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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And The Shoe Lady

"Where are you going, Uncle Wiggily?" asked Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady, who kept house for Mr. Longears, the rabbit gentleman. "Where are you going this fine day?"

"To the store," answered the bunny uncle.

"To the store? Why, I don't want anything," spoke Nurse Jane. "You are always so kind, going to the store whenever I need anything, but nothing is needed for the hollow-stump bungalow to-day."

"I am going to the store for myself," Uncle Wiggily said.

"I am going to buy a new pair of shoes."

So off he hopped, leaning on his red, white and blue-striped barber-pole rheumatism crutch, over the fields and through the woods until he came to the shoe store.

"A pair of shoes? Certainly," said the monkey-doodle gentleman who kept the store. "Will you have high shoes or low shoes?"

"Well, as it is near Spring I'll get low shoes," Uncle Wiggily said. "They will be cooler if I should happen to go down to the Asbury Park ocean board walk."

"Ties, we call them, instead of low shoes, but it is all the same," went on the monkey-doodle. "Here you are."

He brought out a pair of low shoes, or ties, but, when Uncle Wiggily tried to get them on, his feet would not go into them.

"I see—too tight," said the monkey-doodle. "I will put a little talcum powder in the shoes and your foot will then easily slip in."

But, even with the talcum powder, Uncle Wiggily's paws would not slip in.

"I must use a shoe-horn," said the monkey.

"Is a shoe-horn something to play on?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"No, it is something to make a shoe slip on easily," said the monkey-doodle. He brought out a smooth, shiny piece of tin, like a big tablespoon without a handle. Holding this against his heel, Uncle Wiggily could easily slip his foot into his new shoe. Soon he had them both on, and they fitted him well.

"Are they too tight?" asked the monkey-doodle, as the bunny gentleman stepped around the store, practicing.

"No, they're just right," said Uncle Wiggily. "They go on a bit hard, but once I have put them on with the shoe-where the shoe-horn they are very nice. I'll take them."

"And you may have some talcum powder and the shoe-horn to take with you, to put your shoes on easily whenever you wish," said the monkey. For you know Uncle Wiggily pulled the shoe-horn out of his shoe, once he had his foot in. They couldn't both be there at the same time, you see.

Away hopped the rabbit gentleman in his new shoes and with the shoe-horn and the slippery-sliding talcum powder in his pocket.

“Well, now I have my new shoes I wonder if I will meet with an adventure to-day?” thought Uncle Wiggily, as he hopped on. And he did. I’ll tell you about it.

Pretty soon he came to a great, big shoe, standing in the middle of the woods. The shoe had a roof over it, with a chimney sticking out of the top. There was a door to the shoe, and windows. In fact, it was a house, made out of a great, big shoe which a giant used to wear.

“Ha! This is where the Old Woman lives,” said Uncle Wiggily. “The Shoe Lady. I wonder if she is at home?”



He was going to knock on the door and ask how all the children were, when, from inside the shoe there came the sound of crying; children crying; many of them.

“Ha! I wonder if that means trouble?” asked Uncle Wiggily of himself. “I had better see if I can do anything to help.”

He knocked on the door, and the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe, or Shoe Lady, as I call her for short, opened it.

"Of course," spoke the Shoe Lady, "the children always cry when I scold them. Don't you know how it is in the Mother Goose book:

"There was an old woman
Who lived in a shoe,
She had so many children
She didn't know what to do.
She gave them some broth,
Without any bread;
She scolded them all soundly
And sent them to bed."

"That's what happened," said the Shoe Lady.

"Well, er—excuse me—but, that is, do you think it just right to scold them ALL?" asked Uncle Wiggily, kindly.

"Might not at least one of them have been good?"

"Oh, bless your tall hat!" exclaimed the Shoe Lady, with a laugh. "I don't really scold them, you know. That part of the verse is wrong. I only make believe to scold them—pretend, you know, so as to make it as near like the book as I can."

"But I heard crying," said Uncle Wiggily.

"Yes, but it was only make-believe crying, just like the pretended scolding," laughed the Shoe Lady. "I wouldn't for the world hurt one of the children, even though I have so many I don't know what to do."

Uncle Wiggily was glad to hear that, and he was just hopping on, when up came running a little boy.

"Oh, take me in! Take me in!" he cried. "I want my make-believe scolding. I want to make-believe cry, have my broth, without any bread, and go to bed."

"Why, Toodles!" exclaimed the Shoe Lady, looking at him in surprise. "I did not know you were out. You stayed too late at your play. There are so many children here now I don't believe there is room to get you in. After the children eat their supper they swell up, and the shoe house is hardly large enough for them," she said to Uncle Wiggily.

"Oh, I must get in," cried Toodles. "I must!"

"Well, I'll try," said the Shoe Lady. She and Uncle Wiggily tried, but the shoe was so full of children that not another one could get in. They pushed and pulled and shoved and hauled, but poor Toodles could not get in.

"Oh, dear! I don't know what to do," said the lady, who lived in a shoe. "I guess Toodles will have to sleep out in the woods to-night."

"No! Wait! I have it!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "When my foot would not go in my new tight shoe the monkey put talcum powder in it and used a shoe-horn. I'll do that to Toodles." And so he did. And when the little boy was sprinkled with sweet smelling talcum powder, and when the shiny, slippery shoe-horn was slipped into the top of the crowded shoe, in on that slid Toodles as nicely as you please, and everything was all right. There's always room for one more, even in a shoe, you know.

"Thank you, Uncle Wiggily," said the Shoe Lady, and then she gave Toodles his make-believe scolding, he made believe cry, he ate his real broth and went to his real bed. And that's where you must go if it's time.