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Uncle Wiggily And The Worms

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"Well, where in the world have you been?" asked the red monkey of Uncle Wiggily, as the old gentleman rabbit hopped along after he had gotten out of the molasses can.

"Oh, I had an adventure," replied the rabbit, and he told how the hippity-hop toad had saved him from the sticky stuff. "But can you whistle yet, red monkey?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"No, he doesn't seem to be able to do it," spoke the green parrot, in a sort of sad and hopeless tone. "Every time he tries to whistle he puckers his face up in such a funny way that I have to laugh, and when I laugh I can't whistle. Can't you keep your face straight, so I won't have to giggle?" asked the green bird, solemn-like.

"I can't seem to," replied the monkey, and he made another effort to whistle, but he puckered up such a funny face, and his tail got all tied up in a hard knot, and he looked so queer that even Uncle Wiggily had to laugh.

"You see how it is," said the parrot. "I can't give whistling lessons and laugh at the same time," and then he had to laugh "Ha! Ha!" and "Ho! Ho!" because you see the monkey made another queer face trying to get the knots out of his tail.

"I think I have a plan," said Uncle Wiggily after a bit.

"What is it?" asked the monkey.

"You must get behind a tree, red monkey," said the rabbit. "Then the parrot can tell you how to whistle, and give you a lesson without seeing the funny faces you make. Then he can whistle, to show you how, and he won't have to laugh."

"The very thing!" cried the parrot. So they tried that way, and they got along quite nicely. Well, by that time it was the dinner hour, and, after the meal, Uncle Wiggily said he would go out again to look for his fortune, and would come back to supper.

"But don't fall into any more molasses cans," cautioned the monkey, and the rabbit gentleman said he would not. Away Uncle Wiggily hopped over the hills, across the fields and through the woods. Pretty soon he came to a pile of nice brown dirt.

"Ha, some one has been digging here," thought the rabbit. "Perhaps some one else is also looking for a fortune of gold or diamonds. If that is so I had better dig here, too."

So, with his sharp paws, the rabbit began to dig in the dirt near the pile of earth. Faster and faster he dug until, all of a sudden, he saw something moving in the hole he had made.

"Ha! I wonder if there is moving-gold here?" he thought.

But when he looked again he saw that it was only a little angleworm, or earth worm, as some people call them, who was crawling out to sun himself.

"Oh, I hope I haven't hurt you!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily, kindly, as he lifted up the worm gently in his paws.



"Not a bit of it," answered the worm, twisting about to see if his tail was all there. "But I'm glad you're not a fisherman, Mr. Rabbit."

"Why so?" asked Uncle Wiggily, as he shook some dirt out of his left ear.

"Because if you were you might stick me on a sharp hook and toss me into the water for the fish to eat. Nothing is worse than to have a hook stuck into you," said the worm, moving around until he was in two knots. Then he untied himself again.

"I should think hooks might be unpleasant," spoke the rabbit. "But I won't hurt you, and here is a bit of cherry pie for you."

"Thank you, most kindly," said the angle worm, as he sat up on the end of his tail and ate the cherry pie, juice and all. "But why are you digging in the earth, Uncle Wiggily?"

"To find my fortune," answered the rabbit, and he told how long he had been looking for gold or diamonds and how he hadn't found any yet. "Is there any gold down under the ground where you live?" asked the rabbit, sad-like.

"Not a bit, I'm sorry to say," answered the worm. "I live down there with numbers of my friends, but there is no gold. You had better dig somewhere else. But you have been very kind to me, and if ever I can do you a favor I will."

"Thank you," said Uncle Wiggily, so he hopped out of the hole he had made, and, after saying good-bye to the worm, he traveled on to find another place where he might dig for his fortune.

He came to a place in the woods, where the ground was nice and soft, and there he started to make another hole. Well, he hadn't gone down very far before, all of a sudden, he heard a growling voice behind him calling out:

"Here! Who said you could dig in my land?"

"Oh, I beg your pardon. Is this your land?" asked the rabbit, and he looked up to see the skillery-scalery alligator glaring down at him.

"Yes, this is my land, and these are my woods, and because you were so bold as to dig here I'm going to eat you up!" shouted the 'gator, lashing his double-jointed tail around in the dried leaves. "Here I come!" he cried.

Then he made a dive, with his big, wide-open jaws, down into the hole Uncle Wiggily had dug, but the rabbit didn't wait for him. Out he jumped, and away he hopped, and the 'gator crawled after him. Faster and faster ran the rabbit, and faster and faster came the alligator.

"Oh, I know he'll catch me!" thought poor Uncle Wiggily. "Oh, help! Will no one help me?" he cried.

"Yes, we'll help you!" called a little voice on the ground, and, looking down the rabbit saw the angle worm. And, crawling along with him were about a million other worms, some larger and some smaller than he. "Run along as fast as you can," said the first angle worm, "and we'll twine ourselves in knots around the alligator's legs so that he can't chase you any more. Run! Run!"

Well, you may be sure Uncle Wiggily ran as hard as he could.

"I'll get you!" cried the alligator, and he made a jump after the rabbit, but it was the last jump the skillery-scalery creature made that day. For the next instant those million angle worms just tied themselves in hard knots, and sailor knots, and bow knots, and double knots, and true lovers' knots and all sorts of knots around the tail and legs of the alligator, and he couldn't move another inch.

"Now's your chance! Hop away, Uncle Wiggily!" cried the first worm. "We'll hold the alligator here because you were so kind to me."

And the rabbit hopped safely away, and the ugly 'gator couldn't even wiggle his double-jointed tail. Then, when the rabbit was safe at the monkey's house, all the angle worms untied their knots off the alligator, and they scurried down into the ground before he could bite them. So that's how it all happened, just as true as I'm telling you. And that 'gator was so angry that he almost bit a piece out of his own tail. Then he went off in the woods and wasn't seen again for some time.

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