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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily and the July Bug

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"Well, what shall we do today?" asked the white cat to Uncle Wiggily, as they traveled on together, the next day after the adventure at the snake hole. They had slept that night in a nice hollow stump.

"Hum! I hardly know what to do," replied the old gentleman rabbit. "Of course I must be on the watch for my fortune, but, as I don't seem to be finding it very fast, what do you say to having a picnic today?"

"The very thing!" cried cat. "We will get some lunch, and go off in the woods and eat it. Only we ought to have a lot more people. Two is hardly enough for a picnic."

"I would like some of my friends to come to it," spoke Uncle Wiggily, "but I am afraid they are too far away."

"Couldn't you send them word by telephone?" inquired the cat. "I'm sure I would like to meet them, for I have heard so much about Sammie and Susie Littletail, and Johnnie and Billie Bushytail."

"There is no telephone in these woods," replied Uncle Wiggily, "and we don't have time to send them postcards. I wish I could get word to them, however, but I don't suppose I can."

"Yes, you can!" suddenly cried a voice down in the grass. "I'll tell all your friends to come to the picnic if you like."

"Indeed, I would like it," said the rabbit, "but who are you, if I may be so bold as to ask? I can't see you."

"There he is—it's a big June bug!" exclaimed the cat.

"I beg your pardon," spoke the bug quickly, as he crawled out from under a leaf and sat on a toadstool. "But I am not a June bug, if you please."

"You look like one," said Uncle Wiggily politely.

"I am a July bug," went on the funny little creature. "I was intended for a June bug, but there was some mistake made, and I didn't come out of my shell until July. So you see I'm a July bug, and at first I thought it would be jolly fun, to hear all the firecrackers and skyrockets go off."

"It isn't so much fun as you imagine," said Uncle Wiggily, as he thought of the time he went sailing into the air on the sky-cracker. "But don't you like being a July bug?"

"Not very much. You see I'm the only one there is, and all the others are June bugs. The June bugs won't speak to me, nor let me play with them, so I'm very lonesome. I heard you talking about a picnic you were going to have, and so I offered to call all your friends to it. I thought perhaps if I did that you would let me come to it also."

"To be sure!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily. "You may gladly come, but how are you going to send word to all of my friends?"



"I will fly through the air and tell them to come," was the answer. "I am a very swift flyer. Watch me," and then and there the July bug buzzed around so fast that Uncle Wiggily and the cat couldn't see his wings go flip-flop-flap.

Well, they decided it would be a good plan to have the July bug act as a postman, so Uncle Wiggily wrote out the invitations on little pieces of white birch bark, and gave them to the bug. Off he flew into the air waving one leg at Uncle Wiggily and the cat.

"Well, now we must get ready for the picnic—get the things to eat—for that bug flies so fast that soon all my friends will be here," said the rabbit, so he and the pussy began to get the lunch ready.

Uncle Wiggily had some food in his valise, but they got more good things from a kind old monkey who lived in the woods. He used to work on a hand organ, but when he got old he bought him a nest in the woods with the pennies he had saved up, and he lived in peace and quietness, and played a mouth organ on Sundays.

Well, you will hardly believe me, but it's true, no sooner had Uncle Wiggily and the cat put up the lunch, wrapping some for each visitor in nice, green grape leaves, than the first ones of the picnic party began to arrive. They were Dickie and Nellie Chip-Chip, the sparrows, for they could fly through the air very quickly, and so they came on ahead.

"We got your invitation that the July bug left us, Uncle Wiggily, and we came at once," said Dickie.

"Where are the others?" asked the old gentleman rabbit.

"They are coming," answered Nellie, as she tied her tail ribbon over again, for the bow knot had become undone as she was flying through the air.

Well, in a little while along came hopping, Sammie and Susie Littletail, the rabbit children, and Billie and Johnnie Bushytail, the squirrel brothers, and Bully and Bawly the frogs, and Dottie and Munchie Trot, the ponies, and Lulu and Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble, the duck twins, and Buddy and Brighteyes Pigg, and oh, all the boy and girl animals I have ever told you about.

And oh! How glad they were to see Uncle Wiggily. He had to tell them all about his travels after his fortune before they would go off in the woods to the picnic. But at last they went, each one with a little leaf-package of lunch. The July bug came along, too, and he had a very little package of good things, because he was so small, you see, but it was enough.

They all sat down on the ground with flat stones for plates, and sticks for knives and forks, and they ate their picnic lunch there. Oh, they had the finest time, and it didn't matter if some ants did get in the sugar. Uncle Wiggily said they could have all they wanted of the sweet stuff.

And, when the picnic was almost over, there was a sudden noise in the bushes, and two bad foxes sprang out. One tried to grab Uncle Wiggily, and another made a dash for Lulu Wibblewobble.

"Oh dear!" cried Dottie Trot, without looking to see if her hair ribbon was on straight. "We shall all be eaten up!"

"No, you won't!" cried the brave July bug. "I'll fix those foxes!"

So that brave July bug just buzzed his wings as hard as he could, and straight at those foxes he flew, bumping and banging them on their noses and in the eyes, so that they gave two separate and distinct howls, and ran away, taking their big tails with them.

So that is how the July bug saved everybody from being eaten up, and then the picnic was over and every one said it was lovely.

"Well, I'll start on my travels again tomorrow," said Uncle Wiggily, as his friends told him goodbye.

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