Wiggly," spoke Miss Fuzzy Wuzzy. "I never thought a cow could help anyone, but this shows how little I know."

"That's all right!" laughed the bunny. "Mistakes will happen!"