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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Chickie

Howard R. Garis

"Well, what shall we do to-day?" asked the second cousin to Grandfather Prickly Porcupine, as he crawled out of his bed of dried leaves, and looked over to where Uncle Wiggily was washing his whiskers. "Are we going to travel some more?"

"Oh, yes," answered the old gentleman rabbit, "we must still keep on, for I have yet to find my fortune."

"What are you going to do with your fortune when you find it?" asked the porcupine. "Will you buy a million ice cream cones with the money?"

"Oh, my goodness sakes alive, and a pot of mustard, no!" replied Uncle Wiggily. "If I ate as many cones as that I would have indigestion, as well as rheumatism. When I find my fortune I am going back home, and I'll buy something for Sammie and Susie Littletail, and for Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, and for all my other animal friends, including Grandfather Goosey Gander. That's what I'll do when I find my fortune."

"Very good," said the porcupine, and then he got up and washed his face and paws. And he wiped them on the towel after the old gentleman rabbit, instead of before him, for you see when the porcupine soaked up the water off his face he left some of his stickery-stockery quills sticking in the towel, and if Uncle Wiggily had used it then he might have been scratched. But, as it was, the rabbit didn't even get tickled, and very glad of it he was, too. Oh, my, yes, and some pepper hash in addition.

Well, Uncle Wiggily and the porcupine had their breakfast and then they started off. They hadn't gone very far before they met a locust sitting on the low limb of a tree. And this locust was buzzing his wings like an electric fan, and making more noise than you could shake your handkerchief at on a Tuesday morning.

"Why do you do that?" asked the rabbit.

"To keep myself cool," said the locust. "I am fanning myself with my buzzy wings for it is going to be a very hot day."

"Then we must keep in the shade as we travel along," said the porcupine, and that is what he and the old gentleman rabbit did. And it is a good thing they did so, for, as they walked along where it was cool and dark, beneath clumps of ferns, and under big, tall trees, they passed by a place where a bad snake lived.

"Look out! There's the snake's hole!" cried Uncle Wiggily, and he jumped to one side.

"Ha! I'm ready for him!" called the porcupine, and he got some of his stickery quills ready to jab into the snake. But the snake was out on a big rock, sunning himself in the hot sun, though when he heard the rabbit and porcupine talking he made a jump for them and tried to catch them.

But you see they were in the cool shadows, and the snake's eyes were blinded by the sun, so he could not see very well, and thus the rabbit and his friend escaped.

"I tell you it is a good thing we heard the locust sing, and that we kept in the shade, or else we might have stepped right on that snake and he'd have bitten and killed us," said the porcupine, and Uncle Wiggily said that this was true.

Well, they kept on and on, and pretty soon they sat down in the shade of a mulberry tree and ate their lunch. Then they rested a bit, and in the afternoon they traveled on farther.

And, just as they were passing by a large, gray rock, that had nice, green moss on it, all of a sudden they heard something calling like this:

"Cheep! Cheep! Chip-cheep-cheep! Oh, cheep! Peep! Peep!"

"What's that?" asked Uncle Wiggily in a whisper.

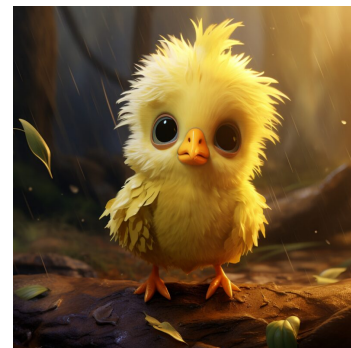
"I don't know. Maybe a burglar fox," answered the porcupine also, in a whisper. "But I'm all ready for him."

So he got out some of his sharpest stickery quills to jab into the burglar fox, and the noise still kept up:

"Cheep! Cheep! Yip! Yip! Yap! Yap! Cheep-chap!"

"That doesn't sound like a fox," said the rabbit, listening with his two ears.

"No, it doesn't," admitted the porcupine, and he stuck his quills back again like pins in a cushion. "Perhaps it is the skillery-scalery alligator, and my quills would be of no use against him," he went on.



Then, all at once, before Uncle Wiggily could make his nose twinkle like a star of a frosty night more than two times, there was a rustling in the bushes, and out popped a poor, little white chickie—only she wasn't so very white now, for her feathers were all wet and muddy.

"Cheep-chap! Yip-yap!" cried the little chickie.

"Why, what in the world are you doing away off here?" asked Uncle Wiggily. "You poor little dear! Where is your mother?"

"Oh, me! Oh, my!" cried the little chickie. "I only wish I knew. I'm lost! I wandered away from my mamma, and my brothers, and sisters, and I'm lost in these woods. Oh chip! Oh chap! Oh yip! Oh yap!" Then she cried real hard and the tears washed some of the dirt off her white feathers.

"Don't cry," said Uncle Wiggily, kindly. "We'll help you find your mamma, won't we, Mr. Porcupine?"

"Of course we will," said the stickery-stockery creature. "You go one way, Uncle Wiggily, and I'll go the other, and the chickie can stay on this big rock until one of us comes back with her mamma."

"Yes, and here is a piece of cherry pie for you to eat while we are gone," said the rabbit, giving the lost chickie a nice piece of the pie.

So off the rabbit and the porcupine started to find the chickie's mamma. They looked everywhere for her, but the porcupine couldn't find the old lady hen, so he went back to the rock to wait there with the lost chickie so she wouldn't be lonesome. But Uncle Wiggily wouldn't stop looking. Pretty soon he heard something going "cluck-cluck" in the bushes, and he knew that it was the mamma hen. Then he went up to her and said:

"Oh, I know where your little lost chickie is."

Well, at first, that mamma hen didn't know who the rabbit was, and she ruffled up her feathers, and puffed them out, and let down her wings, and she was going to fly right at Uncle Wiggily, but she happened to see who he was just in time and she said:

"Oh, thank you ever so much, Uncle Wiggily. I was so worried that I was just going down to the police station to see if a policeman had found her. Now I won't have to go. Come along, children, little lost Clarabella is found. Uncle Wiggily found her."

So she clucked to all the other children, and the rabbit led them toward where Clarabella was sitting on the rock with the porcupine.

And on the way a big, ugly fox leaped out of the bushes and tried to eat up all the chickens, and Uncle Wiggily also. But the old mother hen just ruffled up her feathers and puffed herself all out big again, and she flew at that fox and picked him in the eyes, and he was glad enough to slink away through the bushes, taking his fuzzy tail with him.

Then the rabbit hopped on and took the mamma hen to her little lost chickie on the rock, and the rabbit and the porcupine had supper that night with the chicken family and slept in a big basket full of straw next door to the chicken coop.

Then they traveled on the next day and something else happened.

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