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Uncle Wiggily And The Mumps

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Uncle Wiggily Longears, the bunny rabbit gentleman, was hopping through the woods one day, and he was thinking of making his way over to the other side of the forest, where the real boys and girls lived, hoping he might have an adventure, when, all at once, Mr. Longears heard some voices talking behind a mulberry bush.

"I know what we can do," said the voice of a boy, as Uncle Wiggily could tell, for he had learned to know the talk of boys and girls.

"What can we do?" asked the voice of another boy.

"We can pick up a lot of stones," went on the first boy, "and we can make believe we're hunters, and we can walk through the woods and throw stones at the birds, and squirrels, and rabbits! Come on! Let's do it!"

"Oh, no! I don't want to do *that*," said the second boy. "It isn't any fun to throw stones at birds and bunnies. If you hit a mother bird, and break her wing, she can't take anything to eat to the little birds, and they'll starve."

"Pooh! That's nothing!" exclaimed the first boy, and Uncle Wiggily peeked over the top of the bush to see what manner of boys these were. But the bunny rabbit gentleman kept himself well hidden.

"I don't want any stones thrown at me," he thought.

"And," went on the second boy, who seemed rather kind, "if you throw a stone at a rabbit you might break its leg, and then it couldn't hop home to the baby rabbits."

"That is very true!" thought Uncle Wiggily, who was listening to all that went on. "I wish there were more boys like this kind one."

"Well, I don't care!" grumbled the first boy. "I'm going off and throw stones at birds and rabbits and squirrels!"

"And I'm going home," said the second boy. "I don't feel very good. I have a pain in my cheek and maybe I'm going to have the toothache."

"Goodness me, sakes alive! I hope nothing like *that* happens to such a kind boy," thought Uncle Wiggily. "And as for that other chap, I'll run ahead of him, through

the woods, and tell my friends to hide so he can't throw stones at them."

So, while one boy went home and the other picked up some stones, Uncle Wiggily skipped along through the woods, calling, in his animal talk, to his friends to hide themselves.

"For a boy is coming to stone you!" exclaimed the bunny rabbit gentleman. "Hide! Hide away from the stone-throwing boy!"

And so it happened that when the unkind chap came tramping through the woods, the only bird he saw to stone was an old black crow, as black as black could be.

"I'll hit you!" cried the boy, as he threw a stone.

But the crow was a wise old bird, and wastn't even afraid of the scary, stuffed men that farmers put in their cornfields. So the crow dodged the stone and then he laughed at the boy.

"Haw! Haw! Haw!" laughed the old black crow. "Haw! Haw! Haw!"

The boy grew very cross at this, and threw more stones, and some fell among the flower bushes where some bees were gathering the sweet juices of flowers to make into honey. One stone knocked a bee off a blossom, and spilled the honey it was gathering.

"Just for that I'm going to sting that boy!" buzzed the bee. Out it flittered, making such a zipping sound around that boy's head as to cause the bad chap to drop his stones and run away. So the bee did not have to sting him after all.

"Boys are no good!" buzzed the bee to Uncle Wiggily, as the honey chap flew back to the flowers.

"Oh, *some* boys are good," said the bunny gentleman. "The boy who was with this bad chap was good, and kind to animals. And that reminds me; this boy said he didn't feel very well. I must hop over to-morrow, and take a look at his house. I know where he lives. I hope he isn't going to have the toothache."

But the kind boy, as I call him just for fun, you know, had something worse than the toothache. His neck and jaws began to swell in the night, and he could hardly swallow a drink of water which his mother gave him when she heard him tossing in bed.

"What you s'pose is the matter of me, Mother?" asked the boy.

"Well," said Mother, as she smoothed his pillow, "perhaps you caught cold in the woods to-day."

But it was worse than that. When the Doctor came in the morning, and looked at

the boy, and gently felt of his neck (even which gentle touch made the boy want to cry) the Doctor said:

"Hum! Mumps!"



"Did you say 'bumps,' Doctor?" asked the boy's mother. "Did he fall down and bump himself?"

"No, I said *mumps*!" exclaimed the doctor. "That's a swelling inside his neck, and it will hurt him a lot. But if you keep him in bed, and warm, and give him easy things to eat, he'll soon be all right again."

"Poor boy!" murmured Mother. "Well, I suppose *mumps* are better than *bumps*!"

"I'm not so sure about that," spoke the Doctor as he walked to the door with the boy's mother. "Whatever you do," he said in a whisper, "don't give him anything *sour*—such as lemons or pickles. Sour things make the mumps pain more than ever. Don't even *speak* of vinegar in front of him, or so much as *whisper* it!"

"I won't," promised Mother.

But the boy's little sister overheard what Doctor and Mother were saying, and, being a mischievous sort of girl, she decided to have some fun. At least *she* called it fun.

"I'm going to stand in front of Brother and hold up a pickle so he can see it," said Sister to herself. "I want to see what he'll do!"

So Sister hurried down to the kitchen and brought up a pickle. Then she went in the room where Brother was in bed and, holding the sour pickle in front of him, called:

"Look!"

And, no sooner did the boy look than he felt a sharp pain in his throat, almost as bad as toothache, and he cried:

"Go on away! Stop showing me that—that——" Well, he couldn't even say the word "pickle," for just the thought of anything sour hurts your mumps, you know.

The boy hid his face in his pillow, and when he couldn't see the pickle he felt a little better. But his Sister was still full of mischief.

"Lemons! Lemons! Nice sour lemons!" she called teasingly.

"Stop it! Stop it!" begged the boy. "Oh, how my mumps hurt! Mother, make

Sister stop hurting my mumps!"

And when Mother came, and found what Sister was doing, she made the little girl go to bed, even though it was daytime.

"You will, very likely, get the mumps yourself," said Mother. "And I hope no one says anything sour to *you*."

And, later on, Sister did get the mumps, but I'm glad to say her brother did not hold a lemon up in front of her. For, as I told you, even the *thought* of anything sour hurts the mumps.

Now you know the reason why I didn't want you to read this story when you had the swelling in your neck. It was better to wait until your mumps were gone; wasn't it?

So this boy had the mumps, and he had them on both sides at once, which is the very worst form. He could hardly swallow anything because of the pain, even things that were not sour. Now and then he managed to sip a little hot chocolate.

His mother put a warm flannel bandage around his face, which was much swelled, and, thus wrapped up, the little boy could, now and then, get out of bed.

It was on one of these times, when his jaws were wrapped up, and his face swollen, that Uncle Wiggily happened to hop along through the woods, not far from the Mump Boy's house. And, having very good eyes, Mr. Longears saw the sick lad.

"Poor fellow!" thought the bunny gentleman. "He is ill, just as he thought he was going to be! Toothache it is, too!"

"Who has the toothache!" asked Dr. Possum, for the animal doctor came along just then, with his bag of medicine held fast in the curl of his tail.

"That boy," answered Uncle Wiggily, pointing from the bush, where he and Dr. Possum were hiding, to the window of the boy's home.

"He hasn't the toothache! Those are the mumps!" said Dr. Possum, who knew all about such things.

"Mumps!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily. "Oh, that's too bad. Why, if that boy is mumpy he must have trouble eating. I wonder if I could leave on his doorstep something he would like—something that he wouldn't have to chew and which would slip down easily?"

"Whatever you leave for him, don't have it *sour*," advised Dr. Possum, as he hurried along to see Curly Twistytail, the piggie boy, who had cut his nose on a piece of glass while digging for wild sunflower roots in the woods.

"Ha! Nothing sour for the Mump Boy!" said Uncle Wiggily to himself, as Dr. Possum hopped away. "Then something sweet will be just the proper thing. Sweet honey! I have it! I'll ask my friends, the bees, for some of their honey. I'll get Nurse Jane to make a little pail of birch bark, and I'll leave the wild honey on the boy's stoop."

Off hopped the bunny gentleman, until he found where the bees had their home in a hollow tree.

"Could you give me some honey for a good boy with bad mumps?" asked the rabbit.

"Some honey for a good boy with the bad mumps?" said the Queen Bee. "Certainly, Uncle Wiggily! As much as you like!"

Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the bunny's muskrat lady housekeeper, made a little box of white bark from the birch tree, and when this pretty box was filled with wild, sweet honey, Uncle Wiggily took it with him one evening.

It was time for the Mump Boy to go to bed, but the pain in his neck was so bad that he cried.

"I'm hungry, too," he said. "Oh, why can't I eat something that won't hurt my mumps?"

"I'll try to think of something for you," said Mother wearily.

Just then Uncle Wiggily hopped to the edge of the forest, close to the Mump Boy's house, and running up, he put the birch box of wild honey on the stoop. Then the bunny threw some little stones at the door and hopped away, hiding in the bushes.

"Wait until I see who's at the door," said Mother, as she smoothed the boy's pillow. "Then I'll get you something."

She looked out on the porch, and saw the little birch bark box.

"It looks like a valentine," she thought, "though this isn't Valentine's Day."

"What is it?" asked the boy. "Is it anything I can eat that won't hurt my mumps?"

"Why, yes, it is!" joyfully said his mother, as she saw what it was. "Sweet, wild honey!"

Even the name, so different from sour pickles or lemons, made the Mumps Boy feel better.

"Please give me some," he begged. "It sounds good!"

The wild sweet honey slipped down as gently as a feather, not hurting the boy's

neck at all. And soon after that he went to sleep and in a few days he was better.

Uncle Wiggily saw the boy at the window, the bandage no longer on his face, and he even saw the boy eating the last of the wild honey.

"I guess he liked it," thought the bunny, as he hopped away.

When the boy was all better, and could be out and play, he asked all of his friends which one it was who had left the honey on the porch. One and all answered:

"I didn't do it!"

"I wonder who it was?" said the boy, over and over again.

Well, we know; don't we? But we aren't allowed to tell. And when the Boy's Sister caught the mumps, Uncle Wiggily left her some honey also. Which was very kind of him, I think.

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