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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And The First Kitten

Uncle Wiggily Longears, the nice old rabbit gentleman, was asleep in his easy chair by the fire which burned brightly on the hearth in his hollow-stump bungalow. Mr. Longears was dreaming that he had just eaten a piece of cherry pie for lunch, and that the cherry pits were dropping on the floor with a "rat-a-tat-tat!" when he suddenly awakened and heard some one knocking on the front door.

"Ha! Who is there? Come in!" cried the rabbit gentleman, hardly awake yet. Then he happened to think:

"I hope it isn't the bad fox, or the skillery-scalery alligator, whom I have invited in. I ought not to have been so quick."

But it was none of these unpleasant creatures who had knocked on Uncle Wiggily's door. It was Mrs. Purr, the nice cat lady, and when the rabbit gentleman had let her in she looked so sad and sorrowful that he said:

"What is the matter, Mrs. Purr? Has anything happened?"

"Indeed there has, Mr. Longears," the cat lady answered. "You know my three little kittens, don't you?"

"Why, yes, I know them," replied the bunny uncle. "They are Fuzzo, Muzzo and Wuzzo. I hope they are not ill?"

"No, they are not ill," said the cat lady, mewing sadly, "but they have run away, and I came to see if you would help me get them back."

"Run away! Your dear little kittens!" cried Uncle Wiggily.

"You don't mean it! How did it happen?"

"Well, you know my little kittens had each a new pair of mittens," said Mrs. Purr.

"Yes, I read about that in the Mother Goose book," said the rabbit gentleman. "It must be nice to have new mittens."

"My little kittens thought so," went on Mrs. Purr. "Their grandmother, Pussy Cat Mole, knitted them."

"I have met Pussy Cat Mole," said Uncle Wiggily. "After she jumped over a coal, and in her best petticoat burned a great hole, I helped her mend it so she could go to the party."

"I heard about that; it was very good of you," mewed Mrs. Purr. "But about my little kittens, when they got their mittens, what do you think they did?"

"Why, I suppose they went out and played in the snow," Uncle Wiggily said. "I know that is what I would have done, when I was a little rabbit, if I had had a new pair of mittens."

"I only wish they had done that," Mrs. Purr said. "But, instead, they went and ate some cherry pie. The red pie-juice got all over their new mittens, and when they saw it they became afraid I would scold them, and they ran away. I was not home when they ate the pie and soiled their mittens, but the cat lady who lives next door told me."

"Now I want to know if you will try to find my three little kittens for me; Fuzzo, Wuzzo and Muzzo? I want them to come home so badly!"

"I'll go look for them," promised the old rabbit gentleman. So taking his red, white and blue rheumatism crutch, off he started over the fields and through the woods. Mrs. Purr went back home to get supper, in case her kittens, with their pie-soiled mittens, should come back by themselves before Uncle Wiggily found them.

On and on went the old rabbit gentleman. He looked on all sides and through the middle for any signs of the lost kittens, but he saw none for quite a while. Then, all at once, he heard a mewling sound over in the bushes, and he said:

"Ha! There is the first little kitten!" And there, surely enough she was—Fuzzo!

"Oh, dear!" Fuzzo was saying, "I don't believe I'll ever get them clean!"



"What's the matter now?" asked the rabbit gentleman, though he knew quite well what it was, and only pretended he did not. "Who are you and what is the matter?" he asked.

"Oh, I'm in such trouble," said the first little kitten. "My sisters and I ate some pie in our new mittens. We soiled them badly with the red pie-juice. Weren't we naughty kittens?"

"Well, perhaps just a little bit naughty," Uncle Wiggily said. "But you should not have run away from your mamma. She feels very badly. Where are Muzzo and Wuzzo?"

"I don't know!" answered Fuzzo. "They ran one way and I ran another. I'm trying to get the pie-juice out of my mittens, but I can't seem to do it."

"How did you try?" Uncle Wiggily wanted to know.

"I am rubbing my mittens up and down on the rough bark of trees and on stones," answered Fuzzo. "I thought that would take the pie stains out, but it doesn't."

"Of course not!" laughed Uncle Wiggily. "Now you come with me. I am going to take you home. Your mother sent me to look for you."

"Oh, but I'm afraid to go home," mewed Fuzzo. "My mother will scold me for soiling my nice, new mittens. It says so in the book."

"No, she won't!" laughed Uncle Wiggily. "You just leave it to me. But first you come to my hollow-stump bungalow."

So Fuzzo, the first little kitten, put one paw in Uncle Wiggily's, and carrying her mittens in the other, along they went together.

"Where are you, Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy?" called the rabbit gentleman, when they reached his hollow-stump bungalow. "I want you to make some nice, hot, soapy suds and water, and wash this first little kitten's mittens. Then they will be clean, and she can take them home with her."

So the muskrat lady made some nice, hot, soap-bubbily suds and in them she washed the kitten's mittens. Then, when they were dry, Uncle Wiggily took the mittens, and also Fuzzo to Mrs. Purr's house.

"Oh, how glad I am to have you back!" cried the cat mother. "I wouldn't have scolded you, Fuzzo, for soiling your mittens. You must not be afraid any more."

"I won't," promised the first little kitten, showing her nice, clean mittens.