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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Brer Rabbit: The Gold Mine (6/11)

It was quiet in the cabin for a good ten minutes, and Uncle Remus noticed the little boy was getting sleepy. So, without any warning, he jumped right into a story.

"Well, one year, there was a terrible drought. The crops dried up, and if you'd struck a match anywhere, the whole place would've gone up in flames. Old man Hunger showed up, and the animals got skinny and weak. Brer Bear did better than most because all he had to do was sleep and live off his own fat. Brer Rabbit and his wife had saved some calamus root and



sugarcane, so they managed pretty well. But the rest of the animals were so skinny that you could still see their ribs to this day.

"The animals had a meeting place where they'd gather and talk, just like folks do at

a grocery store. One day, while they were all sitting around, chatting and arguing, Brer Rabbit spoke up. He said that his great-granddaddy had told him about a big gold mine somewhere around Brer Bear's house. Brer Bear growled and said that if he found that gold mine, there wouldn't be any gold left when he was done with it.

"Some of the animals laughed, some just grinned, and after a bit more talking, they all went back to their families. But they didn't



forget about that gold mine. From that day on, no matter where you went, you'd see some of the animals digging and scratching at the ground—some in the fields, some in the woods, and even some right in the

middle of the road. They were so weak and hungry that they could hardly dig without falling over.



"This went on for a while, but eventually, they all agreed that

something had to be done. They decided they'd all go on one big hunt for the gold mine, and then give up. They split into groups, each digging in different places. It so

happened that Brer Rabbit was in a group with Brer Wolf, and he knew he had to be careful. Brer Rabbit wasn't much of a digger, but he had a way of making the others think he was the best of the bunch. So he made a big show of tearing up the dirt.



"They hadn't been at it long when Brer Wolf suddenly shouted, 'Come here, Brer Rabbit! I found it!'

Brer Bear and Brer Fox

were digging nearby, and Brer Rabbit winked to himself and said, 'Glad to hear it, Brer Wolf! Get your gold and enjoy yourself!' Brer Wolf called out, 'Come get some, Brer Rabbit! Come get some!' But Brer Rabbit replied, 'I'll take whatever's left, Brer Wolf. You take what you want, and when you've had enough, I'll grab a little bit for myself.' Brer Wolf said, 'I want to show you something.' Brer Rabbit replied, 'My eyes aren't big for nothing.' Brer Wolf then said, 'I've got a secret to tell you.' Brer Rabbit answered, 'My ears aren't long for



nothing. Just stand there and whisper, Brer Wolf, and I'll hear every word you say.'

"But Brer Wolf didn't say anything. Instead,

he pretended to keep digging, and then, all of a sudden, he made a dash at Brer Rabbit. But when he got to where Brer Rabbit was, Brer Rabbit wasn't there anymore—he was gone. Even though Brer Wolf was weak and hungry, he knew he couldn't catch Brer Rabbit, so he called out, 'What's your hurry, Brer Rabbit? Where you going?' Brer Rabbit hollered back, 'I'm going home to get a bag to carry all the gold you're going to leave me! So long, Brer Wolf! Wish you the best!' And with that, Brer Rabbit took off for home."