Ririro
READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Uncle Wiggily And Old King Cole

Howard R. Garis

“Well, Uncle Wiggily Longears, you are getting very stylish, indeed, it seems,” spoke Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper, after the postman bird had paid a visit to the hollow-stump bungalow one day, and had left a letter. “Very stylish. Look here!”

“Why, what’s the matter?” asked the bunny uncle. “Do you call it stylish just to get a letter? You often get them, and so do I. This is, very likely, from Grandpa Goosey Gander, asking me to come over and play checkers with him.”

“Indeed, it is nothing of the sort!” exclaimed the muskrat lady. “That is, if you will excuse me for saying so. This is a very stylish letter, indeed. It comes from the king’s palace, as you can see, by the royal stamp on it in gold and red and blue and green. I wonder what it can be?”

“I’ll open it and find out; then I’ll tell you,” said Uncle Wiggily, politely. “I guess it’s from the gold and silver palace of the king, who was in the kitchen counting out his money, while the queen was in the parlor eating bread and honey. The maid was in the garden hanging out the clothes, when along came a blackbird and nipped off her nose.

“I helped the king and queen and the maid, you know, and perhaps they are in more trouble, and need more help.”

But when the bunny uncle opened the letter he found it was not from that king, but another—this letter was from Old King Cole.

“Read me the letter,” said Nurse Jane.

So Uncle Wiggily read:

“Old King Cole is a merry old soul,

A merry old soul is he.

He called for his pipe, he called for his bowl,

And he called for his fiddlers three.

“Every fiddler had a fine fiddle,

A very fine fiddle had he,

And Uncle Wiggily is asked to come

To list to the music with me.”

At the bottom of the letter was Old King Cole’s name, in big letters.

“Well, well!” exclaimed Uncle Wiggily. “I don’t understand. What’s it all about, I wonder?”

“Don’t you see!” cried Nurse Jane. “This is a royal invitation from Old King Cole for you to come to his palace, and listen to his fiddlers three making music on their fine fiddles. You must get ready to go. Put on your best suit and look nice.”

“Must I really go?” asked Uncle Wiggily. “I had much rather stay here with you. I don’t know Old King Cole at all well. Must I go?”

“Of course you must go!” Nurse Jane said. “Whenever a king invites you, why, you have to go, even if you must stand on your head. I’ll help you get ready.”

“Very well,” Uncle Wiggily said. “But I had much rather stay home with my slippers on, eating carrot sandwiches. I know it will be too fine and grand for me up at the king’s palace. I’ll be sure to get my napkin on backward, or tickle some one with the wrong fork. But if I must go, I must. I wonder how he came to invite me?”

“Oh, I guess he heard how kind you were to the king who was in the kitchen, counting out his money, and how you dug it up for him when it rolled under the floor,” said Nurse Jane.

So she helped Uncle Wiggily get ready, shaving the back of his neck for him, where he couldn’t himself reach with his razor. And she tied his tie for him, and saw that he was all scrumptious like, and proper.

Finally the rabbit gentleman set off for the palace of the king. He was about halfway there when he heard some little squeaking voices down beside the woodland path, and there he saw Jollie and Jillie Longtail, the mouse children, and their cousin, Squeaky-Eeky.

“Where are you going, Uncle Wiggily?” asked Jollie, the boy mouse.

“To Old King Cole’s to hear some fiddle music,” answered Uncle Wiggily.

“Oh, do please take us with you!” begged Jillie. “We just love fiddle music and we can’t ever go to hear any.”

“Why?” asked the bunny uncle.

“Because,” explained Squeaky-Eeky, the little cousin mouse. “You know what it says in Mother Goose.

“‘Hi-Diddle-Diddle. The cat’s in the fiddle.’ Now we couldn’t go to hear music when a cat was in the fiddle, could we?”

“Of course not,” answered Uncle Wiggily. “I never thought of that. Cats and mice don’t go well together. But how can I take you to King Cole? He may not like mice.”

“Put us in your pockets,” said Jillie. “We are not very big, and we can easily hide when you go in the palace. No one will see us in your pockets.”



Well, Uncle Wiggily put them in—Jollie, Jillie and Squeaky-Eeky Longtail. But the rabbit gentleman was afraid lest the king might not like it. However, let us see what happened, as they say in story books.

“Glad to see you, Uncle Wiggily!” cried Old King Cole, as the bunny uncle came in the grand palace. “Make yourself right at home!” and the king clapped his hands. Then some one sang:

“Old King Cole is a merry old soul,

A merry old soul is he.

He called for his pipe,

He called for his bowl,

And he called for his fiddlers three.”

In came the fiddlers, playing tweedle-dweele-dee, making nice music, until, all at once:

“Snap! Snap! Snap!” went something. “Snap!”

“My goodness me sakes alive and some orange lemonade!” cried Uncle Wiggily. “What was that?”

“Our fiddle strings have broken!” cried one of the fiddlers. “Now we can make no more music until we have new strings.”

“Oh, dear!” cried King Cole. “That’s too bad. I must have music from my fiddlers three, or from some one, or Mother Goose won’t like it. How can I get squeaky fiddle music for Uncle Wiggily? How can I?”

Just then Jollie Longtail popped his head out from Uncle Wiggily’s pocket.

“If you please, Old King Cole,” he said, “Jillie, Squeaky-Eeky and I, with our squeaky voices, will make music for you if you like.”

“I do like,” said the king. “Make some music, if you please!”

So the mice, who have very squeaky voices, sang nice music, almost like the fiddles, and Old King Cole was a more merry soul than ever.

“I’m glad you came, Uncle Wiggily,” he said. “And I’m glad you brought the nice Longtail mice children with you. Give them all some cheese!” And he laughed most jolly-jilly like.

So the mice sang for the king until the fiddlers’ fiddle strings were fixed, and every one had a good time and plenty to eat.

Stories help us explore cultures, learn moral lessons, connect with nature — or simply have fun. That's why ririro.com offers 3,000+ free stories — fairy tales, fables, bedtime stories, myths and more — for every age, in 13 languages, with free printable PDFs and often audio. Reading should be a right, not a privilege. Share ririro.com and spread the joy of reading.
Instagram: @ririro_reading · Pinterest: pinterest.com/ririrocom