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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Camel

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"What sort of an adventure do you think you will have to-day, Uncle Wiggily?" asked the muskrat lady housekeeper of the bunny rabbit as he hopped away from the hollow stump bungalow one morning.

"Well, Nurse Jane, I hardly know," was the answer. "I may meet with some of those circus animals again."

"I hope you do," Miss Fuzzy Wuzzy said, as she tied her whiskers in a bow knot, for she was going to dust the furniture that day. "The circus animals are very kind to you. And it is strange, for some of them are such savage jungle beasts."

"Yes," spoke the bunny gentleman, "I am glad to say the circus animals were kind and gentle. More so than the Pipsisewah or Skeezicks. But then, you see, the circus animals have been taught to be kind and good—that is, most of them."

"I hope you never meet the other sort—the kind that will want to nibble your ears!" exclaimed Nurse Jane as Uncle Wiggily put his tall silk hat on front-side before and started off with his red, white and blue striped rheumatism crutch under his paw.

"I hope nothing happens to him," sighed Nurse Jane as she went in to put the dishes to bed in the china closet.

But something was going to happen to Uncle Wiggily. You shall hear all about it.

On and on through the woods hopped the bunny rabbit gentleman, looking first on one side of the path and then on the other for an adventure. He was beginning to think he would never find one when, all of a sudden, he heard a rustling in the bushes, and a voice said:

"Oh, dear! I can't go a hop farther! I'm so tired, and my bundle is so heavy. I guess I'm getting old!"

"Ha! That sounds like trouble of the old-fashioned sort!" murmured Uncle Wiggily to himself. "I may be able to give some help, as long as it isn't the fox or wolf, and it doesn't sound like them."

The bunny gentleman peered through the trees and, sitting on a flat stump, he saw an old gentleman cat, looking quite sad and forlorn.

"Hello, Mr. Cat!" called Uncle Wiggily, cheerfully, as he hopped over toward the stump. "What's the trouble?"

"Oh, lots of trouble!" mewed the cat. "You see I'm a peddler. I go about from place to place selling pins and needles and things the lady animals need when they sew. Here is my pack," and he pointed to a large bundle on the ground near the stump.

"But what is the matter?" asked the bunny gentleman. "Don't the animal ladies buy your needles, pins and spools of thread? Just step around and see Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, my muskrat lady housekeeper. She is always sewing and mending. She'll buy things from your pack."

"Oh, it isn't *selling* them that's the trouble," said Mr. Cat. "But I am getting so old and stiff that I can hardly carry the pack on my back any longer. I have to sit down and rest because my back aches so much. Oh, how tired I am! What a weary world this is!"

"Oh, don't say that!" laughed Uncle Wiggily, who felt quite cheerful that morning. "See how the sun shines!"

"It only makes it so much hotter for me to carry the pack on my back," sighed the cat.

"Ha! That is where I can help you!" exclaimed Mr. Longears. "I am quite well and strong, except for a little rheumatism now and then. That, however, doesn't bother me now, so I'll carry your peddler's pack for you."

"Will you? That's very kind!" said the cat. "Perhaps I may be able to do you a favor some day."

"Oh, that will be all right!" laughed the bunny, as he twinkled his pink nose. "Come along, we'll travel together and perhaps find an adventure."

Uncle Wiggily slung the cat-peddler's pack up on his back, the cat carried the bunny's crutch, and so off they started together through the woods. They had not gone very far, and the bunny was wondering whether he could not sell Nurse Jane a lot of pins to help the poor cat when, all of a sudden, a loud, snarling sort of voice cried out:

"Oh, where can I find some water? Oh, how much I need a drink! I can go without one for seven days, but this is the eighth and if I don't see some water soon I don't know what will happen!"

"I wonder who that is?" asked the peddler cat.

"I don't know, but we'll soon find out," spoke Mr. Longears.

They looked through the bushes and there they saw a very strange animal, and not what you would call pretty, either. This animal had a long neck, bent like the letter U, and his face looked as though he had rolled over on it in his sleep. But the queerest part of all was his back, on which were two humps, like little mountains, running up to peaks.



"Oh, what a strange chap!" mewed the peddler cat.

"Hush, don't let him hear you!" whispered Uncle Wiggily. "I think this is an animal from the circus."

"You are right—I am!" exclaimed the two-humped chap, looking toward the bushes behind which Uncle Wiggily and the cat were standing. "I heard what you said, too, Mr. Cat," the odd chap went on. "But I don't mind. I'm a camel, and I'm used to hearing folks say how strange I look. But I am in trouble now. Oh, dear!"

"What's the matter?" asked Uncle Wiggily, kindly.

"I'm so thirsty," the camel said. "You see, I took a long drink before I ran away from the circus, which I did, very foolishly, as I wanted some adventures. Well, I'm having them, all right! I've been lost in the woods, and, though I had enough to eat I couldn't find a thing to drink. On the desert, where I came from, I could find water once in a while. But here I'm lost."

"And, though I am a camel," went on the humped creature, "and can hold enough water in my stomach to last for several days, now my time is up. I haven't had a drink for over seven days, and unless I get one soon I don't know what will happen."

"Oh, I can take you to the duck pond and you can get a drink there, Mr. Camel," Uncle Wiggily said, as he hopped out from behind the bush.

"Oh, ho! What a funny chap you are!" snarled the camel, not that he was cross, only a snarl was his regular way of speaking. "Are you a little camel?"

"Why, no, I'm not a camel," answered the bunny. "What made you think so?"

"Because of that hump on your back," said the camel. "Some of us camels have two humps, and some only one. But surely you cannot be a one-humped camel! I never saw one with ears so long!"

"Indeed, I'm not a camel!" laughed Uncle Wiggily. "I'm a rabbit, and this pack that you see belongs to this poor peddler cat, who is too tired to carry it. So I am carrying it for him."

"That is very kind of you," spoke the thirsty circus animal. "In fact, it seems to me you are very fond of being kind, Mr. Longears. You carry the cat's pack, and now you offer to show me where to get a drink. And, if you can, I wish you would soon lead me to water. I am very thirsty!"

"Follow me!" called Uncle Wiggily. Then he hopped off through the woods, carrying the cat's peddler pack, and followed by the two-humped camel, whose long neck swayed to and fro like a clock pendulum, while his humps shook like two bowls full of jelly.

Soon they came to the duck pond and there the camel put his queer face down into the water and drank as much as he pleased. He took a long time to drink, as camels always do, for they must take enough into their stomachs to last for a week in case they can not find more water before the end of seven days.

The cat and Uncle Wiggily stood watching the camel, thinking how queer and homely he was, but honest for all that, when, all of a sudden, out from behind a bush jumped the bad old Pipsisewah!

"Wow! Wow! I've got you now!" howled the Pipsisewah. "I'll nibble your ears now, Uncle Wiggily!"

The bunny rabbit gentleman started to run, but, because he had strapped to his back the pack of the cat peddler, the bunny could not hop fast at all.

"I'll get you! I'll get you!" cried the Pipsisewah.

"Oh dear! Oh dear!" sighed Uncle Wiggily, wondering who was going to save him, for he knew the tired old cat peddler couldn't.

And then, all of a sudden, the circus camel finished his long drink, and, with a jolly snarl, he cried:

"Here! You let Uncle Wiggily alone!" Then with his broad foot, made big and wide so it would not sink into the soft sand of the desert, the camel stepped on the tail of the Pipsisewah, holding him back so he couldn't chase Uncle Wiggily.

"Wow! Wow!" howled the Pip.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed the peddler cat. "Oh, mew!"

"Just wait until I get loose, and I'll chase you, too!" cried the Pipsisewah to the cat. "Just wait!"

"Don't be afraid!" said the camel, with a smile which made him look more homely than before, though this didn't matter. "Here, Uncle Wiggily, hop up on my back, between my two humps! You, too, Mr. Cat, jump up on my back. You and the bunny gentleman can sit there as the people of the desert used to ride me before I joined the circus. Hop up, my kind friends, and I'll soon carry you

safe out of these woods. I can go fast, now that I have had a big drink of water. Hop up!"

Uncle Wiggily, with the cat's pack, hopped up on the back of the camel. The cat, too, sprang up. All the while the camel kept his broad foot on the tail of the Pipsisewah, so the bad animal couldn't get loose. And when the bunny and cat were safe in place, snuggled down in between the camel's humps, the queer creature started off, letting go the tail of the Pip.

"Ha! Now you can't get us!" mewed the cat, looking down from the camel's back.

"Just you wait! I'll get Uncle Wiggily yet, and you too!" the Pip howled. "And I'll fix you, Mr. Camel, for stepping on my tail!"

"Pooh! Nonsense!" snarled the camel, "Uncle Wiggily helped me by showing me where to find water, and now I am helping him." And away he went, quite fast, indeed, for such a queer chap.

And the old Pip skipped away to put some soft moss on his sore tail.

"Isn't this jolly!" laughed Uncle Wiggily, twinkling his pink nose. "I never expected to have a ride on the back of a camel! It's just like a circus parade! I wish Nurse Jane could see me!"

And the muskrat lady did, for the kind camel gave Uncle Wiggily a ride all the way home to the bunny's hollow stump bungalow, and when the muskrat lady housekeeper saw Mr. Longears up between the two humps she cried:

"My land sakes flopsy dub and a basket of soap bubbles! What will happen next?"

"I don't know," laughed Uncle Wiggily.

"As for me, I am going back to the circus," the camel said. And he did. The peddler cat, after selling Nurse Jane some sewing silk, stayed for some time with Mr. Longears, getting rested so he would be strong enough to carry his own pack of needles, pins and thread. And as for the bunny—well, he had more adventures, of course.

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