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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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# Brer Rabbit: The Creatures Go To The Barbecue (1/11)

"Once upon a time," Uncle Remus began to tell the little boy a story. But the child interrupted, "When was 'once upon a time'?" The old man smiled and said, "Well, I reckon it was sometime way back. You know, around the time when Johnny Ashcake started baking? Yep, it was around then."



"Now, there was this man who had a beautiful garden. It was so fine that all the neighbors came to see it. Some looked over the fence, some peeked through the cracks, and some even came to look at it by the light of the stars. And one of those neighbors was old Brer Rabbit. Starlight, moonlight, or cloudlight, it didn't matter to him. When morning came, he was always up and about, feeling pretty good, I must say!



"So, there was Mr. Man, his garden, and old Brer Rabbit." Uncle Remus drew a little map in the dirt with his cane. "Now, with this being the case, what do you think happened? Just what always happens when tasty greens and vegetables are planted. They look good and taste even better, and in the early morning, Brer Rabbit would sneak through the fence and nibble on them. He'd take the greens but leave his



tracks, especially after it rained. Taking and leaving—that's just the way of the world.



"One morning, Mr. Man went out to his garden and noticed something was missing—a cabbage here, a turnip there, and some beans too. He wondered what had

happened. He looked around and saw Brer Rabbit's tracks, which he couldn't take with him. Brer Rabbit had left his shoes at home and came barefooted.

"So Mr. Man called his dogs. 'Here, Buck! Here, Brinjer! Here, Blue!' And he set them on the trail, and off they went!

"You'd have thought they were chasing after a herd of rhinoceroses from the noise they made. Brer Rabbit heard them coming, and he took off for home, doubling back and forth just like he does these days.



"When he got to a spot where he could sit down and catch his breath, he took a poplar leaf and started fanning himself. Then Brer Fox came trotting up. He said, 'Brer Rabbit, what's all this fuss in the woods? What's going on?' Brer Rabbit scratched his head

and said, 'Well, they're trying to drive me to the big barbecue by the creek. They all invited me, and when I refused, they said they'd make me go anyway. It's no fun being as popular as I am, Brer Fox. If you want to go, just get





in ahead of the hounds and run down the big road!

"Brer Fox rolled his little eyes, licked his lips, and took off to the barbecue. He hadn't even disappeared before Brer Wolf came along, and when he heard the news, he ran off too.

"And no sooner was Brer Wolf out of sight than Brer Bear came along. When he heard about the roasted meat and the big pan of gravy, he stood up on his hind legs and snorted. Then he took off, and before he was out of earshot, Brer Coon came along, and when he heard the news, he ran off too.



"So there they all were, running to the barbecue. But what do you think happened? It seems like they all got ahead of the dogs, or maybe

the dogs got behind them, but Brer Rabbit just sat by the creek, laughing and swatting at dragonflies. And those poor creatures had to keep going right past the barbecue—if there even was a barbecue, which I doubt. That's why I say, when you get an invite to a barbecue, you better find out when and where it is, and who's running it."