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Uncle Wiggily And The Elephant

Howard R. Garis

"Matches, Uncle Wiggily! Matches!" cried Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy one morning, as the bunny rabbit gentleman was hopping down the forest path, away from his hollow stump bungalow.

"What's that? Patches?" exclaimed Mr. Longears. "Did I put on my garden trousers that have patches?" and he tried to twist his neck like a corkscrew, so he could look behind him.

"No, I didn't say '*patches*'!" laughed Nurse Jane. "I said *matches*. Don't forget to bring me some matches to light the fire, when you come back from looking for an adventure."

"Oh! Matches!" repeated the bunny. "I'll get some for you, Nurse Jane."

Over the fields and through the woods hopped the bunny rabbit gentleman. He looked here, there and everywhere for an adventure, but could not seem to find one. The Woozie Wolf nor the Fuzzy Fox did not chase him to nibble his ears. Not that Uncle Wiggily wanted them to, but, if they had, that would have been an adventure.

"Well, perhaps I shall find one when I come back," said the bunny gentleman as he hopped along to the seven and eight cent store, where he bought a box of matches.

Carrying these fire-sticks in his paw, Uncle Wiggily was hopping through the forest, on his way back to the hollow stump bungalow when, all at once, the bunny gentleman felt the ground trembling, and he heard a sound like a big horn being blown, and then a loud voice said:

"Oh, dear! I can't get it out!"

"Well, what can this be?" thought Uncle Wiggily. "That horn sounds like the big brass one I heard in the circus. From the way the earth shakes I'd say a big automobile truck was coming along. And as for someone who can't get something out—well, that sounds like trouble! I'd like to help, but first I must see who it is."

Uncle Wiggily looked through the bushes, and at first he thought he saw the side of some big house moving behind the trees. Then he noticed something like a

great leaf flapping in the wind, and a moment later something long, like a fire hose, was thrust forward.

"Why, it's an elephant!" exclaimed the bunny, as he caught sight of the big chap.

"An elephant is just who I am," was the answer in a rumbling voice, coming through the rubber hose of a trunk. "I'm from the circus, and I wish I might be back there this minute, eating my hay!"

"Oh, so you have run away from the circus also, like the lion and tiger?" questioned the bunny.

"Yes," answered the elephant, "I did. But what do you know of my friends, the lion and tiger?"

"Oh, I have met them," answered Mr. Longears. "But is that your only sorrow—wishing you were back in the circus?"

"Indeed it is not," the elephant answered. "I have stepped on a loose stone, and it is fast between the toes of my left hind foot. I can't get it loose by stamping on the ground, and I can't reach so far back with my trunk. I'm in great pain and trouble!"

"That is too bad," spoke Uncle Wiggily. "I guess your stamping on the ground is what I thought was an auto truck coming along."

"Perhaps," admitted the big circus elephant. "I wish I could get that stone out from between my toes," he went on, stamping so hard that he shook the very trees, making them rustle as though a wind had blown them.

"Maybe I can help you," said Uncle Wiggily most kindly. "I have with me my red, white and blue striped rheumatism crutch. With that I may be able to poke out the stone that hurts you."

"I wish you'd try," begged the elephant.

It did not take the bunny gentleman long to loosen the stone from between the elephant's toes, for the foot of an elephant is not like that of a horse or cow—he really has toes and toe-nails, just as you have, only a little larger, of course. Well, I should say so!

"Ah, I feel much better, Uncle Wiggily! Thank you!" spoke the elephant through his hollow rubber hose-like trunk, and it sounded like a trumpet or brass horn when he talked. "Now that the stone is out of my foot I shall go back to the circus."

"The path to the place where the circus is now showing leads past my bungalow," said the rabbit gentleman. "I'll hop along and point out for you the way. I'd like you to meet Nurse Jane."

"That will give me pleasure, also," remarked the elephant, who was very polite.

So he and Uncle Wiggily went along together, but several times the bunny had to say:

"Please don't go so fast, Mr. Elephant. I can't keep up with you."

"I beg your pardon," spoke the immense chap. "Suppose I lift you upon my back and carry you that way?"

"I should much like that," the rabbit uncle said. So in his trunk the elephant gently lifted up Uncle Wiggily, and set him down on the broad back.

"Ah, this is even better than my auto," laughed Uncle Wiggily, as the elephant crashed his way through the forest. Soon they came to the hollow stump bungalow.

"More company for you, Nurse Jane!" called Uncle Wiggily, with a laugh.

"Eh? What's that? Where are you? I don't see anybody but a big elephant?" cried the muskrat lady, looking up.

"I'm on his back!" answered the bunny. And as the elephant lifted Mr. Longears down in the trunk, Nurse Jane was so surprised that she hardly knew what to say.

"Will you—er—have a cup—I mean a *washtub* of tea?" the muskrat lady asked, well knowing that so big a creature must drink a lot of everything.

"Some water is all I need, thank you," answered the elephant. "I had something to eat in the forest before I met Uncle Wiggily."

Then the big chap put his trunk down in the brook and sucked up a great quantity of water. Uncle Wiggily put the box of matches down on the bench at the side of the bungalow, where the sun shone bright and hot, and watched the elephant drink.

"Well, now I'll travel along and go back to the circus," said the big chap with the large trunk and little tail. "I'll tell the lion and tiger I met you."

"Please do." begged the bunny, and then, all of a sudden Nurse Jane cried:

"Fire! Fire! Fire! Oh, the sun has set off the box of matches, and the bungalow is burning! Fire! Fire! Fire!"

Surely enough, this had happened. The box of matches, fizzing and spluttering, was burning Uncle Wiggily's bungalow.

"Turn in an alarm; Get the firemen! Call out the water bugs!" cried the bunny gentleman.

"Just a moment! Don't get excited!" spoke the elephant calmly. "I will put out that fire in a second!"

He sucked up more water from the brook in his trunk and squirted it on the blaze. The fire hissed and spluttered and died out in a puff of smoke.



"Oh, you have saved my bungalow!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "Thank you ever so much! Only for you I'd be burned out of house and home!"

"Pooh! That wasn't any more than you did for me—taking the stone out of my foot," said the elephant. "With my rubber hose-nose of a trunk, I very often put out little fires."

"Oh, I'm so glad Uncle Wiggily met you!" sighed Nurse Jane. "If he hadn't, our bungalow would have burned down, perhaps, Mr. Elephant!"

"Well, one good turn deserves another," laughed the elephant as he tramped away through the forest to find the circus, and the bunny gentleman and Nurse Jane waved "Good-bye" to the big chap.

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