



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Pine Tree

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Uncle Wiggily Longears, the nice old gentleman rabbit, put on his tall silk hat, polished his glasses with the tip of his tail, to make them shiny so he could see better through them, and then, taking his red, white and blue striped rheumatism crutch down off the mantel, he started out of his hollow stump bungalow one day.

"Better take an umbrella, hadn't you?" asked Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper. "It looks as though we might have an April shower."

"An umbrella? Yes, I think I will take one," spoke the bunny uncle, as he saw some dark clouds in the sky. "They look as though they might have rain in them."

"Are you going anywhere in particular?" asked the muskrat lady, as she tied her tail in a soft knot.

"No, not special," Uncle Wiggily answered. "May I have the pleasure of doing something for you?" he asked with a polite bow, like a little girl speaking a piece in school on Friday afternoon.

"Well," said Nurse Jane, "I have baked some apple dumplings with oranges inside, and I thought perhaps you might like to take one to Grandfather Goosey Gander to cheer him up."

"The very thing!" cried Uncle Wiggily, jolly-like. "I'll do it, Nurse Jane."

So with an apple dumpling carefully wrapped up in a napkin and put in a basket, Uncle Wiggily started off through the woods and over the fields to Grandpa Goosey's house.

"I wonder if I shall have an adventure today?" thought the rabbit gentleman as he waved his ears to and fro like the pendulum of a clock. "I think I would like one to give me an appetite for supper. I must watch for something to happen."

He looked all around the woods, but all he could see were some trees.

"I can't have any adventures with them," said the bunny uncle, "though the horse chestnut tree did help me the other day by tossing the bad bear over into the briar bush. But these trees are not like that."

Still Uncle Wiggily was to have an adventure with one of the trees very soon. Just you wait, now, and you shall hear about it.

Uncle Wiggily walked on a little farther and he heard a funny tapping noise in the woods.

"Tap! Tap! Tap! Tappity-tap-tap!" it sounded.

"My! Some one is knocking on a door trying to get in," thought the bunny. "I wonder who it can be?"

Just then he saw a big bird perched on the side of a pine tree, tapping with his bill.

"Tap! Tap! Tap!" went the bird.

"Excuse me," said the bunny uncle, "but you are making a mistake. No one lives in that tree."

"Oh, thank you, Uncle Wiggily. I know that no one lives here," said the bird. "But you see I am a woodpecker, and I am pecking holes in the tree to get some of the sweet juice, or sap. The sap is running in the trees now, for it is Spring. Later on I will tap holes in the bark to get at bugs and worms, when there is no more sap for me to eat."

And the woodpecker went on tapping, tapping, tapping.

"My! That is a funny way to get something to eat," said the bunny gentleman to himself. He watched the bird until it flew away, and then Uncle Wiggily was about to hop on to Grandpa Goosey's house when, all of a sudden, before he could run away, out popped the bad old bear once more.

"Ah, ha! We meet again, I see," growled the bear. "I was not looking for you, Mr. Longears, but all the same I am glad to meet you, for I want to eat you."

"Well," said Uncle Wiggily, sort of scratching his pink, twinkling nose with his ear, surprised like. "I can't exactly say I'm glad to see you, good Mr. Bear."

"No, I s'pose not," agreed the fuzzy creature. "But you are mistaken. I am the Bad Mr. Bear, not the Good."

"Oh, excuse me," said Uncle Wiggily. All the while he knew the bear was bad, but he hoped by calling him good, to make him so.

"I'm very bad!" growled the bear, "and I'm going to take you off to my den with me. Come along!"

"Oh, I don't want to," said the bunny uncle, shivering his tail.

"But you must!" growled the bear. "Come on, now!"

"Oh, dear!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "Will you let me go if I give you what's in my basket?" he asked, and he held up the basket with the nice orange apple turnover in it. "Let me go if I give you this," begged the bunny uncle.

"Maybe I will, and maybe I won't," said the bear, cunning like. "Let me see what it is."

He took the basket from Uncle Wiggily, and looking in, said:

"Ah, ha! An apple turnover-dumpling with oranges in it! I just love them! Ah, ha!"

"Oh," thought Uncle Wiggily. "I hope he eats it, for then maybe I can get away when he doesn't notice me. I hope he eats it!"

And the bear, leaning his back against the pine tree in which the woodpecker had been boring holes, began to take bites out of the apple dumpling which Nurse Jane had baked for Grandpa Goosey.

"Now's my chance to get away!" thought the bunny gentleman. But when he tried to hop softly off, as the bear was eating the sweet stuff, the bad creature saw him and cried:

"Ah, ha! No you don't! Come hack here!" and with his claws he pulled Uncle Wiggily close to him again.

Then the bunny uncle noticed that some sweet, sticky juice or gum, like that on fly paper, was running down the trunk of the tree from the holes the woodpecker had drilled in it.

"Oh, if the bear only leans back hard enough and long enough against that sticky pine tree," thought Mr. Longears, "he'll be stuck fast by his furry hair and he can't get me. I hope he sticks!"

And that is just what happened. The bear enjoyed eating the apple dumpling so much that he leaned back harder and harder against the sticky tree. His fur stuck fast in the gum that ran out. Finally the bear ate the last crumb of the dumpling.

"And now I'll get you!" he cried to the bunny uncle; "I'll get you!"

But did the bear get Uncle Wiggily? He did not. The bear tried to jump toward the rabbit, but could not. He was stuck fast to the sticky pine tree and Uncle Wiggily could now run safely back to his hollow stump bungalow to get another dumpling for Grandpa Goosey.

So the bear had no rabbit, after all, and all he did was to stay stuck fast to the pine tree until a big fox came along and helped him to get loose, and the bear cried "Wouch!" because his fur was pulled.

So Uncle Wiggily was all right, you see, after all, and very thankful he was to the pine tree for holding fast to the bear.



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