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Uncle Wiggily And The Tailors

Howard R. Garis

"Well, where are you going this morning, Uncle Wiggily?" asked Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady, of the rabbit gentleman, as he lifted his red, white and blue-striped rheumatism crutch down off the hat rack, and opened the front door.

"Oh, I'm just going out for a hop through the woods," replied the bunny uncle. "Mother Goose said that Grandfather Goosey Gander was coming to pay her a visit to-day, and, as I haven't seen him in some time, I thought I'd go over myself and have a little talk."

"Very well," went on Nurse Jane, "and on your way back I wish you would bring me a spool of thread."

"A spool of thread? Why, certainly," promised Uncle Wiggily, and off he hopped through the woods until he came to where Mother Goose lived. Her house was next door to the shoe, in which lived the Old Woman Who Had So Many Children She Didn't Know What To Do.

"Good morning, Mother Goose," said Uncle Wiggily, politely. "I hope I see you well. Has Grandpa Goosey Gander come yet?"

"Not yet. I am expecting him every minute. Sit down and make yourself at home," and Mother Goose dusted a chair.

Uncle Wiggily sat down, and he and Mother Goose were talking about the best way to give the most bread and jam to animal children, when along came Grandpa Goosey.

"I'm sorry I'm late," he said, all sort of flustered like, "but I lost a button off my coat. I stopped in a tailor's to have it sewed on, but, would you believe me? There isn't a tailor to be found in Woodland—not one in this whole forest!"

"Nonsense!" cried Mother Goose. "Why, there are four-and-twenty tailors here—just as many as there were blackbirds baked in the pie that was set before the king. No tailors to be found out of all those four-and-twenty? Nonsense! There must be!" and she swept cobwebs down out of the sky just for fun.

"Not a tailor!" said Grandpa Goosey. "I looked all over for one. Their shops were open, but the tailors were gone, and so I had to come without a button on my

coat.”

“Never mind,” said Mother Goose. “I’ll sew it on for you,” and she did.

“That reminds me,” said Uncle Wiggily, after they had talked a bit. “Speaking of tailors, I’m to bring Nurse Jane a spool of thread. I think I’ll be hopping along. If I can’t find any tailor in his shop, where I can buy the thread, I’ll have to go to the five and ten cent store.”

So he said good-bye to Mother Goose and Grandpa Gander, and away hopped the bunny uncle gentleman over the fields and through the woods.

“I wonder if I could find those four-and-twenty tailors?” thought Uncle Wiggily. “Four-and-twenty—that’s just two dozen—quite a number. I wonder why they all left their shops? I wonder——?”

And just then from behind some bushes he heard some voices saying:

“You go up and jab her!”

“No, you do it!”

“I’m afraid!”

“Well, so am I. Hi there, who has a yardstick? Let whoever has a yardstick go up and jab her!”

“And let some one tickle her with a needle.”

“You do it!”

“No, you. I’m afraid.”

“Well, so am I! Boo!”

“Goodness me gracious sakes alive and some hooks and eyes!” cried Uncle Wiggily. “What does all this mean? Who’s afraid?” He peeked through the bushes and there he saw, on the woodland path, a lot of men with needles, pins, spools of thread, tape measures, yardsticks, thimbles, scissors, linings, pockets, buttonholes and all things like that.

“Who are you?” asked Uncle Wiggily, in surprise.

“I’ll tell you who we are,” answered one of the twenty-four, (for there were just two dozen of them) as the rabbit gentleman could count. Then some one sang this song:

“We four-and-twenty tailors went to catch a snail,



The best man among us dared not touch her tail;

She put out her horns like a little Kylow cow,

So run, tailors! Run! Or she'll bite us all just now!"

And as the tailor said that he turned and ran through the woods as fast as ever he could run, all the other twenty-three running after him.

"Oh, my! Oh, me! Oh, dear! This is too funny!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "Four-and-twenty tailors afraid of a snail, even if she did put out her horns like a Kylow cow. I say, tailors! Come back! Come back!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "Mother Goose is worried about you. Come back!"

"We're afraid of the snail!" said one, who had sung the song.

"Nonsense!" laughed Uncle Wiggily. "She wouldn't hurt a lightning bug! Come here, I'll show you how to make her pull in her horns!"

Slowly and carefully the four-and-twenty tailors came back on their tippy-toes.

"What did you want to catch a snail for, anyhow?" asked the bunny uncle.

"Make her put in her horns so she won't look so much like a cow and scare us, and we'll tell you," said the singing tailor.

Uncle Wiggily laughed and suddenly cried:

"Snail, snail, pull in your horn,

Here's Jimmie, the duck boy,

Looking for corn!"

Then the snail quickly pulled in her horns and crawled away and she didn't hurt the tailors any, and they didn't tickle her with a needle, thimble or even a spool of hooks and eyes.

"We just wanted to see if we could catch a snail," said the singing tailor. "We didn't mean to hurt her, but it says in Mother Goose's book that four-and-twenty tailors went out to catch a snail, and, as we were not very busy this morning, we went out. But, oh! how fierce she did look with her horns! I'm not going snail-hunting any more."

"Nor I," cried the other twenty-three tailors in a chorus. Then they thanked Uncle Wiggily for having driven the snail away, as he did, by making believe Jimmie Wibblewobble, the duck boy, was coming after her (since ducks like snails very much). And the tailors each gave Uncle Wiggily a spool of thread, so Nurse Jane had all she wanted, and Grandpa Goosey's button was sewed on.

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