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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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# Uncle Wiggily And The Blackbirds

Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, came out of his hollow-stump bungalow to take a walk in the woods one day.

"I hope I may meet with an adventure," he said to himself, as he limped along on his red, white and blue crutch, that Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady, had gnawed for him out of a corn-stalk.

An adventure, you know, as I have told you before, is something that happens to you. If you find a stick of lollypop candy, that's a nice adventure. But, if you lose your penny down a crack in the board walk, that's an unpleasant adventure; though it may turn out all right in the end.

"Yes," went on Uncle Wiggily, sort of twinkling his pink nose, thoughtful like, "I hope I have a nice adventure, or, perhaps, even a funny one, like sneezing, as, when Tommie Tucker gave the barber the pinch of snuff." That's the story I told you last night, if you will kindly remember.

So Uncle Wiggily hopped along, over the fields and through the woods, and pretty soon he came to where Mother Goose lived, not far from his own hollow-stump bungalow. Mother Goose was looking up at the sky.

“Good morning! What are you looking for?” asked the bunny uncle. “Are you looking for signs of rain, or snow in the clouds?”

“No, indeed,” laughed Mother Goose. “But you know this is the first day of Spring, and the little birds should begin to sing. I am looking to see if the blackbirds are flying up from down South, where they went to spend the Winter. They always come back in the Spring, you know.”

“Yes,” said Uncle Wiggily. “But I do not see any blackbirds coming,” and he, too, looked up at the sky. It was blue—very blue and pretty—like babies’ eyes. And there were little white clouds in the sky, floating along like fairy ships. But there were no blackbirds to be seen.



“I hope nothing has happened to them,” said Mother Goose, sort of anxious like. “They should be here now.”

“I, too, hope they are all right,” Uncle Wiggily said. “I am going for a walk, and if I see the blackbirds, I will tell them to hurry, as you are looking for them.”

“I’ll be very glad if you do that,” spoke Mother Goose, and then she had to go next door to see if Little Bo Peep had found her lost sheep.

Once more Uncle Wiggily hopped along. He looked on all sides of him, and up in the air, hoping he might see the

blackbirds, for then, surely, it would be Spring, and Winter had lasted all too long for the animal folk. But no birds could the bunny uncle see. On and on he went, until, after a while, he came to the palace where lived Old King Cole, the jolly old soul. And, as Mr. Longears was wondering whether or not to go in, and pay King Cole a visit, he heard some one humming a verse that went like this:

“Sing a song of sixpence,  
A pocket full of rye.  
Four-and-twenty blackbirds,  
Baked within a pie.  
When the pie was opened,  
The birds began to sing.  
Wasn't that a dainty dish  
To set before the King?”

Uncle Wiggily stood still. He thought for a moment. “I wonder,” he said. “I wonder—four-and-twenty—blackbirds? Mother Goose didn't say how many she was expecting, and these may be the very same ones. I guess I'll go in and see about this.”

Into the palace of Old King Cole went the bunny uncle. He knew his way about very well, for he had been there before. From the kitchen came all sorts of the most delicious smells, just like a pie baking.

“Why, hello, Uncle Wiggily!” cried jolly Old King Cole, as he saw the bunny uncle hopping along. “Come in and sit down! How are you?”

“Fine!” cried the bunny uncle. “Very fine, indeed. And yourself?” he asked, politely.

"I never felt better in my life. I am just going to have a bit of lunch. Won't you sit down and help me enjoy it?" asked Old King Cole, also politely. "You may have some carrots with lettuce sauce on, or a bit of boiled lollypops with ice cream cones sprinkled on the top. Anything you wish!"

"That is very good of you," said Uncle Wiggily. "But don't go to any trouble on my account. I'll have whatever you are going to have."

"Then it will be pie!" cried Old King Cole. "I told the cook to have pie to-day, and I think it is ready. I'll ring the bell for it."

"Ding-dong!" rang the bell. In came the cook with a big pie on a dish. And the cook began to hum:

"Sing a song of sixpence,  
A pocket full of rye.

Four-and-twenty blackbirds,  
Baked within a pie."

"What's that?" cried Old King Cole. "Twenty-four blackbirds baked in my pie! Why, how did that happen?"

"It was this way," said the cook. "You told me to give you pie to-day. Well, I made all ready for it, but, at the last minute, I had nothing to put in the pie—no apples, no cherries, no peaches—nothing at all. I did not know what to do, but, all of a sudden, I looked out of the window, and I saw two dozen blackbirds flying along. 'The very thing!' said I to myself. 'They'll do for Old King Cole's pie!' I asked them if they would mind getting in between the upper and lower pie crusts, and they said no."

"And did they?" asked the king, putting his crown on sideways.

"They did," answered the cook. "Look!" and he sang:

"When the pie was opened,

The birds began to sing.

Wasn't that a dainty dish

To set before the king?"

Then, taking care not to hurt the feathered singers, the cook cut open the pie. Surely enough, out flew the blackbirds, singing as sweetly as one could wish. Around and around the palace they flew, singing, and Uncle Wiggily cried:

"Why, these must be the blackbirds Mother Goose is looking for! Did you come up from the South to tell us that Spring has come?" he asked them.

"Yes," answered the birds, "we did. But first we wanted to snuggle up in the pie for the king."

"Ha! Well, you did it all right!" laughed Old King Cole.

"But, now, I don't need you in my pie any longer, so fly away to Mother Goose. Uncle Wiggily and I will eat cake, instead of pie, to-day, since there is nothing between the crusts to chew on."

So they ate cake, and the blackbirds, which had only been put in the pie just after it came from the oven, flew all about animal land, singing: "Spring is here! Spring is here!"