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Uncle Wiggily at the Seashore

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One morning Uncle Wiggily was hopping along a dusty road. It was the day after he had gotten away from the bad black bear in the boat, and the old gentleman rabbit was thinking of what great danger he had been in.

"I must certainly be more careful," he thought, "and not get in every boat I see. Why, just think of it! If that bear had eaten me up I couldn't search for my fortune any more," and this so frightened Uncle Wiggily that he looked all around and behind the bushes, fearing the bear might, after all, have come ashore and be chasing after him.

But no bear was there, for he had fallen out of the boat and caught cold and had gone to bed, after drinking some hot honey lemonade. The old gentleman rabbit felt better, when he saw there was no bear, but it was so hot that he was thirsty, so he looked for a place to get a drink. Pretty soon he saw a nice, cold spring, and he took three drinks of water.

And just as the rabbit was drinking the last drop of water he heard a funny noise out in the road, and, looking up, he saw a whole lot of children going past. Some of them were barefooted, and some had little tin pails and shovels in their hands, and some had red balloons and some blue or green ones. Some of the children had on bathing suits and a few had their little dresses tucked up as far as they could go, and they were dancing along on their slim white legs, as happy as happy could be.

"Why, this certainly is very strange," thought the rabbit. "I wonder where they can all be going? Perhaps it is to a circus parade. I must go see, for I might meet my friend the elephant there. Oh, this will be some fun! Is it a circus parade?" he called aloud.

"No, it isn't a circus parade," said a voice at Uncle Wiggily's side, and, looking down, the old gentleman rabbit saw the kind grasshopper who had once given him some molasses.

"If it isn't a circus parade, what is it?" asked the rabbit.

"These children are going to the seashore to bathe and paddle in the salty ocean waves," went on the grasshopper, "and some of them will build sand castles, or dig wells for the water to fill up. Why don't you go, Uncle Wiggily? Perhaps you

may find your fortune there."

"I believe I will," said the rabbit. "Won't you come along?" Well, the grasshopper said he would, so off they hopped together, the hoppergrass--I beg your pardon,--I mean the grasshopper--and the rabbit.

Pretty soon they heard the noise of the waves pounding on the sandy shores, and they could smell the salt breeze and it made them hungry for clam chowder and lobsters and crabs and things like that. Then they saw ever so many more children running along and in a little while they were at the seashore.

"Well, now to look for my fortune," said the rabbit, as he watched the waves rush up on the sand with a big noise and lots of foam, and then they would tumble out to the sea again. "How do you think I had better go about it, Mr. Grasshopper?"



"If I were you I would dig in the sand," said the grasshopper. "Sometimes men, who were called pirates, used to bury gold in the sand, and perhaps there is some of their money left. You dig and I will watch you."

"But I have nothing with which to dig," said the rabbit.

"Oh, you may take my shovel," said a little girl with her dress tucked up high so that it would not get wet. "I am going in wading, so I won't need it."

"Thank you kindly," said the rabbit gentleman to the little girl, and then she went in wading, and a wave splashed up all over her, no matter if her dress was above her knees, and her mamma called to her to be more careful, and not to get so wet.

So Uncle Wiggily began to dig. Deeper and deeper he dug in the sand, while the grasshopper watched him. And every few minutes Uncle Wiggily would look down the hole to see if there was any gold among the grains of sand, but there wasn't any.

All around were children having lots of fun. One boy made a tunnel, and then he played that some sticks of wood were steam cars and he pushed them through the tunnel and puffed out his cheeks to pretend it was the engine choo-chooing.

And a little girl made a garden in the sand, with seaweed for flowers and clam-shells for a house, and she and another little girl had a play-party. Oh, it was great fun!

Then a big boy stretched out on the sand, and another boy covered him all up, from the tips of his toes to the tips of his nose, and he left his nose out so the boy could breathe. Well, the grasshopper and Uncle Wiggily looked at all this fun going on and they were happy as they could be. And the rabbit kept on digging the hole down in the sand, hoping he would soon come to the gold.

And then all of a sudden, before you could count up to forty, the hole which Uncle Wiggily was digging filled up with water, just like a well.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed the rabbit. "This is certainly bad luck. Now I can't find any gold. What am I to do?"

"I guess you'll have to dig another hole," said the grasshopper. "But perhaps there is gold at the bottom of this one, after all. Let's get a pail and dip out the water, then we may see the gold."

So the little girl who had loaned the rabbit her shovel let Uncle Wiggily take her pail to dip out the water. But the funny part of it was that the faster he dipped out the water the more came in, until there was enough for two wells. Then even the grasshopper helped dip out the water with another little pail, but it did no good.

The rabbit and the grasshopper were both so interested in what they were doing that they didn't notice a big crab crawling up behind them, and the first thing they knew Uncle Wiggily felt some one pinch him on his little short tail.

"Ha! What is that?" he cried, turning around quickly, and then he saw the crab, with its big blue claws pinching him.

"Ouch! Oh, my!" cried the rabbit. "Whatever shall I do?"

"I'll help pull him off!" shouted the grasshopper, but he was not strong enough, and the crawly crab still clung to the rabbit's tail.

"Why are you pinching me?" asked the rabbit, as he tried to reach around and pull off the crab, only he found he could not do it.

"I am pinching you because you dug a hole down in my sandy beach," said the crab, "and I'm going to hold on to you until you give me a thousand pieces of cheese for my supper."

"Oh, I can never get that many!" cried the rabbit. "Will no one help me get away from this crab?" But all the children had run home to dinner and there was no one to help the rabbit, until all of a sudden, a big wave washed up, and almost covered Uncle Wiggily.

He could just manage to breathe, and he sprang up on the beach to get away from the water, and the grasshopper hopped out of the way also. But the wave

was a good one after all, for as soon as the crab felt the water sloshing up around him he let go of the rabbit's tail to swim away, and that's how Uncle Wiggily was saved from the crab, even if he didn't find any gold, and he was very glad his tail wasn't pinched off.

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