THE ADVENTURES OF
BRER RABBIT

OPENING NUMBER - HOW DO YOU DO

RUBY, ROSIE, HANNAH, REESE, SHAYNA
How do you do?

BRER TURTLE & BRER BEAVER
Fine!

MS. RACCOON, SISTER SQUIRREL, SISTER SKUNK, SISTER RABBIT
A friendly greetin'.

BRER TURTLE & BRER BEAVER
How do you do?

MS. RACCOON, SISTER SQUIRREL, SISTER SKUNK, SISTER RABBIT
Say it when you're meetin'.

QUEEN DEER, SPARROW, LADY DOE
How do you do?

MS. RACCOON, SISTER SQUIRREL, SISTER SKUNK, SISTER RABBIT
With everyone repeatin':

ALL
Pretty good, sure as you're born.

What goes up is sure to come down,
Penny lost is a penny found,
I'll "howdy" you, you'll "howdy" back,
This for that an' tit for a tat.
BRER FOX & BRER WEASEL
How do you do?

BRER BEAR & BRER WOLF
Fine, how are you?

BRER FOX & BRER WEASEL
How you come on?

BRER BEAR & BRER WOLF
Pretty good, sure as you're born.

MS. RACCOON, SISTER SQUIRREL, SISTER SKUNK, SISTER RABBIT
Stop jumpin’, kids. You'll run out of breath. Why don't you sit down and calm yourselves?

RUBY, ROSIE, HANNAH, REESE, SHAYNA
Well the grasshopper jump, and so do the flea. I do what I like, and that suits me!

BRER TURTLE & BRER BEAVER
How do you do?

MS. RACCOON, SISTER SQUIRREL, SISTER SKUNK, SISTER RABBIT
Fine. How are you?

BRER TURTLE & BRER BEAVER
How you come on?

MS. RACCOON, SISTER SQUIRREL, SISTER SKUNK, SISTER RABBIT
Pretty good, sure as you're born.

BRER RABBIT
The weather's good. The fishin’s fine.

SISTER RABBIT
(to Brer Rabbit)
Now what do you do with all your time?

BRER RABBIT
Oh, I zigs and I zags, I to’s and I fro's. That's what you're askin'
and that's what you knows.

RUBY, ROSIE, HANNAH, REESE, SHAYNA
How do you do?
GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Fine. How are you?

RUBY, ROSIE, HANNAH, REESE, SHAYNA
How you get on?

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Pretty good, sure as you’re born.

SISTER RABBIT
Mind now, Brer Rabbit, better mend your ways. You’re headin’ for trouble one of these days.

MS. RACCOON, SISTER SQUIRREL, SISTER SKUNK
Warnin’ that rabbit is wastin’ your breath!

BRER RABBIT
Don’t worry about me; I can take care of myself!

CAST

ACT I, SCENE 1

[Cast exits, leaving BRER TURTLE and BRER BEAVER sitting at the edge of the stage. Brer Turtle hums songs softly to himself.]

FISH VOICE
Is that all you got to put in the water, Brer Turtle?

BRER TURTLE
That there’s a good worm, Brer Fish. I dug it up myself.

FISH VOICE
Maybe you did a week ago or a month! Either way, I ain’t bitin’ it!

[Splash. Brer Beaver laughs. Enter SALLY MEADOWS, looking around at the woods for her first time. She spies Brer Turtle and Brer Beaver and approaches slowly.]
BRER TURTLE
How-do, young lady.

SALLY
My imagination’s runnin’ away from me… I swear that turtle just talked.

BRER BEAVER
Well, of course he did.

SALLY
You talk too! I’ve never met animals that talk.

BRER TURTLE
Have you ever tried having a conversation with one?

SALLY
No, sir.

BRER TURTLE
Well, there you are.

BRER BEAVER
You from that new house built over yonder?

SALLY
Yes, sir. My name’s Sally Meadows. I live there with my Pappy.
(pause)
The fish bitin’?

BRER BEAVER
(giggling)
Well, Brer Turtle? Are the fish bitin’?

BRER TURTLE
No… but they’re hollerin’ pretty good.

SALLY
Perhaps you can tell me… are there any other children in these parts?

BRER BEAVER
Sure is… Here come some now.

[Enter RUBY RABBIT, ROSIE RABBIT, HANNAH HEDGEHOG, REESE RACCOON, and SHAYNA SKUNK, all laughing. They are shortly followed by SISTER RABBIT, SISTER SKUNK, MS. RACCOON, and SISTER SQUIRREL.]
SISTER SKUNK
Are you girls playing nice?

GIRLS
(sweetly)
Yes, m’am.

MS. RACCOON
Watch out for them long-tooths, like Brer Fox and Brer Weasel.

SHAYNA
We will.

SALLY
(to Brer Turtle and Brer Beaver)
Excuse me, sir, but them children’s animals too.

BRER BEAVER
And…?

BRER TURTLE
My young, Ms. Meadows, if you’re to fit in here, you’d best open your eyes and open your heart. Just look at them young’uns playin’.

RUBY & ROSIE
Now Old Dan Tucker was a fine old man
Washed his face in a fryin’ pan.

SHAYNA, HANNAH, REESE
Combed his hair with a wagon wheel
And died with a toothache in his heel

RUBY, ROSIE, SHAYNA, HANNAH, REESE
Get out the way, Old Dan Tucker,
You’re too late to get your supper.
Get out the way, Old Dan Tucker,
You’re too late to get your supper.

SISTER RABBIT, SISTER SQUIRREL, SISTER SKUNK, MS. RACCOON
Now Old Dan Tucker come to town
Ridin’ a billy goat, leadin’ a hound.
The hound dog barked, the billy goat jumped,
And landed Old Tucker on a stump.

CAST
Get out the way, Old Dan Tucker,
You’re too late to get your supper.
Get out the way, Old Dan Tucker,
You're too late to get your supper.

BRER RABBIT, BRER TURTLE, BRER BEAVER
Now Old Dan Tucker got drunk and fell
In the fire. Didn’t turn out well.
A red-hot coal got in his shoe
An, oh my Lord, the ashes flew.

CAST
Get out the way, Old Dan Tucker,
You’re too late to get your supper.
Get out the way, Old Dan Tucker,
You’re too late to get your supper.

LADY DOE, SPARROW, MAMMY MUD PATTER, BRER BEAR
Now Old Dan Tucker come to town,
Swinging them ladies all around.
First to the right and then to the left,
Then to the gal that he loved best.

CAST
Get out the way, Old Dan Tucker,
You’re too late to get your supper.
Get out the way, Old Dan Tucker,
You’re too late to get your supper.

Get out the way, Old Dan Tucker,
You’re too late to get your supper.
Get out the way, Old Dan Tucker,
You’re too late to get your supper.

[Emily waves to the young animals.]

MS. SQUIRREL
I see a young lady who’s looking for some friends.

SISTER SKUNK
That’s a human child, Ms. Squirrel

REESE
Maybe we better not play with her?

RUBY
She looks safe enough to me.

SISTER RABBIT
You got too much of your Uncle in you.
SISTER SQUIRREL
She’s harmless, I’m sure.

SISTER RABBIT
I’d prefer they stay here.

RUBY
But Mom—

SISTER RABBIT
But what?

RUBY
Nothing.

ROSIE
Hannah, you go on and say ‘hi’.

HANNAH
Why me?

ROSIE
‘Cause you’re the only one with no momma to tell you ‘no’.

[Hannah crosses to Sally.]

HANNAH
How do you do?

SALLY
Fine. How are you?

HANNAH
Pretty good. …Would you like to play with me and my friends?

[Hannah pauses, seeing Sister Rabbit’s scowl. Brer Beaver, seeming to mind his own business, whispers something in Sally’s ear.]

SALLY
If it’s okay with their mommas, lil’ Hedgehog.

SISTER SQUIRREL
What do you say, ladies? There couldn’t be a sweeter little belle in all the region.

[Moms nod. Children rush off together.]

[Exit all, happily, except Grammy Mud Patter. Enter BRER FOX, BRER WOLF, and BRER WEASEL.]
BRER FOX
There just ain’t no justice.

BRER WEASEL
You said it, Brer Fox.

BRER WOLF
We got this whole forest full of juicy animals…

BRER FOX
And we can’t hardly catch one for our dinner.

BRER WEASEL
It’s all due to that interfering Brer Rabbit.

BRER WOLF
The funniest part is: he don’t particularly care ‘bout them other animals.

BRER WEASEL
That’s what you say? Then why’s he always unraveling our plans?

BRER WOLF
‘Cause he don’t particularly care ‘bout us twice as much.

BRER FOX
Our lives would sure be easier if these animals caught themselves.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Your lives would be easier if you just left them alone. Now get off my land before I snap your tails from your backsides.

BRER WEASEL
Oi’ Grammy Mud Patter, if you think we’re scared of you, then—

PAPPY MUD PATTER
Go!!!

[Brer Fox, Brer Wolf, and Brer Weasel scatter. LADY DOE enters majestically attended by SIR SPARROW and BRER BEAR.]

SPARROW
The countryside is producing an impressive crop this year, Lady Doe. All the animals are working hard.

LADY DOE
All except for Brer Fox, Brer Wolf, and Brer Weasel, I’m sure.
GRAMMY MUD PATTER
They’re working hard… workin’ hard at tryin’ to catch the others.

BRER BEAR
Haw-haw. That’s there’s a good one, Grammy.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Your approval makes me feel all warm and fuzzy, Brer Bear.

BRER BEAR
Truly? It does?

[She glares at him.]

SPARROW
I don’t think it does, Brer Bear.

BRER BEAR
But she said…

SPARROW
I know. Let it go.

LADY DOE
And what of Brer Rabbit?

SPARROW
You know him, Lady Doe. He doesn’t lift a finger ‘less there’s some mischief in it.

LADY DOE
And yet he’s the hardest to catch for those scoundrels.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
That’s precisely why he’s so hard to catch, dear—

BRER BEAR
(gaffawing)
Deer…

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
He’s not tied to a family. Even though he’s got his sister and her nieces, he keeps no allegiance, except to himself.

LADY DOE
Oh, I don’t know. I think, deep down in his heart, he cares about others.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
His heart is about as useful to us as Brer Bear’s head.
BRER BEAR
Why, thank you, Grammy. Thank you very much.

SPARROW
Brer Bear, what’s say you and I do a patrol? You head that way.

ACT I, SCENE 2

[BRER BEAVER and BRER TURTLE are inspecting a well. SISTER SQUIRREL is bringing them lunch. RUBY, ROSIE, SALLY, HANNAH, PATTY, REESE, and SHAYNA enter.]

REESE
How-do, Brer Beaver, Brer Turtle.

SHAYNA
Whatchya all doin’?

BRER TURTLE
Just finishin’ up this here well.

HANNAH
A well? What’s it for?

SALLY
A well gathers water from beneath the ground.

SISTER SQUIRREL
You use it for drinking, dear.

BRER BEAVER
And we had to dig mighty deep to reach that water.

ROSIE
Why don’t you just use the stream?

RUBY
Why Patty, don’t you know nothin’? Water from underground is cleaner.

ROSIE
Don’t seem like it would be.

RUBY
Well, seemin’ and is’n are two different things, ain’t they, Sister Squirrel?
SISTER SQUIRREL
I suspect that ‘seeming’ and ‘being’ are two different things, Ruby Rabbit.

SHAYNA
How’s it work?

BRER TURTLE
This rope here’s got a bucket at each end.

BRER BEAVER
One’s at the bottom, full of water, and, while you pull it up, the other goes down to fill itself with water.

HANNAH
Mighty clever.

BRER TURTLE
Yes, but don’t you all go playin’ with it. The bottom of a well’s no good for young ‘uns.

SISTER SQUIRREL
You heard him, girls. Go off and play somewhere else now.

[Exit Brer Beaver, Brer Turtle, and Sister Squirrel. Ruby and Rosie lean over the well.]

ROSIE
It sure is a long way down.

REESE
You two, they told us not to go playin’ with it.

SALLY
C’mon. You both are makin’ me a jumble of nerves.

HANNAH
My quills are shakin’ terrible just watchin’ ya.

RUBY
Tain’t nothin’ to be scared of. We got better balance than—

[They fall in. Hannah, Sally, Reese, and Shayna rush to the well.]

HANNAH, SALLY REESE, & SHAYNA
Ruby! Rosie!

RUBY & ROSIE
Help!
SHAYNA
We’re gonna get your mom! Hold on!

ROSIE
We’ll be okay a while in this bucket, but hurry!

[Exit Hannah, Sally, Reese, and Shayna. After a pause, enter BRER FOX, BRER WOLF and BRER WEASEL.]

BRER FOX
My stomach’s rumblin’ something terrible.

BRER WEASEL
(looking in well)
Brer Fox, you remember sayin’ that life would be easier if the animals started catchin’ themselves?

BRER FOX
Yeah. What about it?

BRER WEASEL
I think our lives just got easier.

BRER FOX
Well, I’ll be. Them’s Brer Rabbit’s nieces…

BRER WOLF
Hello, girls. You in some trouble down there?

RUBY
We’ll be okay.

BRER WOLF
Nonsense. We’ll pull you up.

ROSIE
No, no. We… we… like being down here.

BRER FOX
Brer Wolf, you go and get the fire started. We’ll fish ‘em out.

BRER WOLF
Why don’t you go? I’ll stay.

BRER WEASEL
If you stayed, you might gobble ‘em up, leaving nothing for us.
BRER WOLF
Who says you won’t do the same?

BRER FOX & BRER WEASEL
We do!

[Exit Brer Wolf, angrily.]

BRER FOX
Girls, we got rid of that scoundrel, Brer Wolf. Now let us pull you up.

RUBY
We told you, we don’t want to leave.

[Enter BRER RABBIT.]

BRER RABBIT
Whatchya got down there, Brer Fox?

BRER WEASEL
Brer Rabbit!

BRER FOX
Thank goodness you’re here. Your nieces are trapped in the well. Help us pull them up.

BRER RABBIT
(looking in)
Now, why would I do that? How you get on, girls?

RUBY & ROSIE
Pretty good… sure as you’re born.

BRER RABBIT
There. You see?  
(walking away)
You have yourself a nice day, Brer Fox. Say ‘hello’ to Brer Wolf for me.

BRER WEASEL
What are you up to, Brer Rabbit? Your nieces are stuck in this well!

BRER RABBIT
They ain’t stuck, Brer Weasel. They’re fishin’.

BRER WEASEL
Fishin’?!
RUBY & ROSIE
Fishin!

BRER FOX
There’s fish down there?

BRER RABBIT
More than you can shake a stick at. Last time I was down there I caught twenty-three big ones.

BRER WEASEL
Twenty-three?

BRER FOX
How do you get down there?

BRER RABBIT
Just jump in that bucket, of course.

[Brer Fox and Brer Weasel consider, then grab bucket and jump down. The rope runs and Ruby and Rosie come popping out. Brer Rabbit helps them out.]

BRER FOX
Brer Rabbit! There ain’t no fish down here!

BRER RABBIT
Sure is! I see two wide-mouthed suckers right there! Ha-ha!

[They turn, laughing, as BRER WOLF enters.]

BRER WOLF
Everything’s set, Brer Fox! Have you got—

[Brer Wolf sees the rabbits who freeze, then run. He chases them.]

ACT I, SCENE 3

[BRER RABBIT, RUBY, and ROSIE rush up to a hollow tree trunk and dive inside. They are quickly followed by BRER WOLF.]

BRER WOLF
You slipped up this time, Brer Rabbit! There’s no way out, except the way you went in! I’ll wait you out if it takes seven seasons.

[Enter Brer Bear.]
BRER BEAR  
(pause)  
Brer Weasel, you causin’ mischief?

BRER WOLF  
Brer Bear! Uh… Brer Rabbit is stuck in this tree. I gotta help him. You stay here while I get my ax to cut it down.

BRER BEAR  
That’s sure nice of you, Brer Wolf.

BRER WOLF  
He might try to get himself out. Don’t you let him. I’m afraid he’ll hurt himself.

[Exit Brer Wolf. There is a silent pause as Brer Bear stares at the hole.]

BRER RABBIT  
(poking head out)  
Brer Bear, is that you?

BRER BEAR  
Now, don’t go tryin’ to get out, Brer Rabbit. You’ll hurt yourself.

ROSIE  
No, no. We’re hidin’ in here!

RUBY  
Brer Wolf’s gonna try to eat us!

BRER BEAR  
Nope. He’s fixin to rescue you. Went to get his ax and everything. Now, sit tight. I ain’t lettin’ you out ‘til he comes.

BRER RABBIT  
(pause)  
I suppose you know best. …Want some honey while you wait?

BRER BEAR  
Honey…?

BRER RABBIT  
Sure! There’s the richest, most golden honey in here. Ain’t there, girls?

RUBY  
That’s right. We can squeeze it out the other side of the tree for you.

BRER BEAR  
Okay, then!
ROSIE
Get ready!

[Brer Bear rushes around to the other side of the tree. While he waits, Brer Rabbit, Rosie, and Ruby jump out of the hole and race away.]

BRER BEAR
Brer Rabbit? You got that honey yet? Brer Rabbit?
(looks in the hole)
…Uh-oh. Brer Rabbit!

[Enter Brer Wolf as Brer Bear begins to sob.]

BRER WOLF
Cheer up, Brer Bear. He’ll be free soon.

BRER BEAR
No, no, no… The tree… the tree… ate Brer Rabbit!

[Brer Wolf thrusts his head in the hole.]

BRER WOLF
What…? How…?

[Sobbing, Brer Bear trudges off, accidentally knocking Brer Wolf into the hole. The ax falls out of his hand and remains outside.]

BRER WOLF
Brer Bear? I’m stuck! Brer Bear!!!

ACT I, SCENE 4

[The well.]

BRER FOX
Curse that Brer Rabbit! How are we supposed to get out of here?

[Enter SISTER RABBIT, SISTER SKUNK, SISTER SQUIRREL, and MS. RACCOON along with REESE, SALLY, SHAYNA, and HANNAH.]

SHAYNA
They’re here! Here! In Brer Beaver’s well!

SISTER RABBIT
Ruby?! Rosie?! Girls, can you hear me?
SALLY
I’ll get Lady Doe!

[Exit Sally.]

BRER WEASEL
(trying to sound like one of the rabbits)
Mama?

SISTER RABBIT
…Rosie?

HANNAH
Her voice sounds awful scratchy.

SISTER SQUIRREL
Must be the terrible cold down there.

BRER WEASEL
Yes. My throat hurts.

SISTER RABBIT
Is your sister okay?

BRER FOX
(pause, also adopting high, silly voice)
I’m fine… but I need your help. So does Nosey.

MS. RACCOON
Rosie.

BRER FOX
Right… Rosie.

MS. RACCOON
Dear me, they’re delirious.

SISTER SKUNK
We’ll get you out. Ladies, grab the bucket with me. Pull!

REESE
They’ve gotten awful heavy!

BRER WEASEL
It’s all the water in our fur!

[Enter BRER BEAVER and BRER TURTLE.]
BRER TURTLE
What’s all the hubbub?

[The rope is let go. Brer Fox and Brer Weasel fall back in.]

BRER WEASEL
Curse the daisy! Can’t y’all do anything right?
(pause)
I mean… fiddle-dee-dee. I’m all wet again.

BRER BEAVER
Is someone down there?

HANNAH & SHAYNA
Ruby and Rosie fell in!

REES
We told them not to get so close, but did they listen…?

MS. RACCOON
Reese… now’s not the time.

REES
Sorry, m’am.
(softly)
They didn’t listen.

[Enter LADY DOE, GRAMMY MUD PATTER and SPARROW, led by SALLY.]

SALLY
Here’s the problem, your Majesty.

SISTER RABBIT
Lady Doe, you must help us! My daughters…

LADY DOE
The poor things. They must be suffering. Don’t worry. We’ll get them out.

SISTER SKUNK
We tried to pull them out, but couldn’t manage it.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
We need the strength of John Henry, we do.

SALLY
Who’s John Henry?
SISTER SQUIRREL
Tell her, Grammy. Tell her right.

GRAMMY MUD PATTERN
When John Henry was a little baby
Sittin' on his daddy's knee
He picked up a hammer and
a little piece of steel
And cried, "Hammer's gonna
be the life for me, Lord, Lord
Hammer's gonna be the life for me"

CAST
Now the captain he
said to John Henry
"I'm gonna bring that
steam drill around
I'm gonna bring that
steam drill out on these tracks
I'm gonna knock that
steel on down, God, God
I'm gonna knock that
steel on down.

John Henry told his captain
"Lord a man ain't nothin' but a man
But before I let that steam drill beat me down
I'm gonna die with a hammer in my hand, Lord, Lord
I'll die with a hammer in my hand"

John Henry driving on the right side
That steam drill driving on the left
Says, "Fore I let your steam drill beat me down
I'm gonna hammer myself to death, Lord, Lord,
I'll hammer my fool self to death"

Well captain said to John Henry
"What is that storm I hear?"
John Henry said, "That ain't no storm captain
That's just my hammer in the air, Lord, Lord
That's just my hammer in the air"

Well every, every Monday morning
When a blue bird, he began to sing
You could hear John Henry from a mile or more
You could hear John Henry's hammer ring, Lord, Lord
You can hear John Henry's hammer ring
I say, You can John Henry's hammer ring, Lord, Lord
You can John Henry's hammer ring.

BRER FOX
That was a lovely song. Now… does someone want to get me out of here?!

[They pull together. As they're pulling, in comes Brer Rabbit, Rosie, and Ruby.]

ROSIE
Mama, what are y'all up to?

SISTER RABBIT
Rosie?! Ruby?! If you're there, then who's down the well?

[Brer Fox and Brer Weasel emerge. All scream and scatter. Enter BRER BEAR, sobbing.]

BRER BEAR
Poor old, Brer Rabbit, swallowed by a tree. WHY?

[On 'why' he unknowingly knocks Brer Fox and Brer Weasel back into the well.]

ACT I, SCENE 5

[Woods. Enter Brer Weasel.]

BRER WEASEL
Brer Rabbit… Brer Bear… got me stuck in that well for two nights… Where's the justice?!
(pause)
Why, Brer Weasel, you just had an idea, and you're a fool not to have thought of it sooner. I'll just play dead right on this trail. When the animals come close to check on me, I'll grab one and have my dinner.

[Falls dead. Enter MS. RACCOON, SISTER SKUNK, and SISTER SQUIRREL.]

MS. RACCOON
I don't expect Sister Rabbit will be letting her girls out anytime soon.

SISTER SKUNK
Not after that fiasco at the well.

MS. RACCOON
I've never seen her fuming so – 'specially at her brother.
SISTER SQUIRREL
Deep down, she was joyous, however—joyous that the girls were safe—and that her brother took good care of ‘em.

MS. RACCOON
Well, she hid those feelings well.

SISTER SKUNK
Stop, ladies. What do you see in the road?

MS. RACCOON
That’s Brer Weasel, or I’m a possum.

SISTER SKUNK
You figure he’s sleepin’?

SISTER SQUIRREL
I’ll throw this here nut. If he’s sleepin’, he’s sure to wake up.

[She throws it.]

MS. RACCOON
He ain’t moved.

SISTER SKUNK
I know what’ll get ‘im. I’ll spray him good. Watch him run.

[She sprays.]

MS. RACCOON
Well, I know that I feel like runnin’. You sure can make a fine stink.

SISTER SQUIRREL
But Brer Weasel ain’t so much as twitched…

SISTER SKUNK
You suspect he’s… dead?

SISTER SQUIRREL
He’d have to be—or, if he weren’t, your spray might’ve finished him.

[Sister Skunk and Sister Squirrel move closer to Brer Weasel, suddenly, but silently, Ms. Raccoon jumps forward, stopping them.]
MS. RACCOON (winking)
Sisters, there’s one sure way to know if that scoundrel is dead or not. Grammy Mud Patter told me for certain that a dead creature that’s being watched by other animals will raise its leg and holler “Wahoo!”

[Brer Weasel’s leg shoots up.]

BRER WEASEL
Wahoo!!

[Sister Skunk, Ms. Raccoon, and Sister Squirrel scatter. Brer Weasel, realizing he’s been tricked, drops leg and sighs. Enter Brer Bear.]

BRER BEAR
What’s that I smell? Brer Weasel’s gone and died! Poor thing.

[Brer Bear begins dragging Brer Weasel away.]

BRER WEASEL
Brer Bear, let me go.

BRER BEAR
Nope. You’re dead.

BRER WEASEL
I ain’t dead.

BRER BEAR
Yup, and you’re already rotting.

BRER WEASEL
Brer Bear…!!!

ACT I, SCENE 6

[GRAMMY MUD PATTER sits sewing in her cottage. She pauses as dogs can be heard howling in the distance. Suddenly, Brer Wolf bursts in.]

BRER WOLF
Save me, Grammy Mud Patter! Save me!

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Goodness, Brer Wolf, what’ve you done now?
BRER WOLF
While I was stuck in that tree, some huntin’ dogs sniffed me out. They’ve been chasin’ me all night.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Goodness! Well, I'll hide you. Get in the chest there. Them dogs know better than to mess with Grammy.

BRER WOLF
I sure am grateful!

[Brer Wolf jumps into chest. Grammy sits with her sewing. Dogs fade into distance.]

BRER WOLF
(from inside)
Are they gone, Grammy Mud Patter?

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
No, no. I can hear them sniffing around the chimney.

[Grammy goes to stove and place a cauldron by coals.]

BRER WOLF
What are you doing out there?

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Just fixing you a nice cup of elderberry tea.

[She begins poking holes in top of chest.]

BRER WOLF
What are you doing now?

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Just making some holes so you can get some air.

[We hear the water start to boil.]

BRER WOLF
What’s that I hear?

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Just the wind, I suppose.

[She takes cauldron and begins to pour boiling water on top of chest. Smoke starts coming out of it.]
BRER WOLF
What’s that I feel?

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Must be fleas biting ya.

BRER WOLF
They’re biting mighty hard. They’re eating me something terrible! Yeow!

[Brer Wolf leaps from chest and races out the door.]

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
(calling after)
That’ll teach you to chase after them rabbits and other young’uns!
(rings a triangle)
Hey, doggies! Come and get it!

ACT I, SCENE 7

[Sounds of a rain storm rise and fade. Brer Rabbit leaps along merrily. Suddenly, he leaps to the side.]

BRER RABBIT
Now, that’s some mud in the road. I could’ve sunk to my neck.

[Brer Rabbit continues and meets BRER TURTLE coming in the opposite direction pulling a wagon with bushels of vegetables.]

BRER RABBIT
What’ve you got there?

BRER TURTLE
Crops from the east-side garden. You know… the one you swore you would help me with?

BRER RABBIT
(sheepish)
Did I forget to stop on by?

BRER TURTLE
For an entire season. Now, clear out of the way.

BRER RABBIT
Hold up. There’s a mighty big sinkhole in the road and your wagon’s sure to get stuck if you go down it.
BRER TURTLE
I am not in the mood for your tricks.

[Brer Rabbit shrugs. Brer Turtle continues up the road and gets stuck in the mud.]

BRER TURTLE
You tried to warn me, Brer Rabbit. I apologize.

[Brer Rabbit tries to help him push it from the mud, but it won’t budge.]

BRER RABBIT
You’re gonna need Brer Bear to pull this wagon free.

BRER TURTLE
Can you go fetch him? You’re faster than me.

BRER RABBIT
Last time he saw me he started shoutin’ about me being a ghost and I should get back in the tree that ate me.

BRER TURTLE
Well then, will you guard the vegetables while I go get him.

BRER RABBIT
(sighs)
I suppose...

[Exit Brer Turtle. BRER RABBIT chuckles. After a short time RUBY, ROSIE, SALLY, REESE, SHAYNA, and HANNAH enter.]

ROSIE
How do you do, Uncle?

RUBY
Is that your wagon? It’s sure stuck in the mud.

SALLY
Those are fine lookin’ vegetables, Mr. Rabbit. Where’d you get them?

BRER RABBIT
Brer Turtle and I grew ‘em in the east-garden. I’m watchin’ over ‘em while he fetches Brer Bear to help.

REESE
You’re just gonna stay in the open road by yourself?

SHAYNA
What if Brer Fox or his friends come along?
HANNAH
They'll gobble you up if you can’t outrun ‘em.

BRER RABBIT
Well, I can outrun ‘em, but I wouldn’t. I have to protect the crop.

ROSIE
Maybe we can help you move ‘em.

RUBY
Sure, we can each take a bushel, right girls?

SALLY
I can probably take two.

REESE
We’ll take ‘em right to your house.

SHAYNA
C’mon, girls!

[They exit with all the vegetables. Enter Brer Turtle with Brer Bear.]

BRER BEAR
Brer Turtle, I thought you said you had a wagon full of vegetables.

BRER TURTLE
I did…

BRER BEAR
Then what happened…? It’s that tree again! That tree is eatin’ everything! Run for your life!

ACT II, SCENE 1

[SIR SPARROW pushes BRER RABBIT before LADY DOE, BRER BEAR, and GRAMMY MUD PATTER.]

SPARROW
Here he is, with a stomach about ready to burst.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Then at least his punishment’s begun.

BRER BEAR
You sure he ain’t no ghost?
LADY DOE
Was there anything left of Brer Turtle’s crop?

SPARROW
Top of a carrot here… Some stumps of lettuce… Not much.

LADY DOE
How could you do this, Brer Rabbit? Brer Turtle is a good, hard-working animal. By what right did you take his crop?

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
And you were supposed to help him raise that crop! He did all the raising. You did all the eating!

LADY DOE
And you tricked children into helping you! Your own nieces!

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Despicable.

LADY DOE
You are to be commended for helping them escape from the well and then from the tree, but then to turn around and do this… Every time I’m convinced that your heart is true…

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
…You do something to remind her it ain’t.

BRER RABBIT
(with sincerity)
Lady Doe, the look in your eyes has punished me more than any other penalty.

SPARROW
Don’t think that’s going to stop her from giving you one.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Let me have him over to my house for some tea.

BRER RABBIT
Sounds reasonable…

SPARROW
Does it? Go ask Brer Wolf if he thinks so.

LADY DOE
Brer Rabbit…
The world we know was built on skills,
But that alone don’t count.
Without the sweat and toil of the mind;
Well, it wouldn’t be worth a dime.

SPARROW
You got to live and give, share and care.
Really puts the love in the air.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
When your neighbor’s down and troubled.
You gotta pick him up. Nobody can live in despair.

CAST
Everybody let’s sing, sing, sing…
Everybody let’s sing (Let freedom ring)
Let’s all pitch in. Try to do our thing.
Make a better world to live in.
Everybody let’s sing, sing, sing…
Everybody let’s sing (Let freedom ring)
Let’s all pitch in. Try to do our thing.
Make a better world to live in.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Society has no priority,
We’re all one part of a whole.
When people scream and shout, you hafta hear ‘em out.
Everybody is a beautiful soul.

SPARROW
We gotta pull together, hand in hand.
We really got to do our best.

LADY DOE
Wouldn’t it be a perfect sight to see:
The whole world filled with happiness.

CAST
Everybody let’s sing, sing, sing…
Everybody let’s sing (Let freedom ring)
Let’s all pitch in. Try to do our thing.
Make a better world to live in.
Everybody let’s sing, sing, sing…
Everybody let’s sing (Let freedom ring)
Let’s all pitch in. Try to do our thing.
Make a better world to live in.
Everybody let’s sing, sing, sing…
Everybody let’s sing (Let freedom ring)
Let’s all pitch in. Try to do our thing.
Make a better world to live in.
Let’s all pitch in. Try to do our thing.
Make a better world to live in.

[Exit Cast]

LADY DOE
You are to re-plant the east garden… by yourself. Any tricks - if you get one other hand to help you or replace you - you will be forced to tear up the crop and start again. Now, go.

ACT II, SCENE 2

[Home of Sister Rabbit. Enter BRER BEAVER, SPARROW, and BRER BEAR.]

SPARROW
Sister Rabbit? You home?

[Enter RUBY and ROSIE.]

RUBY
How do you do, Brer Beaver, Brer Bear, Sir Sparrow…

ROSIE
We were just on our way to see the girls.

[Enter SISTER RABBIT.]

SISTER RABBIT
Stop. Into the garden with you and continue with the chores I gave you. And no eating anything ‘til supper.

SPARROW
Lady Doe says you need something fixed? I brought Brer Beaver and Brer Bear with me.

SISTER RABBIT
It’s the west wall, gentlemen. The boards are coming loose and the winds whips through the house terrible. Can you do something?

BRER BEAR
We’d be happy to help you, Sister Rabbit. Now, what needs to be done?
BRER BEAVER
Just follow my lead, Brer Bear.

[Exit Sister Rabbit. Brer Beaver and Sir Sparrow move to side of house. Sister Rabbit re-enters.]

SISTER RABBIT
I’m leaving some lunch here for you all. The chocolates might melt in the sun. I’ll leave them in the shade by the stone.

SPARROW
Much obliged, Sister Rabbit!

[Exit Sister Rabbit.]

BRER BEAVER
Fresh chocolate! That’s sure something to look forward to.

[They set to work. After a time, Sparrow looks toward the stone. He tries to stay focused, but keeps looking back, wanting the chocolate.]

SPARROW
(calling off-stage)
Here I am! What do you want?

BRER BEAVER
Sparrow! You scared me! What’re you yellin’ for?

SPARROW
My kids are calling. I’ll be back.

[Sparrow crosses. He walks past rock and pauses. Brer Beaver and Brer Bear resume work. Sparrow sneaks some chocolate, then returns.]

BRER BEAVER
Everything all right?

SPARROW
Oh… uh… My wife’s sick.

BRER BEAVER
Sorry to hear that.

[They resume working. Sparrow’s eye is drawn back toward the chocolate.]

SPARROW
(calling off-stage)
Hold on! I’m coming.
[Sparrow crosses. Brer Beaver and Brer Bear return to work. Sparrow takes some chocolate then returns.]

BRER BEAVER
How’s your wife?

SPARROW
Mighty low, Brer Beaver. Mighty low.

BRER BEAVER
Sorry to hear that.

[They resume working. Sparrow’s eye is drawn back toward the chocolate.]

SPARROW
(calling off-stage)
All right! I'm coming! I'm coming!

[Sparrow exits. Brer Beaver and Brer Bear return to work. Sparrow takes some chocolate, then returns.]

BRER BEAVER
How’s your wife?

SPARROW
She died.

BRER BEAVER
What?!

BRER BEAR
Was it that tree? Did it eat her?

BRER BEAVER
Hush, Brer Bear.
(to Sparrow)
Let’s stop. Let’s take some lunch, you poor thing.

[Brer Beaver, Brer Bear, and Sparrow cross. Brer Beaver goes to the rock.]

BRER BEAVER
Why, Sparrow, someone’s gone and eaten all the chocolate!

BRER BEAR
The tree…
BRER BEAVER
It weren’t no tree.

SPARROW
Who was here while I was gone? Was it that Brer Rabbit?

BRER BEAVER
Nobody was around! We were by ourselves.

SPARROW
And you’re sure you didn’t go and sneak some?

BRER BEAVER
I never would.

SPARROW
Well then, Brer Bear, you must’ve eaten it.

BRER BEAVER
Me?

SPARROW
It wasn’t me, it wasn’t no tree, and it wasn’t Brer Beaver. You’re the only one left.

BRER BEAR
… I suppose I did it then. I am sorry, Sparrow, Beaver. My mind must not have known what my stomach was doing.

SPARROW
Well, I’ll forgive you, but it’s a shame I didn’t get a nibble.

ACT II, SCENE 3

SALLY, SHAYNA, REESE, and HANNAH skip onto stage.

REESE
Poor Ruby and Rosie.

SALLY
First the well, now Brer Turtle’s crops…

REESE
You suspect their Mamma will ever let them out of the house?

SHAYNA
My Momma said we shouldn’t be punished for bein’ tricked by their uncle.
REESE
Their momma said that’s what they were punished for.

SALLY
She said they ought to know better.

HANNAH
‘Least they’s got Mommas to give them punishment or not.

REESE
Why, Hannah, you got life the best of any of us. You’re free!

SHAYNA
No one tellin’ you when to go to bed…

REESE
To brush up and look pretty…

SHAYNA
To stop snackin’ on sugar cubes…

SALLY
No, Hannah’s right. There ain’t nothin’ like what a Momma’s got with her daughter. Sure there may be fights and squabbles plenty, but Mommas and daughters are always drawn back together – long as they got each other.

HANNAH
(long pause, shifting mood)
Hey! Let’s play a game! Who wants to play leap-frog?

[All stare at Hannah.]

HANNAH
What? Why doesn’t anyone ever want to play leap-frog with me?

SHAYNA
It ain’t no wonder. You have prickles all over your back.

SALLY
Let’s race instead!

SHAYNA
All right! First one down to my Mom’s clothes line wins!

REESE
On your mark… get set…
(starts running)
…Go!
[They race around stage, merrily accusing Reese of cheating. Enter BRER FOX.]

BRER FOX
Well, helloo, ladies. Where you runnin’ off to?

REESE
(to friends)
Yikes! Brer Fox! He’ll catch us and stew us if we give him a chance.

HANNAH
I wish Ruby and Reese were here. They could think us out of this.

SALLY
But they ain’t… We got to do it.

SHAYNA
(thinks, then…)
Run, Brer Fox!

BRER FOX
What?

SHAYNA
There’s a hurricane coming! Ain’t there, girls?

REESE
Uh… yeah! As big a hurricane as anyone’s ever seen!

SALLY
That’s why we were runnin like we were!

HANNAH
Run and hide yourself, Brer Fox! Hide in a hole!

BRER FOX
I’m too big to fit in a hole!

SALLY
Uh… lay down then! Get yourself close to the ground!

REESE
No, no, Shayna! The wind might come and blow him away!

SHAYNA
Hug the tree, Brer Fox! Hug the tree!
HANNAH
What if the wind blows all day and all night?

SALLY
We’ll tie you to the tree, Brer Fox!

SHAYNA
That’ll keep you safe!

[They grab the line and start tying Brer Fox.]

BRER FOX
I can’t thank you girls enough. I surely can’t.
(long pause)
Girls? I don’t hear no hurricane.

SHAYNA
Nope.

BRER FOX
I don’t hear no wind.

HANNAH
Uh-uh.

BRER FOX
Ain’t a leaf moving in the trees.

REESE
Sure ain’t.

BRER FOX
So untie me.

SALLY
We’re afraid to.

[Enter Brer Rabbit lugging a heavy bag toward the gardens.]

BRER RABBIT
Ladies... what you caught there?

SHAYNA, SALLY, REESE, and HANNAH
Brer Fox.

BRER FOX
Brer Rabbit, be kind and untie me.
BRER RABBIT
I’d love to, Brer Fox, but… it’s just too too funny! And I do love to laugh!

I love to laugh
Loud and long and clear
I love to laugh
It's getting worse ev'ry year

The more I laugh
The more I fill with glee
And the more the glee
The more I'm a merrier me

[Enter Sister Rabbit with Ruby and Rosie.]

RUBY
Mom! Can we go over with Uncle and the girls?

ROSIE
Something sure has tickled their fancy!

[Enter MS. RACCOON, SHAYNA SKUNK, and SISTER SQUIRREL.]

SISTER RABBIT
Some people laugh through their noses
Sounding something like this "Mmm-mmm-mmm..." Dreadful!

[Brer Rabbit laughs in a hissing manner.]

Some people laugh through their teeth, goodness sake
Hissing and fizzing like snakes. ss-sss-sss.
Not at all attractive to my way of thinking.

SISTER SQUIRREL
Some laugh too fast – hoo-hee-haw-hee

MS. RACCOON
Some only blast - ha!

SISTER SKUNK
Others, they twitter like birds – hee-hee-hoo-hoo hee-hee-hoo-hoo

RUBY & ROSIE
Then there’s the kind
What can’t make up their mind – hoo-hoo HAW! mmm-mm – ss-ss heh?

SHAYNA, SALLY, REESE, HANNAH
When things strike us as funny
We can’t hide it inside
And squeak - as the squeakelers do
We’ve got to let go with a ho-ho-ho...
And a ha-ha-ha...too!

[Enter remainder of CAST, minus Brer Wolf and Brer Weasel.]

CAST
(minus Sister Rabbit)
We love to laugh
Loud and long and clear
We love to laugh
So ev’rybody can hear
The more you laugh
The more you fill with glee
And the more the glee
The more we’re a merrier we!

[Exit all except Brer Rabbit, who place-walks onstage. The tree with Brer Fox is rolled off. BRER TURTLE and BRER BEAVER approach from the other direction.]

BRER BEAVER
Why, Brer Turtle, look at Brer Rabbit’s good mood. Let’s not spoil it.

BRER TURTLE
He’d be right proud of me, Brer Beaver.

BRER BEAVER
Brer Turtle had me clock how long it took him to get around the lake.

BRER RABBIT
How many days was it?

BRER BEAVER
It was nine minutes, beating your record of ten.

BRER RABBIT
Prove it!

BRER BEAVER
Reckon you could do it again, Brer Turtle?

BRER TURTLE
Maybe I better not. It took a lot out of me.

BRER RABBIT
I knew it. He’s just blowin’ smoke.
BRER TURTLE
Am not!

BRER RABBIT
Then I'll race you! Or are you scared?

BRER TURTLE
…Fine! A race around the lake.

**ACT II, SCENE 4**

[Brer Fox, Brer Weasel, and Brer Wolf sit together.]

BRER WEASEL
I’m going to become a vegetarian.

BRER FOX
Don’t talk crazy. We ain’t licked yet.

BRER WOLF
We ain’t licked? You weren’t stuck in a tree, hunted by dogs, and then doused with boiling water!

BRER FOX
I was at the bottom of a well for two days with this clown and then tied to a tree. So, don’t talk to me about your troubles. Curse that Brer Rabbit.

BRER WEASEL
Here come some animals now. Let’s hide and then pounce on ‘em!

[They jump into orchestra pit, turn, and wait.]

SISTER RABBIT
Well, I don’t know who’s crazier. Brer Turtle for making such an outlandish claim or my brother for settin’ up the race.

MS. RACCOON
You don’t understand, Sister Rabbit. It’s a trick.

SISTER RABBIT
A trick? Brer Turtle has suffered enough from my brother’s tricks. I’m going to warn him.

SISTER SKUNK
No, no. You’ll spoil everything. It’s a trick on your brother.
SISTER SQUIRREL
He’s going to finally know what it feels like to be at the end of a joke.

MS. RACCOON
If he has any sense it’ll change his ways.

SISTER RABBIT
If he has any sense.

SISTER SKUNK
If nothing else, it might make him think twice before playing a trick in the future.

SISTER SQUIRREL
And thinking twice is better than thinking not at all.

[Exit. Brer Fox, Brer Weasel, and Brer Wolf return from pit.]

BRER FOX
A race, eh?

BRER WEASEL
I just gotta be there to see it – ol’ Brer Rabbit is gonna be as red as a tomater!

BRER WOLF
Ain’t you got no sense? All the animals are gonna turn out for this race.

BRER WEASEL
And?

BRER FOX
They’re all gonna cut to the finish line to see the end of the trick.

BRER WEASEL
And?

BRER WOLF
And it’s a ready-made feast!

[Exit.]

ACT II, SCENE 5

[ALL have gathered. BRER FOX, BRER WEASEL, and BRER WOLF can be seen spying through the trees.]
LADY DOE
I have been asked to stand as judge for this historic race. Are the participants here? Good. Sir Sparrow, could you please review the rules?

SPARROW
Each racer will take a different route. Brer Turtle has elected to take the rocky forest trail, leaving Brer Rabbit the smooth country road. These paths intersect several times. Guards will be posted at each intersection to make sure neither runner interferes with the other.

LADY DOE
Thank you. Now, Grammy Mud Patter would like to offer some words of encouragement.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Brer Turtle, if you manage to win this race, you will be the most famous turtle in our history. And even if you don’t, you should be congratulated for trying. Brer Rabbit, if you lose this race, you’ll be known as the slowest fool of a rabbit in this forest or anywhere.

LADY DOE
Thank you, Grammy… Shall we begin? Brer Bear, if you would…

BRER BEAR
Yup. Uh… now, on your mark… uh… get set… uh…uh… There’s a pretty butterfly up there…

SPARROW
Oh, for goodness sake! GO!

[Brer Rabbit shoots away like a rocket. Brer Turtle, at his fastest, can only jog away. Everyone is cheering until Brer Turtle is off-stage, then noise dies down.]

BRER BEAR
And go! … Boy, they is fast. Just disappeared.

LADY DOE
Quickly, everybody. Into the boats. Get across the lake to your posts.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Let’s let that rabbit taste some of his own medicine.

[Exit.]
ACT II, SCENE 6

[SPARROW, LADY DOE, and GRAMMY MUD PATTER wait along the first intersection. Enter Brer Rabbit, he pauses, jogging-in-place, and looks up the forest trail.]

BRER RABBIT
Not a sign of him! And I reckon there won’t be for some time. Sorry, Grammy, but I think I’ll be keepin’ my reputation as the fastest thing in the forest.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Your reputation passed by here thirty seconds ago, wearing a shell and answering to the name of Brer Turtle.

BRER RABBIT
He’s already gone by?! That ain’t possible!

SPARROW
You can’t say he didn’t warn you.

BRER RABBIT
Lady Doe, you wouldn’t lie to me. Honestly now, did he pass by or not?

LADY DOE
(pause)
You’d best get on, Brer Rabbit; time’s a wasting.

[Exit Brer Rabbit.]

ACT II, SCENE 7

[REESE, MS. RACCOON, SHAYNA, HANNAH, SALLY and SISTER SKUNK wait at the next crossing. Enter BRER RABBIT, he pauses, breathing heavy.]

MS. RACCOON
I wouldn’t stop if I were you, Brer Rabbit.

SISTER SKUNK
Brer Turtle passed by some time ago.

BRER RABBIT
Is it true, girls?

HANNAH
It is true, Mr. Rabbit, sir…
REESE
We seen him pass this very spot…

SHAYNA
With our own eyes…

SALLY
He was here with his shell and all…

[Exit Brer Rabbit.]

HANNAH, REESE, SALLY, SHAYNA
…Yesterday.

SISTER SKUNK
I almost feel sorry for that rabbit.

SISTER SKUNK & MS. RACCOON
Almost.

ACT II, SCENE 8

[SISTER RABBIT, RUBY, ROSIE, SALLY and SISTER SQUIRREL wait at third intersection. Enter BRER RABBIT, heaving and gasping.]

SISTER RABBIT
I’ve never seen such a thing as that turtle in all my days.

SISTER SQUIRREL
He passed by like a ghost late for Halloween.

RUBY & ROSIE
Uncle, we need to tell you somethin’…!

[Brer Rabbit looks to them. The girls hesitate, glancing to Sister Rabbit, who stares at them with a cocked head.]

RUBY & ROSIE
(meekly)
Good luck.

[Exit Brer Rabbit.]

SISTER SQUIRREL
Into the boat again! Let’s get to the finish line!
ACT II, SCENE 9

[ALL wait in a tight group, except Brer Rabbit. BRER FOX, BRER WEASEL, and BRER WOLF continue spying. Enter BRER RABBIT, dragging himself across finish line.]

BRER RABBIT
Did… did I do it? Did I beat him?

[He collapses. BRER TURTLE comes through crowd and crouches next to Brer Rabbit.]

BRER TURTLE
There, there. You rest now. You’ve done a great job.

BRER RABBIT
(slowly raising head.)
Thank you… Thank you… AHHH!!! Brer Turtle! Here already! How…? How…?

BRER TURTLE
Gotchya! I didn’t go more than twenty paces before coming back to wait for ya.

MS. RACCOON
If it makes you feel better, you won the race.

BRER TURTLE
This… this was a trick?!

SISTER SKUNK
We wanted to teach you a lesson.

LADY DOE
You need to understand how it feels when these jokes are played.

SISTER RABBIT
Now, have you finally learned something?

BRER RABBIT
I’ve learned. I’ve learned that you’re all low-down, no-good cheats; and I hope you get gobbled up by Brer Fox, Brer Weasel, and Brer Wolf!

RUBY
Even us?

ROSIE
We wanted to warn you!
BRER RABBIT
Wantin’ to and doin’ are two different things. Ain’t they?

[Exit Brer Rabbit.]

LADY DOE
It’s as I expected...

SPARROW
Lady…?

LADY DOE
Those who love to play tricks often can’t take tricks. They feel better about themselves by thinking they’re smarter than other folk. When they’re made a fool of, all their confidence gets whipped away.

[Brer Fox, Brer Weasel, and Brer Wolf emerge.]

BRER FOX
True, true, true… It sure is tough to find out you’ve been tricked.

BRER WEASEL
Yours was a good one! You sure outwitted Brer Rabbit.

BRER WOLF
And you sent him off. I don’t expect he’ll be around here anytime soon.

BRER FOX
Which leaves you little morsels all to our own.

SPARROW
Brer Bear! Do something!

[Brer Bear runs away.]

SPARROW
Wonderful.

[The animals huddle together as Brer Fox, Brer Weasel, and Brer Wolf surround them.]

ACT II, SCENE 10

[Cave. BRER FOX and BRER WEASEL are preparing a giant cauldron while BRER WOLF guards the entrance. ALL animals and SALLY are caught except Brer Bear and Brer Rabbit.]
REESE
Momma, I’m scared.

MS. RACCOON
There, there, Reese. There, there…

SALLY
I want to go home.

HANNAH
Why do they have to be so terrible?

SISTER SKUNK
There’s always been bad folk, Lil’ Hannah. Always will be…

SISTER SQUIRREL
Don’t despair. They have the upper-hand now, but it won’t always be that way.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
We shall overcome
We shall overcome
We shall overcome someday

Oh, here in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome someday.

BRER WEASEL
Stop your singing!

LADY DOE, SPARROW, BRER TURTLE, BRER BEAVER
We’ll walk hand in hand
We’ll walk hand in hand
We’ll walk hand in hand someday

GRAMMY MUD PATTER, LADY DOE, SPARROW, BRER TURTLE, BRER BEAVER
Well, here in my heart
I do believe
We’ll walk hand in hand someday.

BRER WOLF
He said, stop singing!
SISTER SKUNK, MS. RACCOON, SISTER RABBIT, SISTER SQUIRREL
We shall live in peace
We shall live in peace
We shall live in peace someday

ALL
Well, here in my heart
I do believe
We shall live in peace someday.

BRER FOX
If you don’t stop your mouths, we’ll stop ‘em for ya!

SALLY, ROSIE, RUBY, HANNAH, SHAYNA, REESE
We are not afraid
We are not afraid
We shall overcome someday.

ALL
Well, here in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome someday.

BRER FOX, BRER WEASEL, BRER WOLF
We’re warnin’ you…

ALL
We shall overcome
We shall overcome
We shall overcome someday

Well, here in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome someday.
We shall overcome someday.
[Song ends.]

BRER WEASEL
Finally…

[Enter BRER RABBIT.]

BRER RABBIT
Well, well, well, y’all ended up in a fine mess, didn’t ya?

BRER WOLF
Brer Rabbit, what are you doing here?
BRER RABBIT
Just come to see them who liked playing such a mean trick on me.

LADY DOE
Brer Rabbit, help us!

BRER RABBIT
No, I came to see ‘em eat you.
(pause)
You’d best hurry up, though, Brer Fox. In fact, I’d just gobble ‘em raw.

BRER FOX
What are you talkin’ about, Brer Rabbit?

BRER RABBIT
Well, it turns out Brer Bear was right all along. There’s a crazy animal-eating tree roaming the forest and it’s caught the scent of so many animals here.

BRER WEASEL
There ain’t no such thing. If Brer Bear was right, why weren’t you eaten by one?

BRER RABBIT
I almost was! And it went and ate Brer Bear just a moment ago! Saw it myself. There ain’t no end to the appetite of that monster.

BRER WOLF
Well, why don’t you just join the group and wait for him to come?

BRER RABBIT
I’d rather not.

BRER WOLF
You don’t have a choice.

[A low monstrous growl can be heard.]

BRER WEASEL
Wh-wh-what was that?

RUBY
It’s the monster tree come to eat us.

[Now the growl becomes a whail.]

ROSIE
Sounds mighty hungry.

[Enter TREE MONSTER, roaring viciously. All except Brer Rabbit cower.]
BRER WEASEL
It’s true! It’s true!

BRER FOX
Get deeper into the cave!

[Exit Brer Wolf, Brer Weasel, and Brer Bear.]

[Tree Monster removes branches. It’s Brer Bear.]

BRER BEAR
That was a good one, Brer Rabbit. A mighty good trick.

SISTER RABBIT
Brer Rabbit… I don’t know whether to strangle you or kiss you.

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
He is a clever one – ain’t no denyin’ it.

LADY DOE
Come everybody, let’s get out of here right quick!

[Exit all except BRER RABBIT, RUBY, and ROSIE.]

RUBY
How’d you know we were taken away?

BRER RABBIT
Brer Bear went and fetched me. He explained everything… in his way.

ROSIE
We’re sorry we were part of that trick played on you.

BRER RABBIT
No, no. It was justified. As mad as I was before, I understand it was justified. Tricks is best served to scoundrels who deserve it.

[BRER FOX, BRER WEASEL, and BRER WOLF have re-entered while he was talking.]

BRER FOX
And which scoundrels might they be?

[They grab the rabbits.]

RUBY & ROSIE
What are we gonna do?
BRER RABBIT
There ain’t nothin’ to do, girls. They caught us fair and square. How we gonna go, gentlemen?

BRER WEASEL
We’re gonna roast ya!

BRER RABBIT
Well, that’s mighty kind of ya. Thank you. Long as you don’t toss us in the Briar Patch. Right, girls?

BRER WOLF
Maybe roastin’ will take too long. Maybe we’ll just fry you in a pan.

ROSIE
That sounds awfully painful – but it’s a good deal better than bein’ thrown in a Briar Patch.

BRER FOX
Maybe we’ll do like you suggested earlier and just gobble you raw.

RUBY
A terrible way to go… but whatever you decide to do, please, please, please don’t throw us in that Briar Patch.

[BRER FOX, BRER WEASEL, and BRER WOLF huddle together.]

BRER FOX
We’ve decided.
(pause)
You’re goin’ in the briar patch.

BRER RABBIT, RUBY, ROSIE
Noo! / Please! / Have mercy! / Anything but that!

[They’re dragged out of the cave and to the edge of the stage.]

BRER WOLF
There it is, down below.

RUBY
We hope you can live with the screams you’ll hear.

ROSIE
They’ll haunt your dreams forever!
BRER WEASEL
We’ll take the chance.

[BREER RABBIT, RUBY, and ROSIE are ‘tossed’ from edge of stage. Scrunch and thud as they land in patch. BRER FOX, BRER WEASEL, and BRER WOLF listen, with terrible grins at first, but their smiles fade, replaced by looks of confusion. Unexpectedly, they hear laughter from below.]

BRER RABBIT
Brer Fox, Brer Weasel, and Brer Wolf, we were born in the briar patch! Born in the briar patch and we grow up playin’ in its branches!

[BRER FOX, BRER WEASEL, and BRER WOLF roar in rage.]

NEW ORLEANS

[ALL have gathered. Enter BRER RABBIT, RUBY, and ROSIE.]

LADY DOE
Welcome to the heroes, Brer Rabbit and Brer Bear!

GRAMMY MUD PATTER
Let’s celebrate!

I said hey, hey, hey, hey, yeah
(I said hey, hey, hey, hey, yeah)
I said a hey, a hey, hey, yeah
(I said a hey, a hey, hey, yeah)

A come on everybody take a trip with me,
Well down the Mississippi down to New Orleans.
They got a honeysuckle growing on a honeysuckle vine
And love is a blooming there all the time.
Well every southern belle is a Mississippi queen
Down the Mississippi down to New Orleans.

I said hey, hey, hey, hey, yeah
(I said hey, hey, hey, hey, yeah)
I said a hey, hey, hey, yeah
(I said a hey, hey, hey, yeah)

A come on take a stroll down to Basin street
Listen to the music with that Dixieland beat
Well the magnolia blossoms fill the air
And you ain’t been to heaven till you been down there.
They got French moss hangin from a big oak tree
There ain't no better place around for me.

I said hey, hey, hey, hey, yeah
(I said hey, hey, hey, hey, yeah)
I said a hey, hey, hey, yeah
(I said a hey, hey, hey, yeah)

Come on everybody take a trip with me
Down the Mississippi down to New Orleans.
With a honeysuckle hanging on a honeysuckle vine
And love is blooming there all the time.
Every southern belle is a Mississippi queen
Down the Mississippi down to New Orleans.

Yeah, yeah, yeah
(Yeah, yeah, yeah)
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah
(Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah)

A come on take a stroll down to Basin street
Listen to the music with that Dixieland beat
Well the magnolia blossoms fill the air
And you ain't been to heaven till you been down there.
Honeysuckle hanging from a honeysuckle tree
Down in Mississippi down in New Orleans.