

BRER RABBIT HE'S A GOOD FISHERMAN

By Joel Chandler Harris

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One day, when Brer Rabbit, and Brer Fox, and Brer Coon, and Brer Bear and a whole lot of them was clearing a new ground for to plant a roasting-pear patch, the sun began to get sort of hot, and Brer Rabbit, he got tired; but he didn't let on, 'cause he feared the others would call him lazy, and he keep on carrying away rubbish and piling it up, till by and by he holler out that he got a thorn in his hand, and then he take and slip off and hunt for a cool place to rest. After a while he come across a well with a bucket hanging in it.

"That looks cool," says Brer Rabbit, says he. "And cool I 'specs she is. I'll just about get in there and take a nap," and with that, in he jump, he did, and he ain't no sooner fix himself than the bucket begin to go down. Brer Rabbit, he was mighty scared. He know where he come from, but he don't know where he's going. Suddenly he feel the bucket hit the water, and there she sat, but Brer Rabbit, he keep mighty still, 'cause he don't know what minute's going to be the next. He just lay there and shook and shover.

Brer Fox always got one eye on Brer Rabbit, and when he slip off from the new ground, Brer Fox, he sneak after him. He knew Brer Rabbit was after some project or another, and he took and crope off, he did, and watch him. Brer Fox see Brer Rabbit come to the top of the well and stop, and then he see him jump in the bucket, and then, lo and behold! he see him go down out of sight. Brer Fox was the most 'stonished fox that you ever laid eyes on. He sat down in the bushes and thought and thought, but he don't make no head nor tails of this kind of business. Then he say to himself, says he:

"Well, if this don't beat everything!" says he. "Right down there in that well Brer Rabbit keep his money hid, and if it ain't that, he done gone and 'scovered a gold mine, and if it ain't that, then I'm a-going to see what's in there," says he.

Brer Fox crope up a little nearer, he did, and listen, but he don't hear no fuss, and he keep on getting nearer, and yet he don't hear nothing. By and by he get up close and peep down, but he don't see nothing, and he don't hear nothing. All this time Brer Rabbit was mighty near scared out of his skin, and he feared for to move 'cause

the bucket might keel over and spill him out in the water. While he saying his prayers over and over, old Brer Fox holler out:

“Heyo, Brer Rabbit! Who you visitin’ down there?” says he.

“Who? Me? Oh, I’m just a-fishing, Brer Fox,” says Brer Rabbit, says he. “I just say to myself that I’d sort of s’prise you all with a mess of fishes, and so here I is, and there’s the fishes. I’m a-fishing for supper, Brer Fox,” says Brer Rabbit, says he.

“Is there many of them down there, Brer Rabbit?” says Brer Fox, says he.

“Lots of them, Brer Fox; scores and scores of them. The water is naturally alive with them. Come down and help me haul them in, Brer Fox,” says Brer Rabbit, says he.

“How I going to get down, Brer Rabbit?”

“Jump into the other bucket, Brer Fox. It’ll fetch you down all safe and sound.”

Brer Rabbit talked so happy and talked so sweet that Brer Fox he jump in the bucket, he did, and so he went down, ’cause his weight pulled Brer Rabbit up. When they pass one another on the half-way ground, Brer Rabbit he sing out:

*“Good-bye, Brer Fox, take care o’ your clothes,
For this is the way the world goes;
Some goes up and some goes down,
You’ll get to the bottom all safe and soun’.”*

When Brer Rabbit got out, he gallop off and told the folks what the well belonged to, that Brer Fox was down there muddying up the drinking water, and then he gallop back to the well, and holler down to Brer Fox:

*“Here come a man with a great big gun—
When he haul you up, you Jump and run.”*

Well, soon enough Brer Fox was out of the well, and in just about half an hour both of them was back on the new ground working just as if they’d never heard of no well. But every now and then Brer Rabbit would burst out laughing, and old Brer Fox would scowl and say nothing.