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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Black Cricket

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Uncle Wiggily, the nice old gentleman rabbit, was feeling quite sad one morning as he hopped along the dusty road. It was a few days after he had helped the lost chipmunk find her way back home, and he had given her the lost penny which he had also picked up.

"Oh, dear me!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily, as he thought of the penny. "That's generally the way it is in this world. Nothing seems to go right. I naturally thought I had found the beginning of my fortune, even if it was only a penny, and it turned out that the money belonged to somebody else. Oh dear!"

Well, the old rabbit traveler actually felt so badly that he didn't much care whether he found his fortune or not, and that is a very poor way to feel in this world, for one must never give up trying, no matter what happens.

Then Uncle Wiggily looked in his satchel to see if he had anything to eat, but my goodness sakes alive and a ham sandwich! There wasn't a thing in the valise! You see he was thinking so much about the penny that he forgot to put up his lunch.

"Humph! This is a pretty state of affairs!" exclaimed the old rabbit gentleman. "Worse and worse, and some more besides! I do declare! Hum! Suz! Dud!"

Well, he didn't know what to do, so he sat down on a log beside a shady bush and thought it all over. And the more he thought the sadder he became, until he began to believe he was the most miserable rabbit in all the world.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily. "I might as well go back home and done with it."

But no sooner had he said this, than Uncle Wiggily heard the jolliest laugh he had ever known. Oh! it was such a rippling, happy joyous laugh that it would almost cure the toothache just to listen to it.

"Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho! He! He!" laughed the voice, and Uncle Wiggily looked up, and he looked down, and then he looked sideways and around a corner, but he could see no one. Still the laugh kept up, more jolly than ever.

"Humph! I wonder who that is?" said the rabbit. "I wish I could laugh like that," and Uncle Wiggily actually smiled the least little bit, and he didn't feel quite so

sad.

Then, all at once, there was a voice singing, and this is the song, and if you feel sad when you sing it, just get some one to tickle you, or watch baby's face when he smiles, and you will feel jolly enough to sing this song, even if you have been crying because you stubbed your toe.

"Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho! I gladly sing,
I sing about most anything.
I sing about a pussy cat,
Who caught a little mousie-rat.
I sing about a doggie-dog,
Who saw a turtle on a log.
I sing about a little boy,
Who cried because he broke his toy.
And then he laughed, 'Ha! Ha! He! He!'
Because he couldn't help it; see?"

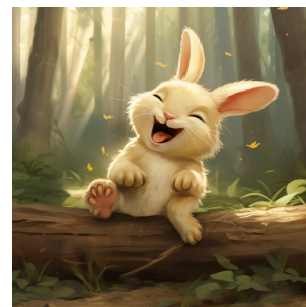
"Well, well!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily, "I wish I knew who that was. Perhaps it is a fairy, and if it is, I'm going to ask her for my fortune. I'm getting tired of not finding it," and when he thought about that he was sad again.

But a moment later a little black creature hopped out from under a leaf, and who should it be but a cricket.

"Was that you laughing?" asked the old gentleman rabbit, as he again looked in his valise to see if he had any sandwiches there. "Was it you?"

"It was," said the cricket. "I was just going—Oh, kindly excuse me, while I laugh again!" the cricket said, and then he laughed more jolly than before.

"What makes you so good-natured?" asked the rabbit.



"I just can't help it," said the cricket. "Everything is so lovely. The sun shines, and the birds sing, and the water in the brooks babble such jolly songs, and well—Oh, excuse me again if you please, I'm going to laugh once more," and so he did then and there. He just laughed and laughed and laughed, that cricket did.

"Well," said Uncle Wiggily, still speaking sadly, "of course it's nice to be jolly, anybody can be that way when the sun shines, but what about the rain? There! I guess you can't be jolly when it rains."

"Oh! when it rains I laugh because I know it will soon clear off, and then, too, I

can think about the days when the sun did shine," said the cricket.

"Well," spoke Uncle Wiggily, "there is something in that, to be sure. And as you are such a jolly chap, will you travel along with me? Perhaps with you I could find my fortune."

"Of course I'll come," said the cricket, and he laughed again, and then he and the old gentleman rabbit hopped on together and Uncle Wiggily kept feeling more and more happy until he had forgotten all about the chipmunk's penny that wasn't his.

Well, in a little while, not so very long, the rabbit and the cricket came to a dark place in the woods. Oh! it was quite dismal, and, just as they passed a big, black stump with a hole in it, all of a sudden out popped the skillery-scalery-tailery alligator.

"Ah, ha!" exclaimed the unpleasant creature. "Now I have you both. I'm going to eat you both, first you, Mr. Cricket, and then you, Uncle Wiggily."

"Oh, please don't," begged the rabbit. "I haven't found my fortune yet."

"No matter," cried the alligator, "here we go!"

He made a grab for the cricket, but the little black insect hopped to one side, and then, all of a sudden he began to laugh. Oh, how hard he laughed.

"Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho! He! He!" My, it was wonderful! At first the alligator didn't know what to make of it. Harder and harder did the black cricket laugh, and then Uncle Wiggily began. He just couldn't help it. Harder and harder laughed the cricket and Uncle Wiggily together, and then, all at once, the alligator began to laugh. He couldn't help it either.

"Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho! He! He!" laughed the 'gator, and great big alligator tears rolled down his scaly cheeks, he laughed so hard. Why, he giggled so that he couldn't even have eaten a mosquito with mustard on.

"Come on, now!" suddenly cried the cricket to Uncle Wiggily. "Now is our chance to get away."

And before the alligator had stopped laughing they both hopped away in the woods together, and so the bad scalery-ailery-tailery creature didn't get either of them.

"My! it's a good thing you made him laugh," said the rabbit when they were safely away.

"It's a good thing to make anybody laugh," said the black cricket, and then he and Uncle Wiggily went on to seek the old gentleman rabbit's fortune.

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