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Uncle Wiggily And The Lion

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Once upon a time, as Uncle Wiggily was hopping through the woods, he heard a roaring sound, coming, it seemed, from a distant clump of trees.

"Oh, ho!" exclaimed the bunny rabbit gentleman. "That's thunder! I suppose we are going to have a storm. I didn't bring my umbrella, but I can find a large toadstool, or mushroom. That will do as well."

The animal folk often use toadstools for umbrellas, you know, and Uncle Wiggily had done this more than once. The bunny hopped on a little farther, and the roaring, rumbling sound boomed out again.

"The thunder is coming nearer," thought Mr. Longears. "I had better hurry if I am going to pick a toadstool umbrella!"

He limped on his red, white and blue striped rheumatism crutch over toward a large mushroom (which, of course, isn't the same as a toadstool, though they look alike), and Uncle Wiggily was just breaking off the stem, so he would not get wet in the thunder shower, when, all of a sudden, a loud voice asked:

"Can you please tell me where the circus went to?"

Uncle Wiggily turned so quickly that he nearly lost the twinkle from the end of his pink nose. For the voice that spoke was almost as loud as thunder.

"Was that you making the noise like a storm?" asked the bunny as he saw a large yellow creature, with a great head, surrounded by a fluffy mane, and a tail on the end of which was a bunch of hair.

"It was," answered the big animal. "I'll try to speak more gently if it hurts your ears. But, naturally, I have a loud voice, being a lion, you know."

"Yes, I knew you were a lion. I remember seeing you in the circus," spoke the bunny gentleman, who was not at all afraid. "But tell me, why aren't you with the show now?"

"Because I ran away," the lion answered. "I got tired of being shut up in my cage all the while, and, when the man left the iron door open I slipped out. I've been hiding in the woods ever since; but it is not as much fun as I thought it would be. Now I wish I could go back to the circus. Can you please tell me where it is?"

"I am sorry to say I cannot," Uncle Wiggily answered. "But if you will come with me to my hollow stump bungalow—not that you can get inside, for you are too large—why, perhaps Nurse Jane may know where your circus is. She knows nearly everything."

"Who is Nurse Jane?" asked the lion.



"She is Miss Fuzzy Wuzzy, my muskrat lady housekeeper," replied the bunny gentleman.

"A rat, is she?" went on the lion. "I don't know much about rats, but once a mouse gnawed the ropes, when I was caught in a net, and set me free—that was before I joined the circus."

"Well, a muskrat is something like a big mouse," said Uncle Wiggily, "so I think you will like Nurse Jane."

"I'm sure I shall," the lion rumbled, trying to make his voice soft and gentle.

"Well, then," went on Uncle Wiggily, "please come along with me, and I'll try to find the circus for you. Nurse Jane may know where it moved to, or some of the animal boys and girls may tell us."

So Uncle Wiggily hopped through the woods, the lion stalking along beside him, and soon they reached the hollow stump bungalow of the bunny gentleman.

"Nurse Jane! Nurse Jane!" called Mr. Longears. "I have brought home a friend with me!"

"Not to dinner, I hope, Wiggy," remarked Miss Fuzzy Wuzzy, from inside the bungalow. "I have a dreadful headache! I haven't been able to wash the breakfast dishes yet, and as for making the beds, and dusting the furniture—it is out of the question! So if you want dinner——"

"Please tell her not to bother," whispered the lion. "I am not hungry and——"

"Is that thunder?" asked the muskrat lady, thrusting her head, tied up in a wet towel, from her bedroom window.

And when the muskrat lady saw the big lion she screamed.

"Do not be frightened, my dear Miss Fuzzy Wuzzy," the lion said. "I just came with Uncle Wiggily to inquire where I might find the circus, from which I foolishly ran away. But I'll toddle on, and not bother you, since you are ill."

"Oh, it isn't really any bother," spoke the muskrat lady. "I could get you a cup of tea. It was only your loud voice that startled me."

"I'm sorry," rumbled the lion, as gently as he could. "I'm afraid my voice is rather louder than the purr of a cat. But I can't help it."

"Oh, of course not!" agreed Nurse Jane. "I wish I could ask you in, but our bungalow was not made for lions."

"I'll come in and get him something he can eat outside," offered Uncle Wiggily. "By that time some of the animal boys or girls, who know where the circus went, may come along, since you don't know, Nurse Jane."

"No, I am sorry to say I don't know," spoke the muskrat lady, as she went back to bed with her headache.

Uncle Wiggily took some carrot soup and some lettuce tea out to the lion, but though the tawny creature said he was not hungry, he ate nearly all there was in the bungalow, for his appetite was much larger than that of the muskrat lady or Mr. Longears.

"And now I would like to do you and Nurse Jane a favor," went on the circus chap, licking the soup off his whiskers with his red tongue. "Couldn't I help wash the dishes or make the beds?"

"I'm afraid not!" laughed Uncle Wiggily, thinking how funny it would look to see a lion making a rabbit's bed.

"Yes, I suppose I am too large to get in the bungalow," went on the roaring chap, in as gentle a voice as he could make come from his throat. "But I know one way in which I can help!"

"How?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"With my tail," said the lion. "That isn't too large to put through one of your windows. And on the end of my tail is a tuft of fluffy hair, just like a dusting brush. Please let me stick my tail in through the different windows. Then I can switch it around, and dust the furniture for Nurse Jane."

"Do you think you can?" asked the bunny, doubtful like.

"Of course!" said the lion. "True, I never before have dusted furniture in a bunny's hollow stump bungalow, but that is no reason for not trying. Please give me a chance!"

So Uncle Wiggily opened all the windows. The lion backed up, and thrust his tail first in one and then in another. When his tail was in the parlor he switched it around—I mean he switched his tail around—and the fluffy tuft of hair on the end knocked all the dust off the chairs, table and piano. Soon the parlor was as nicely dusted as Nurse Jane could have done it herself.

In this way, with his tail, the lion dusted all the rooms in the bungalow, even the

one where Nurse Jane was lying down with a headache. And when the muskrat lady saw the lion's fluffy tail switching around on her chairs in such a funny way, she laughed, and then, in a little while, her headache was all better.

"You certainly are a good houseworker," said the muskrat lady as she got up and drank a cup of tea. "And you have done me a great favor."

"Do not mention it," spoke the lion politely as he flapped his tail in the air to rid it of dust. "It was a pleasure!"

Then along came Jacko Kinkytail, the monkey boy, and he said the circus had moved on to a town about ten miles away.

"Thank you! I'll travel there and get back in my cage," rumbled the lion. Then, with a polite bow to Nurse Jane and Mr. Longears, the tawny, yellow chap with the big voice walked away through the forest. And every time the muskrat lady thought of the lion thrusting his tail in through the window to dust the furniture she had to laugh.

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