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Uncle Wiggily And The Poor Dog

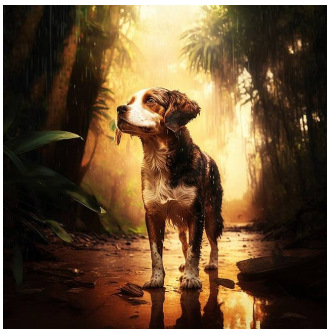
Howard R. Garis

Once upon a time there was a dog so poor that he had no kennel to sleep in. He made his bed in old boxes and barrels along the street, or behind stores. And as for things to eat—that poor dog thought himself lucky if he found a bone without any meat on it! Oh, he was dreadfully poor, was that dog!

He had no collar to wear, though of course he did not miss a necktie, for dogs never wear those. But when this dog saw other dogs, with shiny brass or nickel collars around their necks, when he saw some of them riding in automobiles as he splashed through the mud, and when he looked over in yards and saw some dogs gnawing juicy, meaty bones in front of their warm kennels—this poor dog sometimes felt sad.

"I don't see what use I am in this world," thought the poor dog, as he chased away a tickling fly who wanted to ride on his tail. "I certainly can't help anyone, for I can hardly help myself! I think I'll go off in the woods and get lost! Yes, that's what I'll do," barked the poor dog. "Get lost!"

Perhaps if he had had a good breakfast that morning, with a biscuit or two, or even a slice of puppy cake, he might have been more happy. As it was, after crawling out of an empty rain-water barrel, where he had slept all night, and after finding only a small bone for his breakfast, this dog went off to the woods.



"Good-bye, everybody!" he softly barked, as he stood on the edge of the forest, and looked back toward the village he was leaving. But there was no one even to bark a farewell to him. All alone the poor dog started into the woods. "Good-bye!" he whined.

Now in this same forest, on the opposite side from the trees nearest the village, stood the hollow stump bungalow of Uncle Wiggily Longears. And this same morning that the poor dog decided to lose himself, the bunny rabbit gentleman started out with his tall, silk hat, his red, white and blue striped rheumatism crutch, and his pink twinkling nose to look for an adventure.

"Keep your eyes open for the Woozie Wolf or the Fuzzy Fox!" called Nurse Jane, the muskrat lady housekeeper as Mr. Longears hopped away.

"I will!" promised the bunny uncle.

Uncle Wiggily hopped along and along and along, looking behind bushes and rocks for an adventure when, all of a sudden, he saw a sort of hole down in between two logs.

"Perhaps there is an adventure down in there for me," said the rabbit gentleman. "I'll poke my paw down in and find out. This hole isn't large enough to be the den of the Fox or Wolf."

Uncle Wiggily thrust one of his forepaws down into the hole, and began feeling around between the logs. He touched something soft and fuzzy, and he was just beginning to think that perhaps Baby Bunty was hiding down there so he couldn't tag her when, all of a quickness, those logs rolled together. Before Uncle Wiggily could pull out his paw it was caught fast, and there he was, held just as if he were in a trap.

"Oh, my goodness me, sakes alive, and a basket of soap bubbles!" cried the bunny rabbit gentleman. "I'm caught! How dreadful! I must get out!"

Well, he pulled and he pulled and he pulled, but still his paw was held fast. He scrabbled around among the dried leaves, he tried to lift one log off the other with his rheumatism crutch, and he tried to gnaw a hole in the top log that held him fast. But it was all of no use.

"Oh, I'm afraid I'll have to stay here forever, unless I get help!" thought Uncle Wiggily. "But I must call for aid! Perhaps Grandpa Goosey, or Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, will hear me!"

Uncle Wiggily stopped his pink nose from twinkling, so that he could call more loudly, and then he shouted:

"Help! Help! Help!"

For a time there was no answer, only the wind blowing among the leaves of the trees. And then, all at once, there was a rustling in the bushes and a voice asked:

"Who calls for help?"

"I do," answered Uncle Wiggily. "Oh, even if you are the Woozie Wolf or the Fuzzy Fox, please help me!"

"I am neither the Wolf nor the Fox," was the answer. "I am only a poor dog who came to this forest to lose himself. I never have been able yet to help anyone."

"Well, perhaps you can help me," said Uncle Wiggily, as cheerfully as he could speak. "Come here and see where the logs have fallen on my paw, holding me fast."

So the poor dog, with his ragged clothes which made him look almost like a tramp, came through the bushes, close to Uncle Wiggily.

"My, but you're stylish!" said the dog, as he saw Uncle Wiggily's tall, silk hat.

"That isn't anything," sadly said the bunny rabbit gentleman. "Tall hats do not make for happiness. I'd rather have on an old, ragged cap, like yours, and be free, than wear a diamond and gold crown like a king and be held fast here."

"Yes, it isn't fun to be caught in a trap," barked the poor dog. "But I think I can gnaw through one of those logs and set you free."

Then he began to gnaw. He gnawed and he gnawed and he gnawed, and, in a little while, one of the logs was cut in two, just as if it had been sawed, and Uncle Wiggily could pull out his paw.

"I can't tell you how thankful I am," said the bunny to the dog. "What fine, strong white teeth you have. How did you get them?"

"From gnawing bones without any soft meat on them, I suppose," answered the dog. "Poor dogs must have strong teeth, or they would starve. Rich dogs, who get soft food, can afford to have soft teeth."

"Well, then I am very glad you are a poor dog!" laughed Uncle Wiggily.

"You are?" barked the other, in great surprise.

"Certainly; of course I am!" exclaimed the bunny. "Just think! Suppose you had been one of those rich dogs, with soft, crumbly teeth! You would not have been able to gnaw through the log and I would still be held fast."

"Yes, that's so," agreed the dog, wagging his tail. "I never thought of that."

"Then be thankful, as I am, that you are poor, and have strong teeth," went on Mr. Longears. "You have been of great help to me."

"Have I?" barked the dog. "Then I am very glad! I never before helped anyone. I thought I was too poor!"

"Well, you aren't going to be poor any more," went on the bunny rabbit gentleman. "Come to the woods and live near my hollow stump bungalow. I have a friend, Old Dog Percival, who will let you stay in his kennel. He is rich!"

"Oh, that makes me very happy!" said the dog, who used to be poor. "I have always wanted a kennel to live in!"

Then he went home with the bunny rabbit. And, though he never became a very rich dog, still he had a warm kennel, which Percival shared with him, and he always had enough to eat; and he became great friends with Mr. Longears and Nurse Jane.

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