



WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN, A TALE FROM THE UNITED STATES

Adapted and Retold by Dianne de Las Casas

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Wiley's grandpappy was not a nice man. When he disappeared, everyone said that the Hairy Man got him. Wiley's grandmammy would warn him, "the Hairy Man got your grandpappy and if you don't watch out, he'll get you too! You better beware and take your hound dogs with you because the Hairy Man is scared of hound dogs." Wiley's grandmammy was from the swamps and she was real smart and she even knew magic.

"Yes, ma'am," Wiley answered. So whenever Wiley went out, he took his hound dogs with him. One day, Wiley took his axe to and his hound dogs to the swa

mp to cut some poles for a hen roost. When they got to the swamps, the hounds spotted a young pig, and went chasing off after it, yelping and howling till Wiley couldn't hear them any more. As Wiley was cutting down some poles he said to himself, "I hope that Hairy Man doesn't come now 'cause I don't have my hound dogs with me."

Sure enough, Wiley heard a strange sound. "Booga, wooga, wooga, shim bim bam, I am the Hairy Man, yes I am!"

The Hairy Man appeared in front of Wiley and Wiley's eyes grew big as saucers. The Hairy Man was well, brown and hairy all over. He had big red eyes and big yellow teeth. Worst of all, he drooled and spit when he spoke. And he was carrying a big, burlap sack.

"Ooh, Hairy Man! You sure are ugly! My grandmammy is from the swamps and she's real smart and she evens knows magic and she told me to stay away from you!"

The Hairy Man looked at Wiley and grinned with his big yellow teeth showing. He drooled and spit when he spoke. "Wiley, I got your grandpappy and now I'm going to get you! Just like that, jump into my sack!"

Wiley looked at the Hairy Man and he looked at the Hairy Man's sack. Then he stuck his tongue way out, like this, blew a big raspberry, and climbed up a Cypress tree as fast as he could.

The Hairy Man said, "Booga, wooga, wooga, shim bim bam, I am the Hairy Man, yes I am! Wiley, I got your grandpappy and now I'm going to get you!" The Hairy Man picked up Wiley's axe and began chop, chop, chopping away at the Cypress tree. The Hairy Man was quick and Wiley was running out of time. The axe was nearly all the way through the tree! Poor Wiley!

Just then, Wiley could hear his hound dogs in the distance. He yelled real loud, “Heeeeyaaaa dogs!” And quicker than the Hairy Man could blink his big red eyes, those hound dogs came running and yelping and howling. The Hairy Man looked at Wiley and said as he ran away, “I got your grandpappy and I’m going to get you!”

As soon as the Hairy Man left, Wiley climbed down the tree and hastened his way to grandmammy’s house with his hounds trailing close behind him. Wiley told his grandmammy about his narrow escape from the Hairy Man.

Grandmammy said, “Wiley, tomorrow you are going to tie up your hound dogs and face the Hairy Man. Just do as I say, do you hear me?”

Wiley exclaimed, “I’m not facing the Hairy Man by myself! He told me that he got my grandpappy and now he’s going to get me. ‘Just like that, jump into my sack,’ he says! No, I’m not facing the Hairy Man!”

But Wiley’s grandmammy was from the swamps and she was real smart and she knew magic. She said to Wiley, “When you meet up with the Hairy Man tomorrow, all you have to do is tell him he doesn’t know magic. Then he’ll say that he does. Bet him that he can’t change into a giraffe, and then into an alligator, and then into a possum. The Hairy Man likes to show off his magic and he’ll change into all of those things. When he changes into the possum, grab his burlap sack and stuff him into it and throw him into the swamp water.”

Wiley didn’t want to face the Hairy Man the next day but he knew that his grandmammy was always full of good advice. So the next day, he went into the swamps. Sure enough he heard that strange sound, “Booga, wooga, wooga, shim bim bam, I am the Hairy Man, yes I am!”

Wiley stood face to face with the Hairy Man, staring at his big red eyes and looking at his large yellow teeth. Wiley said, “I bet you don’t know magic.”

The Hairy Man looked at Wiley and said, “Booga, wooga, wooga, shim bim bam, I am the Hairy Man, yes I am! And the Hairy Man knows plenty of magic!”

“Then show me!” said Wiley. “I bet you can’t change into a tall giraffe!”

Quicker than Wiley could blink his eyes, the Hairy Man changed into a tall giraffe, taller than the Cypress trees in the swamp. Wiley said, “Well, I bet you can’t change into an alligator!”

Quicker than Wiley could blink his eyes, the Hairy Man changed into a big alligator with a long, thrashing tail. Then Wiley said, “Well, I bet you can’t change into a possum!”

Quicker than Wiley could blink his eyes, the Hairy Man changed into a small possum with a hairless tail. Wiley grabbed the Hairy Man's burlap sack and said, "Just like that, jump into this sack!" And he threw the Hairy Man possum inside the sack, tied it up, and threw the sack into the swamp water.

But the Hairy Man knew magic and he changed himself into the wind and blew himself right out of the burlap sack. He stood in front of Wiley and said, "Booga, wooga, wooga, shim bim bam, I am the Hairy Man, yes I am! Wiley, I got your grandpappy and now I'm going to get you!"

The Hairy Man picked Wiley up and threw him into the burlap sack, tied it up with rope and said, "Just like that, jump into my sack."

But Wiley was like his grandmammy. He was smart too and had his wits about him. "Hairy Man," Wiley yelled through the bag, "I bet you can't make all the rope in the parish disappear."

Hairy Man stopped and set the bag down. "Oh yeah? Booga, wooga, wooga, shim bim bam, I am the Hairy Man, yes I am! I can do any kind of magic! Now all of the rope in the parish has disappeared."

Wiley climbed out of the burlap sack and yelled, "Heeeeyaaaa dogs!" And quicker than the Hairy Man could blink his big red eyes, those hound dogs, who weren't tied up any more because of the Hairy Man's magic, came running and yelping and howling. The Hairy Man looked at Wiley and said as he ran away, "I got your grandpappy and I'm going to get you!"

Wiley hurried home with his hound dogs trailing behind him. When he got home, he told the whole story to his grandmammy. Grandmammy said, "Well, Wiley, you fooled that Hairy Man two times. Fool him one more time and he'll never bother you again. Hairy Man's going to come back for you tomorrow but I am from the swamps and I'm smart and I know magic," said Wiley's grandmammy, "and I have a plan."

Sure enough, the next day Wiley and his grandmammy heard a strange noise at the door. "Booga, wooga, wooga, shim bim bam, I am the Hairy Man, yes I am! Wiley, I got your grandpappy and now I'm going to get you!"

Grandmammy yelled at the Hairy Man through the door. "If I give you my baby, will you leave me alone?"

The Hairy Man answered, "If you give me your baby, I'll leave you alone."

"Okay, Hairy Man, I'm opening the door now." Grandmammy opened the door and there stood the Hairy Man. He was brown and hairy all over. He had big red eyes and big yellow teeth. Worst of all, he drooled and spit when he spoke. And he was carrying a big, burlap sack.

Grandmammy pointed to the small bed, where a little bundle lay. The Hairy Man ran to the bed, picked up the bundle, and stuffed it into his sack. “Just like that, jump into my sack!” Then he turned around and grinned, showing his big yellow teeth. “Booga, wooga, wooga, shim bim bam, I am the Hairy Man, yes I am!”

Grandmammy told Wiley to come out of hiding and they watched the Hairy Man run across the yard. He stopped and opened the sack. Imagine his surprise when a small, baby pig came bouncing out of that bundle!

The Hairy Man looked at Grandmammy and yelled, “You fooled me!”

Grandmammy replied, “I said you could have my baby but I didn’t say what kind of baby you could have and that’s my baby pig!”

The Hairy Man was so mad he went screaming off into the swamps, pulling out his hair. Since Grandmammy and Wiley fooled the Hairy Man three times, he never bothered them again. You see, Grandmammy was from the swamps and she was real smart and she knew magic. And Grandmammy and Wiley lived a long happy life.

