



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily's Fortune

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The little old lady in the green dress, whose nose and chin nearly touched, was very glad to get the berries which Uncle Wiggily and Kittie Kat gathered. She was very sorry that the wolf had frightened them, but she thought it was just fine of the red monkey to come along when he did.

"And I just wish you could have seen him toss the wolf over the tree-tops by his tail," said the old gentleman rabbit. "It was as good as going to the circus."

"Well, for doing such a trick, the red monkey can have two pieces of my berry pie," spoke the little old woman in the green dress. And that red monkey was very, very thankful, and he ate the two pieces of pie, even down to the last drop of juice.

Of course the rabbit gentleman and Kittie Kat had some pie too, and, after they had eaten their share, and had washed their faces and paws they stayed at the house of the little old woman all night.

"For I want Uncle Wiggily to be nice and rested so he can start off after his fortune to-morrow," she said.

Well, the next morning the rabbit gentleman got ready to go. The old lady with the green dress filled his valise full of good things to eat, including some berry pie, for there were no more cherries now, you know. Then, with Kittie Kat on one side of him and the red monkey on the other side, Uncle Wiggily set off.

"Remember," called the old lady, as she said good-by, "you must travel straight on for three days, and you needn't stop on the way to look for your fortune, for you won't find it. Just keep on, and at the end of the third day you will come to a hill. Go up the hill, and down the other side, and you will then come into your fortune, and I hope you will live for a good many years to enjoy it."

"Thank you so much!" exclaimed the rabbit. "It hardly seems possible that I am going to be rich after all my travels. What kind of a fortune will it be?"

"Oh, you must wait and see," said the kind little old lady.

Well, the rabbit and the cat girl and the red monkey traveled on and on. The first day they came to a big mountain, and the monkey wanted to climb up it to see if there were any coconut trees growing on the top.

"No," Uncle Wiggily told him. "We must keep straight on the level road until we come to the hill." And it is a good thing they didn't climb that mountain. For on top lived a big giant who had a big club, and he might have hit the red monkey with it. Mind, I'm not saying for sure, but that might have happened, you know.

So the three friends traveled on and on, and at the second day they came to where there was a big ball of blue yarn beside a little lake. It was a nice, soft ball of yarn, such as kittens play with when grandma is knitting warm mittens for winter.

"Oh, I must stop and play with that ball of yarn," said Kittie Kat.

"No," said the rabbit, "you must not do that, for the old lady said we were to keep straight on for three days."

And it is a good thing Kittie Kat didn't roll the ball, for inside of it was a big rat, and he might have bitten the little cat girl. Mind, I'm not saying for sure, but that might have happened.

"Now, this is the third day," spoke Uncle Wiggily when they got up one morning, after having slept in a hollow stump. "By nightfall we ought to come to the hill, and on the other side will be my fortune. Oh, how glad I am!"

So they kept on and on, stopping for dinner in a nice shady place, and toward evening they came to the hill.

"There it is!" cried the rabbit as he hurried up it. "Oh, I can hardly wait until I get to the other side."

Up he went, and up went the red monkey and up went Kittie Kat. And on the way the bad fuzzy fox sprang out from the bushes and tried to catch them, but Uncle Wiggily tickled him with his crutch and made him sneeze and fall down hill.

Then they came to the top of the hill. The sun was just setting in the clouds, and they were all colored golden and violet and purple, and oh, it was beautiful! Uncle Wiggily came to a stop. On one side was the red monkey and on the other the cat girl. The rabbit rubbed his eyes. Then he took off his glasses and polished them on his handkerchief. Then he looked down the hill.

"Why--why!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily. "There must be some mistake. I don't see any gold or diamonds. And this place--why, it's the very place I started away from so many weeks ago! There is where I live--there is where Sammie and Susie Littletail live--that's the tree where Johnnie and Billie Bushytail live, and there is the pond where Alice and Lulu and Jimmie Wibblewobble, the ducks, live! This is home! There can't be a fortune here!"

Oh, how disappointed he felt. The sun sank lower behind the clouds and made them more golden and green and purple.

Then out from their homes ran the rabbit children and the squirrel brothers and the duck children, and Peetie, and Jackie Bow-Wow, and Bully the Frog, and his brother, and Dottie and Munchie Trot, and Buddy and Brighteyes Pigg--and all the others.

"Oh, here is Uncle Wiggily! Our Uncle Wiggily has come back!" they cried, leaping about in joy. "Oh, how glad we are to see you. Happy! Happy welcome! You are rich, Uncle Wiggily! Rich! Very rich!"

"Rich!" said the rabbit, rubbing his eyes and trying to stand up while all his friends gathered around him. "But I don't understand. The little old lady in the green dress said I would find my fortune here, but I don't see it."

"Let me explain," said Sammie Littletail. "Do you see that field of cabbage, Uncle Wiggily?" and the rabbit boy pointed to it.

"Yes," said the rabbit, "I see the field."

"There are seventeen million, two hundred and fifty-six thousand, nine hundred and three cabbages there," said Sammie, "and they are all yours. And do you see that field of turnips?"

"Yes," said Uncle Wiggily, as he looked down the hill, "I see them."

"There are nineteen million, four hundred and thirty-three thousand, eight hundred and sixty-six turnips," said Sammie, "and they are all yours. And do you see that field of carrots?"

"I do," said Uncle Wiggily, but he couldn't see so very far, as tears of joy were in his eyes.

"There are one hundred million, eight hundred and twenty-three thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine and a half carrots in that field," said Sammie. "Jillie Longtail, the mouse, had the half carrot because she was ill, but all the rest are yours, and you are the richest rabbit in the world--the very richest--there is your fortune. You can sell the turnips and carrots and cabbages and have forty-'leven barrels of gold."

"But--but I don't understand," said Uncle Wiggily, as he tried to hug all his friends at once.

"It was this way," said Sammie, "when you were gone we all planted things in your garden and fields for you, and we took care of them, hoeing and watering them, until they grew as never carrots or turnips or cabbages grew before. So now you have come back to us, and you are rich."

And it was true. After traveling almost around the earth in search of his fortune, Uncle Wiggily came back to find it right at home, and that's the way it often

happens in this world.

Well, you can imagine how surprised he was. He hugged and kissed all his friends and then he went into his old house with Sammie and Susie Littletail, and when he had sold the cabbages and carrots and turnips for many barrels of gold, there he lived for many, many years, as happy an old gentleman rabbit as you could find in a day's journey. And though his rheumatism bothered him at times it couldn't be helped. And he gave all his friends as much money as they wanted, and they all had good times together, and lots of fun, and every once in a while Uncle Wiggily would treat everybody to strawberry ice-cream cones with cabbage or turnip sauce on.



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