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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And Billie's Top

Uncle Wiggily Longears, the nice rabbit gentleman, was sitting on the front porch of his hollow stump bungalow one day, when along came Billie Bushytail, the little squirrel boy.

"Hello, Billie!" called the bunny gentleman, cheerful-like and happy, for his rheumatism did not hurt him much that day. "Hello, Billie."

"Hello, Uncle Wiggily," answered the chattering squirrel chap. Then he came up and sat down on the porch, but he seemed so quiet and thoughtful that Uncle Wiggily asked:

"Is anything the matter, Billie?"

"No—well—that is, nothing much," said the squirrel boy slowly, "but I'd like to ask you what you'd buy if you had five cents, Uncle Wiggily."

"What would I buy if I had five cents, Billie? Well now, let me see. I think I'd buy two postage stamps and a funny postcard and write some letters to my friends. What would you buy, Billie?"

"I'd buy a spinning top, Uncle Wiggily," said the little squirrel boy, very quickly. "Only, you see, I haven't any five cents. You have, though, haven't you Uncle Wiggily? Eh?"

"Why, yes, Billie, I think so," and the old gentleman rabbit put his paw in his pocket to make sure.

"This is a funny world," said Billie with a long, sorrowful sigh. "Here you are with five cents and you don't want a top, and here I am without five cents and I do want a spinning top. Oh, dear!"

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed Uncle Wiggily in his most jolly fashion. "I see what you mean, Billie. Now you just come along with me," and Uncle Wiggily picked up off the porch his red, white and blue striped barber-pole rheumatism crutch that Nurse Jane had gnawed for him out of a cornstalk.

"Where are we going?" asked Billie, sort of hopeful-like and expectant.

"I'm going to the top store to buy a spinning top," answered bunny uncle. "If you think I ought to have one, why I'll get it."

"Oh, all right," said Billie, sort of funny-like. "Do you know how to spin a top, Uncle Wiggily?"

"Well, I used to when I was a young rabbit, and I guess I can remember a little about it. Come along and help me pick out a nice one."

So the bunny uncle and the squirrel boy went on and on through the woods to the top store kept by Mrs. Spin Spider, who had a little toy shop in which she worked when she was not spinning silk for the animal ladies' dresses.

"One of your best tops for myself, if you please," said Uncle Wiggily, as he and Billie went into the toy store. Mrs. Spin Spider put a number of tops on the counter.

"That's the kind you want!" cried Billie, as he saw a big red one, and pointed his paw at it.

"Try it and see how it spins," said the bunny man. Billie wound the string on the top, and then, giving it a throw, while he kept hold of one end of the cord, he made the top spin as fast as anything on the floor of the store. Around and around whizzed the red top, like the electric fan on Uncle Wiggily's airship.

"Is that a good top for me, Billie?" asked Mr. Longears.

"A very good top," said the squirrel boy. "Fine!"

"Then I'll take it," said Uncle Wiggily, and he paid for it and walked out, Billie following.

If the little chattering squirrel chap was disappointed at not getting a top for himself, he said nothing about it, which was very brave and good, I think. He just walked along until they came to a nice, smooth-dirt place in the woods, and then Uncle Wiggily said:

"Let me see you spin my top, Billie. I want to watch you and see how it's done—how you wind the string on, how you throw it down to the ground and all that. You just give me some lessons in top-spinning, please."

"I will," said Billie. So he wound the string on the top again and soon it was spinning as fast as anything on the hard ground in the woods.

"Do you want me to show you how to pick up a top, and let it spin on your paw?" asked Billie, of Uncle Wiggily.

"Yes, show me all the tricks there are," said the bunny gentleman.

So, while the top was spinning very fast, Billie picked it up, and, holding it on his paw, quickly put it over on Uncle Wiggily's paw.

"Ouch! It tickles!" cried the bunny uncle, sort of giggling like.

"Yes, a little," laughed Billie, "but I don't mind that. Now I'll show you how to pick it up."

Once more he spun the top, and he was just going to pick it up when, all of a sudden, a growling voice cried: "Ah, ha! Again I am in luck! A rabbit and a squirrel! Let me see; which shall I take first?" And out from behind a stump popped a big bear. It was the same one that Uncle Wiggily had hit on the nose with Johnnie's marble, about a week before.

"Oh, my!" said the bunny man.

"Oh, dear!" chattered Billie.

"Surprised to see me, aren't you?" asked the bear sticking out his tongue.

"A little," answered Uncle Wiggily, "but I guess we'd better be getting along Billie. Pick up my top and come along."

"Oh, oh! Not so fast!" growled the bear. "I shall want you to stay with me.

You'll be going off with me to my den, pretty soon. Don't be in a hurry," and, putting out his claws, he grabbed hold of Uncle Wiggily and Billie. They tried to get away, but could not, and the bear was just going to



carry them off, when he saw the spinning top whizzing on the ground.

"What's that red thing?" he asked.

"A top Billie just picked out for me," said Uncle Wiggily.

"Would you like to have it spin on your paw?" asked Billie, blinking his eyes at Uncle Wiggily, funny-like.

"Oh, I might as well, before I carry you off to my den," said the bear, sort of careless-like and indifferent. "Spin the top on my paw."

So Billie picked up the spinning top and put it on the bear's broad, flat paw. And, no sooner was it there, whizzing around, than the bear cried:

"Ouch! Oh, dear! How it tickles. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho! Ho! It makes me laugh. It makes me laugh. It makes me giggle! Ouch! Oh, dear!"

And then he laughed so hard that he dropped the top and turned a somersault, and away he ran through the woods, leaving Billie and Uncle Wiggily safe there alone.

"We came out of that very well," said the bunny uncle as the bear ran far away.

"Yes, indeed, and here is your top," spoke Billie, picking it up off the ground where the bear had dropped it.

"My top? No that's yours," said the bunny gentleman. "I meant it for you all the while."

"Oh, did you? Thank you so much!" cried happy Billie, and then he ran off to spin his red top, while Mr. Longears went back to his bungalow.