



Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby

Joel Chandler Harris

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The original tale of Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby appeared in the Cherokee Advocate in 1845, but a number of similar Cherokee and African Slave stories involving a rabbit trickster appeared around the same time.

In this story, which is filled with fairly heavy dialect, the author tells us how Brer Rabbit uses his wits to convince his enemies, fox and wolf, to cast him into a patch of briars rather than to get even with him using a more conventional (and more successful) method. Only when the deed has been done, do fox and wolf realize they have been tricked.

The author, Joel Chandler Harris, (1845-1908) started collecting materials for a series of books featuring the character of Brer Rabbit in the 1870's. Mr. Harris had become familiar with many of the stories he wrote down during the time he worked as a printer's devil for a newspaper run by Joseph Turnwold, who also owned a plantation using slave labor.

In later years, he worked for other newspapers and magazines, including The Saturday Evening Post.

A number of other well-known authors such as Mark Twain and A. A. Milne have credited Harris with influencing their own writing careers.



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