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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Peppermint

Howard R. Garis

"Uncle Wiggily, would you mind going to the store for me?" asked Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper, one morning, as she came in from the kitchen of the hollow stump bungalow, where she had been getting ready the breakfast for the rabbit gentleman.

"Go to the store? Why of course I'll go, Miss Fuzzy Wuzzy," answered the bunny uncle. "Which store?"

"The drug store."

"The drug store? What do you want; talcum powder or court plaster?"

"Neither one," answered Nurse Jane. "I want some peppermint."

"Peppermint candy?" Uncle Wiggily wanted to know.

"Not exactly," went on Nurse Jane. "But I want a little of the peppermint juice with which some kind of candy is flavored. I want to take some peppermint juice myself, for I have indigestion. Dr. Possum says peppermint is good for it. I must have eaten a little too much cheese pudding last night."

"I'll get you the peppermint with pleasure," said the bunny uncle, starting off with his tall silk hat and his red, white and blue striped rheumatism barber pole crutch.

"Better get it in a bottle," spoke Nurse Jane, with a laugh. "You can't carry peppermint in your pocket, unless it's peppermint candy, and I don't want that kind."

"All right," Uncle Wiggily said, and then, with the bottle, which Nurse Jane gave him, he hopped on, over the fields and through the woods to the drug store.

But when he got there the cupboard was bare—. No! I mustn't say that. It doesn't belong here. I mean when Uncle Wiggily reached the drug store it was closed, and there was a sign in the door which said the monkey-doodle gentleman who kept the drug store had gone to a baseball-moving-picture show, and wouldn't be back for a long while.

"Then I wonder where I am going to get Nurse Jane's peppermint?" asked Uncle Wiggily of himself. "I'd better go see if Dr. Possum has any."

But while Uncle Wiggily was going on through the woods once more, he gave a sniff and a whiff, and, all of a sudden, he smelled a peppermint smell.

The rabbit gentleman stood still, looking around and making his pink nose twinkle like a pair of roller skates. While he was doing this along came a cow lady chewing some grass for her complexion.

"What are you doing here, Uncle Wiggily?" asked the cow lady.

Uncle Wiggily told her how he had gone to the drug store for peppermint for Nurse Jane, and how he had found the store closed, so he could not get any.

"But I smell peppermint here in the woods," went on the bunny uncle. "Can it be that the drug store monkey doodle has left some here for me?"

"No, what you smell is—that," said the cow lady, pointing her horns toward some green plants growing near a little babbling brook of water. The plants had dark red stems that were square instead of round.

"It does smell like peppermint," said Uncle Wiggily, going closer and sniffing and snuffing.

"It is peppermint," said the cow lady. "That is the peppermint plant you see."

"Oh, now I remember," Uncle Wiggily exclaimed. "They squeeze the juice out of the leaves, and that's peppermint flavor for candy or for indigestion."

"Exactly," spoke the cow lady, "and I'll help you squeeze out some of this juice in the bottle for Nurse Jane."



Then Uncle Wiggily and the cow lady pulled up some of the peppermint plants and squeezed out the juice between two clean, flat stones, the cow lady stepping on them while Uncle Wiggily caught the juice in the empty bottle as it ran out.

"My! But that is strong!" cried the bunny uncle, as he smelled of the bottle of peppermint. It was so sharp that it made tears come into his eyes. "I should think that would cure indigestion and everything else," he said to the cow lady.

"Tell Nurse Jane to take only a little of it in sweet water," said the cow lady. "It is very strong. So be careful of it."

"I will," promised Uncle Wiggily. "And thank you for getting the peppermint for me. I don't know what I would have done without you, as the drug store was closed."

Then he hopped on through the woods to the hollow stump bungalow. He had not quite reached it when, all of a sudden, there was a rustling in the hushes, and out from behind a bramble bush jumped a big black bear. Not a nice good bear, like Neddie or Beckie Stubtail, but a bear who cried:

"Ah, ha! Oh, ho! Here is some one whom I can bite and scratch! A nice tender rabbit chap! Ah, ha! Oh, ho!"

"Are—are you going to scratch and bite me?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"I am," said the bear, snappish like. "Get ready. Here I come!" and he started toward Uncle Wiggily, who was so frightened that he could not hop away.

"I'm going to hug you, too," said the bear. Bears always hug, you know.

"Well, this is, indeed, a sorry day for me," said Uncle Wiggily, sadly. "Still, if you are going to hug, bite and scratch me, I suppose it can't be helped."

"Not the least in the world can it be helped," said the bear, cross-like and unpleasant. "So don't try!"

"Well, if you are going to hug me I had better take this bottle out of my pocket, so when you squeeze me the glass won't break," Uncle Wiggily said. "Here, when you are through being so mean to me perhaps you will be good enough to take this to Nurse Jane for her indigestion, but don't hug her."

"I won't," promised the bear, taking the bottle which Uncle Wiggily handed him. "What's in it?"

Before Uncle Wiggily could answer, the bear opened the bottle, and, seeing something in it, cried:

"I guess I'll taste this. Maybe it's good to eat." Down his big, red throat he poured the strong peppermint juice, and then—well, I guess you know what happened.

"Oh, wow! Oh, me! Oh, my! Wow! Ouch! Ouchie! Itchie!" roared the bear. "My throat is on fire! I must have some water!" And, dropping the bottle, away he ran to the spring, leaving Uncle Wiggily safe, and not hurt a bit.

Then the rabbit gentleman hurried back and squeezed out more peppermint juice for Nurse Jane, whose indigestion was soon cured. And as for the bear, he had a sore throat for a week and a day.

So this teaches us that peppermint is good for scaring bears, as well as for putting in candy.

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