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Uncle Wiggily And The Dormouse

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"Tap! Tap! Tap!" came a knock on the door of the hollow stump bungalow one morning. Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman who lived in the woods, called out:

"Please come in!"

In hopped Dickie Chip-Chip, the sparrow boy postchap, with a letter for the bunny gentleman.

"Ha! That's nice!" explained Uncle Wiggily as he took the envelope. "I hope it's a valentine!"

"A valentine this time of year!" laughed Dickie. "This is June, Uncle Wiggily!"

"Oh, so it is. However, I'll read it." And when Dickie flew on to deliver the rest of his letters Uncle Wiggily read his own. It was very short, and said:

"If you want a new hat, come to the green meadow as soon as you read this."

"Ha! If I want a new hat!" thought the bunny uncle. "Well, I do need one. But who knew that I did? This is very strange and mysterious. Ha! I have it! This must be from Alice in Wonderland. She is giving me a little surprise."

So, telling Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, his muskrat lady housekeeper, that he was going out to get a new hat, away hopped Uncle Wiggily, over the fields and through the woods until he came to the green meadow.

In the middle of the meadow was a little grove of trees, and half way there Uncle Wiggily heard a sad little voice saying:

"Oh, dear! What trouble I'm in!"

"Trouble!" cried the bunny gentleman twinkling his pink nose. "Ha! That sounds like old times! Let me help some one. But who is it?"

"It is I. The little Dormouse," was the answer, and, looking down, Uncle Wiggily saw the tiny creature who had been at the queer tea party when the Mad March Hare smashed the Hatter's 5 o'clock watch.

The tail of the poor little Dormouse was caught fast in between two stones and she could not move, but Uncle Wiggily quickly loosened it for her and she was very thankful to get out.



"I was afraid I'd be late," said the Dormouse. "I have to hurry on to help the Queen of Hearts put sugared cheese on the blackberry tarts for the King's birthday. I'll see you again, Uncle Wiggily."

"I hope so," spoke the bunny uncle, as he hurried away to get his new hat, all the while wondering whether or not he would see Alice from Wonderland.

Uncle Wiggily reached the green meadow trees, but no one else was there. He looked up and down, and all around, but there was not even an old hat in sight, to say nothing of a new one.

"I wonder if this letter is an April fool joke?" thought the bunny uncle, taking from his pocket the envelope Dickie had given him. "No, if it's the month of June it can't be April Fool's Day, any more than it can be time for valentines," said the bunny. "But I wonder where my hat is?"

Hardly had Uncle Wiggily said this, out loud, than, all of a sudden, a voice cried:

"Here's your hat!"

With that something seemed to drop down from the clouds, or maybe it was from one of the trees. But whatever it was it completely covered Uncle Wiggily out of sight. It was just as if you took a large bowl and turned it upside down over a grasshopper, only, of course, Uncle Wiggily was not a grasshopper, though he did jump around a lot.

And, at first, in the sudden darkness, the rabbit gentleman thought it was a bowl that, perhaps, the circus elephant's little boy had turned over on him just for fun.

Then, making his pink nose twinkle very fast, so that it shone in the dark like a firefly lantern, Uncle Wiggily was able to see that he was inside a large, tall, silk hat. When it had dropped over him it had shut out all the sunlight, making it quite dark inside where the bunny was.

"Yes, this is a hat!" said Uncle Wiggily to himself. "But what a funny way to give it to me! And it's so large! Instead of my new hat going outside my head, my head is inside the hat. This will never do! I must get out and see what the trouble is. This must be the elephant's hat, it's so large."

But when Uncle Wiggily tried to lift up one edge of the hat, to crawl out, he found

he could not. Some one seemed to be sitting on top of the hat, which was shaped like the silk stovepipe one Uncle Wiggily always wore. And a voice cried:

"Hold it tight and he can't get out!"

"Oh, I'm holding it tight!" was the answer.

Then Uncle Wiggily knew what had happened. Some one had played a sad trick on him. And it was two bad old skillery-scalery alligators. They had borrowed the Wonderland Hatter's hat—which was very large. Nor had they told the Hatter what they wanted of it, for if they had he never would have let them borrow it to make trouble for Uncle Wiggily.

The alligators had climbed up the tree with the big hat, and, after sending Uncle Wiggily the note, they had waited until he came to the field. Then from the branches above they dropped the hat down over him and sat on it.

"And I can't get out!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "That's the worst of it! I can't get out, and those bad alligators will reach under and grab me and—"

"No they won't!" cried a little squeaky voice down low on the ground, just outside the hat.

"Why not?" asked Uncle Wiggily, hopeful like.

"Because I am the Dormouse whom you helped," was the answer. "Now, listen! With my sharp teeth I am going to cut a door in the side of the hat where the alligators, sitting up on top, can't see it. Then you can get out."

So the Dormouse, being made for just such work, as you can tell by its name, gnawed a door in the side of the Hatter's hat, and out crawled the bunny rabbit gentleman before the alligators could grab him. And the bunny and the Dormouse got safely away, Mr. Longears being very thankful, indeed, for having been helped by the little creature.

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