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Uncle Wiggily And His Torn Coat

Howard R. Garis

"Do you think I look all right?" asked Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, of Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, his muskrat lady housekeeper. He was standing in front of her, turning slowly about, and he had on a new coat. For now that Summer was near the bunny uncle had laid aside his heavy fur coat and was wearing a lighter one.

"Yes, you do look very nice," Nurse Jane said, tying her tail in a knot so Uncle Wiggily would not step on it as he turned around.

"Nice enough to go to Grandfather Goosey Gander's party?" asked the rabbit gentleman.

"Oh, yes, indeed!" exclaimed Nurse Jane. "I didn't know Grandpa Goosey was to give a party, but, if he is, you certainly look well enough to go with your new coat. Of course, it might be better if it had some lace insertion around the button holes, or a bit of ruching, with oyster shell trimming sewed down the back, but—"

"Oh, no, indeed!" laughed the bunny uncle. "If it had those things on it would be a coat for a lady. I like mine plainer."

"Well, take care of yourself," called Nurse Jane after him as he hopped off over the fields and through the woods to the house where Grandfather Goosey Gander lived.

"Now, I must be very careful not to get my new coat dirty, or I won't look nice at the party," the old rabbit gentleman was saying to himself as he hopped along. "I must be very careful indeed."

He went along as carefully as he could, but, just as he was going down a little hill, under the trees, he came to a place which was so slippery that, before he knew it, all of a sudden Uncle Wiggily fell down and slid to the bottom of the hill.

"My goodness!" he cried, as he stood up after his slide. "I did not know there was snow or ice on that hill."

And when he looked there was not, but it was covered with long, thin pine needles, which are almost as slippery as glass. It was on these that the rabbit gentleman had slipped down hill.

"Well, there is no great harm done," said Uncle Wiggily to himself, as he found no bones broken. "I had a little slide, that's all. I must bring Sammie and Susie Littletail here some day, and let them slide on pine needle hill. Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, the two squirrels, would also like it, and so would Nannie and Billie Wagtail, my two goat friends."

Uncle Wiggily was about to go on to the party when, as he looked at his new coat he saw that it was all torn. In sliding down the slippery pine needle hill the coat had caught on sticks and stones and it had many holes torn in it, and it was also ripped here and there.



"Oh, dear me!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "Oh, sorrow! Oh, unhappiness! Now I'll have to go back to my hollow stump bungalow and put on my old coat that isn't torn. For I never can wear my new one to the party. That would never do! But the trouble is, if I go back home I'll be late! Oh, dear, what trouble I am in!"

Now was the time for some of Uncle Wiggily's friends to help him in his trouble, as he had often helped them. But, as he looked through the woods, he could not see even a little mouse, or so much as a grasshopper.

"The tailor bird would be just the one I'd like to see now," said the rabbit uncle. "She could mend my torn coat nicely." For tailor birds, yon know, can take a piece of grass, with their bill for a needle, and sew leaves together to make a nest, almost as well as your mother can mend a hole in your stocking.

But there was no tailor bird in the woods, and Uncle Wiggily did not know what to do.

"I certainly do not want to be late to Grandpa Goosey's party," said the bunny uncle, "nor do I want to go to it in a torn coat. Oh, dear!"

Just then he heard down on the ground near him, a little voice saying:

"Perhaps we could mend your coat for you, Uncle Wiggily."

"You. Who are you, and how can you mend my torn coat?" the bunny gentleman wanted to know.

"We are some little black ants," was the answer, "and with the pine needles lying on the ground—some of the same needles on which you slipped—we can sew up your coat, with long grass for thread."

"Oh, that will be fine, if you can do it," spoke the bunny uncle. "Can you?"

"We'll try," the ants said. Then, about fourteen thousand six hundred and twenty-two black ants took each a long, sharp pine needle, and threading it with

grass, they began to sew up the rips and tears in Uncle Wiggily's coat. And in places where they could not easily sew they stuck the cloth together with sticky gum from the pine tree. So, though the pine tree was to blame, in a way, for Uncle Wiggily's fall, it also helped in the mending of his coat.

Soon the coat was almost as good as new and you could hardly tell where it was torn. And Uncle Wiggily, kindly thanking the ants, went on to Grandpa Goosey's party and had a fine time and also some ice cream.

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