



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Helpful Butterfly

Howard R. Garis

"You have a very nice house here," said Uncle Wiggily to the red monkey after they had all sat down, and Old Dog Percival had been told that there was no need to rescue his rabbit friend from a trap.

"Yes, it is a fine little house," said the red monkey. "I built it away off in the woods so as to be nice and quiet. You see I used to live with the monkey who plays five hand organs at once, but finally it got so that I couldn't stand the music any longer, so I went off by myself and made this little house."

"But how did you happen to get splashed with that lovely red color?" asked the grasshopper, "that is if you will excuse me asking you such a personal question."

"Do not mention it, I beg of you," said the red monkey as he tossed up a lump of coal and caught it on his nose. "I will gladly tell you how I became colored red. It was this way: I was writing a letter to a friend of mine and I had no more black ink left. I didn't know what to do until I happened to think that out in the yard back of my house on a bush were some red raspberries. I gathered some of them and put them in a teacup.

"Then, with the potato-masher, I crushed them all up until the red juice ran out. Then I had the loveliest red ink you ever saw. But just then a fly lit on the end of my nose. I went to brush him off with the potato-masher when I happened to hit the cup full of red juice by mistake.

"Well, you can imagine what happened. The raspberry juice splashed all over me until I looked like a strawberry ice-cream cone, and I've been red ever since."

"It's a very fine color," said Uncle Wiggily.

"Yes," agreed the monkey with a sigh "but sometimes it's quite a trouble. All the turkey gobblers and the bulls in the fields chase me whenever they see me, for they don't like red. I'm thinking of taking some dandelions and coloring myself yellow next year. But, now tell me of your travels, Uncle Wiggily."

So the old gentleman rabbit did so, mentioning how he was searching for his fortune, but couldn't find it. Then Percival told about when he used to be in a circus and do tricks, and the grasshopper told how he made his music by playing the fiddle with his left hind leg, and then the red monkey gave them all some chocolate-cocoanut pudding and it was time to go to bed.

Now, I have something sad to tell you, but please don't get alarmed, for I'll make it come out right at the end. In the middle of the night poor Uncle Wiggily was taken ill. He had a dreadful pain, and he was as hot with a fever as a stove with a fire in it.

"I am afraid you have been traveling about too much," said the red monkey, as he lighted a lamp and gave the rabbit a drink of cool water. "We must have Dr. Possum see you in the morning."

"Perhaps I ate too much chocolate-coconut pudding," said Uncle Wiggily. "Oh, how I suffer, and how hot I am."

Well, they did all they could for him by putting his paws in mustard water and giving him sweet spirits of nitre, but it didn't seem to do any good.

"Yes, he is a very sick rabbit," said Dr. Possum, who came in the morning. "He ought to be home in bed, but we can't move him now. He'll have to stay here."

"Oh, the grasshopper and Old Dog Percival and I will take good care of him," said the red monkey, kindly.

"Yes, I guess you will," agreed Dr. Possum. So he left some bitter medicine for Uncle Wiggily and the old gentleman rabbit took it without even wrinkling up his nose--and it was very, very bitter--the medicine I mean, and not his nose.

"Oh, how hot I am!" cried Uncle Wiggily, as the sun got higher and higher in the sky and beat down on the house where the red monkey lived. "I wish I had some ice." Then he fell asleep.

"We will see if we can't find some," said the grasshopper, so he and the monkey and Old Dog Percival started off to look for an ice-house, leaving Uncle Wiggily asleep. Pretty soon he awakened.

"Oh, I wish I had an electric fan to cool me!" cried the poor sick old gentleman rabbit. "Oh, how hot I am! Oh, dear!"

Well, he kept getting hotter and hotter, and tossed to and fro on the bed, and he wished for ice, and ice-cream cones and all such cool things as those. Then, all of a sudden, when he was so warm he couldn't seem to stand it any longer he heard a little voice singing this song:

"Away up North in the ice and snow,
That's the place for you to go.
Where wintry winds do always blow,
And the polar bear's on a big ice floe.
"Where seals dive down in the icy sea,
Where it's far too cold for a bug like me,
Where snowflakes fall so you cannot see,

That is the place for you to be."

"Oh, I'm sure it is," cried poor Uncle Wiggily. "I wish I was up there in the Arctic regions. But I can't go. Oh, if I only had an electric fan to cool me off!"

"I'll be an electric fan for you," said the voice, and turning his head, Uncle Wiggily saw, perched on the window-sill, a beautiful big butterfly, with red and yellow wings. Then the splendid creature flew right up on the rabbit's pillow, and began to wave his wings. Faster and faster the butterfly's wings went until you couldn't see them move--just like an electric fan. And a cool breeze swept over poor, hot Uncle Wiggily, and made him feel much better.

Then the butterfly fluttered harder than ever, and he sang another song about ice-cream freezers and blizzards and snow and hail and icebergs and polar bears and all cool things like that, and he kept on fanning the rabbit with his wings, and before he knew it Uncle Wiggily went fast asleep again.

Then, in a little while, the grasshopper and the red monkey and Old Dog Percival came back with some ice and they gave the rabbit a cool drink, and the butterfly kept on fanning him. And soon Dr. Possum came in, and he said:

"Well, I do declare! Uncle Wiggily is all well again. The butterfly with his cool wings and cold songs has cured him."

Then the rabbit thanked the beautiful winged creature very kindly and got ready to go on seeking his fortune again next day.



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