

Brer Rabbit's Pond

At the back of Brer Rabbit's house was a round pond. Sometimes, when it got very dirty with leaves falling into it, Brer Rabbit cleaned it out.

One time he cleaned it out beautifully, and then he stood and sighed by the edge of his empty pond.

'If only the rain would come and fill it!' he groaned to himself. 'If the rain doesn't come I'll have to fill my big watering-can fifty times and carry it from the tap to the pond!'

Well, the rain didn't come. The sun shone out, and the sky was as blue as forget-me-nots. Not a rain-cloud was to be seen!

'It's no good!' said Brer Rabbit at last. 'I'll have to fill the pond myself.' So he picked up his big watering-can and filled it at the tap by the side of his house.

He dragged it to the pond and emptied the water in – slishy-sloshy, slishy-sloshy! It made a lovely

noise. Brer Terrapin came by, and looked over the wall when he heard the noise.

'My!' he said to Brer Rabbit, 'that's a fine game you're having this morning! It's fun to play with water like that. Let me have a turn.'

'You can't drag my big watering-can along, old slow-coach!' said Brer Rabbit. But Brer Terrapin soon showed him that he could! He balanced the big can on his back and walked slowly to the pond. He stood with his back to the pond and jerked the can. It poured all the water out at once.

'My, but it's heavy!' panted Brer Terrapin. 'I guess you've got a hard job this morning, Brer Rabbit. Why don't you get your friends to come along and help you?'

'Huh! As if Brer Fox and Brer Wolf would fill my pond for me!' said Brer Rabbit.

'You let me manage things for you,' said Brer Terrapin with a sly grin. 'You let me manage things, Brer Rabbit. You've always been a good friend to me, and if you'll let me have a swim in your pond now and again, I'll just see if I can't get you a bit of help this morning!'

'All right, Brer Terrapin, you try,' said Brer Rabbit, and he watched Brer Terrapin crawling out of his gate.



Well, Brer Terrapin, he went down the road, and soon he met Brer Fox.

'Heyo, old shellyback, where have you been this long time?' said Brer Fox.

'Oh, I've just come from Brer Rabbit's,' said Brer Terrapin. 'And my, he gave me such a treat! He let me help him pour water into his pond! It went slishy-sloshy, slishy-sloshy into the empty pond, a real treat to see it! It's fun to play with water, isn't it, Brer Fox? But it's no use *you* going along to Brer Rabbit's, for I don't suppose he'll give you a treat like that. It's only because I'm a friend of his!'

'Well, I'm a friend of his too!' said Brer Fox. 'Haven't I known him for years and years? My, I guess we've done more things together than any other creatures in the world. If I want to pour water into his pond, I just *know* he'd let me!'

'All right, you go and see, Brer Fox,' said Brer Terrapin, putting his head inside his shell to grin to himself. 'You go and see!'

So Brer Fox went along to Brer Rabbit's, and he soon heard Brer Rabbit singing, 'Hi ho! Hi ho!' and he heard the sound of water splashing merrily into the pond.

'Heyo, Brer Rabbit!' yelled Brer Fox. 'You seem

to be mighty busy this morning. That's a fine job you're doing.'

'Oh, a mighty fine job!' said Brer Rabbit, winking to himself. 'A job that everyone would like to do, Brer Fox. I just gave Brer Terrapin a turn at it, because he's a very old friend of mine, and I like giving him a treat.'

'Well, I'm an old friend of yours too,' said Brer Fox. 'You let me have a turn as well, Brer Rabbit. I don't like Brer Terrapin going around saying he's the only friend of yours that helps you with your pond. You let me have a turn too.'

'Why, Brer Fox, I'd be pleased to,' said Brer Rabbit. 'Yes, yes, you have a turn – have two turns – have ten turns if you want to! I'm not one to be selfish. No – if my friends want a share in my pleasures, they are welcome to them. You take the can, Brer Fox, and have a good time!'

So Brer Fox dragged the heavy can to and fro a good many times, whilst Brer Rabbit sat on the warm sunny wall and smoked his pipe and talked.

Now it wasn't long before Brer Bear and Brer Wolf came along and looked over the wall too.

'Heyo, Brer Rabbit,' said Brer Bear. 'We've just met Brer Terrapin, and he's been a-boasting and a-bragging that you've let him fill up your pond

because he's such an old friend of yours. And he said he was mighty certain you wouldn't give anyone else that treat – and here we see Brer Fox playing with the water too!'

'Oh, Brer Bear,' said Brer Rabbit politely, 'that's too bad of Brer Terrapin to go around saying I won't give any of my friends but him a chance to play with my pond. Brer Fox, he came along and said just the same thing – and I'm giving him a treat too! If you want to join in, you just say the word. I'm not the man to stop anyone having a good time!'

Well, by this time Brer Fox was nearly worn out with carrying the heavy can. So he spoke up at once.

'And I'm not the man to be selfish either. I'll let Brer Bear and Brer Wolf have a turn now. That's only fair!'

So Brer Wolf and Brer Bear came in at the gate and set to work to fill the can and empty the water into the pond. My, but it was nearly full now! It only needed about four more cans and it would overflow.

Cousin Wildcat looked over the wall and grinned. Brer Rabbit hopped off to the garden-seat, for he didn't trust Cousin Wildcat's claws.

'Heyo, Brer Rabbit,' said Cousin Wildcat. 'I just heard from Brer Terrapin that you've got Brer Fox and Brer Wolf and Brer Bear doing all your hard work for you. Ah, you're a smart one, Brer Rabbit, no doubt about that! But you don't catch me coming along and carrying your heavy cans for you all morning long. No – my brains are as good as yours *any* day, Brer Rabbit!'

Brer Fox, Brer Wolf, and Brer Bear stood and stared in surprise. Then they turned their eyes on Brer Rabbit, who began to feel mighty uncomfortable. But he put a bold face on it and spoke up well.

'Brer Fox! Brer Wolf! Brer Bear! Are you going to stand there, and let Cousin Wildcat make out I've tricked you, when all you've been doing is to have a treat? You go for him right now, and make him say he's sorry!'

So Brer Fox, Brer Wolf, and Brer Bear jumped over the wall and chased Cousin Wildcat right into the middle of the wood. He fled up a tree and laughed at them. 'Go and ask Brer Terrapin!' he cried. 'Maybe you'll believe *him*!'

But when the three of them hunted for Brer Terrapin, he was nowhere to be found! He was having a fine swim in Brer Rabbit's nice full pond –

and every now and again he would come up to the top and wink his eye at Brer Rabbit. Then down he'd go to the bottom – ker-blinkety-blunk!