



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Sunflower

Howard R. Garis

Mrs. Cat and her daughter Snowball liked Uncle Wiggily so much that they wanted him to stay with them a long time.

"You can build yourself a nice little corncob house next to ours," said Snowball, "and live in it; and you can tell me a story every night."

"Oh, but rabbits live underground, and not in corncob houses, though such houses are very nice," said Uncle Wiggily. "I guess I'll have to be traveling on."

"If you stay, I'll bake you a cherry pie every day," said Mrs. Cat. "And you can help find Snowball when she gets lost again."

"Cherry pie is very good, and you are very kind," said the rabbit politely, "but I have my fortune to find."

"Well, if you can't stay you can't, I s'pose," said Snowball; "but I'm never going to get lost again," and she put her little nose down deep inside a water lily and smelled it, and oh, how sweet and spicy it smelled!

So Uncle Wiggily got ready to start off on his travels again, and in his satchel he put a whole cherry pie that Mrs. Cat had baked for him.

"It will taste good when you are hungry," she said.

"Indeed it will," agreed Uncle Wiggily, and he wished he was hungry then and there, because he just loved cherry pie.

He was walking on through the woods, when, all at once, he heard some music playing, and the name of the song was "Never Take Your Ice Cream Cone and Drop it in the Mud."

"Ha! I believe that is the funny monkey and one of his hand organs!" exclaimed the rabbit. "I shall be glad to see him again."

So he looked through the trees, and there, surely enough, was the monkey, and he was playing the organ with his tail, and in one paw he held a cocoanut and in the other paw an orange, and first he would take a bite of the orange, and then a bite of the coconut.

"I always like music when I eat," said the monkey as he threw a bit of orange skin over his left shoulder.

"How comes it that you are away off here," asked the rabbit.

"Oh! I got tired of staying home," said the monkey. "I thought I would go out and see if I could make a few pennies by playing music." Then he played another tune called, "Don't Sit Down When You Stand Up."

Well, Uncle Wiggily listened to the music, which he liked very much, and he began to feel hungry. Then he thought of the cherry pie, that the cat lady had put in his valise.

"I guess I'll eat some of that and give the monkey a bit," he said, and he did so.

"Oh, this is most delicious and scrumptious!" cried the monkey, as he and Uncle Wiggily sat there eating the pie, and wiping off the juice with green leaves, so as not to soil their clothing.

"Indeed, it is very delectable," said the rabbit, hungry-like. "Have another piece."

Well, he was just cutting it off, when, all of a sudden, before you could say "Boo!" to an elephant, a terrible voice cried:

"Here! Give me that pie! I must have cherry pie!" and before the monkey or Uncle Wiggily knew what was happening, out from behind the bushes jumped the skillery-scallery-tailery alligator, gnashing his teeth.

"Give me that pie!" he cried again, opening his mouth wide enough to swallow a cake as big as a wash-tub.

"No, you cannot have it," said Uncle Wiggily, and, as quick as a wink, he popped the pie into his valise and closed it up. "Now you can't get it!" the rabbit said.

"Then I'll get you and the monkey!" cried the alligator, as he made a dash for both of them.

"Not me! You can't catch me!" exclaimed the monkey, as he skipped up into the top of a tall tree. Then, of course, as the alligator couldn't climb a tree he couldn't get the monkey. The skillery-scallery creature tried to eat the hand organ, and he tried to play it, but he could do neither. Then he got real angry.

"I'll chase after Uncle Wiggily and eat him!" he cried out, for by this time the rabbit was hopping along down the road. After him went the 'gator, coming nearer and nearer.

"Stop! Stop! I want you!" cried the alligator to the rabbit.

"I know you do, but you can't have me!" replied the rabbit. "I don't want to be eaten up!"

So he ran on as fast as he could, but still the alligator came on after him, and the savage beast was almost up to Uncle Wiggily.

"Oh, if I only had some place to hide!" panted the poor rabbit. "Then maybe the alligator would pass me by."

So he looked around for a place in which to hide, but just then he found himself in a field, and all that he could see were a whole lot of sunflowers growing near a fence.

"Oh, I can't hide behind those flowers because the stems are so small around," thought Uncle Wiggily. "And I can't climb up them, and sit on the big flower, because I can't climb, and besides the stems are too slender to hold me up. Oh, what shall I do?"

Well, the alligator was coming nearer and nearer, and the rabbit could hear the gnashing of his teeth, when, all at once one of the sunflowers called out.

"Gnaw through my stem, and cut me down, Uncle Wiggily. Then you can hold my big blossom up in front of you and the alligator can't see you."

"But won't it hurt you to cut you down?" asked the rabbit.

"No, for I will grow up again next year," said the big sunflower. "Hurry and cut me down, and hide behind me, and I'll shine in the eyes of the alligator and blind him."

So Uncle Wiggily quickly gnawed through the sunflower stalk with his sharp teeth, and down the flower came. Then the rabbit held the blossom up in front of himself, and hid behind it, and the yellow flower, which is round, just like the sun, shone so brightly into the alligator's face that he couldn't look out of his eyes, and so he was partly blinded, and he couldn't see to catch Uncle Wiggily, and he had to crawl away without eating the rabbit.

Then Uncle Wiggily thanked the sunflower, and laid it gently down, and hopped on his way again to seek his fortune.

