

Brer Rabbit is in a Hole

Well, you remember that old Brer Rabbit had ridden Brer Fox up to Miss Meadows' house, saddle and bridle and all, and hitched him to the post there. Everyone laughed and talked and sang and then at last the time came to go home.

'Well, it's time I was a-going,' said Brer Rabbit. 'My horse will be pawing the ground to bits, soon, if I don't go out to him. Good-bye, Miss Meadows, good-bye, girls, and thanks for a wonderful party. It was real kind of Brer Fox to fetch me along!'

Brer Rabbit went to the horse-rack, where Brer Fox was tied, walking as though he owned the whole world. He jumped on to Brer Fox's back and rode off, waving his hat to the girls.

Brer Fox didn't say anything at all. He just tore off and kept his mouth shut, and Brer Rabbit sort of felt there was trouble coming. So he held on to

the reins tightly and waited to see what old Brer Fox was going to do.

Brer Fox ambled on till he got into the long lane, out of sight of Miss Meadows' house, and then he just went wild! He ripped and he roared, he snorted and cavorted, he reared and he bucked!

He was trying to fling Brer Rabbit off his back. But he might just as well have tried to fling off his own shadow. Every time he humped himself up, Brer Rabbit slapped the spurs into him, and there they went, up and down, up and down! Brer Fox fairly tore up the ground, and he jumped so high and he jumped so fast that he nearly snatched his own tail off!

They kept on like this, till by and by Brer Fox lay down on the ground and rolled over. This sort of unsettled Brer Rabbit, and he fell off – but by the time Brer Fox was up on his feet again, Brer Rabbit was rushing through the wood faster than a racehorse!

Brer Fox set out after him, and he went so fast that he caught him up, and Brer Rabbit only just had time to get into a hollow tree. The hole he shot in by was too small for Brer Fox, and he had to lie down and rest and get his breath again.

Well, while Brer Fox was lying there, all out of

breath, Brer Buzzard came flapping along, and saw Brer Fox stretched out on the ground. Brer Buzzard flew down beside him and looked at him. Then he shook his wings sadly, put his head on one side and said:

‘Brer Fox is dead, and I’m so sorry.’

‘No, I’m not dead,’ said Brer Fox. ‘I’ve got old Brer Rabbit shut up in here, in this hollow tree, and I’m going to get him this time, if it takes till Christmas!’

Then, after some more talking, Brer Fox made a bargain with Brer Buzzard, and Brer Buzzard promised to watch the hole and keep Brer Rabbit there whilst Brer Fox went to fetch his axe. So Brer Fox galloped off, and Brer Buzzard took up his stand by the hole.

By and by, when everything was still, Brer Rabbit sort of scrambled round close to the hole and shouted out:

‘Brer Fox! Oh, Brer Fox!’

Brer Fox had gone, and nobody said anything. Then Brer Rabbit squealed out as if he were mad.

‘You needn’t talk unless you want to, Brer Fox,’ he said. ‘I know you’re there, and I don’t care if you are! I just want to tell you that I wish old Brer Turkey Buzzard was here!’

Then Brer Buzzard tried to talk like Brer Fox. 'What do you want with Brer Buzzard?' he said.

'Oh, nothing in particular, except that there's the fattest grey squirrel in here that ever I saw,' said Brer Rabbit, 'and if Brer Turkey Buzzard was around he'd be mighty glad to get him!'

'How could Brer Buzzard get him?' said Brer Buzzard.

'Well, there's a little hole round on the other side of the tree,' said Brer Rabbit, 'and if Brer Buzzard was here so that he could stand just there, I'd drive out that squirrel to him.'

'Drive him out,' said Brer Buzzard, hopping round to the other side of the tree, 'drive him out, and I'll see that Brer Buzzard gets him!'

Then Brer Rabbit kicked up such a noise, just as if he were really driving out a squirrel, and when he heard old Brer Buzzard going round the tree to get the squirrel, Brer Rabbit dashed out of the hole and raced for home!

Well, when Brer Buzzard saw Brer Rabbit rushing off, he felt mighty lonesome, but he had promised Brer Fox that he'd stay, and he thought he would hang round and see what Brer Fox would say when he found Brer Rabbit was gone. He didn't have to wait long, because by and by

Brer Fox came galloping through the woods with his axe on his shoulder.

‘How’s Brer Rabbit getting on, Brer Buzzard?’ said Brer Fox.

‘Oh, he’s in there,’ said Brer Buzzard. ‘He’s mighty still, though. I expect he’s taking a nap.’

‘Then I’m just in time to wake him up,’ said Brer Fox. And with that he threw off his coat and grabbed his axe. He brought it down on the tree-trunk – pow! And every time he struck the tree with the axe – pow! – Brer Buzzard did a little dance and shouted out:

‘Oh, he’s in there, Brer Fox. He’s in there, sure enough!’

And every time a chip flew off, Brer Buzzard would jump and dodge and shout, ‘He’s in there, Brer Fox. I just heard him. He’s in there, sure enough!’

And Brer Fox, he lammed away at that hollow tree, till by and by, after he had almost cut the tree through he stopped to get his breath – and he saw Brer Buzzard laughing at him behind his back. And straight away, Brer Fox knew something was up. But Brer Buzzard, he kept on shouting:

‘He’s in there, Brer Fox. He’s in there! I’ve just seen him!’



Then Brer Fox pretended that he was peeping into the tree, and he said: 'Come here, Brer Buzzard, and see if this is Brer Rabbit's foot hanging down!' And Brer Buzzard came stepping up and stuck

his head in at the hole; and no sooner had he done that, than Brer Fox grabbed him. Brer Buzzard scrambled round and flapped his wings, but it was no use. Brer Fox had got him fast.

Then Brer Buzzard squealed out loudly, 'You let me alone, Brer Fox. Turn me loose! Brer Rabbit will get out! You've nearly cut the tree through. A few more cuts and you'll have Brer Rabbit!'

'I'm nearer to you, Brer Buzzard, than I'll be to Brer Rabbit today!' said Brer Fox. 'What did you trick me for?'

'Let me alone, Brer Fox,' said Brer Buzzard. 'My old woman's waiting for me. Brer Rabbit's in there!'

'There's a bunch of his fur on that blackberry bush,' said Brer Fox. 'That's the way he went, Brer Buzzard.'

Then Brer Buzzard told Brer Fox all about it. 'And Brer Rabbit's the greatest rascal that ever lived!' he said.

'That's neither here nor there, Brer Buzzard,' said Brer Fox. 'I left you to watch this hole and I left Brer Rabbit in there. I come back and I find you at the hole and Brer Rabbit gone. I'm going to make you pay for it. I'm going to fling you on a wood-pile and burn you up!'

‘If you fling me on the fire, Brer Fox, I’ll fly away!’ said Brer Buzzard.

‘Well, then, I’ll settle you right now!’ said Brer Fox, and he grabbed Brer Buzzard by the tail to dash him to the ground – but it was just about the time of year when the tail feathers of buzzards drop out, and Brer Buzzard sailed up into the air like a balloon, leaving a few feathers in Brer Fox’s hand!

‘You’ve given me a good start, Brer Fox!’ shouted Brer Buzzard, and Brer Fox had to sit there and watch him fly out of sight!