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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Duchess

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Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, was hopping along through the woods one day, looking for an adventure, when, all of a sudden, he came to a door standing up between two trees. It was a regular door, with a knob, hinges and all, but the funny part of it was there didn't seem to be a room on either side of it.

"This is remarkable!" exclaimed Wiggily, "remarkable" meaning the same thing as queer. "It is very odd! Here is a door and the jamb—"

"Where's the jamb?" asked a little katydid, who was sitting on a leaf in the sun. "I'm very fond of jam."

"I didn't say j-a-m—the kind you eat on bread," spoke Uncle Wiggily. "I was talking about the j-a-m-b—with a b—"

"Bees make honey," said the katydid, "and honey's almost as good as jam. I'm not so fussy as all that. Jam or honey—honey or jam, it's all the same to me."

"No, there isn't any honey, either," said the bunny. "The jamb of the door is the wooden frame that goes around it, to hold it in place."

"Then I don't want any door jamb—I want bread and jam," said the katydid, hopping off to find her sister, Katydidn't, leaving Uncle Wiggily to stare at the lone door.

"Well," said the rabbit gentleman to himself, "I may as well see what's on the other side. Though a door standing all by itself in the woods is the strangest thing I've ever seen."

However, he turned the knob, opened the door and stepped through, and, to his surprise, he found himself in a big kitchen which seemed magically to have appeared the moment he entered the very surprising place. At one end was a big stove, with a hot fire in it, and on the stove was a boiling kettle of soup, which was being stirred by a big fat cook lady, who was shaped like a ham, without the string in the end, of course. For the cook could stand up and didn't need to be hung on a nail as a ham is hung before it's cooked.

In front of the fire was another large lady with a bonnet on almost as big as the Hatter's hat. Over the bonnet was a fluffy, flowing veil.

"Now please be quiet—do!" exclaimed the sitting down lady to something in her lap, and Uncle Wiggily saw that it was a baby. "Come, cook!" she cried. "Is that hot soup ready yet for the baby?"

"Not yet, mum. But it soon will be," answered the cook, and Uncle Wiggily was just going to say something about not giving a little baby hot soup, when the door opened again, and in came Alice from Wonderland.

"Oh, I'm so glad you're here, Uncle Wiggily!" cried Alice. "Now it will be all right."

"What will?" asked the bunny. "What will be right?"

"My left shoe," said Alice. "You see I just came from the Pool of Tears, and everything got all mixed up. When I came out I had two left shoes instead of one being a right, but now you are here it's all right—I mean one is right and the other is left, as it should be," and with that Alice put on one shoe she had been carrying in her hand, and smiled.

"But who is this?" asked Uncle Wiggily, pointing with his red, white and blue striped rheumatism crutch at the big lady holding the baby, which was now squirming like an angle worm.

"It's the Duchess—a friend of the Queen of Hearts," answered Alice. "I'll introduce you to her in a minute. Are you fond of sneezing?"

"Only when I have a cold," answered Uncle Wiggily. "Why do you ask?" and he began to think he was having a very funny adventure indeed. "Why should I be fond of sneezing?"

"Because you'll have to whether you like it or not," answered Alice. "The Duchess is going to talcum powder the baby now—it's just had a bath."

With that the duchess, who is the wife of a duke, you know, called:

"Here, cook! Never mind the soup. Give me the pepper!"

"Goodness me sakes alive and some horseradish lollypops!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "She isn't going to talcum powder the baby with pepper, is she?"

"Of course," answered Alice. "It's that way in the book from which I came to have an adventure with you, so, of course, pepper it has to be. Look out—here come the sneezes!" and Alice got out her handkerchief.



Uncle Wiggily saw the duchess, with a funny smile on her big face, take the pepper-box the cook gave her and start to sprinkle the black stuff over the baby

in her lap. The baby was cooing and gurgling—as all babies do after their bath—and didn't seem at all to mind her being peppered.

"They season chickens and turkeys with salt and pepper, so why not babies?" asked Alice of Uncle Wiggily. The bunny gentleman was just going to say he did not know the answer to that riddle, when the door suddenly opened again and in came a great big dodo bird, which is something like a skillery-scalery alligator, only worse, with a beak like that of a mosquito.

"Ah, ha!" chirped the dodo. "At last I have found him!" and he made a dart with his big beak for Uncle Wiggily. The dodo was just going to grab the bunny gentleman in his claws, and Mr. Longears was so shivery he didn't know what to do, when the duchess, suddenly tossing the baby to the cook, cried:

"Ha! No you don't! I guess it's you I want to pepper instead!" and with that she shook the box of pepper at the dodo, who began sneezing as hard as he could sneeze.

"Aker-choo! Aker-choo! Aker-choo!" sneezed the dodo.

"Keer-zoo! Keer-zoo! Keer-zoo!" sneezed the duchess.

"Goo-snitzio! Goo-snitzio! Goo-snitzio!" sneezed Alice.

"Fizz-buzzy-wuzz! Fizz-buzzy-wuzz! Fizz-buzzy-wuzz!" sneezed Uncle Wiggily, and then the dodo himself gave another very large special five and ten cent store sale sneeze and blew himself backward out of the door. So he didn't get Uncle Wiggily after all.

"And now we are all right," said Alice, when they had all finished sneezing, including the baby. "Have some soup, Uncle Wiggily."

So the bunny did, finding it very good, and made from cabbage and pretzels and then he went home to his stump bungalow.

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