



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And Father William

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One morning, soon after he had finished his breakfast, having taken his red, white and blue striped barber pole rheumatism crutch down from behind the clock, Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, started out from his hollow stump bungalow.

There were quite a few friends of the little girl named Alice in Wonderland whom he had not yet met, and he hoped to have an adventure with one of them. So, tossing up in the air his tall silk stovepipe hat, and letting it bounce three times on the end of his pink nose, Uncle Wiggily hurried off.

The rabbit gentleman had not gone very far, over the fields and through the woods, before he saw something very strange indeed. This something was what seemed to be a funny sort of flower vase, with two things sticking up in it, and on the end of them were two shoes.

"My goodness me, sakes alive and some chocolate cake pudding!" cried the surprised bunny uncle. "What's this?"

Then, as he looked again, he saw a funny face, and a pair of bright eyes looking at him from the bottom part of what seemed to be a flower vase.

"Why, it's a man!" cried Uncle Wiggily.

"Of course I'm a man," was the jolly answer. "But don't be afraid of me; I'm not a hunter man."

"And you—you're standing on your head!" went on Uncle Wiggily, more surprised than ever.

"Of course I'm standing on my head!" said the funny man. "I have to do that to make things come out as they do in the Alice in Wonderland book. I'm Father William, you know," and with that he gave a nimble spring, turned a back somersault, putting himself right side up, and began to recite this verse:

"You are old, Father William, the Young Man said,
And your hair has become very white.
But yet you incessantly stand on your head.
Do you think, at your age, that is right?"

"But is it?" asked Uncle Wiggily quickly, as soon as funny Father William had ceased speaking.

"Of course it is," was the answer. "Otherwise it wouldn't be in the book and I wouldn't do it. At first it came very hard to me, but now I can easily manage. And you'll find you get quite a different view of things, looking at them upside down as I do every now and then," he went on.

"I wonder if I could stand on my head?" spoke Uncle Wiggily.

"Try it," said Father William.

"I'd like to," went on the bunny uncle. "But I might crush my tall silk hat."

"Take it off," suggested Father William.

"Yes, I could do that. But suppose some one were to see me?" asked the bunny. "It would look sort of queer."

"No one will see you here behind the trees," spoke Father William. "Besides, if they do, learning to stand on one's head is very useful. There is no telling when you may want to do it at home."

"That's so," agreed Uncle Wiggily. "Well, I'll try."

At first he couldn't stand up on his head at all, just turning over in a sort of flip-flop every time he tried. But at last Father William held up the bunny rabbit by the heels, and then Uncle Wiggily did it better. After a while he could stand straight, right side up, on his hind paws, give a little wiggle, and then suddenly, with a funny twist and a somersault flop, there he was, standing on his head, with his silk hat twirling around on his upper paws. And Father William could do the same thing.

If you had happened to walk through the woods when Uncle Wiggily and Father William, who had a little holiday from the Alice book, were standing on their heads, surely you would have laughed.

"And, now that I have learned a new trick, I must go look for an adventure," said the bunny.

"I'll go with you," spoke Father William. Together they went along through the woods and over the fields and, all of a sudden, from behind a currant jam bush, out jumped a bad, old, double-jointed skillery-scalery alligator.

"Ah, ha!" cried the alligator. "At last I have caught some one to whom I can do it! Ah, ha!"



"Do what?" asked Uncle Wiggily, while Father William looked around for a place to hide. "What are you going to do?"

"Tickle your feet!" was the surprising answer. "I am the ticklish alligator, and feet I must tickle! Get ready now, here I come."

"Oh, dear!" cried Father William. "I never can bear to have my feet tickled. For, when that happens I laugh and then I sneeze and then I catch cold and have to go to bed. Oh, dear! I don't want my feet tickled!"

"Hush!" whispered Uncle Wiggily, as the 'gator was hopping toward them. "You won't have to suffer that! Quick! Stand on your head as you taught me to, and hold your feet up in the air!"

And in the twinkle of a spiced pear Uncle Wiggily and Father William were standing on their heads. The surprised alligator saw them, and after trying to reach their feet with his claws, which he couldn't do, as they were up in the air, he cried:

"Ah, ha! Thought you'd fool me, didn't you, by standing on your heads! Well, I'll tickle your feet after all. I'll climb a tree and reach down to them!"

"Oh, dear! He'll make me catch cold no matter what I do," sighed Father William.

"No, he won't," said Uncle Wiggily. "The alligator is very good at climbing up trees, but it takes him ever so long to climb down. As soon as he climbs up we'll stop standing on our heads. We'll flip-flop to our feet and run away."

And that's exactly what the bunny and Father William did. As soon as the alligator was up in the tree branches they turned a flip-flop, stood up straight and away they ran, and the alligator was all day getting down out of the tree. So he didn't tickle their feet after all, but he might have if Uncle Wiggily had not learned to stand on his head.

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