



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And The Wise Man

Howard R. Garis

"Rat-a-tat-tat!" came a knock on the door of the hollow-stump bungalow, where Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, lived.

"I'll see who it is," he called to Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy and the muskrat lady housekeeper was glad of that, for her paws were in the dishwater up to her elbows, and you know how it is yourself; you don't like to answer the bell with your hands all soap bubbles, like a pipe.

So Uncle Wiggily went to the door, and, standing there, he saw Nannie Wagtail, the little goat girl. And there were tears in Nannie's eyes, and she was trying to wipe them away with the tips of her horns. But when she did this she only tickled herself and she had to laugh.

But she didn't want to laugh; she wanted to cry, for she was sad. And you know how it is yourself—you can't laugh and cry at the same time; can you?

"Why, Nannie! What is the matter?" asked Uncle Wiggily, kindly. "Come in and tell me all your troubles!"

"Oh, dear! Boo hoo! Hoo boo! I have lots of troubles!" said the little goat girl. "My best doll, Priscilla Spicecake Orangejuice, is gone."

"Gone!" cried Uncle Wiggily.

"Taken!" exclaimed Nannie. "I was out in front of our house a while ago playing dolls with Beckie Stubtail, the little girl bear. Beckie had her doll, Esmeralda Pancake Eggturner, with her, and we were having a lovely time.

"But I laid my doll down to go in the house to get some cookies, and when I came out my doll was gone, and Beckie was crying."

"Why, what happened?" asked Uncle Wiggily, surprised like.

"Beckie said a man came running along, grabbed up my doll, and before she could stop him he hurried off into the woods with my dear Priscilla Spicecake Orangejuice!"



"Oh, that's too bad!" said the bunny uncle. "Now don't you cry any more. You just tell me what sort of a man he was who took your doll and I'll go after him and make him give it back, even if I have to get the circus elephant to squirt water on him from the lemonade barrel. Tell me what sort of a man he was."

"He was a man who wore glasses," said Nannie.

"Say no more!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "I think I know exactly who he is! I'll go after him at once."

So the bunny uncle, telling Nurse Jane not to wait lunch for him, started off over the fields and through the woods to look for Nannie's doll. On the way he met Mother Goose, and he asked that old lady:

"Are any of your friends the kind of a man who wears glasses, and would take a little goat girl's doll?"

"Well, yes," said Mother Goose, slowly, "the Wise Man might. You see he spoiled his eyes, reading so much to make him wise, that he has to wear glasses. But he is really very kind. I think he only took Nannie's doll for a joke, or perhaps he wants to get her another just like it and took that along for a sample."

"Perhaps," said Uncle Wiggily. "But, anyhow, I'll find him and ask him about it."

So he walked and hopped on and on through the woods to where the Wise Man used to live, and pretty soon, from behind a big bush, the bunny uncle heard some one singing this song:

"There was a man in our town,

And he was wondrous wise.

He jumped into a berry bush,

And scratched out both his eyes.

But when he saw his eyes were out,

With all his might and main,

He jumped into another bush

And scratched them in again."

"Ha!" said Uncle Wiggily softly. "I thought so! The wise man! I have found him! Now to see if he has Nannie's doll!"

Uncle Wiggily peeked through the bush, which was a blackberry one, only there were no berries on it now. On the other side, sitting on the ground, was the Wise Man, wearing glasses, and he had Nannie's doll in his hands. He was talking to the doll, something like this:

"Now, little doll, don't be afraid. I won't hurt you. I'm just going to toss you into the berry bush, and scratch out both your eyes. But that won't hurt, for as soon as I see your eyes are out, with all my might and main, I'll toss you in another bush and scratch them in again. There you go!"

Before Uncle Wiggily could stop him, the Wise Man had tossed Nannie's doll, Priscilla Spicecake Orangejuice, into the berry bush. Then the man cried:

"Yes, your eyes are scratched out, all right, dollie! Now to scratch them in again!" And, before Uncle Wiggily could hop any closer to stop him, the Wise Man tossed again into the bush, the poor doll. And when she fell down the Wise Man carefully picked her up, and, looking at her, said:

"Alas! Alack a-day! Woe is me! The eyes aren't scratched in again at all! Oh, dear, what shall I do? I'll have to get the little goat girl another doll."

Uncle Wiggily jumped out from behind the berry bush.

"What do you mean?" asked the bunny uncle. "Why do you treat a poor doll so? Look, her hair has come off, and her eyes have fallen out! Oh, my!" and from the ground he picked up the doll's hair-wig and eyes, which were of glass, fastened together with wire.

"I'm sorry," said the Wise Man. "I'm very sorry this has happened. But I read about the Wise Man in the Mother Goose book, who jumped into a berry bush and got a new pair of eyes. I thought I could do the same as he, for I'm tired of glasses.

"But I thought I'd try it on a doll first, to see if it were true. So, not having any doll of my own I took Nannie's, meaning no harm. But see what I have done!" he said, sadly. "I have scratched out her eyes and her wig is off, and I can't put the eyes back again, nor yet the wig. It's a good thing I didn't jump into the scratchy bush myself. It is better to wear glasses than have no eyes at all."

"Yes, indeed," said Uncle Wiggily, and he felt sorry for the poor Wise Man. "But never mind," went on the bunny uncle. "I know a monkey-doodle gentleman, who mends broken dolls. I'll take Priscilla Spicecake Orangejuice to him, and he can fasten her eyes in again and glue on her wig."

"Will you? Then please do!" said the Wise Man. "I'll pay the monkey-doodle, and here is five cents extra for little Nannie. Tell her I'm sorry I borrowed her doll and I'll never do it again."

"All right," cheerfully said Uncle Wiggily, "and don't you try to scratch your eyes out, and in again."

"I won't," promised the Wise Man. "Glasses are good enough for me."

The monkey-doodle gentleman soon fixed Nannie's doll as good as ever, so the eyes opened and shut, and the little goat girl was happy once more, when Uncle Wiggily brought back Priscilla Spicecake Orangejuice. Thus, you see, everything came out all right, as I generally try to make it.

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