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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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## Uncle Wiggily At The Circus

Jackie Bow Wow, the little puppy dog boy, came running up to Uncle Wiggily one morning, so excited that he barked three times and fell down twice, stubbing his toe over a lollypop stick on the path.

"Oh, Uncle Wiggily!" barked Jackie. "What you think? There's pictures of elephants, and tigers and lions and camels! There's a man putting up a big tent! There are red wagons and golden chariots, and blue wagons and one that plays funny tunes!"

"And there's a man with his face all painted red, white and blue, just like your rheumatism crutch!" barked Peetie Bow Wow, the other little puppy dog chap, as he ran up wagging his tail. "And there's popcorn, peanuts and pink lemonade! Wuff! Wuff!"

"What's it all about?" asked the bunny rabbit gentleman, as he sat down on the steps of his hollow stump bungalow, while the puppy dog boys caught their breaths, which had nearly run away from them.

"It's a circus!" cried Jackie and Peetie just like twins, which they almost were. "A real circus!"

"A circus!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily. "That's nice! Do you mean it is the kind you animal boys sometimes get up; where you charge two pins to get in and three pins for a seat?"

"Oh, no! It's a regular man-circus, that real boys and girls go to see!" barked Jackie.

"It's like the kind we once ran away and joined, where we learned to do jumping, to turn somersaults and other tricks," explained Peetie.

"Well, if it's that kind of a circus," spoke Uncle Wiggily, "we needn't bother our heads about it. We animal folk can't go to any real circus, you know!"

"Oh, but that's what we came to see you for!" whined Jackie. "We want you to take us to the circus!"

"Take you to the circus!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "Why, the very idea! How would an old rabbit gentleman and two funny puppy dog boys look walking into a real circus? The men would think we belonged to it, and had somehow gotten out of our cages. They'd shut us up behind the iron bars, as the lions and tigers are kept. Take you two to the circus! Oh, no! It couldn't be thought of!"

"Oh, dear!" sighed Jackie.

"We told the others that you'd take us," softly barked Peetie.

"What others?" Uncle Wiggily wanted to know, curious like.

"Oh, Sammie and Susie Littletail, Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, Lulu, Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble, and a lot of the animal boys and girls," went on Peetie. "We were over on the edge of the woods, looking at the circus men put up the tent and the colored posters, and we all thought you'd take us."

"Baby Bunty will be so disappointed!" said Jackie.

Uncle Wiggily twinkled his pink nose serious like and thoughtful.

"Hum! Circus!" murmured the old rabbit gentleman. "So Baby Bunty wants to go, does she? Well, she never saw a circus, not even a make-believe one, such as you boys get up. Now I don't care for a circus myself—I've seen too many of 'em. But I'll go—just to take Baby Bunty!"

"And may we come?" asked Jackie, eagerly.

"Oh, well, yes, I s'pose so!" slowly answered Mr. Longears. "Nurse Jane will say I'm strange; but what matter? A circus comes but once a year! Now run along, doggie boys. I'll have to think up some way of getting all of you into the circus tent, for we can't buy tickets and go in the regular way. The circus men wouldn't understand."

Jackie and Peetie were so delighted that they turned somersaults all the way across the field as they ran to tell the other animal boys and girls. Meanwhile Uncle Wiggily hopped along on his red, white and blue twinkling nose—Oh, listen to me, would you! I mean his rheumatism crutch. I guess I'm getting excited about the circus.

Anyhow Uncle Wiggily hopped across the field to the edge of the forest where Jackie and Peetie had said the big show was going to be given that afternoon. Surely enough there was the large white tent, much larger than the one the camping boys had used the time Uncle Wiggily helped dig a rain-water canal for the lads, so they would have dry beds to sleep in.

There was the circus tent!



And there were red, green, yellow, blue and purple posters showing pictures of lions, tigers, camels, elephants and all such wild animals.

"It's a regular circus surely enough," said Uncle Wiggily to himself. "But how am I going to get in with the animal boys and girls? I can't go up to the

wagon and buy tickets, much as I'd like to. I can't speak man-talk, though I can understand it. How can I get in?"

Just then Uncle Wiggily saw two real boys slowly walking around outside the big tent. They seemed to be looking for something.

"I hope they haven't lost their ticket money," thought the bunny. One boy said to the other:

"Here's a good place to get in!"

"All right! Crawl under!" exclaimed the other.

Then those two boys suddenly crawled under the circus tent, because they had no money to buy tickets. Uncle Wiggily watched them.

"Why! The idea!" exclaimed Mr. Longears. "What a way to get in! Why—I have it! That's how I can get in with the animal children! I can crawl under the tent! Of course I wouldn't do it that way if I could buy them tickets, and get in the regular way. But I can't—the ticket man wouldn't understand if I hopped up with green or yellow leaf money. Crawling under the tent is the only way."

Uncle Wiggily hopped back to the woods where he had built his hollow stump bungalow. The animal children were gathered about waiting for him.

"Come on. It's time to start!" said Susie Littletail, who had on her best hat made of green ferns.

"Where are you going, Wiggy?" asked Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, as she saw the bunny gentleman starting off at the head of the procession of animal boys and girls.

"Oh, I'm just going to take Baby Bunty to the circus," said Mr. Longears, holding the littlest rabbit girl by her paw.

"Are you sure you aren't going for yourself?" asked Nurse Jane with a laugh.

"Of course not!" exclaimed the bunny. "The idea!"

On he hopped with the animal children, and when they came near to the edge of the woods, where the circus tent gleamed white amid the green trees, Uncle Wiggily said:

"Wait here, children, until I hop ahead and see if everything is all right."

The bunny, hiding behind a bush, looked across a little field at the tent. He saw two more boys walk softly up and try to crawl under the white canvas, but all at once a man with a big club rushed up, drove away the boys, and cried:

"No, you don't! You can't get in this circus that way!"

"Oh, dear!" thought Uncle Wiggily. "If men are on guard to keep boys from crawling under the tent, they won't let me in with the animal children! What can I do? Baby Bunty will be so disappointed! Ha! I know! I'll start here

in this field, and dig a burrow, or tunnel under ground. I'll slant it down until I'm beneath the tent, and then I'll slant it up, so when we come out we'll be inside the tent. In that way the men with clubs will not see us!" Uncle Wiggily hopped back to the waiting animal children.

"I'll have to dig a tunnel-burrow to get you into the circus," said the bunny. "Stay here and keep quiet!" Starting in the field, behind the bushes and a little way from the circus tent, Uncle Wiggily began to dig. He was a fast worker, and soon he had dug the burrow all the way through.

He came out inside the circus tent, beneath the rows of seats on which were perched many boys, girls and grown folk watching the funny clowns, listening to the band, seeing the men on the high trapeze bars and looking at the horses.

"Ha! The circus is just beginning!" said Uncle Wiggily to himself, as the big bass drum boomed out: "Zoom! Zoom!"

He crawled back through the burrow and got the animal children in line.

"Forward march!" cried Uncle Wiggily, and through the underground burrow crawled the rabbits, squirrels, puppy dogs, pussy cats, chickens, ducks, guinea pigs and all the smaller animal friends of the rabbit gentleman. They were not seen by the men with clubs, because they crawled beneath the tent far below the ground. Then they came up inside the circus, under the high tier of seats.

"Oh, isn't it wonderful!" cried Baby Bunty, keeping hold of Uncle Wiggily's paw.

"Hush!" whispered the rabbit gentleman. "Don't let the people up above know we're down here or they might chase us out!"

So there sat Mr. Longears and his little friends, having a fine view of the circus almost from start to finish.

And the people sitting on the seats above dropped peanuts and kernels of popcorn which the animal children picked up and ate. The only thing they didn't have was pink lemonade, but perhaps that was not good for them.

And at last, when the band began to play like anything, and the horses and elephants raced around the big ring, Uncle Wiggily said:

"Come, now. The circus is ended. We had better get out before the crowd starts or we may be stepped on. Did you like it, Baby Bunty?"

"Oh, it was the most wonderful thing I ever saw!" sighed the little rabbit girl. "Thank you, ever so much!"

"Yes, and we thank you also, Uncle Wiggily," called the other animal children.

Then they crawled down through the burrow again, outside the tent and came into the woods, through which they scampered to their different homes. But they had been to the circus!