

# Brer Rabbit Falls Down the Well

retold by  
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One day, Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox and Brer Coon and Brer Bear and a lot of other animals decided to work together to plant a garden full of corn for roasting. They started early in the morning and raked and dug and raked some more, breaking up the hard ground so it would be ready for planting. It was a hot day, and Brer Rabbit got tired mighty quick. But he kept toting off the brush and clearing away the debris 'cause he didn't want no one to call him lazy.

Then Brer Rabbit got an idea. "Ow!" he shouted as loudly as he could. "I got me a briar in my hand!" He waved a paw and stuck it into his mouth. The other critters told him he'd better pull out the briar and wash his hand afore it got infected. That was just what Brer Rabbit wanted to hear. He hurried off, looking for a shady spot to take a quick nap. A little ways down the road, he found an old well with a couple of buckets hanging inside it, one at the top, and one down at the bottom.

"That looks like a mighty cool place to take a nap," Brer Rabbit said, and hopped right into the bucket.

Well, Brer Rabbit was mighty heavy - much heavier than the bucket full of water laying at the bottom. When he jumped into the empty bucket, it plummeted right down to the bottom of the well. Brer Rabbit hung onto the sides for dear life as the second bucket whipped passed him, splashing water all over him on its way to the top. He had never been so scared in his life.

Brer Rabbit's bucket landed with a smack in the water and bobbed up and down. Brer Rabbit was afraid to move, in case the bucket tipped over and landed him in the water. He lay in the bottom of the bucket and shook and shivered with fright, wondering what would happen next.

Now Brer Fox had been watching Brer Rabbit all morning. He knew right away that Brer Rabbit didn't have a briar in his paw and wondered what that rascal was up to. When Brer Rabbit snuck off, Brer Fox followed him and saw him jump into the bucket and disappear down the well.

Brer Fox was puzzled. Why would Brer Rabbit go into the well? Then he thought: "I bet he has some money hidden away down there and has gone to check up on it." Brer Fox crept up to the well, listening closely to see if he could hear anything. He didn't hear nothing. He peered down

into the well, but all was dark and quiet, on account of Brer Rabbit holding so still so the bucket wouldn't tip him into the water.

Finally, Brer Fox shouted down into the well: "Brer Rabbit, what you doing down there?"

Brer Rabbit perked up at once, realizing that this might be his chance to get out of the well.

"I'm a fishing down here, Brer Fox," says he. "I thought I'd surprise everyone with a mess of fresh fish for lunch. There's some real nice fish down here."

"How many fish are there?" asked Brer Fox skeptically, sure that the rascally rabbit was really counting his gold.

"Scores and scores!" cried Brer Rabbit. "Why don't you come on down and help me carry them out?"

Well, that was the invitation Brer Fox was waiting for. He was going to go down into that well and get him some of Brer Rabbit's gold.

"How do I get down there?" asked Brer Fox.

Brer Rabbit grinned. Brer Fox was much heavier than he was. If Brer Fox jumped into the empty bucket at the top, then Brer Rabbit's bucket would go up, and Brer Fox's bucket would go down! So he said: "Jest jump into the bucket, Brer Fox."

Well, Brer Fox jumped into the empty bucket, and down it plummeted into the dark well. He passed Brer Rabbit about halfway down. Brer Rabbit was clinging to the sides of the bucket with all his might 'cause it was moving so fast. "Goodbye Brer Fox," he shouted as he rose. "Like the saying goes, some folks go up, and some go down! You should make it to the bottom all safe and sound."

Brer Rabbit jumped out of the well and ran back to the garden patch to tell the other critters that Brer Fox was down in the well muddying up the waters. Then he danced back to the well and shouted down to Brer Fox: "There's a hunting man coming along to get a drink o' water, Brer Fox. When he hauls you up, you'd best run away as fast as you can!"

Then Brer Rabbit went back to the garden patch. When the thirsty hunter hauled up the bucket full of water, a wet and shaky Brer Fox sprang out and ran away before the hunter could grab for his gun.

An hour later, Brer Fox and Brer Rabbit were both back in the garden, digging and hauling away debris and acting like nothing had happened. Except every once in a while, Brer Fox would look

sideways at Brer Rabbit and grin, and the rascally rabbit would start to laugh and laugh 'cause both of them had looked so silly plummeting up and down in that ol' dark well.