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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And The Cook

"Well, Mr. Longears, I shall have to leave you all alone today," said Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper, as she gave Uncle Wiggily, the bunny rabbit gentleman, his breakfast in the hollow stump bungalow one morning.

"Leave me all alone—how does that happen?" asked Uncle Wiggily, sort of sad and sorrowful like. "Do you mean you are going to leave me for good?"

"Oh, no; I'm just going to be busy all day sewing mosquito shirts for the animal boy soldiers who are going off to war. Since you taught them how to shoot their talcum powder guns at the bad biting bugs, Sammie Littletail, your rabbit nephew, and Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, the squirrels; Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow, the puppy dogs, and all the other Woodland chaps have been bothered with the mosquitoes."

"They made war enough on me," said Uncle Wiggily.

"And, since they could not catch you, they are starting war against your friends," went on Nurse Jane, "so I am making mosquito shirts for the animal boys. I'll be away sewing all day, and you'll have to get your own lunch, I'm afraid."

"I'm not afraid!" laughed brave Uncle Wiggily. "If I could get away from the bad, biting mosquitoes, I guess I can get my own lunch. Besides, maybe Alice from Wonderland will come along and help me."

"Maybe," spoke Nurse Jane. Then the muskrat lady, tying her tail up in a pink-blue hair ribbon, scurried off, while Uncle Wiggily hopped over the fields and through the woods, looking for an adventure.

But adventures, or things that happen to you, seemed to be scarce that day, and it was noontime before the bunny gentleman hardly knew it.

"Well!" he exclaimed. "I'm getting hungry, and, as I didn't bring any cherry pie with me I'll have to skip along to my hollow stump bungalow for something to eat."

Nurse Jane had left some things on the table for the bunny gentleman to eat for his lunch. There were cold carrot sandwiches, cold cabbage tarts, cold turnip unsidedowns—which are like turnovers only different—and cold lettuce pancakes.

"But it seems to me," said Uncle Wiggily, "it seems to me that I would like something hot. I think I'll make a soup of all these things as I saw the cook doing when I went through the funny little door and met Alice from Wonderland in the kitchen of the Duchess."

So, getting a large soup kettle, Uncle Wiggily put into it the cold carrot sandwiches, the cold lettuce pancakes, the cold cabbage tarts and so on. Then he built a fire in the stove.

"For," said he, "if those things are good cold they are better hot. I shall have a fine hot lunch."

Then Uncle Wiggily sat down to wait for the things to cook, and every once in a while he would look at the kettle on the stove and say:

"Yes, I shall have a fine, hot lunch!"

And then, all of a sudden, after the bunny rabbit gentleman had said this about five-and-ten-cent-store times a voice cried:

"Indeed you will have a hot lunch!" and all of a sudden into the kitchen of the hollow stump bungalow came the red hot flamingo bird, eager to burn the rabbit gentleman.

"Oh!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily. "I—I don't seem to know you very well."

"You'll know me better after a bit," said the red flamingo bird, clashing its beak like a pair of tailor's shears. "I'm the bird that Alice from Wonderland used for a croquet mallet when she played with the Queen of Hearts."

"Oh, now I know!" said the bunny. "Won't you have lunch with me?" he asked, trying to be polite. "I'm having a hot lunch, though Nurse Jane left me a cold one, and—"

"You are going to have a much hotter lunch than you imagine!" said the red flamingo bird. "Look out! I'm getting sizzling hot!" And indeed he was, which made him such a red color, I suppose. "I'm going to burn you!" cried the bird to Uncle Wiggily, sticking out his red tongue.

"Burn me? Why?" asked the poor bunny gentleman.

"Oh, because I have to burn somebody, and it might as well be you!" said the flamingo. "Look out, now!"

"Ha! Indeed! And it's you who had better look out!" cried a new voice. And with that the cook—the same big

lady, shaped like a ham, whom Uncle Wiggily had last seen in the kitchen of the Duchess—this cook hopped nimbly in through a window of the hollow stump bungalow.

"I'll fix him!" she cried, catching up the flatirons from the shelf over the stove and throwing them at the flamingo. "Get out! Scat! Sush! Run away!" And she threw the fire shovel, the dustpan, the sink shovel, the stove lifter, the broom and the coal scuttle at the flamingo. My, but that cook was a thrower!

She didn't hit the red flamingo bird with any of the things she threw, but she tossed them so very hard, and seemingly with such anger, that the bird was frightened.

"This is no place for me!" cried the flaming red bird, drawing in his red tongue. "I'll go make it hot for Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear. He might like some heat for a change from his cake of ice."

Then the red flamingo bird, not burning Uncle Wiggily at all, flew away, and the cook, after she had picked up all the kitchen things she had thrown, came in and had a hot lunch with Uncle Wiggily, who thanked her very much.

"I'm glad you came," said the bunny, "but I didn't know you cooks threw things."

"Oh, I'm from the Wonderland Alice book, which makes me different," the cook answered.

