Ririro
READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily and the Clam

Howard R. Garis

Uncle Wiggily awakened in his wood-and-seaweed house in the morning, and he rubbed his sleepy eyes with his paws. Then he got up off his seaweed bed and as he heard a noise he exclaimed:

"Ha! That sounds like thunder. I wonder if we are going to have a storm?" And, truly, there was quite a booming and rumbling racket outside. Then the rabbit laughed at himself.

"Why, how silly of me!" he exclaimed. "That is the waves pounding on the beach. I forgot that I was at the seashore. Now I must look out and see if there are any more lobsters waiting to catch me."

Well, he was just peering out of the window, when there came a knock on the door, and Uncle Wiggily jumped back.

"Oh no!" he cried. "What's that?"

"It is only I," said a small voice. "I'm your friend, the grasshopper. How are you?"

"Oh, I'm very well, thank you," replied the rabbit. "I'm coming right out. I must tell you about the terrible time I had with the big lobster last night."

So Uncle Wiggily hopped out of the little house and told the grasshopper all about it, and the grasshopper was so frightened that he kept looking behind him all the while, for fear the lobster might be coming after him. But we all know what happened to that lobster; don't we?

"What are you going to do now?" asked the grasshopper after a while, when Uncle Wiggily was washing his face and paws, and combing out his whiskers, which had some seaweed in them.

"Oh, I am going to look for my fortune today," answered the rabbit. "I may find it, for I have heard that often very valuable things are cast up on the seashore by the waves. Yes, I think I shall find my fortune today. But won't you have some breakfast, Mr. Grasshopper? I have some cherry pie left, and a few lettuce and carrot sandwiches with parsley trimmings."

"Oh, I might have a bit of parsley," spoke the jumping insect, and he ate quite a bit of it, while the rabbit ate the other things. Then they both hopped along the beach, looking for a fortune of gold or diamonds for the old gentleman rabbit.

And, just as on the other day, there were children playing in the sand, making little wells of water, and tunnels, and sandhouses, and gardens, and castles and all things like that. But there was no chest of gold, nor bag of diamonds, to be seen, though the two friends looked in every place they could think of, and in some other places, too.

"I don't believe the seashore is a very good place to find your fortune," said the rabbit, sadly, as he hopped along. And then he had to stop to take some sand out of his left ear.

"Perhaps if we ask some of the children they may be able to help us," suggested the grasshopper. Well, they did this, but, though the children were very kind, they hadn't seen any gold or diamonds, either.

"Then we'll ask some of the clams or starfish on the beach," said the grasshopper, but the clams or starfish hadn't seen anything of the rabbit's fortune, though they were very polite about it.

"Oh, I know what we should do," exclaimed the grasshopper.

"What?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"We'll go bathing," went on the jumping insect, "and that will cool us off, and perhaps down under the water we may find your fortune."

"The very thing," cried Uncle Wiggily; "bathing we shall go."



Well, the old gentleman rabbit could swim a little bit, you know, and the grasshopper could float on his back, and together they had a very good time. It was so warm that the water didn't make Uncle Wiggily's rheumatism any worse, I'm glad to say.

Then, after a bit, the grasshopper said he thought he'd take a little hop on the sand to dry off, and that left Uncle Wiggily alone in the water. And now comes the second part of the story.

The old gentleman rabbit was swimming slowly along, looking down under the waves every once in a while to see if there was any gold on the sand beneath, when, all of a sudden, he felt something grab hold of his left hind leg.

"Oh, my! I wonder if that's the bad lobster again?" cried the rabbit, and then he saw a most curious fish, called the toggle-taggle, and this fish had hold of him.

"Oh, please let go of me!" cried the rabbit.

"No, indeed, I will not," said the toggle-taggle, speaking under water, and making a lot of bubbles come up from his breath. "I am going to drag you off to my den beneath the rocks."

"Oh, don't be so cruel!" begged the rabbit. "If you do that I can never find my fortune, and I never can go back and see Sammie and Susie Littletail again."

"That makes no difference to me at all," said the toggle-taggle, speaking in a thin, watery sort of voice, "no matter of difference at all. Here we go!" and he started to drag poor Uncle Wiggily to the bottom of the ocean, under the rocks.

"Ha! I guess I'm not going as easily as that!" cried the rabbit, and at once he began to swim as hard as he could toward land, and Uncle Wiggily could swim pretty well when he tried, let me tell you. This time he swam so hard that he pulled the toggle-taggle fish along with him, and in a second or two Uncle Wiggily was out on the sand, but the toggle-taggle still had hold of him.

"Dry land or water is all the same to me!" cried the odd fish, and then the rabbit saw that the toggle-taggle had legs, as well as fins and a tail, and so he could walk on dry land. "Now you come with me!" cried the bad fish, and he braced with his legs in the sand and was pulling the rabbit back into the water again.

"Oh, will no one help me?" cried Uncle Wiggily, for he was getting weak. And just then a little voice whispered:

"Turn him around, Uncle Wiggily, so I can get hold of his tail. Then I'll pinch him and make him let go of you."

"Uncle Wiggily looked, and there was a nice little clam on the sand behind the toggle-taggle, and the clam had his two shells wide open, ready to pinch the bad fish. Well, the rabbit at once began to push the toggle-taggle toward the clam, and the fish didn't know what this meant. But before he could say anything, his tail came right close to the clam's open shells, and in an instant that brave clam shut his sharp shells down very hard on the tail of the bad toggle-taggle and held on tight.

"Oh, who has me?" cried the fish, and he turned around to see what it was, and with that of course he let go of the rabbit. And then Uncle Wiggily gave a big hop and got safely away. And when the toggle-taggle saw the clam he was so frightened (for he knew that he couldn't bite through the hard shells) that the bad fish at once jumped back into the ocean, taking the brave little clam with him. But the clam didn't mind that--in fact, it was just where he wanted to go--so everything was all right.

"My! That clam saved my life, and I didn't get a chance to thank him!" said Uncle Wiggily, somewhat sadly, as he sat away up on the beach. "But I will the next time I see him." Then the grasshopper came back, and had to hear all about

what had happened.

Then he and Uncle Wiggily went on looking for the fortune, and they had some more adventures before they found it.

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