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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily In A Paper Boat (21/31)

When the morning dawned, after he had slept all night in the cellar under his paper house, that the alligator, with his swooping scaly-ailery tail, had knocked down, Uncle Wiggily awakened, brushed the dirt from his ears, and crawled out.

"My!" he exclaimed as he saw the paper house all flat on the ground, like a pancake, "Nannie Goat would certainly be sorry to see this. But I suppose it can't be helped. Anyhow, it's a good thing that I am not squashed as flat as that house is. Now I'll see about my breakfast, and then I'll travel on again."

So the old gentleman rabbit got his breakfast, eating almost the last piece of the cherry pie, which he had left from the time when he made some for the hedgehog, and then, taking his crutch, striped red, white and blue, like a barber pole, off he started.

Well, pretty soon, in a little while, not so very long, Uncle Wiggily came to a pond of water, and, looking down into it, he saw the most beautiful goldfish that you can imagine. It was a big fish, too, and the scales on it were as round as gold dollars.

"My!" exclaimed the rabbit. "If I had that fish, and I could take him to a jewelry shop, and sell him, I would get so much money that my fortune would be made,

and I wouldn't have to travel any farther. But I guess the fish would rather stay in the pond than in a jewelry shop."

"Indeed, I would," answered the fish, looking up. "And I am glad you are so kind as to be thoughtful of my feelings. Perhaps I may be able to help you, some day." And with that the fish dived away down under the water, after calling good-bye to the rabbit, and then Uncle Wiggily hopped on, and he didn't think any more about the goldfish, until some time after that.

Well, as soon as the elephant had his trunk packed—Oh, hold on, if you please. I wonder what's the matter with me? There's no elephant in this story. He comes in it about five pages farther on.

Well, after traveling for several hours, Uncle Wiggily ate his dinner, then he hopped on some more, and he looked all around for his fortune, but he couldn't find it. Then it began to get dark, and he wondered where he could stay that night.

"I might build a paper house," he said, "but if I do the alligator might come along and smash it, and this time he would probably catch me. I wonder what I'd better do?"

So he looked ahead, and there he saw a stream of water. It was quite a wide brook, but on the other side of it he saw a nice little wooden house, that no one lived in.

"Now, if I could only get over there I'd be safe," said the old gentleman rabbit. "I guess I'll wade across."

Well, he started to do so, but he soon found that the water was too deep for him to wade. It was over his head.

"I'll have to swim across," said Uncle Wiggily.

But, as soon as he got ready to do that, he found himself in more trouble. For he couldn't carry his crutch and valise across with him if he swam, and he didn't like to leave them on the shore, for fear the alligator would get them.

"Oh, I certainly am in great trouble," said the rabbit.

"It's getting darker and darker, and I have no place to stay. I haven't even any paper with which to make me a paper house, but if I could only get across to the wooden house, I'd be safe."

And, just as he spoke, there came a little puff of wind, and lo and behold! a nice piece of paper was blown right down out of a tree, where it had been caught on a branch. Right at Uncle Wiggily's side it fell; that paper did.

"Oh, joy!" the rabbit gentleman cried. "Here is paper to make me a house with." But when he looked more closely at it, he saw that it wasn't big enough for a house, and it wasn't the kind of paper that would keep out the rain, either.

"That will never do," said Uncle Wiggily, sadly. "Ah! But I have an idea. I will make me a paper boat, as Billie Goat once did, and in the boat I'll sail across the stream, and sleep in the little wooden house."

So he folded up the paper, first like a soldier's hat, and then like a fireman's hat, and then he pulled on the two ends, and, presto change! he had a paper boat. Then he

took his crutch, and stuck it up in the middle of the boat, and put a piece of paper on the crutch, and he had a sail. Then he put the boat in the water, and got in it himself. I mean he got in the boat, not the water—with his valise.



"Here we go!" cried the old gentleman rabbit, and he shoved the boat out from the shore. The wind caught in the little paper sail, and away Uncle Wiggily went, as fine as fine could be.

"I'll soon be on the other shore," he said, and just then he

looked down, and he saw some water coming inside the boat. "Hum! That's bad," he cried. "I'm afraid my boat is leaking."

The wind blew harder, and the boat went faster, but more water came in, for you see the paper was sort of melting, and falling apart, like an ice cream cone, for it wasn't the waxed kind of paper from the inside of cracker boxes—the kind that water won't hurt.

Well, the boat began to sink, and the water came up to Uncle Wiggily's knees, and then, all of a sudden there was a funny sound on shore, a snipping snooping

woofing-woofing sound, and into the water jumped the alligator with the skiller-scalery, swooping tail.

"Now I've got you!" he cried, snapping his jaws at the poor old gentleman rabbit. And really it did seem as if Uncle Wiggily would be eaten up. But you never can tell what is going to happen in this world; never indeed.

All of a sudden, just as the paper boat was melting all to pieces, and Uncle Wiggily was trying, as best he could, to swim to shore with his crutch and valise, and just as the alligator was going to grab him, along came the big, kind goldfish.

"Jump on my back, Uncle Wiggily!" cried the fish, and the rabbit did so, in the twinkling of an eye. And before the alligator could grab Uncle Wiggily, the goldfish swam to shore with him, and he was safe. And the



alligator got some soap in his eye, from washing his face too hard, and went sloshing away as mad as could be, but it served him right. And Uncle Wiggily slept safely in the wooden house all night, and dreamed about finding a gold dollar.

Now in case the banana man brings me some pink oranges for the elephant's little boy, I'll tell you in another story about Uncle Wiggily and the mud pie.