



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Church Bell

Howard R. Garis

"Here is a package for you, Mr. Longears," said Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper, as she entered the dining-room, of the hollow stump bungalow, where the rabbit gentleman was eating his breakfast right after supper—the next day, of course.

"A package for me—how nice!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily. "Let me see—what day is it?"

"I don't see that it makes any difference," spoke Nurse Jane. "A package is a package any day."

"Ah, yes, very true," admitted Uncle Wiggily. "But a package on April Fools' day is quite different from one on Christmas."

"So it is," said the muskrat lady with a laugh. "But as it happens, this is not April Fools' day."

"No, it is not," admitted Uncle Wiggily, "and in that case I will open the package. Who brought it?"

"Billie Bushytail, the squirrel boy, on his way to school left it for you," answered Nurse Jane.

"And from whom did it come?" Uncle Wiggily wanted to know.

"You had better open it and see," suggested Nurse Jane.

Uncle Wiggily did so, and what do you s'pose he found? Why in the package was a lovely chocolate cake, with coconut on top, and a yellow carrot in the middle. And there was a little card on which was written:

"From the Scrump, who used to be a Flump, to Dear Uncle Wiggily."

"Ha!" exclaimed the old gentleman rabbit. "This is very nice. I am glad I helped change the Flump into a Scrump."

I told you that story on the page before this, you remember. The Flump was a curious, sad sort of a mixed-up animal, but when Uncle Wiggily fixed her smoky chimney, the Flump turned into a Scrump, which is short for Scrumptious, and scrumptious means lovely.

"My! that is good chocolate cake," said the gentleman rabbit, passing Nurse Jane a large slice. "Just give it away to the animal children when they come home from school."

"That's just like you!" cried the muskrat lady. "Giving away everything you get! Why don't you eat it yourself?"

"I had rather see others eat it," replied Uncle Wiggily. And I might say that if ever you feel yourself turning into a Flump, just start giving things away, or making others happy, and you'll become a Scrump right away. And it's much nicer to be a Scrump than a Flump.

"Where are you going?" asked Nurse Jane, as Uncle Wiggily got up from the table.

"Out for a ride in my airship," replied the rabbit gentleman. "It is a lovely day, and I might find some in trouble whom I could help. Yes, I shall go for a little ride."

"Well, don't fall," begged Nurse Jane, and Uncle Wiggily promised that he would not. Soon he was soaring and flying up near the clouds in his airship, that was made from a clothes basket, some circus balloons, a Japanese umbrella and an electric fan.

Pretty soon, in a little while, not so very long, Uncle Wiggily heard, down on the earth, some one saying most sadly:

"Oh, dear! Now I am in trouble!"

"My! I wonder if that's Tom, the grocery cat, who has another broken basket?" said Uncle Wiggily to himself. "If it is I must help him."

He looked down and found that, right under him, was a big church with a steeple and in front of the church was the sexton, or janitor, a very nice man, indeed, if you will kindly allow me to say so.

"Oh, dear! Such trouble!" cried the sexton man, sadly.

"What is the trouble?" asked Uncle Wiggily kindly, as he lowered his airship. "Perhaps I can help you."

"I'm afraid not," answered the janitor. "You see, the rope by which I pull the church bell is broken. To-morrow is Sunday and I have not time to mend the rope. I can't ring the bell, and unless I do make it jingle ding-dong, the people will not hear it and will not come to church."

"Ha! That is too bad!" agreed Uncle Wiggily. "For going to church does every one good. But won't they come even if the bell doesn't ring?"



"I am afraid not," said the sexton man. "You see, the bell has been rung every Sunday for years and years and years. The people have become used to it. They don't even look at their clocks, but when they hear the bell go 'ding-dong!' they say: 'Ah! it is time to go to church.' But now, alas, the rope is broken and I will not be able to ring the Sunday bell to-morrow."

"Don't worry," said Uncle Wiggily, with a laugh. "And don't be gloomy like a Flump, whatever happens. Perhaps I may be able to help you."

But the sexton man did not think so, and he was quite sad. He tried to fix the bell rope, but he could not, and it looked as though the bell would not ring for Sunday church.

But what did Uncle Wiggily do? Listen, as the telephone girl says, and I will tell you. Sunday morning, bright and early, the rabbit gentleman took a lot of stones in the clothes basket and he went sailing up in his airship.

Right up over the church spire he sailed, and he hovered over the steeple and the bell, and, when it was time for church, the rabbit gentleman threw stones at the bell. And, as he was a good shot, he hit it every time.

"Crack!" went a stone on the bell, and the bell went "Ding-dong! Ding-dong!" slowly and solemn-like. More stones did Uncle Wiggily throw from his airship, and every time the rabbit gentleman hit it the bell rang just as well as though the sexton had pulled the rope.

"Ha!" cried all the people. "There goes the bell! It is time for church!"

So they went, and were not late, but they were much surprised when they saw Uncle Wiggily in his airship, throwing stones at the bell to ring it.

And when all the people were in their seats, Uncle Wiggily didn't have to ring the bell any more. He came down out of his airship and went to church himself, and everybody was happy, and the sexton was most especially thankful to the rabbit gentleman.

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