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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And Jack-be-nimble

Howard R. Garis

“Uncle Wiggily! Uncle Wiggily!” called Sammie Littletail, the little rabbit boy, one Saturday morning, as he hopped up to the hollow-stump bungalow, where the nice, old bunny uncle lived. “Come on out and play, Uncle Wiggily. Please do!”

“Oh, hop away, Sammie!” called Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper, looking out of the kitchen window. “Here, take this cabbage jam tart and run away. Uncle Wiggily can’t bother to play with you to-day.”

“I haven’t any one else to play with,” said Sammie. “Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, the squirrels, are taking their nut-gnawing lesson, and Peetie and Jackie Bow Wow, the puppies, are taking their bone-gnawing lessons.”

“Haven’t you any lessons?” asked Nurse Jane.

“No. I’ve done mine. I had to practice jumping a little. But there’s no school, as it’s Saturday, and I do want some one to play with. My sister Susie has gone off with Lulu and Alice Wibblewobble, the ducks, and anyhow I don’t want to play with girl animals. Won’t Uncle Wiggily come out?”

“No, Sammie. Here, take this carrot cookie and hop along,” said Nurse Jane.

“Wait a minute,” spoke another voice, and Uncle Wiggily himself went out on the back stoop. “What is it you want, Sammie?”

“He wants you to come out and play with him!” cried Nurse Jane. “The idea!”

“Oh, I’ll come,” said Uncle Wiggily, kindly. “I haven’t much to do, and perhaps we may have an adventure together. Come on, Sammie, we’ll go off in the woods, and we’ll play.”

So the old gentleman rabbit and his little bunny nephew hopped off in the woods together, and soon were having a fine time, scurrying in among the dried leaves, and hiding behind old logs and stumps.

“I wonder if there is any new cabbage growing around here?” said Sammie, after a bit. “I’m hungry.”

“It is too soon for cabbage yet,” answered Uncle Wiggily. “It will not be Spring for several weeks. Nor are there any new carrots to be had. But pretty soon we’ll pass a lollypop store, and you may have a lettuce flavored one.”

“That will be nice—thank you,” said Sammie.

“Did you do your jumping lesson to-day?” asked the old gentleman rabbit, after a bit.

“Yes,” said Sammie. “I practiced half an hour.”

“Let me see how well you can jump,” spoke the bunny uncle. “I used to be a pretty good jumper when I was young.”

So Sammie jumped from one stump, far over a log, to another.

“Fine!” cried Uncle Wiggily. “That’s better than I can do, but I’ll try.”

He did try, and, though he could not leap as far as Sammie had done, Mr. Longears did very well. If it had not been for his rheumatism he could have done better.

He and Sammie jumped about for some time, and all at once they were surprised to hear a voice saying:

“Oh, dear! I wish I could jump as far as that. But I don’t believe I shall ever be able to. Oh, dear! Oh, dear!”

“Ha! That sounds like trouble,” said Uncle Wiggily. “Who are you and where are you?”

“I’m Jack, and I’m behind this big stone,” was the answer, and out stepped a boy.

“Ha! I thought at first it might be Jackie Bow Wow,” spoke Uncle Wiggily.

“No; I am another Jack,” said the boy. “I’m one of Mother Goose’s friends.”

“Are you Jack Sprat?” Sammie wanted to know, “who could eat no fat?”

But still the boy did not look like that Jack.

“I’ll tell you who I am,” the boy said. “I’m Jack-be-Nimble, Jack-be-Quick, Jack jump over the candlestick.”



“Oh, now I remember,” spoke Uncle Wiggily. “How do you do, Jack-be-Nimble?”

“But the trouble is I *can’t* do it,” went on Jack.

“Can’t do what?” asked Sammie Littletail.

“I can’t be nimble and jump over the candlestick,” was the answer. “I’ve tried and tried. But it seems of no use. Every time I jump I either hit the candle, and put it out, or I come down ker-flunk! in it, and get my shoes all grease. Mother

Goose says I ought to be ashamed of myself. If I can’t jump over the candlestick, I can’t be in her book, she says, and Oh, dear! I don’t want to be put out of the nice book.”

“That’s too bad,” said Uncle Wiggily. “Now, Jack, I’ll tell you what to do. You watch Sammie and me jump, and perhaps that will teach you how. Watch us. Come on, Sammie, we must jump some more to teach Jack.”

So the old rabbit gentleman and the little rabbit boy jumped about on the soft, dried leaves in the wood. Jack watched them, and then he tried. Of course, having only two legs, he could not leap as far as could the rabbits, with four. But still Jack did very well.

“Now, come here every day to the woods,” said Uncle Wiggily, “and we will give you a jumping lesson. Don’t say anything to Mother Goose about it, and you will soon give her a nice surprise by jumping over the candlestick easily some day. I once took dancing lessons from a waltzing mouse lady without saying anything to Nurse Jane about it, and my! how surprised she was when I did the fox trot.”

“I’ll come,” promised Jack-be-Nimble. And he did. Every day for a week, he took jumping lessons secretly in the woods, of Uncle Wiggily and Sammie, until finally Jack was a very good jumper, indeed. Then one day Old Mother Goose said:

“Well, Jack, I fear it is of no use. You can’t jump over the candlestick, as you ought to do to be in my book, so you’ll have to go out. I’ll get the cow, who leaped over the moon, to jump for me.”

“Oh, please give me one more chance!” begged Jack. “Please!”

Mother Goose kindly did so, and lo! and behold! when next he tried, Jack-be-Nimble jumped over the candlestick as easily as anything. Away over it he jumped and came down on the other side.

“Why, Jack! Where did you learn to jump so well?” asked Mother Goose, in great surprise.

“Uncle Wiggily and Sammie taught me,” he answered. And ever after that nimble Jack had no trouble.

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