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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And The Hoptoad

"Dear me!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily as he got out of bed the morning after the green parrot had scared away the fuzzy fox, "I do seem to be having the most surprising adventures, but I can't find my fortune. Anyhow, I'm glad we had the parrot with us last night; aren't you, red monkey?"

"Indeed I am," declared the little chap with the long tail. "And perhaps he will bring us good luck, and you may come across your fortune at any moment. Why don't you go look for it while I take my whistling lesson?"

"Are you going to try again to whistle?" asked the rabbit.

"Indeed I am," replied the monkey. "I'm not going to give up just because I can't do a thing the first time or the forty-'leventh time. If it's possible for me to whistle I'm going to learn."

"Bravo!" cried the parrot, fluttering his green wings.

"That's the way to talk. Well, now we'll have breakfast, and after that I'll give you a whistling lesson, but first I must sing a song." So he sang this one:

"Once there was a dollie,
Who could shut her eyes,
They were blue like buttercups,
Under summer skies.
She had hair like roses,

And her teeth were red,
Sometimes when she walked along
She stood on her head.

"Inside her was sawdust,
Fine as fine could be,
Made from sawing little boards
That grew in a tree.

She could walk on tiptoes,
Also skip a rope,
Every Sunday morning she
Washed her face with soap."

"My! That was a funny doll, with red teeth and hair like roses," said the monkey. "I wonder if she was any relation to me?"

"And who ever heard of blue buttercups?" asked the rabbit. "Buttercups are yellow! Every one knows that."

"I know," said the parrot. "You see there really wasn't ever any such dollie--I just made up that song as I went along. But now for breakfast. Yo, ho! Ho, yo!"

Well, it was a nice breakfast they all had together in the little house the monkey had built, and when it was over the parrot started on the whistling lesson. Uncle Wiggily watched the monkey for a time, and saw the long-tailed chap turn a double back somersault when he found he couldn't whistle any other way. But even that didn't seem to do any good.

"Never mind," said the parrot, kindly; "you may learn yet. Never give up!"

"I'll not," said the monkey.

"Well, I think I will go off and see if I can find my fortune," said Uncle Wiggily. "I'll come back to dinner," and off he hopped, looking on all sides for gold or diamonds so that he could get rich and go back home to live in peace and comfort.

Well, the old gentleman rabbit hadn't gone on very far before he came to a place where there was a hole in the ground, and in front of it was a sign, which read: "HOP DOWN HERE AND GET RICH."

"Ah, ha!" exclaimed the rabbit. "Indeed, I'll not do that. There must be a bad fox or a bear down there. I'll keep away." So he hopped on very quickly, and a voice called out after him:

"Aren't you coming down and get rich?"

"No, I'm not!" answered the rabbit, as he looked back and saw a savage mud turtle sticking his long neck and snaky head out of the hole. Then the rabbit kept on, and he went so fast that the turtle couldn't catch up to him.

Well, the next place he came to was a little pond of water, and in front of this was a piece of paper on which was written:

"JUMP IN HERE AND GET RICH."

"Ah, ha! No, indeed!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily, foxy-like.

"They can't catch me that way! There is probably an alligator in that pond."

So away he ran as fast as he could go, and a voice cried after him:

"Aren't you coming in?" And, looking back, he saw a big, savage water rat.

"No, indeed; I'm not coming in," said the old gentleman rabbit, and he hurried on, while the water rat gnashed his sharp teeth, because he was so disappointed at not catching the rabbit.

Well, the next place Uncle Wiggily came to was a big, bright, tin can standing beside the path that led through the woods.

"Ha! I wonder what that can be?" thought the rabbit.

"Perhaps there is a sign on it telling me to climb in and get rich." So he looked all around the tin can, but there was no sign. "That must be a safe place," thought the rabbit. "It may be full of gold or diamonds. I'm going to have a look in."

He tried to climb up the sides of the can, but they were too smooth, so he got some long sticks and some short ones, and, by tying them together with ribbon grass, Uncle Wiggily made a little ladder. Then, by standing this up against the tin can, he could climb up and look in.

When he first looked over the top of the can he couldn't see anything. Then he leaned away far over, and the first thing he knew, in he had fallen ker-splash! and the can was full of molasses--yes, there poor Uncle Wiggily was in a can of molasses and he was so stuck up that he didn't know what to do.

He tried to swim out, but the molasses was too thick. And he kept sinking deeper and deeper.

"Oh, dear! What shall I do?" he cried. "I can never get out!"

And then, all of a sudden, a voice outside the can called:

"Who are you, and what is the trouble?"

"Oh, please help me," begged the rabbit.

"I will," said the voice again.

"I am the hippity-hop toad, and I am going to take that can up on my back, and hippity-hop up and down with

it until I turn all the molasses into molasses candy, and then you can climb out on that. Hold fast, please."

Well, Uncle Wiggily held fast, and the first thing he knew the can in which he was a prisoner gave a lurch and a swaying motion, and then it almost turned upside down, and then he knew it must be up on the back of the hippity-hop toad.

Then, my goodness! I wish you could have seen that toad hop. Up and down he went like the dasher in a churn, or like a steam pump. Up and down! Up and down, faster and faster! The molasses splashed all over and some got up Uncle Wiggily's nose and some in his eyes, and it was all he could do to hold on to the sides of the can. But somehow he managed it.

But pretty soon the molasses got thicker and thicker, and then it began to get harder and harder, and pretty soon it was turned into sticks of molasses candy. Then Uncle Wiggily took these candy sticks and made a



ladder of them, and when the hippity-hop toad set down the can off his back the rabbit climbed up the inside of it on his candy ladder, went down his wooden ladder outside the can and he was safe.

Of course he had lots of spots of molasses on him, but the toad showed him where there was a brook of water in which he washed himself. Then he thanked the hippity-hop toad and went back to the monkey house, though still without his fortune.