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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Milkman

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Well, now I guess we're all ready for the story of the chicken who tried to roll an egg up hill, and it fell down, and was broken into forty-'leven pieces and the monkey—Oh dear! Did you ever hear of such a thing? I guess I must have turned over two pages in the story book instead of one, for to-night I'm going to tell you about Uncle Wiggily and the milkman, and not about the chicken and the egg at all. That comes in later.

Let's see then, we left the old gentleman rabbit just after he had met the Phoebe birds, didn't we? Well, a few days after that, as Uncle Wiggily was hopping along with the elephant, who had come back to him again, now and then, when he was tired, taking a ride on the back of the big fellow, all of a sudden they heard a voice crying:

"Ah, ha! Now I have you!"

"My! What's that?" asked the old gentleman rabbit.

"It must be somebody after us," answered the elephant. "But don't you be afraid, Uncle Wiggily, I'll take care of you, and not let them hurt you. Just get behind me."

So the rabbit got behind the big elephant, and, would you believe it? you couldn't see Uncle Wiggily at all, not even if you were to put on the strongest kind of spectacles, such as Grandma wears. For he was hidden behind the elephant.

Then, in another moment a man with a long rope came bursting through the bushes, and he ran straight toward the elephant.

"Now I have you!" cried the man again. "You must come right back to the circus with me."

"Oh, it's you they want, and not me," remarked Uncle Wiggily, and then he wasn't afraid any more, and felt better, for he knew that he could still travel on and seek his fortune.

"Yes, they're after me," said the elephant sadly. "I guess I'll have to leave you, Uncle Wiggily. Do you want me to go with you, Mr. Man?"

"Yes, we want you back in the circus show."

"Will I have all the peanuts I want?" asked the elephant.

"Oh, yes," promised the man, "you may have a bushel and a pint every day, besides a pailful of pink lemonade."

"Then I'll come," said the elephant, "though I would like to have Uncle Wiggily come also. But he still has his fortune to find. Come and see me some time," he called to the rabbit.

"I will," said Uncle Wiggily. Then the man tied a rope around the elephant's trunk and led him away, and the big fellow waved and flapped his ears at the rabbit to say good-bye.

"Now I must travel all alone once more," said Uncle Wiggily to himself, as he hopped on through the woods. "And I do hope I find part of my fortune to-day, even if it's only ten cents' worth."

Well, he was passing across a nice green field a little while after that when, all of a sudden, he heard some voices talking. He looked all around, but he couldn't see any one, and he wondered if perhaps there were fairies about. Then he heard a voice say:

"Now, children, hop just as I do. Take a long breath and then hop, and be very careful where you go."

Then Uncle Wiggily looked down in the grass, and he saw a mamma hoptoad and a whole lot of her little toads hopping along. The mamma toad was giving the little ones their morning lesson. And I just wish you could have seen how nicely those tiny toads could hop. One little chap, named Sylvester, hopped over a big stone, and his little sister, named Clarabella, leaped over a stick with a nail in it and didn't get hurt a bit.

"Ha! That is very good hopping! Very fine, indeed!" cried Uncle Wiggily, waving his ears back and forth. "I could hardly do better myself."

"Oh, it's very kind of you to say so," said the mamma toad. "Now, children, give a big hop for Uncle Wiggily."

Well, they all took long breaths, and they were just going to hop when the old gentleman rabbit suddenly called:

"Look out! Hold on! Don't jump!"

They all stopped quickly, and the mamma toad wanted to know what was the matter.

"Why, there is a big cow walking along," said the rabbit, for he could see over the top of the grass better than could the toads, and could watch the big cow coming. "If that cow stepped on you, why, you would never hop again," said the

rabbit, and then he led the toads out of danger.

"Oh, I'm ever so much obliged to you," said the mamma toad to the rabbit. "You saved our lives."

Then she had all the little toads thank the old gentleman rabbit, and the mamma toad asked him to come to her house for dinner. Uncle Wiggily went, but the toad's house was so small that he couldn't get in, until he had made it bigger by scratching away some of the dirt around the front door.

Then he had a very good dinner, and he stayed all night at the toad family's house and watched the little ones hop some more, and he and the papa toad talked about the weather.

Well, in the morning when Uncle Wiggily got up and washed his face and paws, and combed out his whiskers, he suddenly heard all the little toads crying.

"Hum! Suz! Dud!" he exclaimed, "some of them must have the toothache." So he went down stairs, and there all the toad family were sitting around the breakfast table, but they weren't eating.

"What's the matter?" asked Uncle Wiggily, sadly-like.

"Why," said the papa toad, "the milkman hasn't come, and the children have no milk for their oatmeal, and I have none for my coffee, and I'm in a hurry to get down to the store where I work."

"That's too bad," said the rabbit. "Can't you use condensed milk?"

"We haven't any," spoke the mamma toad.



"Well, I'll hop out and see if I can see the milkman coming," said the rabbit, "for I can see a long distance." So he went out and he hopped up and down the street, and he looked up and down, but no milkman could he see. And the little toads were getting hungrier and hungrier every minute and they cried a lot, yes, indeed!

"This is too bad!" said Uncle Wiggily. "I guess that milkman must be lost. What can I do? Ah, I have it!" and away he hopped off toward the green fields. Pretty soon he came to where the cow, who had nearly walked on the toads, was eating grass, and, stepping up to her, Uncle Wiggily politely asked:

"Will you please give me some milk for the toads?"

"To be sure I will," said the cow, kindly, "and I'm sorry I nearly stepped on them

yesterday." So she gave Uncle Wiggily a canful of fresh milk, for the rabbit had brought the milk can out with him. Then Uncle Wiggily hopped to the toadhouse as fast as he could, and the little toads had milk for their breakfast, and didn't cry any more.

Then, after a while, the milkman (who was a big puppy dog) came along and said he was sorry he was late, but he couldn't help it, because he had stepped on a thorn and had a lame foot and couldn't go fast, so they forgave him.

"Well, I'll travel along now, I guess," said Uncle Wiggily, and once more he started off to seek his fortune.

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