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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And The Mud Pie (22/31)

Uncle Wiggily slept very soundly that night in the little wooden house, across on the other side of the brook, where the alligator tried to catch him, but didn't. And when he awakened in the morning the rabbit traveler wondered what he was going to have for breakfast. But he didn't wonder very long.

For, as soon as he had gotten up, and had washed his paws and face, and combed out his ears—oh, dear me—I mean his whiskers—as soon as he had done that, he heard a knock on the door.

"Oh, my, suz dud and a bottle of milk!" exclaimed the old gentleman rabbit. "I hope that isn't the scary-flary alligator again."

So he peeped out of the window, but to his surprise, he didn't see any one.

"I'm sure I heard a knock," he said, "but I guess I was mistaken."

Well, he was going over to his valise to see if it had in it anything to eat, when the knock again sounded on the door.

"No, I wasn't mistaken," said Uncle Wiggily. "I wonder who that can be? I'll peep, and find out."

So he hid behind the window curtain, and kept a close watch, and the first things he saw were some little

stones flying through the air. And they hit against the front door with a rattley-bang, and it was these stones that had made the sound that was like a knock.

"Oh! it must be some bad boys after me," thought the poor old gentleman rabbit. "My! I do seem to be having a dreadful time seeking my fortune. There is always some kind of trouble."

And then more stones came through the air, and banged on the door and this time Uncle Wiggily saw that they came from the stream, and, what is more, he saw the goldfish throwing the stones and pebbles out of the brook with his tail. Then the rabbit knew it was all right, for the goldfish was a friend of his, so he ran out.

"Were you throwing stones at the house?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"Yes," replied the fish, "it was the only way in which I could knock on your door. You see I dare not leave the water, and I wanted you to know that I had some breakfast for you."

And with that the kind goldfish took a little basket, made of watercress, from off his left front fin, and handed Uncle Wiggily the basket, not his fin, for he needed that to swim with.

"You'll find some cabbage-salad with snorkery-snickery ell-grass dressing on it, some water-lily cake, and some moss covered eggs for your breakfast," said the fish.

"And I wish you good luck on your travels to-day."

"Thank you very much," said Uncle Wiggily, "and I am very much obliged to you for saving me from the alligator last night."

"Do not mention it," spoke the fish most condescendingly. "I always like to help my friends." And with that he swam away, and Uncle Wiggily ate his breakfast, and then, taking his crutch and valise, he set off on his travels again.

He hopped on for some time, and finally he came to a place where there were some high, prickly bramble-briar bushes.

"I will rest here in their shade a bit," thought the old gentleman rabbit, "and then I will go on."

So he sat down, and, as the sun was quite warm, he fell asleep before he knew it. But he was suddenly awakened by a hissing sound, just like when steam comes out of the parlor radiator on a frosty night. Then a voice cried:

"Now I've got you!"

Uncle Wiggily looked up, and there was a big snake, just going to grab him. But do you s'pose the rabbit waited for that snake? Not a bit of it. Catching up his crutch and valise, he gave one tremendous and extraordinary springery-spring, and over the prickery stickery briar and bramble bushes he went, flying through the air, and the snake couldn't get him.

But when Uncle Wiggily came down on the other side of the bushes! Oh, my! that was a different story. For where do you imagine he landed? Where, indeed, but right in the middle of a big mud pie that two little hedgehog boys were making there. Yes, sir, right into the middle of that squasher-squawshery mud pie fell Uncle Wiggily.



Oh! How the mud splashed up! It went all over the rabbit, and some got on the two little hedgehog boys. Well, they were as surprised as anything when they saw a nice old gentleman rabbit come down in the middle of their pie, and at first they

thought he had done it on purpose.

"Let's stick him full of our stickery-stockery quills," said one hedgehog boy.

"Yes, and then let's pull his ears," said the other hedgehog boy. But, mind you, they didn't really mean anything bad, only, perhaps, they thought Uncle Wiggily was a savage fox, or a little white bear.

"Oh, boys, I'm sorry!" said the old gentleman rabbit as soon as he could dig the mud out of his mouth.

"What made you do it?" asked the biggest hedgehog boy, wiping some mud out of his eye.

"Yes, our pie is all spoiled," said his brother, "and we were just going to bake it."

"Oh, it is too bad!" said Uncle Wiggily, sorrowfully, "but you see I had to get away from that snake, and I didn't have time to look where I was jumping. I'm glad, though, that I left the snake on the other side of the bushes."

"So are we," said the two hedgehog boys.

"But you didn't leave me there. I'm here!" suddenly cried a voice, and out wiggled the snake again. He started to catch the rabbit, but those two brave hedgehog boys grabbed up a lot of mud, and plastered it in that snake's eyes so that he couldn't see, and he had to wiggle down to the pond to wash it out. Then Uncle Wiggily and the boys were safe, and he helped them to make another mud pie, with stones in for raisins, and he gave them some of his real cherry pie, and oh! how they liked it! Then they were all happy, and Uncle Wiggily stayed at the hedgehog's house until the next morning.

Now, in case the little girl in the next house brings me a watermelon ice cream cone with a rose on top, I'll tell you on the next page about Uncle Wiggily and the elephant.