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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And Jack-in-the-pulpit

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Uncle Wiggily was slowly hopping along through the woods, sometimes leaning on his crutch, when his rheumatism pained him, and again skipping along when he got out into the warm sunshine. It was the day after the picnic, and the old gentleman rabbit felt a bit lonesome as all his friends had gone back to their homes.

"I do declare!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily, as he walked slowly along by a little lake, where an August rabbit was running his motor boat, "if I don't find my fortune pretty soon I won't have any vacation this year. I must look carefully to-day, and see if I can't find a pot full of gold."

Well, he looked as carefully as he could, but my land sakes and a pair of white gloves! he couldn't seem to find a smitch of gold and not so much as a crumb of diamonds.

"Hum!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily, "at this rate I guess I'll have to keep on traveling for several years before I find my fortune. But never mind, I'm having a good time, anyhow. I'll keep on searching."

So he kept on, and all of a sudden when he was walking past a prickly briar bush, he heard a voice calling:

"Hey, Uncle Wiggily, come on in here."

"Ha! Who are you, and why do you want me to come in there?" asked the old gentleman rabbit.

"Oh, I am a friend of yours," was the answer, "and I will give you a lot of money if you come in here."

"Let me see your face," asked the rabbit, "I want to know who you are."

"Oh! I have a dreadful toothache," said the creature hiding in the bushes. "I don't want to stick my face out in the cold. But if you will take my word for it I am a good friend of yours. I would like very much for you to come in here."

"Well, perhaps I had better," said the old gentleman rabbit, "for I certainly need money."

And he was just going to crawl in under the prickly briar bush when all of a

sudden he happened to look, and he saw the skillery-scallery tail of the alligator accidentally sticking out. Yes, it was the alligator trying to fool dear old Uncle Wiggily.

"Oh, ho!" cried the wise old rabbit. "I guess I won't go in there after all," so he hopped to one side and the alligator kept waiting for him to come in so he could eat him, but when the rabbit didn't come in the savage creature with the skillery-scallery tail cried:

"Well, aren't you coming in?"

"No, thank you," said the rabbit. "I have to go on to seek my fortune," and away he hopped. Well, that alligator was so angry that he gnashed his teeth and nearly broke them, and he crawled after Uncle Wiggily, but of course, he couldn't catch him.

Uncle Wiggily was pretty careful after that, and whenever he came near a prickly briar bush he listened with both his long ears stuck up straight to see if he could hear any sounds like an alligator. But he didn't, and so he kept on.

Well, it was coming on toward evening, one afternoon, and the old gentleman rabbit was tramping along the road, wondering where he would sleep, when all of a sudden something came bursting out of the bushes toward the rabbit, and a voice cried out:

"Hide! Hide! Uncle Wiggily. Hide as quickly as you can!"

"Why should I hide?" asked the old gentleman rabbit. "Is there a giant coming after me?"

"Worse than a giant," said the voice. "It is a bad wolf that jumped out of his cage from the circus, and he is just ready to eat up anything he sees," and the July bug, for it was he who had fluttered out of the bushes, to tell Uncle Wiggily, made his wings go slowly to and fro like an electric palm-leaf fan.

"A wolf, eh?" cried the old gentleman rabbit. "And do you think he will eat me?"

"He surely will," said the July bug. "I happened to fly past his house, and I heard him say to his wife that he was going out to see if he could find a rabbit supper. So I know he's coming for you. You'd better hide."

"Oh! where can I hide?" asked the rabbit, as he looked around for a hollow stump. But there wasn't any, and there were no holes in the ground, and he didn't know what to do.

Then, all at once there was a crashing in the bushes and it sounded like an elephant coming through, breaking all the sticks in his path.

"There's the wolf! There's the wolf!" cried the July bug. "Hide, Uncle Wiggily,"

and then the bug perched on the high limb of a tree where the wolf couldn't catch him.

Well, the poor old gentleman rabbit looked for a place to hide himself away from the wolf but he couldn't seem to find any, and he was just going to crawl under a stone and maybe hurt himself, when all at once he heard a voice say:

"Jump up here, Uncle Wiggily. I'll hide you from the wolf."

So the rabbit traveler looked up, and there he saw a flower called Jack-in-the-pulpit looking down on him. I've told you about them before, how the frog once took his bath in one, and how, when you pick a wood-bouquet you put them in with some ferns to make the bouquet look pretty. They are a flower like a vase, with a top curling over, and a thing standing up in the centre whose name is "Jack."



"Jump in here," said the Jack. "I'll fold my top down over you like an umbrella, and the wolf can't find you."

"But you are so small that I can't get inside," said the rabbit.

"Oh, I'll make myself bigger," cried the Jack, and he took a long breath, and puffed himself up and swelled himself up, until he was large enough for Uncle Wiggily to jump down inside. Then the Jack-in-the-pulpit closed down the umbrella top over the rabbit, and he was hidden away as nice and snug as could be wished.

Pretty soon that bad savage wolf came prancing along, and he looked all over for the rabbit. Then he sniffed and cried:

"Ha! I smell him somewhere around here! I'll find him!" But he couldn't see Uncle Wiggily because he was safely hidden in the Jack-in-the-pulpit. So the wolf raged around some more and chased after his tail, and just as he smelled the rabbit hidden in the flower, the July bug flew down out of the tree, bang! right into the eyes of the wolf, and then the savage creature felt so badly that he ran home and ate cold bread and water for supper, and he didn't bother Uncle Wiggily any more that day.

So that's how the Jack-in-the-pulpit saved the rabbit and very thankful Uncle Wiggily was. And he stayed that night in a hollow stump, and the next day he went on to seek his fortune.

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