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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And The Cheshire Cat

Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, was hopping along through the woods one day, wondering what sort of an adventure he would have, and he was thinking about Alice in Wonderland and what a queer tea party he had been to the day before, when the Mad March Hare smashed the Hatter's watch because the hands always stayed at 5 o'clock tea time.

"If anything like that is going to happen to me today," said the bunny uncle to himself, "I ought to have brought Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy along, so she could enjoy the fun. I'll just hop along and if anything queer starts I'll go back after her."

So he went on a little farther, and, all of a sudden, he saw, lying on the woodland path, a piece of cheese.

"Ha!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "I wonder if Jollie or Jillie Longtail, the mouse children, dropped that out of their trap? I'll take it to them, I guess."

He picked up the bit of cheese, thinking how glad the mousie boy and girl would be to have it back, when, all at once, he heard behind him a voice asking:

"Oh, did you find it? I'm so glad, thank you!" and from under a bush out stepped a cat wearing a large smile on the front of its face. The cat stretched out its claw and took the bit of cheese from Uncle Wiggily.

"Oh! Is that yours?" asked the bunny gentleman, in surprise.

"It's Cheshire cheese; isn't it?" asked the cat.

"I—I believe so," answered the bunny. "Yes," he added as he looked and made sure, "it is Cheshire cheese."

"Then, as I'm the Cheshire cat it's mine. Cheshire cat meet your cheese! Cheese, meet your cat! How do you do? So glad to see you!" and the cat shook paws with the cheese just as if Uncle Wiggily had introduced them.

"I dare say it's all right," went on the bunny uncle.

"Of course it is!" laughed the cat, smiling more than ever. "I'm so glad you found my cheese. I was afraid the March Hare had taken it for that silly 5 o'clock tea party. But I'm glad he didn't. At first I took you for the March Hare. You look like him, being a rabbit."

"My birthday is not in March, it is in April," said Uncle Wiggily, bowing.

"That's better," spoke the Cheshire cat. "You have done me a great favor by finding my cheese, and I hope to be able to do you one some day."



"Do not mention it," spoke the bunny uncle, modest-like and shy, as he always was. He was just going to ask about Alice in Wonderland when the cat ran away with the cheese.

"Never mind," thought Uncle Wiggily. "That was the beginning of an adventure, anyhow. I wonder what the next part will be?" He did not have long to wait.

All of a sudden, as he was walking along through the woods, sort of leaning on his red, white and blue striped barber pole rheumatism crutch, there was a rustling in the bushes and out popped a whole lot of hungry rats.

"Ah, there IT is!" cried one rat, seizing hold of Uncle Wiggily by his ears.

"Yes, and just in time, too!" cried another, grabbing the bunny by his paws. "Into our den with IT before the mouse trap comes along and takes IT away from us!"

With that the rats, of which there were about five hundred and sixteen, began hustling Uncle Wiggily down a hole in the ground, and the first he knew they had him inside a wooden room in an underground house and they locked the door, taking the key out.

"What does this mean?" cried the bunny uncle. "Why do you treat me this way?"

"Why, IT can speak!" cried several of the rats, in surprise.

"Of course I can!" cried Uncle Wiggily, his pink nose twinkling. "But why do you call me IT?"

"Because you are a piece of cheese," said one rat, "and we always call cheese IT."

"Cheese? I, cheese?" asked astonished Uncle Wiggily.

"Of course," cried the biggest rat of all. "You're Cheshire cheese. Why, you perfume the whole room! We're so hungry for you. We thought the grocer had forgotten to send you. But it's all right now. Oh, what a

delightful meal we shall have. We love Cheshire cheese," and the rats in the room with Mr. Longears looked very hungrily at the bunny uncle—very hungrily indeed.

"Oh, what shall I do?" thought Uncle Wiggily. "I see what has happened. When I picked up the Cheshire cat's piece of Cheshire cheese some of the perfume from it must have stuck to my paws. The rats smelled that and think I'm it. IT!" murmured the bunny gentleman. "As if I were a game of tag! IT!"

The rats in the locked room were very busy, getting out their cheese knives and plates, and poor Uncle Wiggily hardly knew what to do with this most unpleasant adventure happening to him, when, all of a sudden, right in the middle of the room, there appeared a big, smiling mouth, with a cheerful grin spread all over it. Just a smile it was, and nothing more.

"Oh!" cried Uncle Wiggily in surprise. "Oh!"

With that all the rats looked up and, seeing the smile, one exclaimed:

"I smell a cat! Oh, woe is me! I smell a cat!"

Then, all of a sudden the smile grew larger and larger. Then a nose seemed to grow out of nothing, then some whiskers, then a pair of blazing eyes, and then ears—a head, legs, claws and a body, and finally there stood the Cheshire cat in the midst of the rats.

"Scat, rats," meauowed the Cheshire cat. "Scat!"

"How did you get in here?" asked one rat.

"Yes, tell us!" ordered another. "How did you get in past the locked door?"

"Through the keyhole," said the Cheshire cat. "I sent my smile in first, and then it was easy for my body to follow. Now you scat and leave Uncle Wiggily alone!" and with that the cat grinned larger than ever, showing such sharp teeth that the rats quickly unlocked the door and ran away, leaving the bunny uncle quite safe. "Alice in Wonderland, most magically knew of the trouble you were in," said the Cheshire cat, "so she sent me to help you, which I was glad to do, as you had helped me. My Cheshire cheese, that you found for me when I had lost it, was very good!" Then Uncle Wiggily hopped back to his bungalow, and the cat went to see Alice.