



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Water Lilies

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Uncle Wiggily was hopping along through the woods one day, and pretty soon, as he went past a cute little house, made out of corncobs, he heard some one calling to him.

"Oh, Mr. Rabbit," a voice said, "have you seen anything of my little girl?" And there stood a nice mamma cat, looking anxiously about.

"I don't know," answered Uncle Wiggily, as he stopped in the shade of a tree, and set down his valise. "Was your little girl named Sarah, Mrs. Cat?"

"Oh, indeed, my little girl is not named Sarah," said Mrs. Cat. "She is called Snowball, and she is just as cute as she can be. She is all white, like a ball of snow, and so we call her Snowball. But she is lost, and I'm afraid I'll never find her again," and the kittie's mamma began to cry, and she wiped her tears on her apron.

"Oh, don't worry. Never mind. I'll find her for you," said the kind old gentleman rabbit.

"I can't find my fortune but I believe I can find Snowball. Now, tell me which way she went away, and I'll go search for her."

"I didn't see her go out of the house," said Mrs. Cat, "because I was making a cherry pie, and I was very busy. Snowball was playing on the floor, with a ball of soft yarn, and it rolled out of doors. She raced out after it, and I thought she would soon be back. I put the cherry pie in the oven and then when I went to look for her she was gone. Oh, dear! I just know some horrid dog has hurt her."

"Please don't worry," said Uncle Wiggily. "I'll find her for you. I'll start right off, and if I can't find her I'll get a policeman, and he can, for the police always find lost children."

So Uncle Wiggily started off, leaving his valise with Mrs. Cat, but taking his crutch with him, for he thought he might need it to beat off any bad dogs if they chased after Snowball.

First the old gentleman rabbit looked carefully all along the road, but he couldn't see anything of the lost pussy cat.

"Perhaps she may be up a tree," he said to himself. "If a dog chased her she

would climb up one, and perhaps she is afraid to come down."

So he looked up into all the trees, and he even shook some of them in order to see up them better, but he did not discover the pussy cat. Then he called:

"Snowball! Snowball! Snowball! Where are you?"

But there was no answer.

"Oh, if there was only some bird who could call 'Snowball' I would get them to call for the lost pussy," thought Uncle Wiggily.

Then he looked up and he saw a big black bird sitting on a tree.

"Can you call 'Snowball' for me?" asked the rabbit, politely. "She is lost and her mamma wants her very much. Just call 'Snowball' as loudly as you can."

"I can't," said the big black bird. "All I can cry is 'Caw! Caw! Caw!' I am a crow, you see."

"That is too bad," said the rabbit. "Then I will have to keep on searching by myself," so he did, and the crow flew away to look for a cornfield that had no scarecrow in it to frighten him.

Well, Uncle Wiggily looked in all the places he could think of, but still there was no pussy to be seen, and he was just thinking he had better go for a policeman. But he thought he would try just one more place, so he looked down a hollow stump, but Snowball was not there.

"I'll have to get a policeman after all," said the rabbit, so he told a policeman cat about the lost pussy, and the policeman cat searched for Snowball, but he couldn't find her, either.

"I guess she is gone," said the policeman. "You had better go back and tell her mamma that she hasn't any little pussy girl any more."

"Oh, how sad it will be to do that!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "I just can't bear to."

But he started back to the corncob house to tell Mrs. Cat that he couldn't find her Snowball. And all the while he kept feeling more and more sad, until he was almost ready to cry.

"But I must be brave," said the old gentleman rabbit, and just then he came to a pond where a whole lot of beautiful, white water lilies were growing. Oh, they are a lovely flower, with such a sweet, spicy smell. As soon as Uncle Wiggily saw them he said:

"I'll pick some and take them home to Mrs. Cat. Perhaps they will make her feel a little happy, even if her Snowball is gone forever."

So with his long crutch Uncle Wiggily pulled toward shore some of the water lilies, until he could pick them on their slender stems. Some of the flowers were wide open, and some were closed, like rosebuds.

He took both kinds home to Mrs. Cat, and when he told her he couldn't find Snowball she was very sorrowful and she cried. But she loved the flowers very much, and put them in a bowl of water.

"I'll stay here to-night," said the rabbit, "and in the morning I'll look for Snowball again. I'm sure I'll find her."

"Oh, you are very kind," said Mrs. Cat, as she wiped away her tears.

Well, the next morning Uncle Wiggily got up real early, and the first thing he saw was the bowl of water lilies on the parlor table. They had all closed up like buds in the night, but in the sunlight they all opened again into beautiful flowers.

And, would you believe me, right in the middle of one of the flowers something white moved and wiggled. Then it gave a little "Mew!" and then Uncle Wiggily cried:

"Oh, Mrs. Cat, come here quickly! Here is Snowball! She was asleep inside of one of the water lilies!"

And, surely enough, there was the little lost kittie, just awakening in one of the flowers, and she was exactly the color of it. And, oh, how glad she was to see her mamma again, and how her mamma did hug her!

"How did you get in that flower?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"Oh, when I went after my ball a big dog chased me," said Snowball, "so I jumped into one of the lilies and I fell asleep, and the flower went shut and I stayed there. But now I'm home, and I'm glad of it," and she just kissed Uncle Wiggily on the tip end of his nose, that twinkled like a star on a frosty night.

So that's how Snowball was lost and found.



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