



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Jack Rabbit and Mr. Turtle

Abbie Phillips Walker

It had rained for days. Oh, how it had rained, poured right out of the sky as if old Mr. Sun was drawing the water up from the ocean somewhere and then pouring it out in buckets full all over the world.

The woods folk were in despair; those who lived in the ground were driven to the top of high rocks and those who lived in the trees could not get out to get food excepting the birds, and they complained that the yards for miles around were covered with water and no crumbs or worms were to be had.

Jack Rabbit sat on the top of a rock, looking very forlorn and unhappy; he had sat there all night and all the day before, and besides being very tired and not daring to fall asleep for fear of tumbling off the rock into the water, he was very hungry.

Johnnie Squirrel chattered to him from his house in a tree, and told him he would gladly share his nuts with him if there was any way of getting them to him, and he would be glad to give Jack Rabbit shelter if he could climb a tree.



"I wish Mr. Fox would come along, he is such a wise fellow," said Jack Rabbit. "He would be sure to think of a way to get me off this rock to a dry spot." But Mr. Fox did not come that way; he was having all he could do to find a place of safety for himself, for while he could swim and was tall enough to keep his head above water, it was no easy matter for him to find a place to sleep where he could be safe from the dogs and guns.

So, while Jack Rabbit wished for his friend, Mr. Fox was a long way off, wondering if he would ever again have a home.

"Why don't you ask Mr. Owl; he is as wise as your friend, Mr. Fox," said Mr. Squirrel, "perhaps he might help you out of your trouble."

"I do not think I should care for his advice," said Jack Rabbit, "besides, there is no one that could help me but Mr. Fox; he would carry me to a dry place on his back, I am sure."

"Could I be of any assistance, sir?" asked someone close beside Jack Rabbit.

Jack Rabbit looked around and saw Mr. Turtle slowly crawling up the side of the rock.

"Oh, dear, you cannot help me!" said Jack Rabbit, "you are not large enough and I am sure you are having quite as much discomfort as any of us; you are so short."

"Why, my dear Jack Rabbit, you talk as though I never saw a flood before—I am better able to take care of myself than any of you; I can swim, you know."

"Swim?" said Jack Rabbit, "why you cannot run; you walk along so slowly and pokey through the woods, I wonder you don't get stepped on. Look out, you'll fall off and be drowned."



But Jack Rabbit's warning came too late—off tumbled Mr. Turtle into the water and Jack Rabbit expected he would be drowned before his eyes, but, to his surprise, Mr. Turtle paddled about with the greatest ease and came back to the rock.

"That is rather a slippery place you are sitting on, Jack Rabbit," he said, "I shall feel safer here."

He crawled on a stone that was partly covered with water and sat down to rest.

"Yes, I have seen many floods," he said. "This is nothing to the one I saw about a hundred years ago; I was quite a young fellow then. 'A hundred years ago!'" repeated Jack Rabbit, "how old are you, Mr. Turtle?"

"Oh, about two hundred," answered Mr. Turtle, "and as I was saying, I saw a real flood a hundred years ago. You would have been lost in that flood, Jack Rabbit; it came up over the rocks, and even the trees looked short, the water was so deep."

"Mr. Fox would have been drowned in the flood, wouldn't he?" asked Jack Rabbit, beginning to think Mr. Turtle must be very wise if he was very old.

"Yes, Mr. Fox would have been drowned, and, in fact, everybody was drowned but the few I was able to save."

"How did you save them?" asked Jack Rabbit, becoming very much interested, and not thinking Mr. Turtle so much of a joke after all.

"On my back," said Mr. Turtle. "I saved an ancestor of yours that day, or you

would not be here, Jack Rabbit."

"Did you?" said Jack Rabbit, very meekly. "Who was he?"

"Why Jack Rabbit, of course," said Mr. Turtle. "I carried him and his family to dry land on my back, and that is the way you happened to be here. Perhaps you will be as kind to me, Mr. Turtle," said Jack Rabbit, in a very pleading tone, "and carry me to dry land, too; I have been sitting here all night and all day yesterday, too; I am hungry, too."

"To be sure I'll carry you," said Mr. Turtle. "I was ready to do that when I first came along; in fact, I was looking for you, but you seemed to think I was so slow I could not be of any use, and that your friend, Mr. Fox, was the only one who could save you; now jump on."

Mr. Turtle came alongside the rock and Jack Rabbit very carefully crawled down to his back and sat on it very still, his ears sticking up straight with fright.



"You won't tip me over, will you, Mr. Turtle?" he said.

"No, no; of course I won't. Didn't I save your ancestor? You sit still and I will soon have you on dry land."

"Here we are, now jump off," said Mr. Turtle, crawling up the side of a hill, and Jack Rabbit jumped without being told a second time.

"Mr. Turtle," he said, "I am sorry I made fun of your slow way of getting about. I owe my life to you, and I will never forget it." "Oh, that is all right," said Mr. Turtle, "just mention it to your children so when there is another flood they will know I will look out for them. Goodbye, Jack Rabbit, I may not be about here again for a hundred years or so."



"I wonder how long he expects to live?" said Jack Rabbit. "Anyway, he is a kind-hearted old fellow, and I will not forget he saved my life. I expect a hundred years from now he will be telling the same story to another Jack Rabbit."

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