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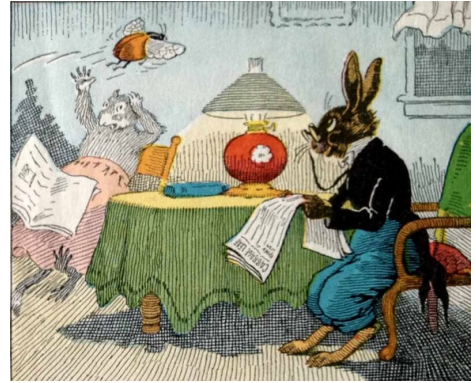
Uncle Wiggily's June Bug Friends

Howard R. Garis

One evening, after Uncle Wiggily, the nice bunny rabbit gentleman, had been out all day looking in the woods for adventures, he came home to his hollow stump bungalow. He and Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy sat down to read. It was a warm night, and the window was open. All of a sudden, there was a loud buzzing sound in the room. "What's that?" asked Uncle Wiggily, looking over his glasses. "Oh, it's a big June Bug!" cried Nurse Jane. "The largest I have ever seen! Oh, if it gets tangled in my hair, I'll never get it out!"

"Nonsense, Nurse Jane! A June Bug cannot harm you," said Uncle Wiggily. But the muskrat lady grew very excited. She stood up on a chair and flapped her paper at the Bug. Uncle Wiggily took his tall silk hat in one paw and the tea strainer in the other and said he would catch the buzzing creature and let him sleep in the pansy bed. "There's no harm in him," said the bunny, "and who knows when you may want a June Bug to do you a favor?" After a while, Uncle Wiggily caught the insect and gently put him to bed.

The next day, after Uncle Wiggily had been so kind to the June Bug, putting him in the pansy bed, the rabbit gentleman was out walking in the woods with Nannie and Billie Wagtail, the two goat children. "Tell us more about the funny June Bug, Uncle Wiggily," bleated Billie. "He was funny, but Nurse Jane was afraid of him," said Uncle Wiggily, laughing. "I caught him in the tea strainer and gave him some sugar. He said he would do me a favor someday, if he could. But wait a minute. That looks like danger ahead!"



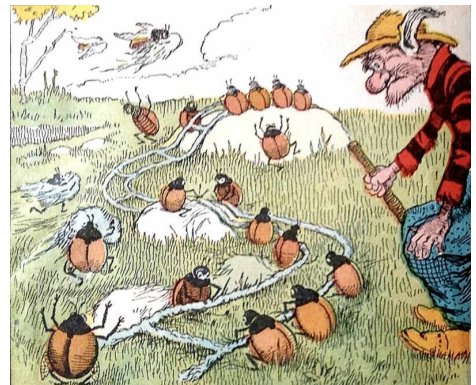
Uncle Wiggily, Nannie, and Billie Wagtail came to a stop just at the edge where some sticks were crisscrossed on the woodland path. The bunny thought it was a trap, and it was. All of a sudden, Uncle Wiggily, Billie, and Nannie fell into a deep pit which the bad Bazumpus had dug, hoping to catch the bunny. "Oh, dear!" bleated the little goat girl. "If ever we wanted help, it is now! Where is that June Bug, Uncle Wiggily?" Billie tried to scramble out by digging his horns into the side of the pit but could not. Oh, what trouble!



After Uncle Wiggily, Billie, and Nannie had tried to get out of the pit, only to find themselves slipping back all the while, they suddenly heard a buzzing sound above them, and there was the June Bug. "I want to thank you again, Uncle Wiggily, for being so kind to me last night," buzzed the Bug. "I saw you fall into this pit as I was flying away from your bungalow a little while ago. Now I am going to help you out." Billie Wagtail shook his horns. "I don't see how even a big June Bug can help us," he said. "Oh, dear!"



After the June Bug had looked down in the pit the Bazumpus had dug, the insect flew away, saying, "I'll soon be back with a lot of my sisters, brothers, cousins, uncles, and aunts, and we'll get you out of the pit, Uncle Wiggily." The bunny said that would be very kind. So the June Bug fluttered his wings and whistled on his hind legs, and hundreds of other bugs buzzed up to see what was the matter. "We must make a ladder of grass stems so Uncle Wiggily can get out of the pit," said the big June Bug.



Buzzing their wings and weaving with their legs, the kind June Bugs soon made a long, strong grass ladder. "Now," said the big June Bug, "we will carry it to the pit, lower it down, fasten the upper end to a tree, and Uncle Wiggily, Nannie, and Billie can climb out." The bad old Bazumpus, and his club, by which he hoped to knock some souse off Uncle Wiggily's ears, saw the bugs marching along with the grass ladder. "I wonder what they are going to do?" thought the bad chap. "I must watch and see."



Reaching the pit in which were Uncle Wiggily and the goat children, the June Bugs fastened the ladder so it would not slip and tossed the other end down in the hole. Then Nannie and Billie climbed up, and then it was Uncle Wiggily's turn. "See, Billie, I told you a June Bug could help us," said the bunny gentleman as he got to the top of the pit. "But who dug that hole?" asked Mr. Longears. "It was the Bazumpus!" buzzed the largest June Bug. "Yes, and there he is now!" cried Nannie, as she saw the bad creature. "Look!"



As soon as the rabbit was safely out of the pit, the biggest June Bug cried, "Now, my friends, since we have saved Uncle Wiggily and paid him back for the favor he did me, chase the Bazumpus!" And all the Bugs chased the bad chap, tickling him with long spears of grass so that he ran away as fast as he could go. Nannie and Billie danced for joy because their bunny uncle was saved, and Mr. Longears shook paws with the big June Bug and invited him to come to dinner that day. So everybody was happy but the Bazumpus.



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