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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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# Uncle Wiggily And The Little Birds

Uncle Wiggily Longears, the old rabbit gentleman, was out in his yard one day, whistling away, hammering and sawing and making his funny nose twinkle like a star on a frosty night in June. He could not twinkle his nose so very well because it had on it a piece of red, white and blue court plaster. And the reason he had the plaster there was because the last time he was out in his airship, he had had an accident, and a hailstone had struck him on the nose, as I have told you.

You just try to make your nose twinkle with a piece of court plaster on it, and see how hard it is. It's almost as hard as it is to stand on your head and peel a basket of soap bubbles.

But still Uncle Wiggily was doing the best he could, and, as I have said, he was whistling and hammering and sawing.

"What in the world are you doing?" asked Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady, who kept house for Uncle Wiggily.

"I am fixing my airship," he said. You know he had one, made of a clothes basket, with an electric fan to send it along through the air whizzy-izzie-like, and to lift the airship Uncle Wiggily used a lot of toy circus balloons, tied together.

"Going up in your airship!" cried Nurse Jane. "Why, you were out in it the other day, and look what a terrible fall you had. The hailstones burst your balloons and down you came in a tree. And Johnnie Bushytail, the squirrel, had to get you a wild grape vine rope so you could climb down."

"I know he did," said Uncle Wiggily, cheerful-like. "And I am very thankful to him."

"And still, and with all that happened to you, getting your nose scratched and all that, are you again going up in your airship?" Nurse Jane wanted to know.

"I am going up," said Uncle Wiggily bravely. "I want to learn how to sail all over the world in my airship."

"But suppose another hailstorm comes and smashes your balloons?" asked Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy. "You will fall again, and you may be hurt worse next time."

"No more hailstones can bother me!" cried the rabbit gentleman. "See, I am going to fasten an umbrella over my toy balloons, and then no hailstones can hit them." And he whistled more cheerfully than before.

"Well, I do declare!" exclaimed Nurse Jane. "You are surely odd!"

Uncle Wiggily really was fastening a Japanese umbrella over his funny clothes basket airship.

"The umbrella will keep off the sun as well as the rain and hail," he said happy-like.

Well, the old gentleman rabbit was just getting ready to go up in his airship again, when, from among the leaves of a tree that grew in his garden, he heard a voice saying:

"Now, birdies, it is time you learned to fly. Stand on the limb, where our nest is built, flutter your wings as I do, and jump off. Keep your wings fluttering and you will be flying."

"Oh, but we are afraid!" cried several tiny chirping voices.



"Ha! That is a mother bird teaching her little ones to fly," said Uncle Wiggily, as he looked up. "I must watch this. I love little birds."

"Don't be afraid," said the mamma bird to the children birds. "You will not fall. When I was a little bird I

was afraid, too, but nothing happened to me and I have been flying ever since. Come now, jump off the tree branch into the air."

"Oh, we're afraid!" cried the littlest of the birdies.

"Our wings might come off, and then we'd drop to the ground," said another little bird, as it fluttered back into the nest.

"Nonsense!" cried the mamma bird. "Your wings will not drop off and you will not fall. You must learn to fly now. You are getting old enough to fly for yourselves. Come, Pickie!" she called to the one who had gone back in the nest, "stand in line with the others and learn to fly."

"Oh, mamma! I can't! Really I can't!" cried Pickie, who was given that name because he had such a sharp little bill for picking up bread crumbs.

"You must learn to fly," said the mamma bird. "Your papa will soon be home, and think how proud he will be if you can fly to meet him!"

"Oh, we are afraid," said the little birds.

It is just like when baby first learns to walk. At the beginning he is afraid to take a step alone, but soon he grows braver and toddles all over.

"Come! Fly!" called the mamma bird.

"We are afraid—afraid!" chirped the little birdies.

"Ha! I think I can help the mamma bird give them their flying lesson," said Uncle Wiggily. "I will go up in my airship and float slowly along. I will keep right under the little birds, and I'll tell them that if their wings give out, and if they fall, they will land on my umbrella and not get hurt at all."

So away he went in his airship, and when he got near the top of the tree, with the electric fan buzzing and the toy balloons lifting him up, the rabbit gentleman called:

"See me, birdies! I am flying, and you know a rabbit has no wings. Look!"

"Exactly," said the mamma bird. "See, little ones! If Uncle Wiggily is not afraid to fly, you should not be, for you were made on purpose for sailing through the air, and he was not."

"And I'll keep right under you with my airship, to catch you if you fall," said Uncle Wiggily. "Don't be afraid, birdies!"

"All right! Here we come!" cried Pickie, getting brave all of a sudden. Off the limb he fluttered, and his brothers and sisters fluttered after him, flapping their wings.

"Oh, we are flying!" they cried joyfully. "We can fly!"  
"I knew you could," called their mamma, soaring on her wings after them. "And how proud your papa will be! Thank you so much, Uncle Wiggily, for making my birdies brave enough to fly."

"Do not mention it," answered the rabbit gentleman politely, as he sailed about in his airship.

He kept under the little birds for a while, in case they might fall, but none of them did, and soon they fluttered back to the nest for supper. They had learned to fly and were not afraid any more. Wasn't that good?