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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And The Lost Boy

"There goes that boy out again, flying his kite," said Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, as she looked from the window of the hollow stump bungalow one morning.

"What boy?" Uncle Wiggily wanted to know.

"The new boy who has just moved into the red brick house," answered the muskrat lady housekeeper. "I hope he isn't a bad boy, who will chase you, Uncle Wiggily, and come to the forest to play tricks on Sammie and Susie Littletail, and the other animal boys and girls."

"Oh, he doesn't look like that kind of a boy," said the bunny rabbit gentleman, as he sat down to eat his breakfast of carrot pancakes with turnip maple sugar gravy sprinkled down the middle. "But I'll be careful until I get to know him better."

Uncle Wiggily's hollow stump bungalow had lately been rebuilt near the edge of a wood, and, just beyond the thicket of trees and tangle of bushes was a small town, where lived many boys and girls.

Only a few of these boys and girls knew about the bunny rabbit gentleman, and his muskrat lady nurse, and those who did were kind to Uncle Wiggily, because the rabbit gentleman had been kind to them, doing them many favors.

But now that a new boy had moved into the red brick house, Uncle Wiggily felt that he must not hop around

in too lively a fashion, until he found out whether the boy was bad or good. For there are some bad boys, you know.

"He seems quiet enough," said Nurse Jane, as she spread some lettuce marmalade on a slice of bread for Uncle Wiggily. "He sits there flying his kite. I guess it will be safe for you to go to the store for me, Wiggy."

"What do you want from the store?" asked the bunny gentleman, as he took his tall, silk hat down off the piano. Sometimes he went to the store quite dressed up. At other times he would put on an old cap and overalls, just as he came from the garden.

"I want another ball of red yarn," Nurse Jane answered. "I did not have quite enough to knit the mittens for Sammie and Susie, the rabbit children."

"I suppose that's because I gave some of the yarn to the three little kittens who lost their mittens," said the bunny, twinkling his pink nose upside down, to make sure it would not fall off as he hopped along.

"Well, that's one of the reasons," Nurse Jane answered.

"But I'm glad you helped the little kittens. You can easily get me another ball of yarn."

"Of course," Uncle Wiggily agreed, and soon he was hopping over the fields and through the woods, on his way to the store. Not one of the stores where the boys and girls bought their toys and lollypops, but a special animal store, kept by a Monkey Doodle gentleman.

And as Uncle Wiggily hopped along under the bushes, near the house of the Kite Boy, the bunny heard the boy's mother say:

"Don't go away and get lost, Buddie!"

"No, I won't!" promised the boy, as he held his kite string in his hand and watched his toy fly high in the air.

Uncle Wiggily stopped for a moment, underneath a big burdock plant, and looked at Buddie, which was the boy's pet name. Buddie could not see the rabbit gentleman. If he had, Buddie would have been much surprised to notice a bunny with glasses and a tall silk hat.

The wind blew the kite higher into the air, and Uncle Wiggily thought of the many times he had helped Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, the squirrels, fly their kites, and how he had, more than once, made kites for Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow, the puppy dog boys.

Then the bunny gentleman hopped on to the store to get the ball of red yarn for Nurse Jane. He stayed some little time, Mr. Longears did, for he met Grandfather Goosey Gander, and talked to the old gentleman duck about rheumatism, and what to do when you sneezed too much.

But finally Uncle Wiggily started back for his hollow stump bungalow, and soon he was in the middle of the wood, about half way home. And all of a sudden the bunny gentleman heard a crying voice saying:

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I don't know where my home is! I'm lost! Oh, dear! I'm lost!"

Mr. Longears peered through the bushes, and there he saw the boy from the red brick house, who held in his hand a broken kite.



"Ah, I see what has happened!" said the bunny. "His kite broke loose from the string. Forgetting what he promised his mother, about not going away, the boy ran after his kite, over into the woods, and now he is lost. I wonder if I can help him find his way home?"

Uncle Wiggily did not show himself yet. Hiding behind the bushes, the bunny followed the lost boy as he wandered about among the trees, not knowing which way to go.

"Oh, where is my house?" said the boy over and over again. "Why can't I find it?"

Then a mournful voice cried:

"Woo! Woo! Woo!"

"Oh, dear! What's that?" exclaimed the lost boy, suddenly stopping.

"It's only an owl bird," said Uncle Wiggily to himself. He wished he might speak to the boy, and tell him this, but though the bunny could understand boy-talk, the boy couldn't understand rabbit language.

The Kite Boy went on a little farther, and then he heard a rustling in the dried leaves.

"Oh-o-o-o!" gasped the lost boy. "Maybe that's a snake!"

"Nonsense!" laughed Uncle Wiggily to himself. "It is only a brown thrush bird, scattering the leaves to look for

something to eat. And, even if it were a snake it wouldn't hurt the boy. I wish I might tell him so."

The boy wandered along a little farther, and suddenly there boomed out through the forest a sound of:

"Ga-rump! Ga-roomp! Ga-Zing!"

"Oh, maybe that's a giant!" cried the boy, dropping his broken kite.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Uncle Wiggily. "That's only Grandpa Croaker, the big bull frog who tells such funny stories to Bully and Bawly No-Tail, the frog boys! How Grandpa Croaker will laugh when I tell him the lost boy thought him a giant! But I must help this boy out of the woods, or his mother will be worried."

"Let me see, how can I do it without letting him see me? Ha! I have it. This ball of red yarn. I'll hop to the edge of the wood, near his house, and fasten one end of the red yarn to a tree there. Then I'll come back, unwinding the ball on the way, and when I get to the boy, I'll toss him what is left of the ball. Then all he'll have to do will be to follow the red cord right to his house."

No sooner said than done! Uncle Wiggily knew his way through the forest, even in the dark, and he soon reached the edge of the wood and saw the boy's red brick house.

Then, tying one end of the red yarn to the bush near where the boy had been sitting to fly his kite, Uncle Wiggily turned back, unrolling the ball as he hopped along. He soon came to the lost boy again, and the poor little chap was crying harder than ever.

Over the bush and at the feet of the boy, the bunny tossed the little ball of yarn that remained.

"Oh, what's that?" cried Buddie, almost ready to jump out of his skin. But when he saw the little red ball, and the red string stretching off through the trees, he was no longer afraid.

"Oh, maybe this is a fairy string, and will lead me home!" he joyfully cried, as he began to follow it. And, though we know it wasn't a fairy string, still it was just as good, for it led the boy home, as he followed the yarn, winding up the ball as he walked along. And, oh, how fast he ran when he came within sight of his house, crying, as he dropped the ball:

"Here I am, Mother! Here I am. I'm not lost any more!"

"Well, I'm glad of that," Mother answered. "You shouldn't have gone into the woods. I was just coming to look for you."

"Well," whispered Uncle Wiggily to himself, "I'm glad I could be of some help in this world." Then the rabbit, who had followed the lost boy until Buddie found his home, wound up the red yarn again, and took it to Nurse Jane.

"My! That was quite an adventure," said the muskrat lady when the bunny gentleman told her about it. And if the boiled egg doesn't try to go sailing in the gravy boat, and splash condensed milk on the bread-knife, I'll tell you on the page after this about Uncle Wiggily and Stubby Toes.