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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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# Uncle Wiggily And The Beech Tree

"Will you go to the store for me, Uncle Wiggily?" asked Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper, of the rabbit gentleman one day, as he sat out on the porch of his hollow stump bungalow in the woods.

"Indeed I will, Miss Fuzzy Wuzzy," said Mr. Longears, most politely. "What is it you want?"

"A loaf of bread and a pound of sugar," she answered, and Uncle Wiggily started off.

"Better take your umbrella," Nurse Jane called after him. "All the April showers are not yet over, even if it is May."

So the rabbit gentleman took his umbrella.

On his way to the store through the woods, the bunny uncle came to a big beech tree, which had nice, shiny white bark on it, and, to his surprise the rabbit gentleman saw a big black bear, standing up on his hind legs and scratching at the tree bark as hard as he could.

"Ha! That is not the right thing to do," said Uncle Wiggily to himself. "If that bear scratches too much of the bark from the tree the tree will die, for the bark of a tree is just like my skin is to me. I must drive the bear away."

The bear, scratching the bark with his sharp claws, stood with his back to Uncle Wiggily, and the rabbit gentleman thought he could scare the big creature away.

So Uncle Wiggily picked up a stone, and throwing it at the bear, hit him on the back, where the skin was so thick it hurt hardly at all.

And as soon as he had thrown the stone Uncle Wiggily in his loudest voice shouted:

"Bang! Bang! Bungity-bang-bung!"

"Oh, my goodness!" cried the bear, not turning around. "The hunter man with his gun must be after me. He has shot me once, but the bullet did not hurt. I had better run away before he shoots me again!"

And the bear ran away, never once looking around, for he thought the stone Mr. Longears threw was a bullet from a gun, you see, and he thought when Uncle Wiggily said "Bang!" that it was a gun going off. So the bunny gentleman scared the bear away.

"Thank you, Uncle Wiggily," said the beech tree. "You saved my life by not letting the bear scratch off all my bark."



"I am glad I did," spoke the rabbit, making a polite bow with his tall silk hat, for Mr. Longears was polite, even to a tree.

"The bear would not stop scratching my bark when I asked him to," went on the beech tree, "so I am glad you came along, and scared him. You did me a great favor and I will do you one if I ever can."

"Thank you," spoke Uncle Wiggily, and then he hopped on to the store to get the loaf of bread and the pound of sugar for Nurse Jane.

It was on the way back from the store that an adventure happened to Uncle Wiggily. He came to the place where his friend the beech tree was standing up in the woods, and a balsam tree, next door to it, was putting some salve, or balsam, on the places where the bear had scratched off the bark, to make the cuts heal. Then, all of a sudden, out from behind a bush jumped the same bad bear that had done the scratching.

"Ah, ha!" growled the bear, as soon as he saw Uncle Wiggily, "you can't fool me again, making believe a stone is a bullet, and that your 'Bang!' is a gun! You can't fool me! I know all about the trick you played on me. A little bird, sitting up in a tree, saw it and told me!"

"Well," said Uncle Wiggily slowly, "I'm sorry I had to fool you, but it was all for the best. I wanted to save the beech tree."

"Oh, I don't care!" cried the bear, saucy like and impolitely. "I'm going to scratch as much as I like!"

"My goodness! You're almost as bad as the ear-scratching cat!" said Uncle Wiggily. "I guess I'd better run home to my hollow stump bungalow."

"No, you don't!" cried the bear, and, reaching out his claws, he caught hold of Uncle Wiggily, who, with his umbrella, and the bread and sugar, was standing under the beech tree. "You can't get away from me like that," and the bear held tightly to the bunny uncle.

"Oh, dear! What are you going to do to me?" asked the rabbit gentleman.

"First, I'll bite you," said the bear. "No, I guess I'll first scratch you. No, I won't either. I'll scrite you; that's what I'll do. I'll scrite you!"

"What's scrite?" asked Uncle Wiggily, curious like.

"It's a scratch and a bite made into one," said the bear, "and now I'm going to do it."

"Oh, ho! No, you aren't!" suddenly cried the beech tree, who had been thinking of a way to save Uncle Wiggily.

"No, you don't scrite my friend!" And with that the brave tree gave itself a shiver and shake, and shook down on the bear a lot of sharp, three-cornered beech nuts. They fell on the bear's soft and tender nose and the sharp edges hurt him so that he cried:

"Wow! Ouch! I guess I made a mistake! I must run away!"

And away he ran from the shower of sharp beech nuts which didn't hurt Uncle Wiggily at all because he raised his umbrella and kept them off. Then he thanked the tree for having saved him from the bear and went safely home.