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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And The Dog (9/31)

Uncle Wiggily's rheumatism was quite bad after he got wet in the fountain, as I told you in the other story, and when he thanked the mamma cat-bird and her kitten-birds for saving him, he found that he could hardly walk, much less carry his heavy valise.

"Oh, we'll help you," said Mrs. Cat-Bird. "Here, Flitter and Flutter, you carry the satchel for Uncle Wiggily, and we'll take him to our house."

"But, mamma," said Flutter, who was getting to be quite a big bird-boy, "Uncle Wiggily can't climb up a tree to our nest."

"No, but we can make him a nice warm bed on the ground," said the mamma bird. "So you and Flitter carry the satchel. Put a long blade of grass through the handle, and then each of you take hold of one end of the grass in your bills, and fly away with it. Skimmer, you and Dartie go on ahead, and get something ready to eat, and I'll show Uncle Wiggily the way."

So Flitter and Flutter, the two boy birds, flew away with the satchel, and Skimmer and Dartie, the girl birds, flew on ahead to set the table, and put on the teakettle on the stove to boil, and Mrs. Cat-Bird flew slowly on over Uncle Wiggily, to show him the way.

Well, pretty soon, not so so very long, they came to where the birds lived. And those good children had already started to make a nest on the ground for the old gentleman rabbit. They had it almost finished, and by the time supper was ready it was all done. Then came the meal, and those birds couldn't do enough for Uncle Wiggily, because they liked him so.

When it got dark, they covered him all up, with soft leaves in the nest on the ground, and there he slept until morning. His rheumatism wasn't quite so bad when, after breakfast, he had sat out in the warm sun for a while, and after a bit he said:

"Well, I think I'll travel along now, and see if I can find my fortune to-day. Perhaps I may, and if I do I'll come back and bring you more peanuts."

"Oh, that'll be fine and dandy!" cried Flitter and Flutter, and Skimmer and Dartie. So they said good-bye to the old gentleman rabbit, and once more he started off.

"My! I'm certainly getting to be a great traveler," he thought as he walked along through the woods and over the fields. "But I don't ever seem to get to any place. Something always happens to me. I hope everything goes along nicely to-day."

But you just wait and see what takes place. I'm afraid something is going to happen very shortly, but it's not my fault, and all I can do is to tell you exactly all about it. Wait! There, it's beginning to happen now.

All of a sudden, as Uncle Wiggily was traveling along, he came to a place in the woods where a whole lot of Gypsies had their wagons and tents. And on one tent, in

which was an old brown and wrinkled Gypsy lady, there was a sign which read:

FORTUNES TOLD HERE.

"Ha! If they tell fortunes in that tent, perhaps the Gypsy lady can tell me where to find mine," thought Uncle Wiggily. "I'll go up and ask her."

Well, he was just going to the tent when he happened to think that perhaps the Gypsy woman wouldn't understand rabbit talk. So he sat there in the bushes thinking what he had better do, when all at once, before he could wiggle his ears more than four times, a great big, bad, ugly dog sprang at him, barking, oh! so loudly.

"Come on, Browser!" cried this dog to another one.



"Here is a fat rabbit that we can catch for dinner. Come on, let's chase him!" Well, you can just imagine how frightened Uncle Wiggily was. He didn't sit there, waiting for that dog to catch him, either. No, indeed, and a bag of popcorn besides! Up jumped Uncle Wiggily, with his crutch and his valise, and he hopped as hard and as fast as

he could run. My! How his legs did twist in and out.

"Come on! Come!" barked the first dog to the second one.

"I'm coming! I'm coming! Woof! Woof! Bow-w-w Bow-wow!" barked the second dog.

Poor Uncle Wiggily's heart beat faster and faster, and he didn't know which way to run. Every way he turned the dogs were after him, and soon more of the savage animals came to join the first two, until all the dogs in that Gypsy camp were chasing the poor old gentleman rabbit.

"I guess I'll have to drop my satchel or my crutch," thought Uncle Wiggily. "I can't carry them much farther. Still, I don't want to lose them." So he held on to them a little longer, took a good breath and ran on some more.

He thought he saw a chance to escape by running across in front of the fortune-telling tent, and he started that way, but a Gypsy man, with a gun, saw him and fired at him. I'm glad to say, however, that he didn't shoot Uncle Wiggily, or else I couldn't tell any more stories about him.

Uncle Wiggily got safely past the tent, but the dogs were almost up to him now. One of them was just going to catch him by his left hind leg, when one of the Gypsy men cried out:

"Grab him, Biter! Grab him! We'll have rabbit potpie for dinner; that's what we'll have!"

Wasn't that a perfectly dreadful way to talk about our Uncle Wiggily? But just wait, if you please.

Biter, the bad dog, was just going to grab the rabbit, when all of a sudden, Uncle Wiggily saw a big hole in the ground.

"That's what I'm looking for!" he exclaimed. "I'm going down there, and hide away from these dogs!"

So into the hole he popped, valise, crutch and all, and oh! how glad he was to get into the cool, quiet darkness, leaving those savage, barking dogs outside. But wait a moment longer, if you please.

Biter and Browser stopped short at the hole.

"He's gone—gotten clean away!" exclaimed Browser.

"Isn't that too bad?"

"No, we'll get him yet!" cried Biter. "Here, you watch at this hole, while I go get a pail of water. We'll pour the water down, under the ground where the rabbit is, and that will make him come out, and we'll eat him."

"Good!" cried Browser. So while he stood there and watched, Biter went for the water. But, mind you, Uncle Wiggily had sharp ears and he heard what they were saying, and what do you think he did?

Why, with his sharp claws he went right to work, and he dug, and dug, and dug in the back part of that underground place, until he had made another hole, far off from the first one, and he crawled out of that, with his crutch and valise, just as Biter was pouring the water down the first hole.

"Ah, ha! I think this will astonish those dogs!" thought Uncle Wiggily, and he took a peep at them from behind a bush where they couldn't see him, and then he hopped on through the woods, to look for more adventures, leaving the dogs still pouring water.

And one happened to him shortly after that, as I shall tell you on the next page, when, in case the rocking chair doesn't tip over backwards and spill out the sofa cushion into the rubber plant, the story will be about Uncle Wiggily and the monkey.