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Uncle Wiggily And The Hazel Nuts

Howard R. Garis

"Going out again, Uncle Wiggily?" asked Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, one morning, as she saw the rabbit gentleman taking his red, white and blue-striped rheumatism crutch down off the clock shelf.

"Well, yes, Janie, I did think of going out for a little stroll in the forest," answered the bunny uncle, talking like a phonograph. What he meant was that he was going for a walk in the woods, but he thought he'd be polite about it, and stylish, just for once.

"Don't forget your umbrella," went on Nurse Jane. "It looks to me very much as though there would be a storm."

"I think you're right," Uncle Wiggily said. "Our April showers are not yet over. I shall take my umbrella."

So, with his umbrella, and the rheumatism crutch which Nurse Jane had gnawed for him out of a cornstalk, off started the bunny uncle, hopping along over the fields and through the woods.

Pretty soon Uncle Wiggily met Johnnie Bushytail, the squirrel boy.

"Where are you going, Johnnie?" asked the rabbit gentleman. "Are you here in the woods, looking for an adventure? That's what I'm doing."

"No, Uncle Wiggily," answered the squirrel boy. "I'm not looking for an adventure. I'm looking for hazel nuts."

"Hazel nuts?" cried the bunny uncle in surprise.

"Yes," went on Johnnie. "You know they're something like chestnuts, only without the prickly burrs, and they're very good to eat. They grow on bushes, instead of trees. I'm looking for some to eat. They are nice, brown, shiny nuts."

"Good!" cried the rabbit gentleman. "We'll go together looking for hazel nuts, and perhaps we may also find an adventure. I'll take the adventure and you can take the hazel nuts."

"All right!" laughed Johnnie, and off they started.

On and over the fields and through the woods went the bunny uncle and Johnnie, until, just as they were close to the place where some extra early new kind of

Spring hazel nuts grew on bushes, there was a noise behind a big black stump—and suddenly out pounced a bear!

"Oh, hello, Neddie Stubtail!" called Johnnie. And he was just going up and shake paws when Uncle Wiggily cried:

"Look out, Johnnie! Wait a minute! That isn't your friend Neddie!"

"Isn't it?" asked Johnnie, surprised-like, and he drew back.

"No, it's a bad old bear—not our nice Neddie, at all! And I think he is going to chase us! Get ready to run!"

So Johnnie Bushytail and Uncle Wiggily got ready to run. And it was a good thing they did, for just then the bear gave a growl, like a lollypop when it falls off the stick, and the bear said:



"Ah, ha! And oh, ho! A rabbit and a squirrel! Fine for me! Tag—your it!" he cried, and he made a jump for Uncle Wiggily and Johnnie.

But do you s'pose the bunny uncle and the squirrel boy stayed there to be caught? Indeed, they did not!

"Over this way! Quick!" cried Johnnie. "Here is a hazel nut bush, Uncle Wiggily. We can hide under that and the bear can't get us!"

"Good!" said the bunny uncle. And he and Johnnie quickly ran and hid under the hazel nut bush, which was nearby.

The bear looked all around as he heard Uncle Wiggily and Johnnie running away, and when he saw where they had gone he laughed until his whiskers twinkled, almost like the rabbit gentleman's pink nose, and then the bear said:

"Ha, ha! and Ho, ho! So you thought you could get away from me that way, did you? Well, you can't. I can see you hiding under that bush almost as plainly as I can see the sun shining. Here I come after you."

"Oh, dear!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "What shall we do, Johnnie? I don't want the bear to get you or me."

"And I don't either," spoke the little squirrel boy.

"I wonder if I could scare him away with my umbrella, Johnnie?" went on Uncle Wiggily. "I might if I could make believe it was a gun. Have you any talcum powder to shoot?"

"No," said Johnnie, sadly, "I have not, I am sorry to say."

"Have you any bullets?" asked the bunny uncle.

"No bullets, either," answered Johnnie, more sadly.

"Then I don't see anything for us to do but let the bear get us," sorrowfully said Mr. Longears. "Here he comes, Johnnie."

"But he sha'n't get us!" quickly cried the squirrel boy, as the bear made a jump for the bush under which the bunny and Johnnie were hiding. "He sha'n't get us!"

"Why not?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"Because," said Johnnie, "I have just thought of something. You asked me for bullets a while ago. I have none, but the hazel nut bush has. Come, good Mr. Hazel Bush, will you save us from the bear?" asked Johnnie.

"Right gladly will I do that," the kind bush said.

"Then, when he comes for us!" cried Johnnie, "just rattle down, all over on him, all the hard nuts you can let fall. They will hit him on his ears, and on his soft and tender nose, and that will make him run away and leave us alone."

"Good!" whispered the hazel nut bush, rustling its leaves. "But what about you and Uncle Wiggily? If I rattle the nuts on the bear they will also fall on you two, as long as you are hiding under me."

"Have no fear of that!" said the bunny uncle. "I have my umbrella, and I will raise that and keep off the falling nuts."

Then the bear, with a growl, made a dash to get Uncle Wiggily and Johnnie. But the hazel bush shivered and shook himself and "Rattle-te-bang! Bung-bung! Bang!" down came the hazel nuts all over the bear.

"Oh, wow!" he cried, as they hit him on his soft and tender nose. "Oh, wow! I guess I'd better run away. It's hailing!"

And he did run. And because of Uncle Wiggily's umbrella held over his head, the nuts did not hurt him or Johnnie at all. And when the bear had run far away the squirrel boy gathered all the nuts he wanted, and he and Uncle Wiggily went safely home. And the bear's nose was sore for a week.

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