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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Red Queen

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Once upon a time, when Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, was out walking in the woods, he stopped beside a little hole in the ground near a pile of oak tree leaves, and listening, when the wind stopped blowing, he heard a little voice saying:

"Oh, but where can she be? I fear she is lost! Little Crawlle is lost!"

"My! That's too bad," thought Uncle Wiggily. "Somebody's little girl is lost. I must ask if I cannot help find her." So he called:

"Oh, ho, there! May I have the pleasure of helping you in your trouble, whoever you are?"

"But who are you?" asked a voice that seemed to come out of the little hole in the ground.

"I am Uncle Wiggily Longears," answered the bunny. "You can easily see me, but I can't see you. And who is this Crawlle who is lost?"

"She is my little girl," was the answer, and up the hole in the ground came crawling a red ant lady, who was crying tear drops about as large as that part of a pin point which you can't see but can only feel.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily. "I couldn't imagine who would live in such a little house, but of course ants can. And now what about Crawlle?"

"She is my little girl," answered the red ant. "I sent her to the store about an hour ago to get a loaf of sand bread, but she hasn't come back and I'm sure something has happened to her."

"Let us hope not," spoke Uncle Wiggily, softly. "I'll go at once and look for her. Have no fear, Mrs. Ant. I'll find Crawlle for you. It is rather a queer name."

"Crawlle is called that because she crawls in such a funny way," said Mrs. Ant. "Oh, dear! I hope she is all right. If she should happen to have fallen down a crack in a peach stone she'd never get out."

"I'll find her," said Uncle Wiggily, bravely.

So off started the bunny uncle, hopping on his red, white and blue striped rheumatism crutch over the fields and through the woods, looking for Crawlle.

He had not gone very far before he heard a small voice calling:

"Help! Help! Oh, will no one help me?"

"Yes, of course, I will!" answered the bunny, and then he saw an acorn which seemed to be moving along the ground in a queer way.

"Ha! Can it be that this acorn is alive?" asked Uncle Wiggily. "And can that acorn want help?" he cried.

"No, it is I—Crawlie, the ant girl—under the acorn," was the answer, "and I want help, for I'm in such trouble."

"What kind?" asked Uncle Wiggily. "What's the trouble?"

"Why, I'm caught under this acorn here and I can't get out," was the answer, and Crawlie's voice sounded as though she had gone down cellar to get a crumb of apple and couldn't find her way back again. "I went under the acorn shell, which is empty," said the little ant girl, "and though it was nicely propped up on one side when I crawled in, it was blown over by the wind and I was held beneath it. Oh, dear! I can't get out and go to the store for the loaf of sand bread!"

"Oh, yes you can!" cried jolly Uncle Wiggily. "I'll lift the acorn shell off you and let you out."

So he did, easily picking up the empty oak tree acorn from where it was covering Crawlie, and then the little ant girl, who was red, just like her mother, could walk about.

"Oh, thank you, Uncle Wiggily," she said. "If ever we ants can do you a favor we will."

"Oh, do not mention it," spoke Uncle Wiggily, modest-like and shy. Then Crawlie hurried on to the sand bread store and the bunny hopped along over the fields and through the woods.

He had not gone very far before he met a poor old June bug gentleman, and the June bug seemed very sad and unhappy.

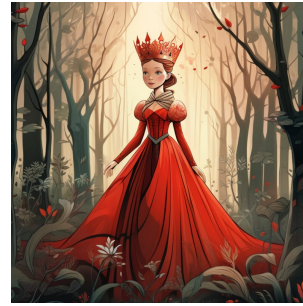
"What is the matter?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"Lots," was the answer. "You see it is now time, being July, for June bugs like myself to get in their winter wood so we will not freeze in the cold weather. But I hurt my legs, banging into an electric light one night, and I'm so lame and stiff that I can't gather any wood at all. I shall freeze, I know I shall!" and the June bug gentleman was more sad than ever.

"Oh, cheer up!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "There is plenty of wood under these trees. I'll help you gather it."

"There is no need to do that," said another voice, and, looking up, Uncle Wiggily and the June bug saw, sitting on a green mossy log, a Red Queen wearing a golden crown.

"Oh!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily in surprise. "You are—"



"I am the Red Queen from Alice in Wonderland," interrupted the lady on the log. "I was also the red ant lady who was crying and also Crawlle, the red ant girl. You were so kind to me when you thought I was only a crawling insect that now, when I have changed myself into a Red Queen, I want to help you. And I know I can best help you by helping this June bug friend of yours."

"Indeed, you can!" said Uncle Wiggily, thankful like.

"I thought so," spoke the Red Queen. "Watch!"

With that she waved her magic wand, and, instantly, ten million red, white and black ants came crawling out of old logs from holes in the ground and from under piles of leaves, and each ant took up a little stick of wood and carried it into the June bug's house for him, so he had plenty of wood for all winter, and couldn't freeze.

"There you are, Uncle Wiggily!" laughed the Red Queen. "One kindness, you see, makes another," and then she got in her golden chariot and drove away, and when the June bug gentleman had thanked him, and the ants had crawled home, the bunny himself went to his hollow stump bungalow very happy.

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