

# Brer Rabbit Gets a Riding-Horse

Brer Rabbit stayed in his house till the tar from the tar-baby rubbed off his fur, but it wasn't many days before he was galloping up and down the place the same as ever, and perhaps a little cheekier than before.

Well, the tale about how Brer Rabbit got stuck in the tar-baby soon got round, and everyone laughed to hear it. Miss Meadows and the girls, who were great friends of Brer Rabbit, heard the tale too – and when Brer Rabbit paid them a visit, Miss Meadows asked him about it, and the girls began to giggle.

But Brer Rabbit sat up just as cool as a cucumber, and let them giggle.

By and by he crossed his legs and winked his eye slowly. Then he said:

'Ladies, Brer Fox was my daddy's riding-horse for thirty years; maybe more, but thirty years

anyhow!' Then he bowed politely, put on his hat, and marched off as stiff and straight as a walking-stick.

Well, the next day Brer Fox went calling on Miss Meadows and the girls, and as soon as he began to laugh about Brer Rabbit being stuck up in the tar-baby, Miss Meadows told him what Brer Rabbit had said.

'Brer Rabbit says you were his daddy's riding-horse for thirty years,' she said. 'Well, well, fancy you being ridden by a rabbit, Brer Fox!'

Brer Fox snapped his jaws and looked mighty angry to hear such a thing. He stood up to go, and said:

'Ladies, just wait till I get hold of Brer Rabbit! I'll make him chew up his words, sure enough!' And with that off Brer Fox marched.

And when he got to the main road he shook the dew off his tail and made straight for Brer Rabbit's house. When he got there, Brer Rabbit was expecting him, and the door was shut fast.

Brer Fox knocked - blim, blam! Nobody answered. Brer Fox knocked again - blim, blam! Still nobody answered. Then he knocked a third time - blim, blam!

Brer Rabbit called out in a mighty weak voice:

'Is that you, Brer Fox? I want you to run and fetch the doctor. The dish of parsley I ate this morning is making me feel bad. Do, please, Brer Fox, ran quickly!' said Brer Rabbit.

'I've come for you,' said Brer Fox. 'There's going to be a party up at Miss Meadows'. All the girls will be there, and I promised that I'd fetch you. The girls said it wouldn't be a proper party unless you were there, and they made me fetch you.'

'I'm too sick to come,' said Brer Rabbit.

'You're all right!' said Brer Fox. 'A party will put you right, Brer Rabbit. It's what you're needing.'

'I'm not needing anything,' said Brer Rabbit in a weak voice. 'You just go away, Brer Fox. You make me feel worse.'

'You're bound to feel bad if you go and shut yourself up on a fine day like this,' said Brer Fox. 'Come along with me, and smell what a fine day it is.'

'The day smells all right,' said Brer Rabbit. 'It's you that doesn't smell so good to me, Brer Fox.'

'The girls will be mighty sorry if I go back without you,' said Brer Fox.

'I can't walk, I'm so weak,' said Brer Rabbit.

'Well, I'll carry you,' said Brer Fox.

'How?' said Brer Rabbit.

'In my arms,' said Brer Fox.

'You'll drop me,' said Brer Rabbit.

'I won't,' said Brer Fox.

'Well,' said Brer Rabbit, after a bit, 'I'll come with you if you'll carry me on your back, Brer Fox.'

'That's all right with me,' said Brer Fox at once.

'Come on, Brer Rabbit, or the party will be over.'

'I can't ride on your back unless I have a saddle to sit on,' said Brer Rabbit. 'I'd be slipping off all the time.'

'I'll get you a saddle,' said Brer Fox.

'It's no good me sitting in a saddle unless I've some reins to hold on by,' said Brer Rabbit.

'Well, I'll get a bridle,' said Brer Fox.

'I won't ride you unless you wear blinkers,' said Brer Rabbit. 'If you don't wear blinkers, Brer Fox, you'll be shying at the tree-stumps along the road, and I'll fall off.'

'I'll get some blinkers,' said Brer Fox.

'You get all those things and I'll go to the party,' said Brer Rabbit.

'Now, see here, Brer Rabbit,' said Brer Fox, 'I'll just carry you to the lane outside Miss Meadows' house, but you must get down and walk the rest of the way.'

'That suits me all right,' said Brer Rabbit, and

then Brer Fox ran to fetch the saddle, the reins, and the blinkers.

Now Brer Rabbit knew quite well that Brer Fox meant to take him to Miss Meadows' and make him tell them it wasn't true that Brer Fox had been his daddy's riding-horse, and he made up his mind to trick Brer Fox. By the time he had combed his hair and twisted up his whiskers along came Brer Fox with the saddle and bridle on, looking as smart as a circus pony. He trotted up to the door and stood pawing the ground and champing the bit in his mouth like a proper horse. Brer Rabbit got on his back and they ambled off.

Brer Fox couldn't see him behind him, because he was wearing blinkers over his eyes, but by and by he felt Brer Rabbit lift up one of his feet.

'What are you doing, Brer Rabbit?' he said.

'Just pulling up my sock, Brer Fox, just pulling up my sock,' said Brer Rabbit.

By and by Brer Rabbit lifted up the other foot.

'What are you doing now, Brer Rabbit?' said Brer Fox.

'Just scratching my toe, Brer Fox, just scratching my toe,' said Brer Rabbit.

But all the time, gracious goodness, Brer Rabbit was putting on sharp spurs, and when they got

close to Miss Meadows', where Brer Rabbit should have got off, Brer Rabbit slapped the spurs into Brer Fox's skin, and my word, didn't Brer Fox gallop along! Every time he slowed down, Brer Rabbit just stuck those spurs into him again, and Brer Fox let out a yell and galloped on at top speed.

When they got to the house, Miss Meadows and the girls were sitting outside on the verandah, and instead of stopping at the gate, Brer Rabbit rode right through it, and up to the horse-rack. He jumped off Brer Fox, threw the reins over the horse-rack, and ambled into the house grinning all over his face.

He shook hands with everyone, and sat down to smoke a big cigar. Then he took the cigar out of his mouth, puffed out a cloud of smoke, and said:

'Ladies, didn't I tell you Brer Fox was the riding-horse for our family? He's not so fast now as he was, but I dare say he'll get better after I've ridden him for a month or two!'

And then Brer Rabbit grinned, and the girls giggled, and Miss Meadows said what a fine pony Brer Fox was. Brer Fox was hitched tightly to the horse-rack and couldn't loose himself.

'You just wait till you ride me home, Brer Rabbit!' said Brer Fox, gritting his teeth. 'You just wait!'