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Uncle Wiggily And The Yellow Bird

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Once upon a time, when Johnnie Bushytail was going along the road to school, he met a fox—oh, just listen to me, would you! This story isn't about the squirrel boy at all. It's about Uncle Wiggily Longears to be sure, and the yellow bird, so I must begin all over again.

The day after the old gentleman rabbit had helped Mrs. Wren feed her little birdies he found himself traveling along a lonely road through a big forest of tall trees. Oh, it was a very lonesome place, and not even an automobile was to be seen, and there wasn't the smell of gasoline, and no "honk-honks" to waken the baby from her sleep.

"Hum, I don't believe I'll find any fortune along here," thought Uncle Wiggily as he tramped on. "I haven't met even so much as a red ant, or even a black one, or a grasshopper. I wonder if I can be lost?"

So he looked all around to see if he might be lost in the woods. But you know how it is, sometimes you're lost when you least expect it, and again you think you are lost, but you're right near home all the while.

That's the way it was with Uncle Wiggily, he didn't know whether or not he was lost, so he thought he'd sit down on a flat stone and eat his lunch. The reason he sat on a flat stone instead of a round one was because he had some hard boiled eggs for his lunch, and you know if you put an egg on a round stone it's bound to roll off and crack right in the middle.

"And I don't like cracked eggs," said the rabbit. So he laid the eggs he had on the flat stone, and put little sticks in front of them and behind them, so they couldn't even roll off the flat stone if they wanted to. Then he ate his lunch.

"I guess it doesn't much matter if I am lost," said the traveling fortune-hunting rabbit a little later. "I'll go on and perhaps I may meet with an adventure." So on he hopped, and pretty soon he came to a place where the leaves and the dirt were all torn up, just as if some boys had been playing a baseball game, or leap-frog, or something like that.

"My, I must look out that I don't tumble down any holes here," thought Uncle Wiggily, "for maybe some bad men have been setting traps to catch us rabbits."

Well, he turned to one side, to get out of the way of some sharp thorns, and, my

goodness! if there weren't more sharp thorns on the ground on the other side of the path. "I guess I'll have to keep straight ahead!" thought our Uncle Wiggily. "I never saw so many thorns before in all my life. I'll have to look out or I'll be stuck."

So he kept straight on, and all of a sudden he felt himself going down into a big hole.

"Oh! Oh dear! Oh me! Oh my!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "I've fallen into a trap! That's what those thorns were for—so I would have to walk toward the trap instead of going to one side."

But, very luckily for Uncle Wiggily, his crutch happened to catch across the hole, and so he didn't go all the way down, but hung on. But his valise fell to the bottom. However, he managed to pull himself up on the ground, though his rheumatism hurt him, and soon he was safe once more.

"Oh, my valise, with all my clothes in it!" he cried, as he looked down into the hole, which had been covered over with loose leaves and dirt so he couldn't see it before falling in. "I wonder how I can get my things back again?" he went on.

Then he looked up, and in a tree, not far from him, he saw something bright and yellow, shining like gold.

"Ah, ha!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "At last I have found the pot of gold, even if the rainbow isn't here. That is yellow, and yellow is the color of gold. Now my fortune is made. I will get that gold and go back home."



So, not worrying any more about his valise down the trap-hole, Uncle Wiggily hopped over to the tree to get what he thought was a big bunch of yellow gold. But as he came closer, he saw that the gold was moving about and fluttering, though not going very far away.

"That is queer gold," thought the old gentleman rabbit. "I never saw moving gold before. I wonder if it is a good kind."

Then he went a little closer and he heard a voice crying.

"Why, that is crying gold, too," he said. "This is very strange."

Then he heard some one calling:

"Oh, help! Will some one please help me?"

"Why, this is most strange of all!" the rabbit cried. "It is talking gold. Perhaps

there is a fairy about."

"Oh, I only wish there was one!" cried the yellow object in the tree. "If I saw a fairy I'd ask her to set me free."

"What's that? Who are you?" asked the rabbit.

"Oh, I'm a poor little yellow bird," was the answer, "and I'm caught in a string-trap that some boys set in this tree. There is a string around my legs and I can't fly home to see my little ones. I got into the trap by mistake. Oh! can't you help me? Climb up into the tree, Uncle Wiggily, and help me!"

"How did you know my name was Uncle Wiggily?" asked the rabbit.

"I could tell it by your ears—your wiggling ears," was the answer. "But please climb up and help me."

"Rabbits can't climb trees," said Uncle Wiggily. "But I will tell you what I'll do. I'll gnaw the tree down with my sharp teeth, for they are sharp, even if I am a little old. Then, when it falls, I can reach the string, untie it, and you will be free."

So Uncle Wiggily did this, and soon the tree fell down, but the golden yellow bird was on a top branch and didn't get hurt. Then the old gentleman rabbit quickly untied the string and the bird was out of the trap.

"I cannot thank you enough!" she said to the rabbit. "Is there anything I can do for you to pay you?"

"Well, my valise is down a hole," said Uncle Wiggily, "but I don't see how you can get it up. I need it, though."

"I can fly down, tie the string to the satchel and you can pull it up," said the birdie. And she did so, and the rabbit pulled up his valise as nicely as a bucket of water is hoisted up from the well. Then some bad boys and a man came along to see if there was anything in the hole-trap, or the string-trap they had made; but when they saw the bird flying away and the rabbit hopping away through the woods they were very angry. But Uncle Wiggily and the yellow bird were safe from harm, I'm glad to say.

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