



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And Johnnie's Marbles

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It was a nice, warm spring day, when the ground in the woods where the animal boys and girls lived was soft, for all the frost had melted out of it; and, though it was a little too early to go barefoot, it was not too early to play marbles.

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, the squirrels; Sammie Littletail, the rabbit, and Jimmie Wibblewobble, the duck, were having a game under the trees, not far from the hollow stump bungalow which was the house of Uncle Wiggily Longears, the bunny gentleman.

"First shot agates!" cried Johnnie.

"No, I'm going to shoot first!" chattered his brother Billie.

"Huh! I hollered it before either of you," quacked Jimmie, the duck boy, and he tossed some red, white and blue striped marbles on the ground in the ring. The marbles were just the color of Uncle Wiggily's rheumatism crutch.

The animal boys began playing, but they made so much noise, crying "Fen!" and "Ebbs!" and "Knuckle down!" that Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper, went to the bungalow door and called:

"Boys! Boys! Will you please be a little quiet? Uncle Wiggily is lying down taking a nap, and I don't want you to wake him up with your marbles."

"Oh, I don't mind!" cried the bunny uncle, unfolding his ears from his vest pockets, where he always tucked them when he went to sleep, so the flies would not tickle him. "It's about time I got up," he said.

"So the boys are playing marbles, eh? Well, I'll go out and watch them. It will make me think of the days when I was a spry young bunny chap, hopping about, spinning my kites and flying my tops."

"I guess you are a little bit twisted; are you not?" asked Nurse Jane, politely.

"Oh, so I am," said Uncle Wiggily. "I mean flying my kite and spinning my top."

Then he pinkled his twink nose—Ah! you see that's the time I was twisted—I mean he twinkled his pink nose, Uncle Wiggily did, and out he went to watch the animal boys play marbles.

Billie, Johnnie and Jimmie, as well as Sammie, wanted the bunny uncle to play

also, but he said his rheumatism hurt too much to bend over. So he just watched the marble game, until it was time for the boys to go home. And then Johnnie cried:

"Oh, I forgot! I have to go to the store for a loaf of bread for supper. Come on, fellows, with me, will you?"

But neither Jimmie, nor Sammie nor Billie wanted to go with Johnnie, so he started off through the woods to the store alone, when Uncle Wiggily cried:

"Wait a minute, Johnnie, and I'll go with you. I haven't had my walk this day, and I have had no adventure at all. I'll go along and see what happens."

"Oh, that will be nice!" chattered Johnnie, who did not like to go to the store alone. So, putting his marbles in the bag in which he carried them, he ran along beside Uncle Wiggily.

They had not gone far when, all of a sudden, there came a strong puff of wind, and, before Uncle Wiggily could hold his hat down over his ears, it was blown off his head. I mean his hat was—not his ears.

Away through the trees the tall silk hat was blown.

"Oh, dear!" cried the bunny uncle. "I guess I am not going to have a nice adventure today."

"I'll get your hat for you, Uncle Wiggily!" said Johnnie kindly. "You hold my bag of marbles so I can run faster, and I'll get the hat for you."

Tossing the rabbit gentleman the marbles, away scampered Johnnie after the hat. But the wind kept on blowing it, and the squirrel boy had to run a long way.

"Well, I hope he gets it and brings it back to me," thought Uncle Wiggily, as he sat down on a green, moss-covered stone to wait for the squirrel boy. And, while he was waiting the bunny uncle opened the bag and looked at Johnnie's marbles. There were green ones, and blue and red and pink—very pretty, all of them.

"I wonder if I have forgotten how to play the games I used to enjoy when I was a boy rabbit?" thought the bunny gentleman. "Just now, when no one is here in tile woods to laugh at me, I think I'll try and see how well I can shoot marbles."

So he marked out a ring on the ground, and putting some marbles in the center began shooting at them with another marble, just the way you boys do.



"Ha! A good shot!" cried the bunny uncle, as he knocked two marbles out of the ring at once. "I am not so old as I thought I was, even if I have the rheumatism."

He was just going to shoot again when a growling voice over behind a bush said:

"Well, you will not have it much longer."

"Have what much longer?" asked Uncle Wiggily, and glancing up, there he saw a big bear, not at all polite looking.

"You won't have the rheumatism much longer," the bear said.

"Why not?" Uncle Wiggily wanted to know.

"Because," answered the bear, "I am going to eat you up and the rheumatism, too. Here I come!" and he made a jump for the bunny uncle. But did he catch him?

That bear did not, for he stepped on one of the round marbles, which rolled under his paw and he fell down ker-punko! on his nose-o!

Uncle Wiggily started to run away, but he did not like to go and leave Johnnie's marbles on the ground, so he stayed to pick them up, and by then the bear stood up on his hind legs again, and grabbed the bunny uncle in his sharp claws.

"Ah ha! Now I have you!" said the bear, grillery and growlery like.

"Yes, I see you have," sadly spoke Uncle Wiggily. "But before you take me off to your den, which I suppose you will do, will you grant me one favor?"

"Yes, and only one," growled the bear. "Be quick about it! What is it?"

"Will you let me have one more shot?" asked the bunny uncle. "I want to see if I can knock the other marbles out of the ring."

"Well, I see no harm in that," slowly grumbled the bear. "Go ahead. Shoot!"

Uncle Wiggily picked out the biggest shooter in Johnnie's bag. Then he took

careful aim, but, instead of aiming at the marbles in the ring he aimed at the soft and tender nose of the bear.

"Bing!" went the marble which Uncle Wiggily shot, right on the bear's nose. "Bing!" And the bear was so surprised and kerslostrated that he cried:

"Wow! Ouch! Oh, lollypops! Oh, sweet spirits of nitre!" And away he ran through the woods to hold his nose in a soft bank of mud, for he thought a bee had stung him. And so he didn't bite Uncle Wiggily after all.

"Well, I guess I can play marbles nearly as well as I used to," laughed the bunny uncle when Johnnie came back with the tall silk hat.

And when Mr. Longears told the boy squirrel about shooting the bear on the nose, Johnnie laughed and said he could have done no better himself.

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