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Uncle Wiggily And The Pulpit-jack

Howard R. Garis

"Well, how are you feeling today, Uncle Wiggily?" asked Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper, as she saw the rabbit gentleman taking his tall silk hat down off the china closet, getting ready to go for a walk in the woods one morning.

"Why, I'm feeling pretty fine, Nurse Jane," answered the bunny uncle. "Since I ran home to get away from the fox, after he turned a peppersault from pulling too strong to get up the sassafras root, I feel much better, thank you."

"Good!" cried Nurse Jane. "Then perhaps you would not mind going to the store for me."

"Certainly not," spoke Uncle Wiggily. "What do you wish?"

"A loaf of bread," replied Miss Fuzzy Wuzzy, "also a box of matches and some sugar and crackers. But don't forget the matches whatever you do."

"I won't," promised the bunny uncle, and soon he was hopping along through the woods wondering what sort of an adventure he would have this day.

As he was going along keeping a sharp look-out for the bad fox, or the skillery-scalery alligator with the double jointed tail. Uncle Wiggily heard a voice saying:

"Oh, dear! I'll never be able to get out from under the stone and grow tall as I ought. I've pushed and pushed on it, but I can't raise it. Oh, dear; what a heavy stone!"

"Ha! Some one under a stone!" said Uncle Wiggily to himself. "That certainly is bad trouble. I wonder if I cannot help?"

The bunny uncle looked all around and down on the ground he saw a flat stone. Underneath it something green and brown was peeping out.

"Was that you who called?" asked Mr. Longears.

"It was," came the answer. "I am a Jack-in-the-Pulpit plant, you see, and I started to grow up, as all plants and flowers do when summer comes. But when I had raised my head out of the earth I found a big stone over me, and now I can grow no more. I've pushed and pushed until my back aches, and I can't lift the stone."

"I'll do it for you," said Uncle Wiggily kindly, and he did, taking it off the Pulpit-

Jack.

Then the Jack began growing up, and he had been held down so long that he grew quite quickly, so that even while Uncle Wiggily was watching, the Jack and his pulpit were almost regular size.

A Jack-in-the-Pulpit, you know, is a queer flower that grows in our woods. Sometimes it is called an Indian turnip, but don't eat it, for it is very biting. The Jack is a tall green chap, who stands in the middle of his pulpit, which is like a little pitcher, with a curved top to it. A pulpit, you know, is where some one preaches on Sunday.

"Thank you very much for lifting the stone off me so I could grow," said the Jack to Uncle Wiggily. "If ever I can do you a favor I will."

"Oh, don't mention it," replied the rabbit gentleman, with a low bow. "It was a mere pleasure, I assure you."

Then the rabbit gentleman hopped on to the store, to get the matches, the crackers, the bread and other things for Nurse Jane.

"And I must be sure not to forget the matches," Uncle Wiggily said to himself. "If I did Nurse Jane could not make a fire to cook supper."



There was an April shower while Uncle Wiggily was in the store, and he waited for the rain to stop falling before he started back to his hollow stump bungalow. Then the sun came out very hot and strong and shone down through the wet leaves of the trees in the woods.

Along hopped the bunny uncle, and he was wondering what he would have for supper that night.

"I hope it's something good," he said, "to make up for not having an adventure."

"Don't you call that an adventure—lifting the stone off the Jack-in-the-Pulpit so he could grow?" asked a bird, sitting up in a tree.

"Well, that was a little adventure." said Uncle Wiggily. "But I want one more exciting; a big one."

And he is going to have one in about a minute. Just you wait and you'll hear all about it.

The sun was shining hotter and hotter, and Uncle Wiggily was thinking that it was about time to get out his extra-thin fur coat when, all of a sudden, he felt

something very hot behind him.

"Why, that sun is really burning!" cried the bunny. Then he heard a little ant boy, who was crawling on the ground, cry out:

"Fire! Fire! Fire! Uncle Wiggily's bundle of groceries is on fire! Fire! Fire!"

"Oh, my!" cried the bunny uncle, as he felt hotter and hotter, "The sun must have set fire to the box of matches. Oh, what shall I do?" He dropped his bundle of groceries, and looking around at them he saw, surely enough, the matches were on fire. They were all blazing.

"Call the fire department! Get out the water bugs!" cried the little ant boy. "Fire! Water! Water! Fire!"

"That's what I want—water," cried the bunny uncle. "Oh, if I could find a spring of water. I could put the blazing matches, save some of them, perhaps, and surely save the bread and crackers. Oh, for some water!"

Uncle Wiggily and the ant boy ran here and there in the woods looking for a spring of water. But they could find none, and the bread and crackers were just beginning to burn when a voice cried:

"Here is water, Uncle Wiggily!"

"Where? Where?" asked the rabbit gentleman, all excited like. "Where?"

"Inside my pulpit," was the answer, and Uncle Wiggily saw, not far away, the Jack-plant he had helped from under the stone.

"When it rained a while ago, my pitcher-pulpit became filled with water," went on Jack. "If you will just tip me over, sideways, I'll splash the water on the blazing matches and put them out."

"I'll do it!" cried Uncle Wiggily, and he quickly did. The pulpit held water as good as a milk pitcher could, and when the water splashed on the fire that fire gave one hiss, like a goose, and went out.

"Oh, you certainly did me a favor, Mr. Pulpit-Jack," said Uncle Wiggily. "Though the matches are burned, the bread and crackers are saved, and I can get more matches." Which he did, so Nurse Jane could make a fire in the stove.

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