



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Wintergreen

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Uncle Wiggily Longears, the nice old gentleman rabbit, knocked on the door of the hollow tree in the woods where Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, the two little squirrel boys, lived.

"Come in!" invited Mrs. Bushytail. So Uncle Wiggily went in.

"I thought I'd come around and see you," he said to the squirrel lady. "I'm living in the woods this Summer and just now I am out taking a walk, as I do every day, and I hoped I might meet with an adventure. But, so far, I haven't. Do you know where I could find an adventure, Mrs. Bushytail?"

"No, I'm sorry to say I don't, Uncle Wiggily," answered the squirrel lady. "But I wish you could find something to make my little boy Billie feel better."

"Why, is he ill?" asked the bunny uncle, surprised like, and he looked across the room where Billy Bushytail was curled up in a big rocking chair, with his tail held over his head like an umbrella, though it was not raining.

"No, Billie isn't ill," said Mrs. Bushytail. "But he says he doesn't know what to do to have any fun, and I am afraid he is a little peevish."

"Oh, that isn't right," said Mr. Longears. "Little boys, whether they are squirrels, rabbits or real children, should try to be jolly and happy, and not peevish."

"How can a fellow be happy when there's no fun?" asked Billie, sort of cross-like. "My brother Johnnie got out of school early, and he and the other animal boys have gone off to play where I can't find them. I had to stay in, because I didn't know my nut-cracking lesson, and now I can't have any fun. Oh, dear! I don't care!"

Billie meant, I suppose, that he didn't care what he said or did, and that isn't right. But Uncle Wiggily only pinkled his twink nose. No, wait just a moment if you please. He just twinkled his pink nose behind the squirrel boy's back, and then the bunny uncle said:

"How would you like to come for a walk in the woods with me, Billie?"

"Oh, that will be nice!" exclaimed the squirrel lady. "Do go, Billie."

"No, I don't want to!" chattered the boy squirrel, most impolitely.

"Oh, that isn't at all nice," said Mrs. Bushy-tail. "At least thank Uncle Wiggily for asking you."

"Oh, excuse me, Uncle Wiggily," said Billie, sorrylike. "I do thank you. But I want very much to have some fun, and there's no fun in the woods. I know all about them. I know every tree and bush and stump. I want to go to a new place."

"Well, new places are nice," said the bunny uncle, "but old ones are nice, too, if you know where to look for the niceness. Now come along with me, and we'll see if we can't have some fun. It is lovely in the woods now."

"I won't have any fun there," said Billie, crossly. "The woods are no good. Nothing good to eat grows there."

"Oh, yes there does—lots!" laughed Uncle Wiggily. "Why the nuts you squirrels eat grow in the woods."

"Yes, but there are no nuts now," spoke the squirrel boy. "They only come in the Fall."

"Well, come, scamper along, anyhow," invited Uncle Wiggily. "Who knows what may happen? It may even be an adventure. Come along, Billie."

So, though he did not care much about it, Billie went. Uncle Wiggily showed the squirrel boy where the early spring flowers were coming up, and how the Jacks, in their pulpits, were getting ready to preach sermons to the trees and bushes.

"Hark! What's that?" asked Billie, suddenly, hearing a noise.

"What does it sound like?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"Like bells ringing."

"Oh, it's the bluebells—the bluebell flowers," answered the bunny uncle.

"Why do they ring?" asked the little boy squirrel.

"To call the little ants and lightning bugs to school," spoke Uncle Wiggily, and Billy smiled. He was beginning to see that there were more things in the woods than he had dreamed of, even if he had scampered here and there among the trees ever since he was a little squirrel chap.

On and on through the woods went the bunny uncle and Billie. They picked big, leafy ferns to fan themselves with, and then they drank with green leaf-cups from a spring of cool water.

But no sooner had Billie taken the cold water than he suddenly cried:

"Ouch! Oh, dear! Oh, my, how it hurts!"

"What is it?" asked Uncle Wiggily. "Did you bite your tongue or step on a thorn?"

"It's my tooth," chattered Billie. "The cold water made it ache again. I need to go to Mr. Stubtail, the bear dentist, who will pull it out with his long claws. But I've been putting it off, and putting it off, and now—Oh, dear, how it aches! Wow!"

"I'll cure it for you!" said Uncle Wiggily. "Just walk along through the woods with me and I'll soon stop your aching tooth."

"How can you?" asked Billie, holding his paw to his jaw to warm the aching tooth, for heat will often stop pain. "There isn't anything here in the woods to cure toothache; is there?"

"I think we shall find something," spoke the bunny uncle.



"Well, I wish we could find it soon!" cried Billie, "for my tooth hurts very much. Ouch!" and he hopped up and down, for the toothache was of the jumping kind.

"Ah, ha! Here we have it!" cried Uncle Wiggily, as he stooped over some shiny green leaves, growing close to the ground, and he pulled some of them up. "Just chew these leaves a little and let them rest inside your mouth near the aching tooth," said Mr. Longears. "I think they will help you, Billie."

So Billie chewed the green leaves. They smarted and burned a little, but when he put them near his tooth they made it nice and warm and soon the ache all stopped.

"What was that you gave me, Uncle Wiggily?" Billie asked.

"Wintergreen," answered Uncle Wiggily. "It grows in the woods, and is good for flavoring candy, as well as for stopping toothache."

"I am glad to know that," said Billie. "The woods are a nicer place than I thought, and there is ever so much more in them than I dreamed. Thank you, Uncle Wiggily."

So, as his toothache was all better, Billie had good fun in the woods with the bunny uncle, until it was time to go home.