



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Hatter

Howard R. Garis

"Oh, Uncle Wiggily!" called Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper, as Mr. Longears, the rabbit gentleman, started to hop out of his hollow stump bungalow one morning. "Oh, Uncle Wiggily!"

"Well, what is it?" asked the bunny with a polite bow. "Do you want anything from the store?"

"Some carrot coffee, if you please," answered the muskrat lady. "When you finish your walk, and have had a nice adventure, bring home some coffee."

"I'll do it," promised Uncle Wiggily, and then, as he hopped along, over the fields and through the woods, he thought perhaps he had better buy the carrot coffee first.

"For," said he to himself, "I might have such a funny adventure that I'd forget all about what Nurse Jane told me."

Now you just wait and see what happens, if you please.

It did not take the bunny long to get the coffee; the monkey doodle gentleman who kept the store wrapping it up for him in a paper that had been twisted around a lollypop candy.

"It's a bit sticky and sweet," said the monkey doodle store keeper, speaking of the lollypop paper, "but that will stop the coffee from falling out."

"Fine!" laughed Uncle Wiggily, and then he hopped on to look for an adventure. He had not gone very far before when, all of a sudden, he heard a voice saying:

"Well, I don't know what to do about it, that's all! I never saw such trouble! The idea of wanting me to get ready for it this time of day!"

"Ha! Trouble!" thought Uncle Wiggily. "This is where I come in. What is it you can't get ready for this time of day, and who are you?" asked the bunny, for he saw no one.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" called a voice, and out from under a mulberry bush stepped a little man, with such a large hat that it covered him from head to foot.

"Oh, excuse me," said Uncle Wiggily. "You are—"

"The Hatter! Exactly! You have guessed it," said the little man, opening a window which was cut in the side of his hat. The window was just opposite his face, which was inside, so he could look out at the bunny gentleman.



"I'm the Hatter, from 'Alice in Wonderland,'" went on the little man. The bunny hadn't quite really guessed it, though he might if he had had time.

"And what is the trouble?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"Oh, I've just been ordered by the Queen of Hearts to get up a tea party right away for Alice, who is expected any minute," went on the Hatter. "And here it is 10 o'clock in the morning, and the tea's at 5, and I haven't even started."

"You have lots of time," said Uncle Wiggily. "Hours and hours."

"Yes, but I haven't the tea!" cried the Hatter. "Don't mind me, but I'm as mad—as mad as—as lollypops, and there's nothing madder than them!" he said, sort of grinding his teeth. This grinding made Uncle Wiggily think of the coffee in his pocket. So, holding out the package, he said:

"I don't s'pose this would do, would it?"

"What?" asked the Hatter.

"It's coffee," went on the bunny, "but—"

"The very thing!" cried the Hatter, who was now smiling. "It will be just the thing for the 5 o'clock tea. We'll have it right here—I'll set the table," and opening two little doors lower down in his big hat, he stuck his arms through them and began brushing off a broad, flat stump near Uncle Wiggily.

"The stump will do for a table," said the Hatter. "This is great, Uncle Wiggily! We'll have tea for Alice after all, and make things happen as they do in the book. Don't mind me saying I was as mad as lollypops. I have to be mad—make believe, you know—or things won't come out right."

"I see," said Uncle Wiggily, remembering that it was quite stylish to be "as mad as a hatter," though he never before knew what it meant. "But you see, my dear sir," the rabbit went on, "I have only coffee to give you, and not tea."

"It doesn't matter," said the Hatter. "I'll boil it in a coconut shell, and it will do her very well," and with that he took out, from somewhere inside his hat, half a cocoanut shell. This he set on top of the stump on a little three-legged stool, and built a fire under it.

"But you need water to make coffee—I mean tea," said Uncle Wiggily.

"I have it!" cried the Hatter, and, picking up an umbrella plant growing near by, he squeezed some water from it into the cocoanut shell kettle.

Uncle Wiggily poured some of the ground coffee into the cocoanut shell of umbrella water, which was now boiling, and then the bunny exclaimed:

"But we have no sugar!"

"We'll sweeten it with the paper that came off the lollypop," said the Hatter, tearing off a bit of it and tossing it into the tea-coffee.

"What about milk?" asked Uncle Wiggily. "Alice may want cream in her coffee—I mean tea."

"Here we are!" cried the Hatter.

With that he picked a leaf from a milkweed plant growing near the flat stump and from that he squeezed out some drops of milk into a cup he made from a Jack-in-the-pulpit flower.

"Now we're all ready for 5 o'clock tea!" cried the Hatter, and just then along came Alice from Wonderland, with the March Hare, and they sat down to the stump table with Uncle Wiggily, who happened to have a piece of cherry pie in his pocket, so they had a nice little lunch after all. And the carrot coffee with milkweed cream in it, tasted like catnip tea, so everything came out all right.

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