



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Brer Rabbit (Full Book)

Joel Chandler Harris

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Chapter 1: The Creatures Go To The Barbecue

"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."



Chapter 2: Frolic

The little boy, eager to know more, asked Uncle Remus, "What happened to the animals after the barbecue? Did the dogs hurt any of them?" Uncle Remus closed his eyes and chuckled. "Well, now you're asking something, honey. You see, Brer Rabbit was always quick on his feet and even quicker in his mind. He loved playing tricks on the other animals, and his pranks often left them in a mess, coming and going.



"The dogs did pretty well chasing the smaller animals like Brer Fox, Brer Coon, and Brer Wolf, but when they ran into old Brer Bear, they sure hit a snag. The most eager dog got too close, and Brer Bear gave him such a whack that he was split open from side to side. After the ruckus was over, the animals limped back home, trying to heal their cuts and bruises.

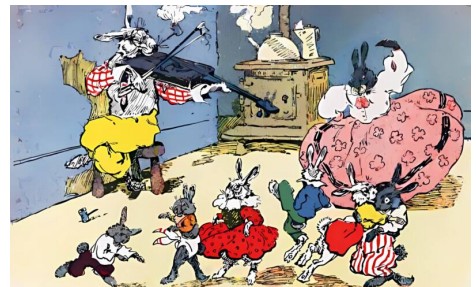


"When they finally felt better, they got together to come up with a plan to get back at Brer Rabbit. They argued and argued, just like your dad does when he's in a bad mood. But after a while, they came up with a plan that seemed like it might work. They decided to pretend they were having a dance. They knew Brer Rabbit loved a good dance, so they'd invite him. And when he showed up, they'd ask him to play the fiddle. If he refused, they'd close in on him and teach him a lesson.



"Everything was going smoothly, but while they were making their plans, Brer Rabbit was hiding in the grass, listening to every word. When the time came, Brer Rabbit sprang into action. Before they knew it, here he came running down the road, fast as a horse that had broken through a fence. He called out, 'Well, hello, friends! I haven't seen you all since the last time! Where have you been? And how was the barbecue? If my eyes aren't playing tricks on me, there's old Brer Bear, the one I've been looking for! And there's Brer Coon! I'm in big luck today. There's going to be a big dance at Miss Meadows' place, and she wants Brer Bear to show everyone the roasting-ear shuffle, and she's counting on Brer Coon to do the jig they call rack-back-Davy.

"I'm supposed to play the fiddle—something I haven't done since my oldest daughter had the mumps and the measles at the same time! So, this morning, I took down the fiddle, played a few notes, and when I opened my eyes, there was my whole family dancing around the room, even though breakfast still needed cooking!"





"With that, Brer Rabbit bowed and took off down the road like the dogs were after him."

"But what happened next?" the little boy asked. Uncle Remus chuckled again. "Nothing at all," he said. "The animals didn't have any dance, and when they went to Miss Meadows' house, she stuck her head out the window and told them if they didn't leave, she'd call the law on them!"



Chapter 3: Brother Bear's Big House

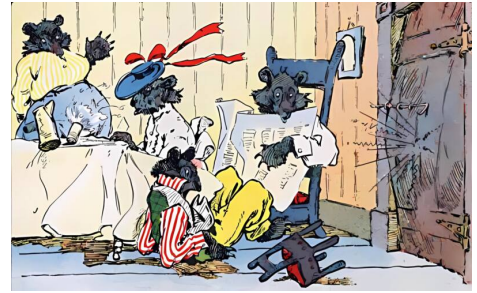
"Out of all the animals," Uncle Remus began as the little boy looked at him curiously, "old Brer Bear had the biggest and warmest house. I don't know why or how, but that's just the way it was, as it was told to me. And if I can help it, I'll never deceive you or lead you into any bad habits. Your dad hung around with me for a long time, and if you ask him, he'll tell you I never lied to him while he was paying attention—not if I know myself."



"Well, old Brer Bear had this big house I'm telling you about. If he ever bragged about it, I never heard, but that's what he had—a big house with plenty of room for him and his family. And he didn't have more than he needed, because his whole family was big and hefty, what folks call naturally plump."



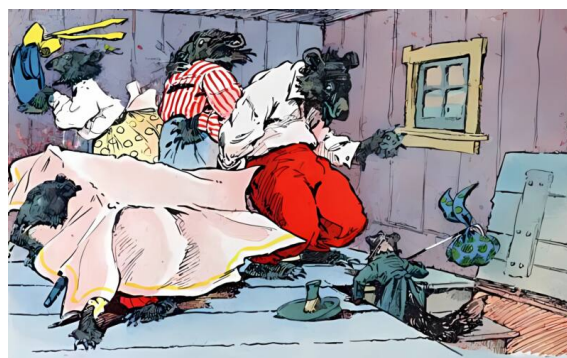
"He had a son named Simmon, and a daughter named Sue, not to mention his old wife, and they all lived together day after day and night after night. And when one of them went out, they were expected home by mealtime, if not before. They got along just fine, washing their faces and hands in the same washbasin on the back porch and drying on the same towel, just like all happy families do.



"Well, time went on, and things changed, as you'd expect, and one day there was a loud knocking on Brer Bear's door. Brer Bear hollered out, 'Who's knocking at this time of year, before the corn's planted or the cotton's growing?' The one at the door made a big noise and rattled the hinges. Brer Bear shouted, 'Don't tear down my house! Who are you, and what do you want?' And the answer came, 'I'm one, and therefore not two. If you're more than one, who are you, and what are you doing in there?' Brer Bear replied, 'I'm one, and almost two, but I'd appreciate it if you told me your full family name.' Then the answer came.



"'I'm the knocker and the mover both, and if I can't climb over, I'll crawl under if you just give me the word. Some call me Brer Polecat, and some call me a long word that's not worth remembering, but I want to move in. It's mighty cold out here, and everyone I meet tells me it's mighty warm in there where you are.' Then old Brer Bear said, 'It's warm enough for those who stay inside, but not nearly as warm for those on the outside. What do you really want?' Brer Polecat replied, 'I want a lot of things I don't get. I'm a mighty good housekeeper, but I notice that not many folks want me to keep house for them.' Brer Bear said, 'I don't have room for a housekeeper; we barely have room to sleep. If you can keep my house on the outside, you're welcome to it.'



"Brer Polecat said, 'You may think you don't have room, but I bet you have as much room as anyone I know. If you let me in just once, I guarantee I'll make all the room I need.'"

Uncle Remus paused to see how the little boy would react. He closed his eyes as if he were tired, but when he opened them again, he saw a faint smile on the child's face. "It won't hurt you to laugh a little bit, honey. Brer Polecat came into Brer Bear's house, and his breath was so bad that everyone had to get out—and he stayed and stayed until time itself couldn't chase him away."



Chapter 4: The Big Race

One hot summer day, while the little boy was playing near Uncle Remus's cabin, a big, dark cloud appeared in the sky. It brought a strong wind that blew leaves and dust everywhere. Then, with a flash of lightning and a loud crash of thunder, the boy ran straight to Uncle Remus, who was standing in his doorway. "Well, now!" Uncle Remus exclaimed, before the thunder even faded. "That wind and rain remind me of the time when old Brer Rabbit set up a big race to entertain the other animals. It was the funniest race you ever heard of.



"Brer Rabbit went deep into the woods until he found the Rainmaker's house. He knocked on the door, went inside, and asked the Rainmaker if he could set up a race between Brer Dust and Cousin Rain to see which one was the fastest. The Rainmaker grumbled and fussed, but finally, he agreed. He said if it was anyone but Brer Rabbit asking, he wouldn't have even considered it.



"So they set a day for the race, and then Brer Rabbit went to tell all the animals the news. They didn't know how Brer Rabbit knew about the race, but they all wanted to see it. Brer Rabbit and the Rainmaker planned for the race to happen right down the middle of the big road. When the day came, Brer Rabbit made sure the animals were in their spots—Brer Bear stood at the bend in the road, Brer Wolf a little farther down, and Brer Fox at the crossroads. Brer Coon, Brer Possum, and the others were scattered up and down the road.



"To those waiting, it seemed like time had stopped. Brer Bear growled, Brer Wolf howled, and Brer Possum laughed, but after a while, a cloud appeared in the sky. It wasn't a big cloud, but Brer Rabbit knew Cousin Rain was inside, along with Uncle Wind. The cloud crept closer until it was right over the big road, then it dipped down a bit like it was letting Cousin Rain out for a fair start. Sure enough, Cousin Rain got out, and so did Uncle Wind.



"And then, gentlemen, the race began! Uncle Wind helped them both—he had his bellows with him and he blew it hard! Brer Dust jumped up from where he was lying and came down the road, swirling and twirling. He hit Brer Bear first, then Brer Wolf, then Brer Fox, and after that, all the other animals, nearly choking them all! Never in your life have you heard such coughing and sneezing, such snorting and wheezing! They all looked like they were painted red with dust. Brer Bear sneezed so hard that he had to lay down in the road, and Brer Dust nearly buried him, and it was the same with the other animals—they got dust in their ears, noses, and eyes.



"And then Cousin Rain came along, chasing Brer Dust, and nearly drowned them all. He left them covered in mud, and they were worse off than before. It took them a long time to get the mud out of their eyes and ears, and when they finally could see a little bit, they noticed that Brer Rabbit, instead of being covered in mud, was as dry as a chip—if not drier!



"That made them so mad that they all took off after him, trying their best to catch him, but if there's one thing Brer Rabbit's got, it's fast feet, and in no time, the other animals couldn't see a trace of him! All the same, Brer Rabbit hadn't planned on running two races that day."

"But, Uncle Remus," the little boy asked, "who won the race, Brer Dust or Cousin Rain?" The old man shifted in his chair and rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Well," he answered carefully, "they say that when Cousin Rain couldn't see Brer Dust anymore, he thought he'd won. But he called out, 'Brer Dust, where are you?' And Brer Dust called back, 'You'll have to excuse me; I fell down in the mud and can't run anymore!'"

Chapter 5: Flying Adventure

There was a time when all the animals got tired of Brer Rabbit's tricks. They decided to hold a big meeting to figure out how to stop him. Everyone came—Brer Bear in his big fur coat, Brer Wolf with his loud howl, and even old Simon Swamp Owl, hooting as he arrived. Brer Fox was there too, wearing his black socks, along with a bunch of other animals I don't need to mention. Some were bow-legged, and some were knock-kneed, but they all agreed to hold a convention to put an end to Brer Rabbit's pranks.



Brer Fox offered a pot of gold to whoever could catch Brer Rabbit. Brer Buzzard, who was getting old, said he'd give it a try, even though he coughed as he spoke. The other animals thanked him for his offer. Brer Bear, who was sitting in a chair, stood up and suggested they thank Brer Buzzard right then and there instead of waiting for another day.



They argued back and forth about what to do. Some wanted to give Brer Buzzard a crown of flowers if he could take Brer Rabbit up into the sky and drop him halfway. They sent a messenger to ask Brer Rabbit to come to the meeting, but Brer Rabbit, who had a habit of knowing things before they were even said, showed up before they could even send the message.



Brer Rabbit wiggled his nose and winked. "Here's the bird I want to see!" he said. "Brer Buzzard, I'm trying to learn how to fly!" Of course, Brer Buzzard agreed, and everyone said he was a very accommodating bird.



Brer Buzzard spread his wings, trying to look young even though he was old. He strutted around, dreaming about the pot of gold and what he'd buy with it. But before he knew it, Brer Rabbit jumped right between his wings and said, "Now, hurry up and give me a ride! If you don't, I'll give you some trouble when we're up in the sky!"

The animals grinned as Brer Buzzard took off, making a big fuss as they watched. As for Brer Rabbit, he was having the time of his life. The ride was as easy as eating pie! He held onto Brer Buzzard with his paws, and whenever Brer Buzzard tried to shake him off, Brer Rabbit would scratch and tickle him with his claws, making it impossible for Brer Buzzard to get rid of him.



Brer Rabbit steered Brer Buzzard all over the sky, laughing and hollering so

loudly that all the animals below could hear him. You can imagine how they felt, waiting for someone to fall!

When Brer Rabbit finally got tired of the ride, he steered Brer Buzzard straight back to the ground. As soon as they landed, Brer Rabbit went into hiding. When the other animals came to see what happened, Brer Rabbit was nowhere to be found. And that, I reckon, is the end of that adventure!

Chapter 6: The Gold Mine

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."



Chapter 7: Gets Brer Fox a Horse

Not many of the animals liked water, except maybe Brer Coon's daughter. Brer Bear, Brer Fox, and old Brer Rabbit all agreed—they couldn't stand wading through creeks or swimming in rivers. Whenever they had to cross water, they'd run for cover! They noticed that when people came to a river, they'd ride a horse across.



Brer Fox said he wished he had a horse. Among all the other animals, he'd be the happiest if he could get one. He'd buy a bridle and a brand-new saddle and ride that horse all around. He said, "Once I start trottin', I'll be the fastest around!" Brer Rabbit smiled a big smile and said, "I can't ride myself because I've got a boil, but I think I know where you can find a horse. He's way back yonder where two roads meet. I'll meet you there tomorrow morning, just as the sun starts to rise."



Brer Fox replied, "I hear you, and if I'm not sick, I'll be there for sure!" Brer Rabbit tipped his hat and said, "So long, friend. We'll get that horse, you can count on it."

Long before the sun came up, Brer Rabbit was already up and moving, chuckling to himself like a cat purring. The horse was stretched out, sleeping in the pasture. Brer Rabbit crept up as close as he dared to see if the horse was really alive. The horse flicked his tail. "This time, we'll catch him for sure!" Brer Rabbit said to himself. Then he saw Brer Fox coming and thought, "Here's another fine fellow about to get himself into trouble!"

Out loud, Brer Rabbit said, "Good luck has brought the horse right where you want him! If you tie yourself to his tail, you can hold him, and more than that, you can trip him and roll him over!" So, Brer Fox did just that, getting close to where trouble was waiting.



Brer Rabbit shouted, "Hold him down! Hold him down! Keep him right there on the ground!"

The horse woke up with a snort and a whinny, showing he was quite the kicker! Right then, Brer Rabbit started to snicker, saying, "Hold on, Brer Fox! Don't let go! If you make him stay still, you'll ride him sooner!" But the horse reared up and kicked up a huge cloud of dust. And before you knew it, Brer Rabbit heard a loud crash!



"I hope you're not too hurt, Brer Fox," Brer Rabbit called out, "but your wife's going to be mad—you've gone and torn your shirt!"

Chapter 8: Finds the Moon in the Mill Pond

One bright day in the middle of May, Brer Rabbit was feeling great. He hit the road, not knowing exactly where he was going. "Oh, I'm free as can be," he said, "no one can change my mind today!" Brer Tarrypin, who was hiding under his vine, winked at Brer Rabbit and called out, "Where are you heading with your pipe and walking cane?"



Brer Rabbit waved his hand like a lady with a fan. "I'm so bored I could burst with pain," he replied. "I'm way too nice, and I haven't laughed much since the big January rain. If I don't have some fun soon, folks will start calling me 'Sunday-Jane!' I'll get all gloomy and sad if I don't have a good time, and I might even lose my cheer!"



So off he went, quick on his feet, with a grin, a laugh, and a little cough. He told Miss Motts, Miss Meadows, and all the others about what was going to happen. It was going to be a big fishing trip at the mill pond, and everyone hoped the wind wouldn't blow from the north. All the animals—big and small, tall and short—agreed to come. Brer Wolf and Brer Bear said they'd be there and promised to bring a net. They all agreed on the day, and Brer Rabbit said they didn't have to come if it rained.



When the day finally came, the big road and the lane were filled with a crowd, all talking loudly and having fun. Brer Rabbit was there with Miss Molly Hare, waiting for the fun to start. He pretended he was going to jump into the pond, but then something made him stop and drop his jaw.



He called out to Brer Coon, "Come quick and see the Moon! She's floating in the pond without a fin!" Brer Rabbit looked again and said, "She really fell in, and we've got to get her out! If she stays in the pond, we're in trouble for sure."



"We need light to play at night and see where we're going," he added. "We'll drag the pond with the net—if we don't fail, we'll have something to cheer about!" But when it came to dragging the pond, some of the animals started complaining about who would do the work. They all acted like they wanted to help, but it ended up being the taller animals who had to do it.

Brer Bear laughed as he grabbed a stick, and Brer Wolf said he was afraid he'd fall, but he took his place anyway with a grumpy face. When they started to haul the net, Brer Wolf grumbled, "Oh, you better believe this water's cold! I feel like a sponge!"



Then, with a big splash and a lot of squealing, they all tried to grab the Moon in the water, which they shouldn't have done. The water went over their heads with

a huge splash, and Brer Rabbit bent over laughing. "Oh, all your trouble just fills me with fun-unj-unj!" he giggled.

Chapter 9: How Mr. Lion Lost His Wool

"It was on a day just like this that Mr. Lion lost his wool," Uncle Remus said to the little boy. "Mr. Man decided it was time to butcher some hogs, so he got a big barrel and filled it halfway with water from the spring. Then he piled up a lot of wood and put rocks between the logs. He lit the fire at both ends and in the middle, and soon the water in the barrel was boiling.



"After they killed the hogs, they dipped each one into the hot water. When they pulled them out, the hair was ready to fall right off. They scraped the hogs clean with sticks and chips, leaving no hair on them at all.



"Once all the hogs were killed and cleaned, and everything was quiet, old Brer Rabbit peeked out from behind a bush where he had been hiding. He looked around, and then went over to the fire to warm himself. He wasn't there long before Brer Wolf and Brer Fox showed up, and that's when he got an idea.

"'Hello, friends! Howdy and welcome!' Brer Rabbit said. 'I'm just getting ready to take a warm bath like Mr. Man gave his hogs. Want to join me?' They said they weren't in a hurry, but they helped Brer Rabbit put more hot rocks in the barrel and watched the water bubble.



"Soon, who should come walking up but old Mr. Lion? He had a mane that went all the way from his head to the end of his tail, and in some places, it was so long it dragged on the ground. That's why all the animals were afraid of him. He growled and asked what they were doing, and when Brer Rabbit told him, Mr. Lion said that's just what he needed.



"'How do you get in?' Mr. Lion asked.

"'Just back right in,' said Brer Rabbit. So, Mr. Lion backed into the barrel, but the water was so hot that he tried to get out and slipped in all the way to his shoulders. Believe it or not, that creature was scalded so badly that he hollered and scared everybody for miles around.



"When he finally got out, all his wool had fallen off, except for the little bit around his neck and the tuft at the end of his tail—and that would've come off too if his tail hadn't slipped through the hole in the barrel."

Uncle Remus closed his eyes, but he was still watching the little boy. For a moment, the child said nothing, then he exclaimed, "I must tell that tale to mother before I forget it!" He ran out of the cabin as fast as his feet could carry him, leaving Uncle Remus shaking with laughter.

Chapter 10: How Brer Rabbit Got a House

Once upon a time, all the animals decided to build a house. They wanted to make it strong enough to keep out the mosquitoes and fix it up nice and cozy. Every animal was there, from Brer Bear to Brer Possum, along with Brer Wolf, Brer Fox, and Brer Coon. Brer Rabbit was there too, but he wasn't doing much. Instead, he stood around pretending to be the boss, saying they needed the house done quickly.



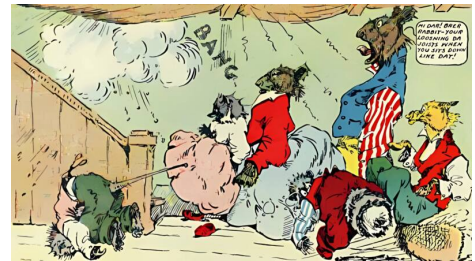
Brer Rabbit acted busy, oh yes, very busy, but he wasn't doing a thing! He claimed he'd get dizzy if he climbed the scaffold, so instead, he just measured, marked, and sang. The animals built the house, and it turned out fine, made from poplar, oak, and pine. The smallest room was a tiny seven-by-nine, just right for anyone who got sick and needed to rest.



Brer Rabbit waited until the time was right, then he chose an upstairs room for himself. He sat up there, singing to himself and feeling pretty pleased. But he also got something he shouldn't have—a gun, a cannon, and a tub of water—which he hid under his bed.



When the animals came home, Brer Rabbit was ready. He told them he was going to sit down. "Well, sit," they said, "and we'll try to be steady." Brer Rabbit frowned, then—Bang-bang!—went the gun. The barrels were double, and the animals were as quiet as mice. Brer Bear said, "There must be some trouble, but I hope he doesn't break the house!"



Brer Rabbit asked, "Where should I spit at?" Brer Wolf grinned and said, "Wherever you can make it hit!" Brer Fox rubbed his chin thoughtfully. Then, Brer Rabbit took the tub of water and emptied it all over the stairs, nearly drowning Brer Coon's daughter and even one of Brer Bear's kids!



Brer Rabbit warned them, "When I sneeze, I'll scare you, and I hate to do it!" Brer Fox said, "We'll listen and hear you. Just go ahead with your sneeze!"

Then—Boom-a-lam!—went the cannon, and the animals lit out of there, jumping through windows and doors, any way they could escape. And after that, they didn't come back to that house anymore!



Chapter 11: The Partridge Nest

Oh, what's wrong with the Whippoorwill,
Sitting and crying on the far-off hill?
And what's the matter with Miss Bob White,
Choking herself, saying "Good-night"?
You know something's not right,
When they sing that sad song at night.
Half a call, half a cry,
They must be telling a tale that makes you sigh.



Miss Whippoorwill's troubles can wait for another day,
But let me tell you why Miss Bob White is feeling this way.
There was a time, not long ago,
When she didn't hide her nest or keep it low.
She built it in the open, easy to see,
And was as polite as she could be.

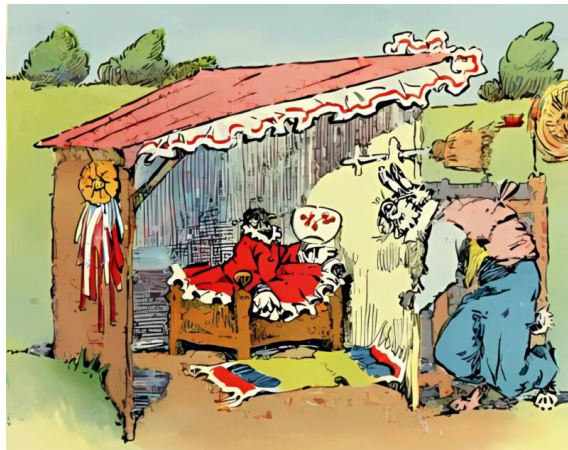


She'd make her house facing east and west,
Then fill her nest with eggs, doing her best.
She'd keep them warm, sitting all day,

And make sure her house stayed dry that way.
While this was going on, Brer Rabbit came by,
Wiggling his mouth and blinking his eye.
“Good morning, Miss Bob,” he said with cheer.
“And the same to you, Brer Rabbit, my dear.”



Brer Rabbit said, “I haven’t seen you in a while.
I was worried something was wrong, not your usual style.
But here you sit, quiet as a mouse,
Not doing much, just keeping house!”
“Oh well,” said she, “I’m too old to roam,
I used to do it, but now I stay home!
The only thing I want is to wash my dress,
But I can’t do that while I’m on my nest.”



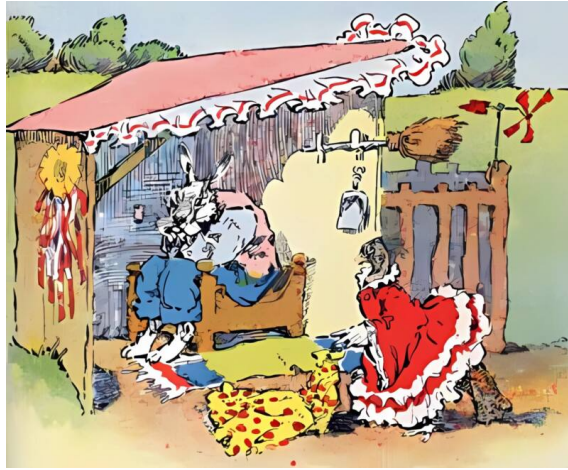
Brer Rabbit offered, “Can’t I help you out?
I’m not doing much, just walking about.
My old woman says if sitting’s the thing,
I’m the best there is—I’m Old Man Sit!”
“I’m sure of it,” said Miss Bob White,
“If you sit, it’ll be done right.”
“Thank you, Miss Bob! Go wash your dress,
And I’ll do my best to watch your nest!”



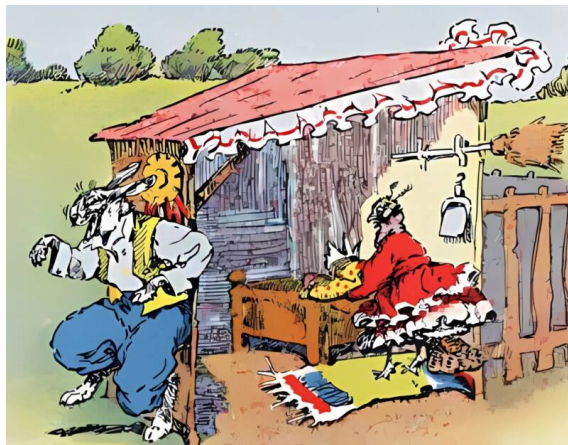
So off she went, with a flutter and a flap,
And washed her dress in some clean dirt, just like that.
Brer Rabbit saw the eggs and shook his head,
His mouth started to water, and his eyes turned red.
“This would be hard to match,” he said with glee,
“So I’ll just take them home and hatch them for me!”
So he did just that, and when he came back,
He moved at a pace between a walk and a quick dash.



Miss Bob White, after washing her dress,
Rushed back to her house and nest.
“Thank you, Brer Rabbit,” she said with a bow.
“No need to thank me, ma’am, not now.
I was just here, fretting and sweating,
Worried I wasn’t good at sitting.
My old woman says I’ve got a slow fever,
And honestly, I’m starting to believe her!



"I felt something move, I heard something run,
And now the eggs are gone—not a single one!
I've seen a lot, and I've heard folks talk,
But I've never seen eggs get up and walk!"
"My goodness!" said Miss Bob White,
Peeking into the nest, "You're right!"
And ever since then, when darkness falls,
She gives her lost babies her Good-night calls!
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