

# **Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog**

David Cory

## Table of Contents

<b><u>Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog</u></b> .....	<b>1</b>
<u>David Cory</u> .....	1
<u>STORY I. BILLY BUNNY AND MR. BLACKSNAKE</u> .....	2
<u>STORY II. BILLY BUNNY AND THE FRESHWATER CRAB</u> .....	2
<u>STORY III. BILLY BUNNY AND THE SORROWFUL JAY BIRD</u> .....	3
<u>STORY IV. BILLY BUNNY AND THE TING-A-LING TELEPHONE</u> .....	4
<u>STORY V. BILLY BUNNY AND THE RUNAWAY DOG</u> .....	5
<u>STORY VI. BILLY BUNNY AND MR. O'HARE'S ESCAPE</u> .....	6
<u>STORY VII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE POLICEMAN CAT</u> .....	7
<u>STORY VIII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE GRAY MOUSE</u> .....	8
<u>STORY IX. BILLY BUNNY AND RED ROOSTER</u> .....	9
<u>STORY X. BILLY BUNNY AND MRS. COW</u> .....	10
<u>STORY XI. BILLY BUNNY AND THE BIG BEAR</u> .....	11
<u>STORY XII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE RABBITVILLE "GAZETTE"</u> .....	12
<u>STORY XIII. BILLY BUNNY AND MR. MOLE</u> .....	13
<u>STORY XIV. BILLY BUNNY AND THE WATER SNAKE</u> .....	14
<u>STORY XV. BILLY BUNNY AND THE PEACOCK</u> .....	15
<u>STORY XVI. BILLY BUNNY AND THE MARBLE DEER</u> .....	16
<u>STORY XVII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE FOREST DANCE</u> .....	17
<u>STORY XVIII. BILLY BUNNY AND RAGGED RABBIT</u> .....	18
<u>STORY XIX. BILLY BUNNY AND TAILOR BIRD</u> .....	19
<u>STORY XX. BILLY BUNNY AND PARSON CROW</u> .....	20
<u>STORY XXI. BILLY BUNNY AND JACK-IN-THE-BOX</u> .....	21
<u>STORY XXII. BILLY BUNNY AND DR. DUCK</u> .....	22
<u>STORY XXIII. BUNNY AND THE FRETFUL PORCUPINE</u> .....	22
<u>STORY XXIV. BILLY BUNNY AND DANNY BILLYGOAT</u> .....	23
<u>STORY XXV. BILLY BUNNY AND THE WHALE</u> .....	24
<u>STORY XXVI. BILLY BUNNY AND THE MERMAID</u> .....	25
<u>STORY XXVII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE BEANSTALK</u> .....	26
<u>STORY XXVIII. BILLY BUNNY AND SCATTERBRAINS</u> .....	27
<u>STORY XXIX. BILLY BUNNY AND MRS. BLACK CAT</u> .....	28
<u>STORY XXX. BILLY BUNNY AND BIG YELLOW DOG</u> .....	29
<u>STORY XXXI. BILLY BUNNY AND A HAPPY BIRTHDAY</u> .....	30
<u>STORY XXXII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE LOST RING</u> .....	31
<u>STORY XXXIII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE GREAT NEWS</u> .....	32
<u>STORY XXXIV. BILLY BUNNY AND JENNY MUSKRAT</u> .....	33
<u>STORY XXXV. BILLY BUNNY AND THE MILLER'S DOG</u> .....	34
<u>STORY XXXVI. BILLY BUNNY AND THE WOODCHUCK</u> .....	35
<u>STORY XXXVII. BILLY BUNNY AND LITTLE PEEWEE</u> .....	36
<u>STORY XXXVIII. BILLY BUNNY AND OLD MOTHER MAGPIE</u> .....	37

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- STORY I. BILLY BUNNY AND MR. BLACKSNAKE.
- STORY II. BILLY BUNNY AND THE FRESHWATER CRAB.
- STORY III. BILLY BUNNY AND THE SORROWFUL JAY BIRD.
- STORY IV. BILLY BUNNY AND THE TING-A-LING TELEPHONE.
- STORY V. BILLY BUNNY AND THE RUNAWAY DOG.
- STORY VI. BILLY BUNNY AND MR. O'HARE'S ESCAPE.
- STORY VII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE POLICEMAN CAT.
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- STORY IX. BILLY BUNNY AND RED ROOSTER.
- STORY X. BILLY BUNNY AND MRS. COW.
- STORY XI. BILL BUNNY AND THE BIG BEAR.
- STORY XII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE RABBITVILLE "GAZETTE."
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- STORY XXVII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE BEANSTALK.
- STORY XXVIII. BILLY BUNNY AND SCATTERBRAINS.
- STORY XXIX. BILLY BUNNY AND MRS. BLACK CAT.
- STORY XXX. BILLY BUNNY AND BIG YELLOW DOG.
- STORY XXXI. BILLY BUNNY AND A HAPPY BIRTHDAY.
- STORY XXXII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE LOST RING.
- STORY XXXIII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE GREAT NEWS.
- STORY XXXIV. BILLY BUNNY AND JENNY MUSKRAT.
- STORY XXXV. BILLY BUNNY AND THE MILLER'S DOG.
- STORY XXXVI. BILLY BUNNY AND THE WOODCHUCK.
- STORY XXXVII. BILLY BUNNY AND LITTLE PEEWEE.
- STORY XXXVIII. BILLY BUNNY AND OLD MOTHER MAGPIE.

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## STORY I. BILLY BUNNY AND MR. BLACKSNAKE.

Rain, rain, go away,  
Billy Bunny wants to play.

This is what Willy Wind sang one morning. Oh, so early, as the raindrops pitter-pattered on the roof of the little rabbit's house in the Old Brier Patch.

And then of course he woke up and wiggled his little pink nose a million times less or more, and pretty soon he was wide awake, so he got up and looked into the mirror to see if his eyes were open, as he wasn't quite sure he was wide awake after all, for the raindrops made a drowsy noise on the old shingles and the alarm clock wouldn't go off, although it was 14 o'clock.

Well, after a little while, not so very long, his mother called to him, "Billy Bunny, the stewed lollypops are getting cold and the robin's eggs will be hard boiled if you don't hurry up, or hurry down, or something."

"I'll be ready in a jiffy," answered the little rabbit, and then he brushed his whiskers and parted his hair in the middle with a little chip, and after that he was ready for breakfast and dinner and supper, for rabbits are always hungry, you know, and can eat all the time, so I've been told, and I guess it must be true, for why should an old rabbit have told me that if it isn't the truth, I should like to know, and so would you, I'm sure.

"Don't forget your rubber boots," said Mrs. Bunny after the morning meal was over, as Billy Bunny started to hop outdoors. So, like a good little bunny boy, he came back and put them on, and then before he went he polished the brass door knob on the front door and swept the leaves off the little stone walk.

And after that he was ready to do whatever he liked, so out he went on the Pleasant Meadow to eat some clover tops so as not to feel hungry for the next ten minutes.

And just then Mrs. Cow came along with her tinkle, tinkle bell that hung at her throat from a leather collar.

"Where are you going?" she asked, but the little rabbit didn't know. He was only looking around. He hadn't had time to make up his mind what to do, and just then, all of a sudden, just like that, Mr. Blacksnake rose out of the grass.

"Look out!" cried Mrs. Cow. "Maybe he's going to eat you," but whether he was I'm sure I don't know, for Billy Bunny didn't wait to see. He didn't care whether Mr. Blacksnake wanted his breakfast, but hopped away as fast as he could and pretty soon, not so very far, he came to the Babbling Brook, and there sat the little fresh water crab on the sand, and when he saw Billy Bunny he said:

"It's raining, Billy Bunny,  
But you and I don't care,  
For raindrops make the flowers  
Grow and blossom fair."

And this is what every little boy and girl should say on rainy days.

## STORY II. BILLY BUNNY AND THE FRESHWATER CRAB.

Let me see. It was raining in the last story when we left off, wasn't it? Billy Bunny and the little freshwater crab were talking together, weren't they?

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

That's it, and now I know where to begin, for it's stopped raining since then and Mr. Happy Sun is shining in the sky and the little clouds are chasing each other over the blue meadows like little lambs.

"I like that little piece of poetry you just said," cried the little rabbit. "Please say another." So the freshwater crab wrinkled his forehead, and then he began:

"And when the sun is shining,  
And all is bright and gay,  
Just keep a little sunshine  
To help a rainy day."

"I will," said the little bunny, for he was a cheerful little fellow, and then he hopped away and by and by he came to the Old Mill Pond.

But Uncle Bullfrog was nowhere to be seen.

There stood the old log, but there was nobody on it but a black snail. It seemed strange not to see the old gentleman frog sitting there, his eyes winking and blinking and his white waist-coat shining in the sun, and it made the little rabbit feel lonely.

"Where is Uncle Bullfrog?" he asked a big bluebottle fly, who was buzzing away at a great rate. But he didn't know, and neither did a big darning needle that was skimming over the quiet water.

"I wonder if that dreadful Miller's Boy has taken Uncle Bullfrog away," thought Billy Bunny, and just then Mrs. Oriole flew down from her nest that swung in the weeping willow tree and said:

"Are you looking for Uncle Bullfrog, little rabbit?"

"Yes, ma'am. Do you know where he is?"

"He's down by the mill dam," answered the pretty little bird, and then she flew back to her nest that looked like an old white cotton stocking at Christmas time because it was all bulgy and full, only, of course, hers had little birds inside and a Christmas stocking has all sorts of toys, with an orange in the toe and a Jack-in-the-Box sticking out of the top.

So off hopped the little rabbit, and pretty soon he saw the old gentleman bullfrog catching flies, and undoing his waistcoat one button every time a fly disappeared down his throat.

"I thought at first that dreadful Miller's Boy had taken you away," said Billy Bunny, "and I was very sad, for I like you, Uncle Bullfrog, and I've never forgotten how you found the letter I lost a long time ago."

"Tut, tut," said the old gentleman frog. "How's your mother?" and then he swallowed another fly and unbuttoned the last button, and if he takes off his waistcoat I'll tell you so in the next story.

### **STORY III. BILLY BUNNY AND THE SORROWFUL JAY BIRD.**

Well, Uncle Bullfrog didn't take off his waistcoat, as I thought he might in the last story, so I'm not going to tell you anything more about him.

We'll just leave him in the old Mill Pond and go along with Billy Bunny, who is hopping away toward the

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

Friendly Forest.

By and by, after he had gone into the shady depths for maybe a million and two or three hops, he came across his old friend the jay bird, who had sold him the airship, you remember, and then bought it back again.

"I wish you'd kept your old flying machine," said the jay bird sorrowfully. "But you wanted to buy it back," said the little rabbit, "so it's not my fault."

"Perhaps not," replied the sorrowful jay bird, "but that doesn't make matters any better."

"Why, what's the trouble?" asked the little rabbit, sitting down and taking a lollypop out of his knapsack.

"I had an accident," answered the jay bird.

"I ran into a thunder cloud and spilled out all the lightning, and, oh dear, oh dear. I just hate to talk about it, but I will. The lightning jumped all around and then struck the old tower clock and broke the main spring, so that it wouldn't go any more, and now nobody in Rabbitville can tell the day of the month, or when it will be Thanksgiving or Fourth of July."

"Let's go to the clock maker and ask him to fix it," suggested the little rabbit, and this so delighted the sorrowful jay bird that he smiled and flew after Billy Bunny, and pretty soon they came to the old clock maker, who was an old black spider.

"Certainly I'll fix it," he said, "but it will cost you nine million and some billion flies."

"All right," said Billy Bunny. "I'll go down to the 3 and 1-cent store and buy a fly catcher." So off he went and pretty soon he came back with a great big fly catching box, and after he had set it down, they stood and watched the flies go in until it was so full that not another one could even poke in his nose.

"Now, Mr. Spider," said Billy Bunny, "there are maybe a trillion flies in that box, for the storekeeper told me it was guaranteed to hold that many, so please fix the town clock, for it would be too bad if the little boys and girls didn't know it was Christmas when it really came."

So the spider got out his little tool bag and climbed up the steeple and fixed that old town clock so well that it began to play a tune, which it had never done before, and all the people in Rabbitville were so delighted that they gave the spider a little house to live in for the rest of his days.

### **STORY IV. BILLY BUNNY AND THE TING-A-LING TELEPHONE.**

Ting-a-ling went the telephone bell in Uncle Lucky Lefthindfoot's house, the kind old gentleman rabbit who was the uncle of Billy Bunny, you know.

And I only say this right here in case some little boy or girl should read this story without having seen all the million and one, or two, or three that have gone before.

So Uncle Lucky jumped out of the hammock where he had been swinging up and down on the cool front porch of his little house in Bunnytown, corner of Lettuce avenue and Carrot street, and hopped into the library and took down the receiver and said "Helloa! This is Mr. Lucky Lefthindfoot talking."

"Is that you, Uncle Lucky?" answered a voice at the other end of the wire. "This is Billy Bunny, and I'm lost in the

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

Friendly Forest." "What!" cried the old gentleman rabbit, and he got so excited that he put the wrong end of the receiver to his left ear and got an awful electric shock that nearly wiggled his ear off. "Where are you now?"

"I don't know," replied his small nephew. "I'm lost, don't you understand?"

"Gracious, goodness mebus!" exclaimed the old gentleman rabbit, "then how am I to find you?"

"I don't know, but please do," said Billy Bunny sorrowfully, "for I'm dreadfully hungry, and I haven't got a single lollypop or apple pie left in my knapsack."

"Well, you just stay where you are and I'll get into the Luckmobile and find you," replied the old gentleman rabbit as cheerfully as he could, although he didn't know how he was going to do it, and neither do I, and neither do you, but let's wait and see.

So pretty soon, in a few short seconds, Uncle Lucky was tearing along the dusty road toward the Friendly Forest, and by and by he came to the house where his cousin, Mr. O'Hare, lived. So he stopped the automobile and knocked on the door, and as soon as Mr. O'Hare opened it, he said: "Jump in with me, for my little nephew is lost and I want you to help me find him."

So away they went into the Friendly Forest, and they looked all around, but, of course, there was no little rabbit that looked like Billy Bunny anywhere in sight. So Uncle Lucky and Mr. O'Hare got out, and after tying the automobile to a tree, they set out in different directions to find the little bunny. And Uncle Lucky went along a little path and Mr. O'Hare followed a small brook, and after a while the old gentleman rabbit heard a bird singing:

"I saw a little rabbit  
A-sitting by a tree,  
And I should say he'd lost his way  
That's how he looked to me."

"Where did you see him?" asked Uncle Lucky excitedly. But what the little bird replied you must wait to hear in the next story.

## STORY V. BILLY BUNNY AND THE RUNAWAY DOG.

You remember in the last story just as Uncle Lucky asked the little bird to tell him where Billy Bunny was I had to leave off for there was no more room in the story for me to add another word? Well, what the little bird said was:

"Follow the path, Mr. Lucky Lefthindfoot, 'till you come to a bridge, and then turn to your right, and pretty soon, if the little bunny hasn't hopped away, you'll find your lost nephew."

So Uncle Lucky started right off. He didn't wait to even dust off his old wedding stovepipe hat, and by and by he came to the bridge. But oh dear me! Right in the middle of it stood a big dog, and when he saw the old gentleman rabbit he gave a loud bark and ran at him.

And what do you think the dear old bunny did? He honked on his automobile horn, which he had in his paw, and this frightened the dog so dreadfully that he turned around and ran away so fast that he would have left his tail a thousand miles behind him if it hadn't been tied on the way dogs' tails are, you know.

And after that Uncle Lucky crossed the bridge and turned to his right and pretty soon he saw Billy Bunny under a

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

bush looking very miserable and unhappy. But when he heard his Uncle Lucky's voice, for the old gentleman rabbit gave a cry of delight as soon as he saw him, the little rabbit looked as happy as he had before he was lost.

"Here's an apple pie for you," said the dear, kind old gentleman rabbit, taking a lovely pie out of his pocket. "I knew you'd rather have something to eat than a million carrot cents."

And of course the little rabbit would, for he was so hungry he could have eaten brass tacks, or maybe iron nails.

"Now come along with me," said Uncle Lucky. "We'll go back to the Luckymobile. Your cousin, Mr. O'Hare, went the other way to look for you, so I suppose we'll have a dreadful time to find him. But, never mind, I've found you." And dear, affectionate Uncle Lucky hugged his small nephew, he was so glad to be with him once more.

Well, after they reached the automobile they honked and honked on the horn hoping Mr. O'Hare would hear them. But I guess he didn't, for he never came back, although they waited until it was almost 13 o'clock.

"We'll have to go home without him," said Uncle Lucky at last. And I guess he was wise not to wait any longer, for it was growing dark, and to drive an automobile through a forest is not an easy thing to do at night. And just then, all of a sudden, Willie Wind came blowing through the tree tops. When he saw the two little bunnies he said:

"Your cousin, Mr. O'Hare, has fallen into a deep hole over yonder." And Willie Wind pointed down the Friendly Forest Trail. In the next story you shall hear how Uncle Lucky and Billy Bunny found their cousin, Mr. O'Hare.

### **STORY VI. BILLY BUNNY AND MR. O'HARE'S ESCAPE.**

You remember in the last story how Willie Wind whispered to Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky that their cousin, Mr. O'Hare, had fallen into a deep hole? Well, it didn't take the two little rabbits more than five short seconds and maybe five and a half hops to reach the spot, and then they looked over the edge, but very carefully, you know, for fear they might fall in, and there, sure enough, way down at the bottom was Mr. O'Hare looking very miserable indeed.

"Keep up your courage!" cried Uncle Lucky in as cheerful a voice as he could muster, and then he looked around to find a rope or a ladder. But of course there were not any ropes and ladders lying about, so that kind old gentleman rabbit peeped over the edge of the hole and called down again, "Keep up your courage! We'll get you out!"

Although he didn't know how he was going to do it, and neither do you and neither do I and neither does the printer man.

Well, after a while, and it was quite a long while, too, Billy Bunny found a wild grapevine which he let down into the hole. "Make a loop and put it around your waist and Uncle Lucky and I will haul you out," he called down, and then Mr. O'Hare did as he was told, and after the two little rabbits had pulled and pulled until their breath was almost gone, Mr. O'Hare's head appeared at the top of the hole.

And then with one more big pull they brought him out safely, although his waist was dreadfully sore because the grapevine had cut into his fur and squeezed all the breath out of him.

"I'm going to complain to the street cleaning department or the first policeman I see," said Mr. O'Hare. "It's a dreadful thing to have a hole like this right in the middle of the Friendly Forest Trail."

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

"Never mind that," said Billy Bunny, "let's go back to the Luckymobile. It will be late before we get out of the woods and maybe the electricity will all be gone and then we can't light the lamps, and maybe we'll be arrested."

And this is just what happened. They had only gone a little ways when they heard a voice say:

"Stop your motor car, I say,  
You have no lamps to light the way.  
Come, stop your car and get right out!  
Listen, don't you hear me shout?  
Stop your car or I will shoot.  
Don't try away from me to scoot!"

"We don't intend to," said Uncle Lucky, and he put on the brake and the Luckymobile came to a standstill. And there in the road stood a big Policeman Cat, with a club and gold buttons on his coat and a big helmet, and his number was two dozen and a half.

"Get out of your car," he commanded, which means to say something sternly, but before the two little rabbits obeyed, something happened, but what it was you must wait to hear in the next story.

### **STORY VII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE POLICEMAN CAT.**

Well, I'm glad to say it was something nice that happened just as I left off in the last story. You remember the Policeman Cat had arrested Billy Bunny and his Uncle Lucky.

Well, just as that Policeman Cat lifted his club to tickle Uncle Lucky's left hind foot, a big elm tree began to bark and of course the Policeman Cat was nearly scared to death. He thought it was a dog, you see, and instead of tickling dear, kind Uncle Lucky with his club, he turned tail and ran off down the road.

And he ran so fast that he left his number behind and Uncle Lucky picked it up and put it on the automobile, and after that they asked two little fireflies to sit inside the lamps and make them shine, for you remember the electricity had all burned up.

Well, after a while, they came to a turn in the road and, goodness gracious! before they could stop the automobile they ran into a milk wagon. And, oh, dear me! there was whipped cream all over the place, and Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky looked like two little cream puffs.

And I suppose you are wondering where the driver of the milk wagon was all this time. And so were Uncle Lucky and Billy Bunny, and if you'll wait a minute I'll tell you, as soon as my typewriter behaves itself, for it got so excited when Luckymobile ran into the milk wagon that it caught my thumb and pinched it.

Well, pretty soon, after Uncle Lucky had looked behind the moon and Billy Bunny into all the empty milk cans and one full one, they found the driver up in a weeping willow tree.

"I'll come down if you'll promise not to run over me," he said, for he was nearly frightened to death and looked dreadfully funny, for one of the milk can covers had fallen on his head.

"I thought he would be mad as a hornet," whispered Billy Bunny to his rabbit uncle.

"But where's my horse?" said the milkman when he reached the ground. So they all looked around and everywhere else, but they couldn't find him until they looked up into another weeping willow tree. And there was

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

the poor horse high up in the branches.

"Oh, I'll come down from this willow tree,  
If you'll promise me just one thing,  
And that is never again to say:  
'Gid-ap' as you drive me along the way,  
For I always go the best I can;  
I'm a faithful friend to every man,  
So please don't hurry me so,  
For I'm not trying to go too slow."

"All right, my good old horse," said kind Uncle Lucky. "Your master shall give me his word." So the horse jumped down and the willow tree stopped weeping right away, for it was so glad that the poor old milk horse was never again to be hurried on his way. And in the next story I'll tell you why.

### STORY VIII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE GRAY MOUSE.

You remember in the last story how the Luckymobile had run into a milk wagon? Well, after Billy Bunny had helped the milkman hitch up his horse and Uncle Lucky had filled the milk cans with ice cream and soda water from a near-by candy store, so as not to have all the little boys and girls disappointed at breakfast when they didn't get their milk, our two little rabbit friends got into the Luckymobile and started off again.

Well, it was still evening, you know, and the little fireflies who had crawled into the lamps made them as bright as possible, so it wasn't hard to steer the automobile. And, after a while, maybe a mile, they came to a house, where lived a gray mouse, all alone by herself in a hole near a shelf, where cake and mince pies made her open her eyes, for they looked, oh, so good, as a pie or cake should.

Now I didn't know I was going to write poetry or I should have let my hair grow long like a poet instead of going to the barber for a shave.

Well, anyway, the two little rabbits stopped the automobile right in front of mousie's door and when she heard the horn go honk, honk, she came to the window and looked out.

"Why, it's Mr. Lucky Lefthindfoot," she squeaked, and then she opened the door and asked the two little rabbits in and gave them some pie and cake.

"You can put the automobile in the barn if you like," she said, "and spend the night here, for it's getting very dark and maybe you'll run into something." So Billy Bunny took the Luckymobile around to the barn, and just then an old owl began to toot:

"I'm very fond of little gray mice,  
And little white rabbits, too, are nice."

And down flew that old gray owl and made a grab for Billy Bunny. But he didn't catch him. No, sireemam! For the little rabbit hopped into the henhouse through the little round door, and the big red rooster began to crow:

"Look here, Mr. Owl, if you come inside  
I'll hurt you with my spur.  
Don't you dare get funny with Billy Bunny,  
Or muss his pretty white fur."

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

And then he flew down from his perch and said, "Cock-a-doodle-do" three times and a half, and after that the owl flew away. "That was very kind of you," said the little rabbit. "Oh, don't mention it," said the red rooster, "but there is one thing you can do for me." "What's that?" asked Billy Bunny. "Take me Luckymobiling," laughed the red rooster.

"All right. To-morrow Uncle Lucky and I will invite you for a nice drive," said the little rabbit, and if the Luckymobile doesn't get sick maybe Uncle Lucky will ask some little boy or girl to go, too, and maybe it might be you.

### STORY IX. BILLY BUNNY AND RED ROOSTER.

Well, the next morning when the little rabbits woke up the sun was shining brightly through their bedroom window and Mrs. Mousie was singing a song down in the kitchen below as she made hot muffins for breakfast. And this is what she sang:

"Upstairs in my nice guest room are two  
Nice little rabbits in bed.  
As soon as I'm able I'll fix up the table  
And give them some honey and bread.  
And then a hot muffin to give them a stuffin',  
And then they'll be bountifully fed."

And when Billy Bunny heard her he grew so hungry that he hurried faster than he had ever hurried before, and so did the old gentleman rabbit, and he buttoned his collar on backwards and put his left shoe on his right foot and tripped over his old wedding stovepipe hat.

And after that they both hopped downstairs, and as soon as Mrs. Mousie heard them she brought in the bread and honey and the hot muffins and they all had breakfast. And after that Billy Bunny asked her to go automobiling with them.

So she put on her old gray bonnet with a bit of ribbon on it, and tied the strings under her chin, and put on her black silk mitts and her gold locket breastpin with the picture of Mr. Mousie inside.

"You don't mind if we invite the red rooster to go along, too, do you?" asked Billy Bunny, and then he told her how the rooster had scared away the old owl. And of course Mrs. Mousie didn't care, so the rooster got in and sat on the back seat with Mrs. Mousie.

Well, after they had gone for maybe a mile, and maybe some more, they came to a beautiful candy store, where the windows were full of peppermint sticks and a brown sugar monkey did all sorts of tricks.

"Stop right here," said the red rooster, "and I'll get out and buy you a bag of candy." And when he came back he had four bags of candy. Just think of that! In one bag was sugar-coated carrots for Billy Bunny, and another bag was full of candied carrots for Uncle Lucky, and in the bag he gave to Mrs. Mousie were two little chocolate mice.

"What have you got in your bag?" asked Uncle Lucky as he made the Luckymobile jump over a high ditch and run along through a lovely green meadow spread all over with buttercups.

"Sugared peanuts," answered the red rooster. "I just love them. The last time I went to the circus I ate forty-nine bags and a half and drank twenty-three glasses of pink lemonade and a bushel of popcorn."

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

"Wait a minute," said the old gentleman rabbit. "I've got a stomach ache listening. How did you do it?" And in the next story I'll tell you what the rooster said, that is, if nothing happens to prevent it, for he certainly was a wonderful rooster, to be able to eat all that.

### STORY X. BILLY BUNNY AND MRS. COW.

Well, something did happen to prevent the red rooster from telling Billy Bunny how he had been able to eat forty-nine bags and a half of peanuts at the circus, as I mentioned in the last story.

You see, as the Luckymobile galloped along over the meadow, all of a sudden, just like that, it ran right into the Babbling Brook, and then of course it stopped so suddenly that Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky didn't stop at all, neither did Mrs. Mousie and the red rooster.

They just kept right on going, and the first thing they knew and the first thing you know, they all landed in the long grass beside Mrs. Cow.

"My, how you startled me!" she exclaimed, and she rang the little bell at her neck and up ran her little calf, who was only two weeks old, and had never seen Billy Bunny and his friends before.

After that she walked down to the Babbling Brook but oh, dear me! all the electricity oil had spilled out of the cabaret and she couldn't drink the water, and all the little fish were covered with it just like sardines, you know, and the watercress had salad dressing all over it, so of course she couldn't eat the watercress.

"Never mind," said kind little Billy Bunny, and he took out of his knapsack a big yellow lemon lollypop and gave it to her, and then she didn't care, for she just loved candy.

"I'll help you get the automobile out," said Mrs. Cow gratefully, for she liked anybody who was kind to her little calf. So she put her horns under the front of the Luckymobile and then she said, "Heave ho, e-ho!" and pushed and shoved and lifted that big heavy automobile right out of the brook without even cracking her two long horns.

"If you don't mind," said the red rooster, "I'll leave you two little rabbits and make a call on Cocky Docky up at the Old Farm. "And if you don't care," squeaked little Mrs. Mousie, "I'll call on Dickey Meadowmouse." So Uncle Lucky and Billy Bunny hopped into the automobile and drove off, while Mrs. Cow tinkled her bell and sang:

"Moo, moo, moo. I'm glad I helped you two.  
One good turn deserves another.  
When you see your bunny mother,  
Tell her how your car I took  
Safely from the Babbling Brook."

"It's a puzzle to me," said Uncle Lucky, "why we are always having so many accidents. Maybe I had better get a chauffeur." "You won't need any chauffeur after I'm done with you," said a deep growly voice, and out from behind a clump of bushes jumped a wicked wildcat and bit one of the front tires, she was so hungry.

And what do you suppose happened then? Why the tire burst with such a loud noise, just like a gun, you know, that the wildcat was frightened nearly to death and she turned around and ran away so fast that she got home an hour too early for supper.

## STORY XI. BILL BUNNY AND THE BIG BEAR.

Near the Friendly Forest Pool  
Is the Woodland Singing School.  
Little Squirrel Bushy Tail  
Sings the Do, Ray, Mee, Fa scale.  
Uncle Bullfrog sings "Ker-chunk"  
From his floating elm tree trunk.  
And a big good-natured bear  
Sings an old familiar air.

"It's time for your singing lesson," said Mrs. Bunny to her little rabbit. So Billy Bunny started off, hoppity hop, down the Friendly Forest trail, and by and by he reached the Pool where all the pupils came to take their singing lessons.

Mr. Grasshopper was there with his fiddle and the tree toad with his drum, and the lark with her flute and little Jenny Wren with her piano. And what do you suppose Billy Bunny had tucked away in his knapsack? Why, Uncle Lucky's automobile horn.

You see, the kind old gentleman rabbit was making a visit at the Old Brier Patch where he had taken his automobile after that dreadful wildcat had bitten the front tire, and this is how Billy Bunny came to get the horn.

Well, sir, after the music started, he pulled out his horn and gave a tre-men-dous honk on it, and everybody thought an automobile was going to run over him.

Some jumped into the Pool and some ran up the trees, and, oh, dear me! everybody got all out of tune, and the bear lost the air and couldn't find it again!

And just then who should come along but a peddler with a pack of tin cans, rattling away on his back, and of course he made more noise than all the singing school put together.

And when the big bear saw him he was so angry that he jumped from behind a tree and said, "Boo!"

"Do you want to buy a tin plate?" asked the peddler, trying hard not to be frightened, "or would rather have a dishpan?"

"Don't want either," said the bear with a terrible growl.

"Perhaps you'd like a nutmeg grater," said the poor old peddler, and he was so frightened by this time that his knees knocked into the tin pans and made a dreadful noise.

"I've a dandy egg beater," went on the peddler, in a trembling voice, but after that he never said another word, for that great big bear jumped right at him and took the egg beater out of his hands and growled so terribly that the tin peddler turned away and ran down the forest path as fast as he could go.

And then all the little and big forest folk began to sing:

"Hip, hip hurray, the peddler's gone away.  
No more he'll make his tin pans shake  
And spoil our singing school beside the Forest Pool."

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

And in the next story, if the baby who lives in the house opposite doesn't shake his rattle at me all night so that I can't get to sleep and dream about the next story in time to write it for to-morrow night, I'll tell you more about the little rabbit's adventures.

### STORY XII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE RABBITVILLE "GAZETTE."

There was once a little rabbit  
Who was very fond of pie,  
Apple pie, with sugar on the crust.  
And he had a little habit,  
When his mother wasn't nigh,  
Of eating apple pie until he bust.

This is what Mr. William Bunny, the little rabbit's father, you know, was singing one day, and the reason was because Mrs. Bunny had found little Billy Bunny in the pantry.

And what happened to the little rabbit I'm not going to tell you, for it is so sad that it would make you weep to hear it.

"All day he nibbled pie  
Till at last I thought he'd die,"  
Said the doctor with a sigh.

And then Mr. William Bunny looked at his small son and sighed, too, for he had just paid the doctor's bill.

"Please don't sing any more," said little Billy Bunny. "Don't you remember the doctor said I was to be kept quiet?"

So Mr. William Bunny went out on the porch to smoke a cigar and read the Rabbitville "Gazette" until after supper time.

And while he was reading Mrs. Bunny looked over his shoulder and read: "Wanted, a secondhand automobile in good condition."

"Ring up your Uncle Lucky on the telephone," she called to Billy Bunny. "Here's a chance for him to sell his Luckymobile." So the little rabbit rang up 000 Lettuceville, and in a few minutes he heard the old gentleman's voice at the other end of the wire.

"But I don't want to sell my Luckymobile," he said. "It's the only one in ex-is-tence," which means the only one ever made, and I guess he was right, for I never rode in a Luckymobile, did you?"

"But mother thinks you ought to sell it," said Billy Bunny, "and so does father, for they both say you'll have a terrible accident some day if you don't look out."

"Well then, I'll look out," said Uncle Lucky with a laugh. "But I won't sell my Luckymobile." And then he asked Billy Bunny to make him a visit. So the little rabbit put on his knapsack and picked up his striped candy cane and started off, after first asking his mother's permission, of course.

And after he had gone for maybe a million Hops, he came to a big tree where Old Barney the Owl had his next. But of course, he wasn't awake. Oh, my, no. He had his eyes tightly closed, for owls don't like a bright light, you

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

know. They can see in the dark but not in the daytime.

But when Billy Bunny called out, "Helloa, Mr. Barney," the old gentleman owl blinked his eyes and said, "Who's calling me?" And then the little rabbit thought he'd play a joke, so he said, "Mr. Mouse!"

And if there was anything that Old Barney loved to eat, it was mice. And in the next story I'll tell you what Billy Bunny did.

### **STORY XIII. BILLY BUNNY AND MR. MOLE.**

You remember in the last story I promised to tell you what Billy Bunny did when Old Barney the Owl asked him, "Who's there?" and the little rabbit replied, "Mr. Mouse," just to fool him, you know. Well, after that

Old Barney the Owl  
Gave a terrible scowl  
As he looked at little Bill Bunny.  
You thought you were wise,  
But my blinky old eyes  
Can see you are not a bit funny.  
I can see from my house  
You are not Mr. Mouse.

And then the old blinkerty, winkerty owl flopped down to the ground and tried to catch the little rabbit. But Billy Bunny was too quick for him. He jumped into a hollow stump before you could say "Jack Rabbit!"

"Come out of there," cried Old Barney, in a screechery, teachery voice, but you just bet the little bunny didn't. He knew what would happen if he did.

Well, by and by, after a long while, he looked around, and, would you believe it, he found a little pair of stairs. So down he hopped until he came to a door on which was painted in red letters: "Mr. Mole, Subway Contractor."

Then the little rabbit knocked on the door and pretty soon it was opened and there stood Mr. Mole himself.

"What do you want?" he asked, trying to squint out of his little tiny eyes that were hidden all over with hair.

"It's me Billy Bunny," replied the little rabbit. "Mr. Owl tried to catch me and I hopped into your hollow stump entrance, but I haven't got a ticket for the subway."

"Well, you can come in anyway," said the kind old mole; "my subway isn't finished yet and the trains won't be running for some time. Come in." So Billy Bunny hopped inside and sat down on a chair close to a little brass railing, behind which stood Mr. Mole's desk.

Then Mr. Mole sat down and looked at Billy Bunny as much as to say, "And now what can I do for you?" So Billy Bunny said, "I would like to get up on the ground again. Can you show me a new way, because I don't want to go back the way I came?"

Then Mr. Mole pressed a little bell, and in came a mole with overalls on and a little pickaxe. "Show my friend, Mr. Billy Bunny, through the tunnel to the Moss Bank entrance."

"Thank you," said the little rabbit, and he hopped after the workman mole until they came to an opening. And

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

when the little rabbit got outside once more he found himself on a mossy bank where blossomed a lovely bed of violets.

So he picked a bouquet for himself and stuck it in his buttonhole, and after that he hopped away singing a song. And if Robbie Redbreast hadn't heard it I never would have been able to tell it to you. Wasn't it lucky that the little robin sang it to me this morning while I was still in bed? Because, if he hadn't, how would I have ever learned it?

Over the clover and over the grass  
Hoppity, hop, I go;  
Over the leaves from the autumn trees  
And over the soft white snow,  
With a whistle and song  
I go hopping along,  
I'm Billy Bunny, you know.

### STORY XIV. BILLY BUNNY AND THE WATER SNAKE.

"Over the grass or over the snow,  
Fast as a little white breeze I go.  
I'm Billy Bunny, Billy Bunny, you know."

Thus sang the little rabbit even after I left off in last night's story. Isn't it strange? Maybe I dreamed it. Anyhow, that's what I think he did, and after a while, when he had stopped singing, you know, he came to a little hill on the top of which was a high white pole with an American Flag flying from it.

And underneath was a whole regiment of little Boy Bunny Scouts, dressed in khaki, with guns and caps and brass buttons and guns and drums and a captain and a fife, and I guess there were three or four fifes, and as soon as they saw the little rabbit, they all shouted, "Here comes Billy Bunny. Let's get him to join our regiment."

"I belong to the Billy Bunny Boy Scouts of Old Snake Fence Corner," replied the little rabbit. "I can't join your regiment." So he hopped along and by and by he came to a big white swan that was sailing up and down on a pond.

"Would you like to take a sail?" she asked, coming up close to the bank. "Because if you would, just hop on my back and I'll take you around the pond two times and maybe a half if you'll give me a lollypop."

So the little rabbit opened his knapsack and gave her one and then he hopped on her back and went for a lovely sail in and out among the pond lilies and little green grass islands.

Well, everything was going along beautifully when, all of a sudden, just like that, a big water snake came swimming by.

"Oh, don't let him swallow me," cried the little rabbit, and he took his popgun out of his knapsack and stuck the cork in the end.

"I'll shoot you on the tail if you touch me," he cried just as bravely as he could, but he nearly slipped off the swan's back just the same, he was so frightened.

"Don't you come any nearer," said the swan with a fierce hiss, but the snake didn't care. He swam around and

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

around until the little rabbit got so dizzy that he had to hold on to the swan's neck.

"Please swim around the other way," pleaded the little rabbit, "you make me dreadfully dizzy. "But the bad water snake said he wouldn't, because that's just what he wanted Billy Bunny to be so dizzy that he would fall into the water and then that dreadful water snake could swallow him and maybe a pond lily besides.

"Look here," said the swan, "if you don't stop making snakery circles all around me, I'll bite your head off with my big, strong beak." And then what do you think the little rabbit did? Why, he managed somehow to lift up his gun and shoot it off, and the cork hit the water snake on the end of the tail and gave him such a headache that he swam over to the long grass and ate watercress salad and a piece of lemon pie.

And while he was doing that the swan took the little rabbit to the other side of the pond and he hopped away so fast that he didn't tell me what he was going to do in to-morrow's story.

### STORY XV. BILLY BUNNY AND THE PEACOCK.

Well, if it hadn't been for Robbie Redbreast who saw little Billy Bunny hopping away from the lily pond, as I told you in the last story, I never would have found out what he did after that, and so there would have been no story to-night. So the next time you see Robbie Redbreast, please thank him.

And now this is what he told me. After the little rabbit had hopped along for maybe a mile or three, he came to a high stone wall. "I wonder what's on the other side?" he said to himself, and then a beautiful peacock looked over and said: "I'll tell you, little rabbit.

"It's a beautiful garden where a fountain plays all day and the breezes sing all night and the flowers whisper and bow their heads."

"How can I get in?" asked the little bunny, "for I love flowers and I never heard a fountain play. What does it play?"

"Oh, all sorts of waterfall music," said the peacock, and he spread his beautiful tail out like a fan and brushed a little green fly off his nose. "It plays trills and rills and cascades and ripples and dipples."

And this made the little rabbit so curious that he hunted all around to find a gate in the high stone wall. And pretty soon, not so very long, he came to one, with big iron rods and curiously carved images of lions and dragons and animals with wings.

So he squeezed through and hopped up to the beautiful fountain where lots of little gold and silver fish swam around and around and the water fell in diamonds and rubies and emeralds, but he didn't know that it was Mr. Happy Sun who colored the water drops to make them look like precious stones.

"Please play me a tune," said the little rabbit. And then the beautiful peacock said, "What tune would you like?" and the little rabbit answered:

"Sprinkle, sprinkle, little star,  
Just a water drop you are.  
Twinkle, twinkle, drops of dew,  
With the sunlight shining through."

So the beautiful fountain played this little song while Billy Bunny sat there listening and the beautiful peacock

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

spread his tail to catch the sparkle from the glittering drops of water. And then all the roses began singing:

Roses white and roses red,  
And roses yellow too, instead,  
And pretty lilies white as snow,  
And every other flower you know.

And after that Billy Bunny asked the peacock to sing a song, but when he started to sing, oh dear, oh dear. For you know just because a bird has beautiful feathers he may not have a beautiful voice, and the sounds the peacock made were dreadful.

Yes, indeed. And if the little rabbit hadn't skipped away he would have had to hold his paws over his ears, and then maybe he couldn't have stopped them up, for he had very large ears and very small feet.

### **STORY XVI. BILLY BUNNY AND THE MARBLE DEER.**

In the story before this I told you how the beautiful peacock sang a song which was dreadful, so very dreadful that little Billy Bunny had to hold his ears and run away from the lovely fountain.

Well, after he had hopped along for maybe a million hops or less, he came to a little deer on a smooth lawn. So he stopped and spoke to him, but the pretty little animal never said a word. He didn't even look at the little rabbit, so Billy Bunny touched him on the nose, but, oh, dear me! It was cold and hard, not at all like the nose of a real little deer.

But the little bunny didn't know it was a marble deer. He just thought it was alive, you see, and he was puzzled and didn't know what to do. And then a lovely white dove flew down and said:

"He can't speak. He's only a statue."

"What is that?" asked the little rabbit, for he had never seen one before.

"Why, a statue is a figure carved out of marble or stone," answered the dove, and then she began to coo and comb her feathers with her bill.

"Well, I'll just hop along then," said Billy Bunny, and he said good-by. And after a while he came to a little house all covered with red rambler roses, so he looked inside to see who lived there, for he thought perhaps it might be a fairy who owned this beautiful garden with the lovely fountain and the wonderful peacock.

But there was no one inside, so he hopped in and sat down/on a small wicker chair and rocked back and forth. For it was a rocking chair, you know. And, by and by, he fell asleep and dreamed that the beautiful peacock was flying around the fountain and scattering the water drops all about with his mag-nif-i-cent tail. And then, all of a sudden, the little rabbit woke up, for somebody was saying:

"Isn't this a dear little bunny?" And Billy Bunny opened his eyes and saw a little girl with yellow curls leaning over him.

"Give him to me," said a boy's voice. And there stood a small boy dressed in a sailor suit and a big sailor hat on which was written, "Battleship Uncle Sam."

And then Billy Bunny knew it was time to be going. So he gave one big hop and maybe two million and a half

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

little skips and jumps, and soon he was far away, and if he hadn't maybe that little boy would have put him in a cage or a big box and kept him shut up for a long time.

"Goodness!" said the little rabbit, "I must be more careful next time." And then something happened. A little hard ball hit him on the left hind foot, and a man's voice called out, "If it hadn't been for that pesky little rabbit I would have made that hole."

And the big man put his golf stick in the bag and watched Billy Bunny limp away to hide in the woods close by.

### **STORY XVII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE FOREST DANCE.**

When the moon is big and bright  
Little bunnies dance at night.  
How they hop and skip and go  
On their lucky left hind toe.

Well, sir, that's what Billy Bunny was doing. It was a lovely moonlight night in August, and the big, round moon was gleaming down on the Pleasant Meadow just like an electric lamp, only it was up in the sky, you know, and not on the ceiling.

And Mrs. Bunny was there, too, and so was Cousin Cottontail, and all the little rabbits for miles around.

Now it's a dangerous thing to be dancing, even if the moon is bright, for owls and hawks fly by night, and if they happen to see a bunny dance, they always fly down and break it up. They don't say a word; they just fly away with one of the little bunny dancers and he never dances any more. No, sireemam.

Well, on this particular night little Billy Bunny was doing the fox trot with a nice little lady bunny, when all of a sudden from out of the Friendly Forest came Slyboots and Bushy Tail, the small sons of Daddy Fox, you remember.

And the reason they were out so late at night was because their father had sprained his foot jumping over a stone fence to get away from a pack of hounds who had chased him for a thousand and one miles and fourteen feet.

Now Billy Bunny had forgotten all about Daddy Fox. He was thinking only about Robber Hawk or Old Barney the Owl, and so he never saw the two foxes until they were so close to him that they almost stubbed their whiskers on his powder puff tail.

And if it hadn't been for the lady bunny who was dancing with him maybe Slyboots, or maybe Bushy Tail, would have caught the little bunny. But the lady rabbit saw them just in time and she gave a scream and hopped into a hollow stump and Billy Bunny after her, and then all that the two foxes could do was to stand close by and say:

"Isn't that a shame,  
To spoil their little game,  
To stop their dancing  
And their prancing,  
Who do you think's to blame?"

"You are, you two bad foxes," said Billy Bunny, but he didn't come out of that hollow stump. No, sireemam, he staid inside and so did the little lady rabbit, and by and by the two bad foxes went away and told their father, Daddy Fox, all about it, and he said, "Don't make any excuse.

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

"You are very poor hunters if you can't catch a rabbit when he's dancing the Fox Trot." And I guess he was right, for Slyboots and Bushy Tail were so ashamed that they didn't dare look in their mother's looking-glass for two days and three nights.

And in the next story if Billy Bunny gets out of that hollow stump before I see him, I'll ask Robbie Redbreast to tell me what he does so that I can write to-morrow's story for you to read.

### **STORY XVIII. BILLY BUNNY AND RAGGED RABBIT.**

Robbie Redbreast told me this morning he saw Billy Bunny hop out of the hollow stump where he had hidden with the little lady bunny, you remember in the last story, to escape from the two bad foxes.

Well, after he had looked all around to make sure they were gone, he said good-by to Miss Rabbit. And then, so Robbie Redbreast told me, he looked at his gold watch and chain, which his dear, kind Uncle Lucky had given him for a birthday present, and it was just thirteen o'clock.

"That's my lucky number," exclaimed the little rabbit; "maybe I'll find my fortune to-day." And he looked all about him, under a stone and behind a bush, but there wasn't any fortune in sight, not even a twenty-dollar gold piece. So he wound his watch and started off again; and by and by, not so very far, he came to a castle where lived a giant bunny whose name was "Ragged Rabbit" because he always wore torn and tattered clothes.

And when he saw Billy Bunny hopping along, he said, "Ha, ha. Ho, hum, I'll eat that little bunny as sure as I'm a foot high!" And as he was twenty-one feet high less or more, he surely thought he would.

"What did you say?" asked Billy Bunny, for his quick ears had caught the sound of the Ragged Rabbit's voice, but not the words.

"Oh, never mind," answered the Ragged Giant Rabbit. "Come and I'll show you my castle." And, oh, dear me. Billy hopped in and the big Giant Rabbit closed the door with a bang, and all the pictures on the walls almost fell down and the chandelier rattled like a milk wagon full of empty cans. But the little rabbit wasn't frightened. And could you guess what he did if I let you guess until to-morrow night?

Well, sir, that brave little bunny took his popgun out of his knapsack and shot it off, and it made a dreadful loud pop, and the big Ragged Rabbit said, "Oh, my! Was that a cannon?"

And then he laughed so loud that he broke a window pane and had to telephone right away to the plumber to have one put in.

"That's my pop-gun, Mr. Giant," said Billy Bunny, "and if you try to hurt me I'll shoot you." And then the Ragged Giant Rabbit laughed again, and this time the picture of his grandfather fell down and made a big dent in the floor.

"If you don't stop laughing," said the little rabbit, "you'll deafen me. Please only giggle." So the Giant Rabbit grew very polite indeed and only smiled, and then of course nothing was broken.

"Tell me who you are and where you are going and what time it is," he said, "and then I'll give you something to eat."

But before the little rabbit could reply a loud knocking came at the door, and so you'll have to wait to hear who was there until to-morrow, for I've no more room in this story.

## STORY XIX. BILLY BUNNY AND TAILOR BIRD.

You remember in the last story somebody was knocking at the door of the Ragged Rabbit's castle, don't you? The Giant Rabbit, who always wore torn and tattered clothes because he had no wife to mend them and wouldn't pay his tailor's bills?

Well, who do you suppose was on the other side of that door? Just wait until the Giant Rabbit opens it and you shall see. Now open your eyes, if you have shut them, and see Uncle Lucky, as sure as I am writing this story and you are reading it.

Yes, sir. There stood the dear old gentleman rabbit, and oh, dear me, didn't he look worried? I suppose he thought he'd find Billy Bunny inside the giant. But when he saw Billy Bunny standing there, safe and sound and happy, with his popgun in his hand and a smile on his face, he began to laugh.

"Whew!" exclaimed the old gentleman rabbit, greatly relieved, which means to feel much better. "I'm glad to see you, my dear nephew. And also to make your acquaintance, Mr. Ragged Rabbit Giant. My name is Mr. Lucky Lefthindfoot. Howdy!" and he put out his right front paw and shook hands with the giant, who had to lean way down to reach Uncle Lucky's paw.

"But, goodness me!" said the old gentleman rabbit after looking at the giant for some moments, "you need a tailor. Let me call the Tailor Bird to mend your clothes. You are too nice a rabbit not to be well dressed."

And kind Uncle Lucky went to the telephone and told the Tailor Bird to bring a spool of thread a mile long and a needle as big as a spear for he had a giant customer for him with holes in his clothes as big as a circus ring. The Tailor Bird said he'd try to, but wouldn't promise unless he could send in a bill as big as a newspaper spread out flat.

"Will that be all right?" asked Uncle Lucky after he had explained matters to the ragged Giant Rabbit.

"Certainly," said the Giant Rabbit with a grin, "and tell him I'll pay him with a dollar bill as big as a Turkish rug or a crex carpet."

And then they all sat down and told funny stories, and Billy Bunny sang a song that went something like this, only much nicer, but I can't quite remember it all:

"Oh, you're a raggerty, taggerty man,  
In a castle big and old,  
And I'm a Billy Bunny boy  
With a heart that's brave and bold.  
You can't scare me with your thunder laugh  
Or your club like a telegraph pole,  
So you'd better allow the Tailor Bird  
To sew up each raggerty hole."

And then the Tailor Bird commenced and it took him until half-past fourteen o'clock to mend that Giant Rabbit's clothes. "I might just as well have made you a new suit," he said, as the last inch of the mile-long spool of thread was used up. "I declare I never had such a job before."

And I guess he spoke the truth, for I never met a Giant Rabbit in my tailor's shop, although I once had a giant bill from my tailor.

## STORY XX. BILLY BUNNY AND PARSON CROW.

Well, after the Tailor Bird got his money from the Ragged Giant Rabbit for mending his clothes, he thanked Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky and said he must be going for he had to make a suit of clothes right away for Parson Crow.

"If you'll wait a minute you can go with us," said kind Uncle Lucky; "we'll take you home in the automobile."

Of course the Tailor Bird was only too anxious to get a ride, although he did have a good pair of wings. But the needle was pretty heavy and, anyway, Tailor Birds don't often have the opportunity to ride in automobiles.

Well, after a little ways, not so very far, the Luckymobile came to a stop and, of course, Billy Bunny had to get out to see what was the matter, and he hunted and hunted all over the machine, but couldn't find out what was wrong. By and by he saw one of the numbers had dropped off the little license plate that hung down from the rear axle.

So he hopped back, and by and by, just as he was going to give up looking for it, Parson Crow flew by, and when he saw Billy Bunny he stopped and said: "What are you looking for, little rabbit?"

And when Billy Bunny told him, he took the number 7 out of his pocket and handed it to the little bunny. "Here's your number," cawed the black crow, although I never heard of a white one except once, and that was a bad bird who had been whitewashed by a colored painter because he ate up all the corn.

"That's my lucky number," said Billy Bunny. And then the crow said in a mournful voice:

"It's mine, too, and I just hate to give it up."

"Well, if you can get me another number, I don't care if you keep it," said the little rabbit. And then what do you think that crow did? Why, he got a nice smooth little chip and made a lovely number 3 on it with a red pencil and handed it to the little rabbit.

And as soon as he had tied it on the Luckymobile, would you believe it if I didn't say so, that Luckymobile started to go all by itself. And if Billy Bunny hadn't been mighty quick he would have been left behind.

"Where are you two rabbits going?" asked the crow as he flew alongside of the Luckymobile. "Because if you are not in a hurry, why don't you come with me to the meeting house to-night and hear me preach?"

"We will," said kind Uncle Lucky, "and I'll drop a carrot cent in the collection box if you want me to." So after a while they stopped near a tall pine tree and Parson Crow sat on a limb and waited for all the little people of the forest to come to the meeting. Well, after they were all there, he began:

"Now, listen to the words I say,  
And do your duty every day.  
Be always good and most polite  
And do the things you know are right.  
Oh, never say an angry word  
To any animal or bird,  
So when the night comes 'twill be good  
To feel you've done the best you could."

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

And after that Uncle Lucky dropped a carrot dollar in the collection box and drove home with Billy Bunny.

### STORY XXI. BILLY BUNNY AND JACK-IN-THE-BOX.

Oh, I'm a rollicking Jack-in-the-Box,  
And I'm not afraid of a bear or a fox,  
For every one's scared when up I pop,  
And the little girl cries, "Oh, stop! oh, stop!"  
I'm the bravest thing you ever saw,  
I'm not afraid of my Mother-in-Law!

Well, sir, I suppose you'll think Billy Bunny was frightened and that Uncle Lucky lost his breath and the automobile a tire. But nothing of the sort happened. Instead, the old gentleman rabbit laughed so hard that his collar button fell out and it took him fifteen minutes and half an hour to find it. And then he never would have if the Jack-in-the-Box hadn't seen it first. And where do you suppose that ex-as-per-a-ting, which means teasing, button was? You'd never guess, so I'll have to tell you without asking you again.

It was in the old gentleman rabbit's waistcoat pocket where he kept his gold watch and chain and pocket knife and pencil with a rubber on the end and a toothpick.

"How did you see it pop into my pocket?" he asked the Jack-in-the-Box. "I'll never tell you," said the Jack-in-the-Box, "but what does that matter? You've found your collar button, and that's enough."

"If I come across your cousin Jack-in-the-Pulpit," said Uncle Lucky, after he had buttoned up his collar and wound his watch, "I'll tell him how kind you were to find my collar button for me," and then the old gentleman rabbit took off his old wedding stovepipe hat and bowed to the Jack-in-the-Box and drove away in the Luckmobile down the road, and when he came to a bridge he said to his little nephew, "Do you think we're on the right road?"

"I don't remember this bridge, do you?" And then a voice cried out, "Don't be anxious, Mr. Lucky Lefthindfoot. This is the road to Lettuceville.

"Keep right on after you cross the bridge until you come to a little red schoolhouse and then turn to your left and then turn to your right and if you don't get home until morning you've made a mistake."

"Thank you," said Uncle Lucky. "And if I make a mistake I'll come back and give you a scolding," and after that they crossed the bridge, and just as they came to the first turn in the road they heard a dreadful loud noise in the woods close by.

"What's that?" asked Billy Bunny, and he turned up his left ear and his coat collar so that he could hear better.

"It's an old friend of yours," answered a deep growly kind of a voice, and before the two rabbits could wonder who it was their friend, the good-natured bear jumped out of the bushes.

"Take me with you, please," he said, "for I've run a splinter in my foot and it hurts me to walk." And in the next story you shall hear of another adventure which the two little rabbits had.

## STORY XXII. BILLY BUNNY AND DR. DUCK.

You remember in the last story how the good-natured bear asked Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky to give him a ride in the Luckymobile because he had run a splinter in his foot.

Well, as soon as he had climbed into the automobile, and it took him almost 23 1/2 seconds to do it, for the splinter was so long that it caught on the door, Uncle Lucky started off and by and by they came to the house where the good Duck Doctor lived. Dr. Quack, you remember.

"Now, I'll go in and get him to come out and look at your splinter," said Billy Bunny, as he hopped out of the Luckymobile and rang the front door bell, and in a minute, less or more, a nice looking lady duck came out and said, "The Doctor is away on his vacation. He's gone to the Lily Pond for two weeks. But you can call him up on the telephone if you like. The number is Waterville, 2 3 umpty eleven."

So the little rabbit called up the number and when the doctor heard what was the matter, he said, "You had better come to see me.

"You have the automobile right there, and it's a dangerous thing to have so large a splinter as that. Tell Mr. Bear he'll have a dreadful corn if it isn't taken out at once."

So they all hurried away and pretty soon they came to Lily Pond, and there was Dr. Duck swimming around among the pond lilies and the frogs, having a lovely time. And wasn't he sunburnt? Well, I should say he was. His bill was as dark as a little brown berry and his nose was as red as a little choke cherry.

"That looks very serious to me," said he, putting on his glasses and looking at Mr. Bear's injured feet. "I'll have to get a saw and cut off your foot." And then Mr. Bear gave a dreadful howl. "Oh, please don't saw off my foot. It's sore enough already."

"I didn't mean to saw off your foot," said Dr. Duck. "Did I say that? I mean to saw off the splinter and then put on a poultice and draw out the pain."

Well, it took a long time to do all that, and the poor Bear cried several times, for it hurt the splinter dreadfully, you know, to be sawed off that way. But by and by the poultice began to "draw, and pretty soon out came the splinter, and Mr. Bear felt ever so much better. That is, until the doctor said, "It will cost you a million dollars, for that was a very serious operation."

"I've never even seen a million dollars," said the Bear. "Nor even a million cents. You'll have to mail me a corrected bill," and then he jumped into the automobile and asked Uncle Lucky to drive away.

"Stop, stop!" cried the Duck Doctor, but Uncle Lucky paid no attention to him, any more than the Bear paid the bill. "You send a corrected bill to my friend," said the old gentleman rabbit. "And, mind you, you had better correct it three times and a half if you ever want it paid."

And in the next story you shall hear of an exciting adventure which the two little rabbits had with a fretful porcupine.

## STORY XXIII. BUNNY AND THE FRETFUL PORCUPINE.

Oh, never tease a porcupine,  
For reasons I'll relate,

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

He's like a cushion full of pins  
That stand out stiff and straight.  
And if you stand too close I know  
He'll stick one in your little toe.

Well, that's just what Uncle Lucky did, and of course he got stuck with one of those prickly, stickery porcupine needles and it was an awful bother to get it out.

And the fretful porcupine laughed and this made Billy Bunny very angry, and he took his popgun out of his knapsack and hit the porcupine on the end of the nose with the cork bullet, and this made the prickly animal run away.

And after that the two rabbits started off again in the Luckymobile and by and by they came to a little village where they made lollypops by the million. And the first thing Uncle Lucky did was to buy a big box full of them and put it in the back of the Luckymobile, "for," said the kind old gentleman rabbit, "we may run across some boys and girls and then we'll have something nice to give them."

Wasn't that kind of him? But he was always doing nice things, was dear, kind, generous Uncle Lucky.

Well, after a while they came to some woods where a picnic was being held. There were lots and lots of children playing under the trees and the women were sitting around talking and telling their troubles, and the men were making whistles and bows and arrows for the boys and telling how they used to shoot with them when they were little boys.

"Helloa there, children!" cried Uncle Lucky, while Billy Bunny honked the horn. "Don't you want some lollypops?" And in about five hundred short seconds there wasn't a lollypop left in that big box, and Uncle Lucky was a hero, or a Santa Claus, I don't remember which. And then one big boy said, "Let's give three cheers for the two rabbits and one more for the Luckymobile."

And you never heard such a noise in your life. One little boy got so excited that he swallowed a raspberry lollypop and his mother had to reach down his throat and pull it out by the stick.

"Now be good until I see you again," said the kind old gentleman rabbit as he drove off, and by and by Billy Bunny saw something moving among the trees.

"What's that?" he said to his rabbit uncle. But before the old gentleman rabbit could reply, a big stone hit one of the lamps on the automobile and broke it to splintereens.

"Stop that whoever you are!" shouted Billy Bunny. "If you do it again I'll shoot!" and he held his popgun up to his shoulder just like a soldier boy in battle.

And if the little canary in my room doesn't wink at me all night so that I can't hear the alarm clock in the morning, I'll tell you another story.

## **STORY XXIV. BILLY BUNNY AND DANNY BILLYGOAT.**

Well, my little canary bird didn't wink at me all night, as I feared it might in the last story, and my alarm clock said "good morning" to me at half-past fourteen o'clock, so I got up in time, and here is the story I wrote before I went out into the garden to eat raspberries with Robbie Redbreast.

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

One evening as Uncle Lucky and Billy Bunny were driving along in the Luckymobile, who should they come across but a little billygoat named Danny.

He had a little beard that hung down from his chin and two little horns that stuck up from his head, and he was playing on a flute while he sat cross-legged on a stone by the roadside. And when he saw our two small friends in their machine, he began to play:

It's not so far to the twinkle star  
In the little white boat of sleep.  
So list to my tune, like a breeze in June,  
Where the honeysuckles creep.

Over the sky, way up high,  
In the little white boat of sleep.  
Ever so far to the twinkle star  
Way up in the sky blue deep.

"Where did you learn that lullaby," asked kind Uncle Lucky, brushing a tear from his eye, for he remembered just a little song his mother used to sing when he was a little boy rabbit, you know.

"I don't know," answered Danny Goat. He pulled on his goatee and smiled, and then he began again:

"Up in the sky when the sun is high  
The white cloud boats go sailing by,  
And the summer breeze in the tall, tall trees  
Is singing a song the whole day long.  
And this is the song they sing:  
We ring the bell in the cool damp dell  
That grows on the lily's stalk,  
We bend the ferns in the river's turns  
And the tail of the great gray hawk;  
And the foamy spray in the big deep bay  
We blow on the great boardwalk."

"That reminds me of Atlantic City," said Uncle Lucky. "Let's drive down there and go for a swim."

"Just the thing," said the little rabbit; "I've got my bathing suit in my knapsack. I'm ready."

So off they went, and by and by they came to the seashore. But there wasn't a hotel in sight, so of course they knew they had made a mistake. They didn't care, especially Billy Bunny, for not very far from land was the big good-natured whale who had taken him for a sail a long, long time ago. "There's my friend the Whaleship!" cried the little rabbit.

And in the next story, if that whale doesn't swim away, I'll tell you something more about Billy Bunny and his kind Uncle Lucky.

## **STORY XXV. BILLY BUNNY AND THE WHALE.**

You remember in the story before this that Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky were at the seashore, and out a little ways from the land was the good-natured Whale.

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

Well, as soon as he saw the little rabbit he swam up to the beach and said "Hello." And then Billy Bunny introduced him to Uncle Lucky, and after that the Whale said:

"Don't you both want to go for a sail?" and as the old gentleman rabbit had never been on a whaleship in his life, he said yes right away, and so did the little rabbit.

Then the Whale pushed his tail up on the sand and the two little rabbits hopped over it just like a bridge, and then they sat down, and away went the whale with a swish of his tail that splattered the spray all over the bay.

"Goodness me!" cried the old gentleman rabbit, "I'll have to wipe off my spectacles," and he took his polka-dot handkerchief from his pocket, and after that he tied it over his old wedding stovepipe hat, for he wasn't going to lose that hat, no siree, and a no sireemam, not even if he had to tie the anchor to it. By and by, not so very long, they heard a sweet voice singing, so they looked everywhere, but the only thing they saw was the big green ocean.

"I wonder who is singing?" said Uncle Lucky, and he took his spyglass out of his waistcoat pocket and twisted it around and around until he could see distinctly, which means plainly, you know.

"There she is!" cried the old gentleman rabbit, and he got so excited that he looked through the wrong end of the spyglass and then he said, "No, she isn't!" for he couldn't see anything at all that way, you know.

"What did you see?" asked the little rabbit, and he pushed forward Uncle Lucky's old wedding stovepipe hat to keep it from falling over his left ear.

"A mermaid!" cried the old gentleman rabbit, and before he could turn the spyglass the other way a lovely mermaid swam up and handed him her card, and on it was written in lovely purple ink:

Miss Coral Seafoam,  
Oceanville,  
U. S. A.

"Pleased to meet you," cried the old gentleman rabbit most politely. "This is my nephew, William Bunny, Brier Patch, Old Snake Fence Corner, and my name is Mr. Lucky Lefthindfoot and I live in Lettuceville, corner of Carrot and Lettuce streets," and then he tried to take off his hat, but he couldn't, for it was tied down tight, you remember, with his blue polka-dot handkerchief.

And after that the mermaid asked them to visit her coral island, where she and her sisters sold coral beads and scarfpins. And in the next story you shall hear well, I guess I won't tell you now, but let you wait and see.

## **STORY XXVI. BILLY BUNNY AND THE MERMAID.**

Well, now we'll commence by saying that as soon as Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky reached the coral island, where the lovely mermaid lived, for she had asked them to call, you remember, they got off the Whale, and, after asking him to wait for them while they made a little visit, sat down on the sand, and pretty soon the mermaid brought them each a lovely coral scarfpin, and the one she gave to Uncle Lucky was a little image of herself and the one she gave to Billy Bunny was a little fish.

Then the little rabbit opened his knapsack and took out a lovely apple pie and gave it to her. And she was so pleased that she ate it all up, and then she said, "I'll give you a lovely breast-pin made of beautiful coral for your mother, Mr. Billy Bunny, if you'll give me another pie."

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

So the little rabbit opened his knapsack and took out another fresh, juicy apple pie and placed the beautiful present for his mother carefully in the knapsack, and after that he ate a lollypop and Uncle Lucky drank a bottle of ginger ale, and then they said good-by and got aboard the Whaleship and sailed away.

And would you believe it? Dear, kind Uncle Lucky almost cried! You see, he had never seen a mermaid before, and he thought she was lovely, and I guess she was, for Uncle Lucky couldn't make a mistake, I'm sure, for he had travelled abroad and had seen lots and lots of beautiful lady bunnies.

"And now where are we going?" asked the little rabbit, but Uncle Lucky was too busy trying to find his other blue polka-dot handkerchief with which to wipe his eyes to answer.

And then he couldn't find it, and the reason was because he had given it to a Chinaman the day before, but he didn't remember that, for he was so miserable at leaving the beautiful mermaid.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" sighed the old gentleman rabbit,

"'Tis sad to part.  
My poor old heart  
Is nearly, nearly breaking;  
Alas! alas! that mermaid lass  
Has set my head a-shaking!"

And after that his old wedding stovepipe hat almost fell off his head, and it would have, I'm sure, if it hadn't been for the blue polka-dot handkerchief which he had tied over the top of it.

And just then, all of a sudden, the Whaleship bumped into a motor boat, and nearly upset it.

"What's the matter with your pilot?" screamed the man who was in the motor boat, and when Uncle Lucky looked over the side of the Whale he saw it wasn't a man at all, but the old Billygoat who owned the Ferryboat I told you about some umpty-leven stones ago.

"Excuse us, please," said the kind old gentleman rabbit, but what the Billygoat said I'll have to tell you in the next story, for there's no more room in this one.

## **STORY XXVII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE BEANSTALK.**

Seeing it's you," answered the Billygoat, who, you remember in the last story, had gotten very angry because Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky had bumped into his motor boat with their whaleship.

"I'll forgive you," and then he raced the Whale all the way to the shore and would have beaten him, too, if he had gone faster.

And as soon as the whaleship ran up on the beach, the two little rabbits hopped off and got into their automobile and drove away, and the Whale went back and told the Mermaid that the two little rabbits had a beautiful Luckymobile, and she felt dreadfully sorry that she hadn't gone with them.

Well, after a little while, not so very far, they came across a wonderful beanstalk, which was growing up so high that you couldn't see the top, and if Billy Bunny had only known the story about "Jack and the Beanstalk," I guess he would have thought that the story had come true.

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

"My gracious!" exclaimed Uncle Lucky. "My lima beans at home grow pretty high but never as high as this," and he took out of his waistcoat pocket his spyglass and tried to find the top of the beanstalk; but he couldn't, for it was hidden in the clouds. Just think of that!

"I'm going to climb up that beanstalk," said the little bunny. "Maybe I'll find my fortune at the top."

"And I'll go with you," said the old gentleman rabbit, for he wasn't going to let his small nephew go up a strange beanstalk and perhaps get lost in the clouds, you know.

Not good, kind Uncle Lucky. No, sireemam; so they hopped out of the Luckymobile and started up the beanstalk, and by and by, after a pretty long time, they came to the top and the first thing they saw was their friend American Eagle and his wife, and she was sitting on her nest hatching out the big eggs which she had laid.

"We'll need lots of eagles now that we've gone to war," said the big bird, and he flapped his wings and sang "Yankee Doodle Dandy" three times over and then once more. And this made the old gentleman rabbit so excited that he stood up and made a speech, and then he threw his old wedding stovepipe hat up into the air and gave three cheers and half a dozen tigers and two or three bears.

And after that Billy Bunny opened his knapsack and took out an American flag and put it on the top of the beanstalk so that all the people in the aeroplane could see it and say "Hip-hur-ray for the U. S. A.!"

"When the little eagles come out of their shells you must bring them to call on me," said good, kind Uncle Lucky to Mrs. Eagle. "I have some popcorn and lollypops at home, and I know how children like those things."

And this made Mrs. Eagle very happy and Mr. Eagle very proud, and he helped the two little rabbits to climb down the beanstalk in time for me to write what they did in the next story, which will be about an adventure in the Friendly Forest.

## STORY XXVIII. BILLY BUNNY AND SCATTERBRAINS.

After Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky reached the ground, for they had climbed down the beanstalk, you remember, as I told you in the last story, they jumped into the Luckymobile and drove off toward the Friendly Forest, and when they had gone maybe a mile in and out among the trees, for there wasn't really any automobile road to go on, you know, they came across Scatterbrains, the gray squirrel.

Now Uncle Lucky knew Old Squirrel Nutcracker very well, and as the old gentleman squirrel was very nice and well behaved it made Uncle Lucky provoked to think that his son should be such a scatterbrains. So Uncle Lucky stopped the automobile and said:

"Well, young squirrel, have you been troubling your father lately?" and Scatterbrains answered, "No, Mr. Lucky Lefthindfoot, not lately. Not since yesterday."

"What!" exclaimed the old gentleman rabbit, "do you mean to say you troubled him yesterday? Why didn't you wait until to-morrow?" and then Uncle Lucky winked at Billy Bunny and then scowled at Scatterbrains.

And just then they heard a dreadful noise. It sounded just as if the trees were snapping to pieces and, all of a sudden, a tornado struck them and up in the air went the Luckymobile with the two little rabbits, but what happened to the little squirrel I really don't know, unless it took him up, too, and hid him in a cloud.

And perhaps it did, for I've often seen clouds that looked exactly like squirrels, haven't you, and other animals,

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

too, like bears and cats?

"Gracious me!" cried Uncle Billy. "Hang on, Billy Bunny, and don't let the cushions slip or the electricity run out of the cabaret, for if we ever get back to earth, I'd like to get home and stay home forever. Oh, home, sweet home," and the old gentleman rabbit took off his automobile goggles, for they were full of tears and he couldn't see anything.

Well, by and by, the tornado let go and the automobile fell on top of a clothesline and balanced there as nicely as a tight-rope dancer, and when the two little rabbits looked about them, they found they were in Mrs. Bunny's backyard in the Old Brier Patch. Wasn't that lucky? Well, I guess it was!

And just then Mrs. Bunny came out of the kitchen door to hang up some of Billy Bunny's little shirts on the line, for it was Monday morning, you know.

And when she saw the Luckymobile on her clothesline she gave a scream, and then she began to laugh, and after that she ran back into the house and brought out her scissors and cut the rope and the automobile came down with a bang, and out tumbled the two little rabbits.

"Well, well, well," said Mrs. Bunny, and she sat down on the clothespin basket and laughed, but, of course, there weren't any clothespins, or any other kind of pins, in it, you see, for then she wouldn't have laughed.

And in the next story, if my umbrella doesn't open and stand over my bed to keep off the mosquitoes, I'll tell you another story to-morrow night.

## STORY XXIX. BILLY BUNNY AND MRS. BLACK CAT.

Awake, awake, 'tis early morn.  
The cow is climbing the stalks of corn,  
The little bird is beating an egg,  
And the rooster is dancing about on one leg,  
And the pig is trying on her new bonnet,  
With a little blue bow and a red cherry on it.

Uncle Lucky rolled over in bed and then he got up and wiggled his nose and his left ear, and after that he was so wide awake that he didn't want to get back into bed, as I did, when I woke up this morning.

And just then the breakfast bell rang and Mrs. Bunny put on the coffee and the baked lollypops and the stewed prunes, and, oh, dear me! I really can't remember what rabbits eat every day, for I'm sure they don't eat the same old thing, for if they did they wouldn't be jolly and gay and hop about merrily all through the day, but would sit in a corner and sulk and be sad, and maybe get angry and maybe get mad.

So always remember to have something new, for no one can always enjoy a prune stew. There! I've gone and written another piece of poetry and my typewriter wouldn't print it properly. Isn't that too bad?

Well, after breakfast the old gentleman rabbit went out for a walk in the Pleasant Meadow, and he went all alone, too, for Billy Bunny had to stay home and polish the front door knob and sweep the piazza and feed the canary and bring in the wood, for Mrs. Bunny had to hurry up with the breakfast dishes so as to be able to go over and see Cousin Cottontail, who had just had a new baby rabbit.

Well, as I was saying, Uncle Lucky hopped along the Pleasant Meadow until he came to the Old Farm Yard

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

where Cocky Docky and Henny Jenny and all the other Barn Yard Folk lived with the good-natured farmer.

And just as he was going through the gate, who should bounce out at him but a big black cat. And, oh, dear me. Her claws were sticking out of her feet like pins and her eyes were yellow as fire and her teeth glittered and her whiskers stood out like bayonets, and her tail was as big as a rolling pin and her back was humped up worse than a camel's.

If you can think of anything worse than the way that cat looked I wish you would write me a letter and tell me so that I can scare Uncle Lucky, for, would you believe it, he wasn't the least big frightened. No, sireemam.

He just took off his old wedding stovepipe hat and bowed most politely to Mrs. Black Cat, and she was so surprised that she turned around and went back to her three little kittens who never wore mittens because they didn't have any.

And after that the old gentleman rabbit hopped into the barn and ate some corn and had a talk with Mr. Sharptooth Rat. And maybe he would have been talking there yet if something hadn't happened. And when you don't expect it, something very often, and sometimes most always, does happen. The Miller's dog ran into the barn and made a grab for the old gentleman rabbit, but Uncle Lucky was too quick for him.

He hopped to one side and then out of that barn so that he hopped right into to-morrow night's story. Wasn't that wonderful?

### **STORY XXX. BILLY BUNNY AND BIG YELLOW DOG.**

Let me see. Didn't I say that Billy Bunny hopped out of the Old Barn so fast in last night's story that he jumped right into this one? Well, he did, and here he is saying, "I'm ready for another adventure!"

And no sooner had he said this than along came a big yellow dog with a muzzle on his nose, and when the little rabbit saw him he laughed out loud, "Oh, ho! Mr. Yellow Dog! Did you put your nose into a mouse trap?"

"No, I didn't," replied the Yellow Dog. "It's a muzzle to keep me from biting little rabbits," and then he gave a dreadful growl and tried to pull off the muzzle with his front paws.

"I won't wait until you get it off," said Billy Bunny, and he hopped away as fast as he could, for he wasn't the least bit curious to see whether that muzzle was tied on tight!

And by and by he came to a hollow stump where lived an old rabbit named Hoppity-hop.

"Helloa, my little friend," said the old rabbit, and then he wriggled his nose a million times or less, for I guess he smelt the lettuce sandwich which Billy Bunny had in his knapsack.

"Good morning," said Billy Bunny, but he didn't open his knapsack. No, sir! It wasn't fourteen o'clock, which is the luncheon hour in Rabbitville, so I've been told. And this, of course, made the old rabbit very sad. "Oh, dear me," he cried, "I'm so hungry, and if there is anything I love more than a lettuce sandwich it's apple pie!"

"How do you know I've got an apple pie?" asked Billy Bunny, and he took out his gold watch and chain to see what time it was, for he began to feel hungry all of a sudden. But, oh, dear me!

It wasn't fourteen o'clock, or anywhere near it, so he twisted the stem of his watch until the hands pointed at the luncheon time, and then he took out the lettuce sandwich and the apple pie and he and the old rabbit ate them up

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

right then and there, and after that they felt ever so much better.

"Now I'll tell you a secret," said the old rabbit. "There's a carrot candy shop not very far from here, and if you've got any money in your knapsack I'll take you there."

Wasn't that kind of that old rabbit? So off they hopped and pretty soon, not so very far, they came to the candy shop, and the old lady woodchuck who kept it was awfully kind and generous, for she filled up a paper bag right to the top for a lettuce dollar bill, which I think was a very cheap price to pay for all that candy, don't you?

And when it was all gone, Billy Bunny said good-bye and hopped away singing at the top of his voice:

"Oh, who is so merry and who is so gay  
As a rabbit who always has money to pay  
For candy and popcorn and nice apple pie  
And other sweet things that you're longing to buy."

And in the next story, if Billy Bunny does eat any more carrot candy and get so dizzy he can't hop in a circle, I'll tell you some more about the little rabbit.

## STORY XXXI. BILLY BUNNY AND A HAPPY BIRTHDAY.

It very often happens  
You don't know what to do,  
And then's the time the Mischief Man  
Comes smiling round to you.  
He whispers something in your ear  
You know you shouldn't stop to hear,  
And then's the time for you to say,  
"Oh, Mischief Man, please go away!"

This is what dear good Uncle Lucky wrote in Billy Bunny's album, for it was the little rabbit's birthday, you know, and Uncle Lucky thought he ought to warn him against the Mischief Man.

Well, as soon as the ink was dry so that the little rabbit could put the album away in Uncle Lucky's desk, the kind old gentleman rabbit said: "Let us take a ride in the Luckymobile. Maybe we can go some place where we will have a good time."

So they got into the automobile and started off, and by and by they came to a shady spot in the woods. And there right under a big spreading chestnut tree, was a little table covered with a clean white cloth and in the middle was a lovely birthday cake with candles and big frosted letters, which read, "A Happy Birthday to Billy Bunny!"

And oh, my, wasn't he delighted and so were all the little forest folk, for they were all there, let me tell you, from Old Squirrel Nutcracker to the Big Brown Bear.

And so were the little people from the Pleasant Meadow, Dicky Meadow Mouse and Robbie Redbreast and many others. And pretty soon along came the barnyard folk, Cocky Docky, Henny Jenny and Ducky Daddies. Even Mrs. Cow wasn't too busy to be there, and if you'll wait a minute I'll tell you the names of some more of Billy Bunny's friends:

Turkey Purky, Danny Beaver, Old Mother Magpie, Timmy Chipmunk, Scatterbrains, the gray squirrel, and

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

Shadow Tail, his brother. Daddy Fox would like to have been there, only Uncle Lucky hadn't sent him an invitation. The only friend who wasn't there was Uncle Bullfrog. He couldn't leave his log in the Old Mill Pond, so he sent his regrets by little Mrs. Oriole, who lived in the willow tree by the Old Mill.

"Now we'll cut the cake," said kind Uncle Lucky, and he went over to the Luckymobile to get the big carving knife which he had hidden under the cushions.

"There's a little gold ring hidden away somewhere," he said as he cut the cake very carefully so as not to topple over the pretty candles and get the pink and green melted wax all over the white frosting.

And then everybody ate up his piece of cake as fast as he could to find the little gold ring. "I've got it! I've got it!" screamed Timmy Chipmunk. But, oh, dear me. It wasn't the ring at all. It was only a hard nut.

And the little chipmunk was so disappointed that he ran home to tell his mother all about it, and she gave him one she had found when she was a little girl in the toe of her stocking one happy Christmas morning. And in the next story you'll be surprised to hear who got the ring after all.

## STORY XXXII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE LOST RING.

Something's going to happen;  
I feel it in the air.  
But what it is you soon shall know,  
So hold your breath and stare.

You remember in the last story I told you about Billy Bunny's birthday party and promised to tell you who found the little gold ring in the frosted cake.

Well, just as the little rabbit said, "I've found it!" Daddy Fox sprang from behind a bush and grabbed the piece of cake right out of the little rabbit's paw.

And then he jumped over the Luckymobile and ran off to his den to give it to Slyboots or Bushy Tail, his two little sons, you know, but which one got it I can't remember, for everybody was so excited that they forgot to ask the naughty old fox before he got away.

"That's too bad," said kind Uncle Lucky; "I'll have to get you another one," so he said good-bye to everybody and took Billy Bunny down to the 3 and 10 cents store, where they bought a lovely gold ring with a big ruby in it. Wasn't that nice?

And then they came back to the woods, but everybody had gone home and there was no more birthday cake anywhere to be seen, not even a little piece of candle.

"Well, what shall we do now?" said the kind old gentleman rabbit, and he poured some lettuce oil into the cabaret and took out his blue polka-dot handkerchief and wiped his ear, and then he dusted off his old wedding stovepipe hat and honked the automobile horn and blew up a tire and turned a cushion upside down to hide a grease spot. And after that he put on his goggles and started off again, and by and by, not so very long, they came to a signpost on which was written:

"Which road shall I take?"

"Goodness, gracious me!" exclaimed the old gentleman rabbit, "what's the matter with my goggles?" and he took

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

them off and looked at the signpost again.

"It says the same old thing," he said with a sigh, and he took off his old wedding stovepipe hat and dusted the top, and after he had put it on his head again he heard a voice saying:

"Take the road that leads to the left,  
And not the one to the right,  
For if you don't you will get left  
And you won't get home till night."

"Who's speaking?" said Billy Bunny. And the reason he hadn't said anything before was because he had been sound asleep.

And then who should come out from behind that funny signpost but a great roaring bull with two horns and about ten feet long and big red, snorting nostrils.

"Don't let us disturb you," which means bother or something like that, said Uncle Lucky, and he honked the horn with all his might, and, would you believe it, the bull was so frightened that he ran away and never stopped till he got home and covered himself with the crazy quilt on his old four-poster bed.

### **STORY XXXIII. BILLY BUNNY AND THE GREAT NEWS.**

Once upon a time,  
So I've heard tell,  
There lived a little rabbit  
In a shady dell.  
And on one side a clover patch,  
Where red-topped clovers grew,  
And 'tother side was lollypops  
Of red and white and blue.

This is the song Mrs. Bunny sang one morning as she set to work to wash her little rabbit's white duck trousers, for it was Monday, and that is washday in Rabbitville, so they tell me.

And just as she was hanging them out on the line who should fly up but Old Mother Magpie, and, my! wasn't she excited. Why, she was so disturbed that her bonnet had fallen off her head and was hanging by the strings.

"Have you heard the news?" she asked, and she rolled off one of her black silk mitts and turned her wedding ring around three times and a half.

"Heard what?" asked Mrs. Bunny, putting the clothespin in her mouth instead of on the clothesline.

"Why, the Miller's boy has gone off to the war."

"Hurray!" shouted little Billy Bunny, who was polishing the brass door knob on the back door. "Hurray!"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," said Old Mother Mischief. "His poor mother is nearly crazy with grief."

"I'm sorry for her," said Mrs. Bunny, and she thought how thankful she ought to be that her little rabbit didn't have to shoulder a musket.

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

"Well, I'm glad he's going," said Billy Bunny. "He can shoot at something else now besides little rabbits."

Old Mother Magpie ruffled her feathers. "Well, if I had a boy like you I'd teach him not to glory over another person's grief," and then she flew away.

"I'm sorry for his mother," said Mrs. Bunny, "but the Miller boy will never be missed," and the clothespin fell out of her mouth and stood up in the grass like a little wooden soldier.

"Do you want anything at the store?" asked the little rabbit, after he had finished cleaning the door knob. "If you do, tell me, for I'm going by there."

"You can order a pound of carrot tea and some lollypops," answered his mother, and then Billy Bunny picked up his striped candy cane and set off for the village, and by and by he came to the post office and the nice lady postmistress called to him that there was a letter there addressed to Billy Bunny, Old Brier Patch, but what was written in it I'm not going to tell you now, for I must stop and play a game of pinochle with dear, kind Uncle Lucky, who just telephoned me to come over to his house and have a game with him this evening, and I mustn't keep him waiting another minute.

### **STORY XXXIV. BILLY BUNNY AND JENNY MUSKRAT.**

Well, I played pinochle with Uncle Lucky Lefthindfoot last evening and it was so late when I got home that I overslept myself this morning.

And maybe I'd have slept all day if Robbie Redbreast hadn't come to my window and told me that Billy Bunny was reading a letter which I told you about in yesterday's story and that every time he turned a page he laughed harder than ever.

Well, I was so curious to know what he was laughing at that I told Robbie Redbreast to fly back to him and look over his shoulder and see what was in the letter while I hurried and dressed as fast as I could, and when I was all ready to go into the Friendly Forest where the little rabbit was, I saw him coming toward me with the letter in his hand and the little robin perched upon his knapsack.

"Good morning," he said and handed me the letter, and now you shall hear what was written to Mr. William Bunny, Brier Patch, Old Snake Fence Corner, U. S. A., care of Uncle Sam!

"My dear Billy Bunny:

"Just a few lines from your old friend the Circus Elephant to tell you that he is coming to see you as soon as he gets over the measles. If you've never had the measles, dear Billy Bunny, don't get them, for they are dreadful things for there's so many of them.

"Please give my love to Mr. Lucky Lefthindfoot and tell him as soon as I'm well, I'll be back in his circus.

"Your friend,

"Elly."

And as soon as I'd read the letter the little rabbit put it in his pocket and hopped away and by and by he came to a little stone house by a river. And before I go any farther I'll just whisper to you how I know all this.

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

You see, the little robin told me all about it, for he and I are great friends and his nest is in the old apple tree just under my window.

Well, pretty soon, after looking all around, Billy Bunny knocked on the door of the little stone house and in a few minutes it was opened by a nice lady muskrat, whose name was Jenny Eva.

"How do you do, little rabbit," she said, and then she invited him in and gave him a cookie made out of carrot seeds and pumpkin flour. And after that he showed her the letter from his friend, the circus elephant, and just then, all of a sudden, the front door flew open and in came the miller's dog.

And, oh, dear me! Mrs. Jenny Eva Muskrat forgot all about her society manners and ran down the back stairs into the river and the little rabbit forgot to say good-bye and hid himself in a big hat box where she kept her last year's Easter bonnet. And then, what do you suppose the miller's dog did? Why, he began to sing:

"Old Mrs. Muskrat jumped into the river,  
Splasherty, splasherty, splash!  
And little boy rabbit jumped into the box,  
That held her best bonnet and trampled upon it.  
Masherty, masherty, mash!"

And in the next story you shall know what the miller's dog did when he stopped singing, that is, if Robbie Redbreast isn't too frightened to look into the window and tell me all about it.

### **STORY XXXV. BILLY BUNNY AND THE MILLER'S DOG.**

After the Miller's Dog stopped singing, as I told you in the story before this, he poked his nose into the hat box where Billy Bunny had hidden himself and said in a deep, growly voice:

"Come out of there or I will growl and bite the bonnet  
That Mrs. Muskrat wears for best  
And the purple flowers on it.  
And then she'll think it's you who did  
This dreadful unkind deed,  
And never speak to you again  
Or you with cookies feed."

"Goodness me, but you are a very poor sort of a poet," said the little rabbit, peeping out of the hat box. "Your poetry is dreadful," and this made the Miller's Dog so ashamed of himself that he couldn't wag his tail or even bark.

No, sir. He couldn't do a thing but slink out of the door and close it so softly that it didn't pinch his tail hardly at all.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the little rabbit. "Did you ever see such a silly dog?" And neither did I and neither did you, I know.

Well, after a little while, Mrs. Jenny Eva Muskrat came up the back stairs from the river, where she had gone in the last story, you remember, and wasn't she glad that nothing more had happened? "If you had jumped into that other hat box," she said, "you would have spoilt my next year's Easter bonnet, and that would have been too dreadful for anything."

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

And wasn't the little rabbit glad? Well, I guess he was twice over and maybe three times. And after that he said good-by and hopped away, and after he had traveled for a long, long ways he came to the field where his old friend the Scarecrow lived.

"How have you been?" asked the little rabbit, and he took a lollypop out of his knapsack and offered it to the scarecrow, but he didn't want it. "Haven't you got a cigar?" he asked. "I haven't smoked for ever so long."

"I'm sorry," said Billy Bunny. "I don't think I have any really and truly cigars. Here's a chocolate one if that will do," and he handed it to his friend the Old Clothes Man.

But the Old Clothes Man couldn't smoke it at all, although he tried the best he could, and pretty soon it began to rain and the chocolate became soft and sticky, and the little Bunny all wet, so he said: "I guess I'll crawl into a hollow stump if I can find one."

And it didn't take him long, for he hopped away to the woods nearby, and the first thing he saw was an old stump, so he hopped inside. And no sooner was he safely out of the rain than a voice said:

"What are you doing in my hollow stump;  
Who are you anyway?  
Why didn't you knock on this old wood block  
If you really want to stay?"

And in the next story I'll tell who it was that said this.

## **STORY XXXVI. BILLY BUNNY AND THE WOODCHUCK.**

You remember in the last story that just as Billy Bunny hopped into the hollow stump a voice said, "What are you doing in here?"

"I came in to get out of the wet," answered the little rabbit, and then the voice replied:

"What! Is it raining? I'll lend you an umbrella!" and an old woodchuck opened a little door in the side of the stump and winked at Billy Bunny.

"That's very kind of you," said the little rabbit, and he opened his knapsack and gave the woodchuck a nice lollypop, and after that the woodchuck said: "I think you'd better stay here with me until the rain is over. Don't you think so?"

And Billy Bunny said yes, for the woodchuck was very nice and had such good manners that the little rabbit felt quite at home.

But oh, dear me! it began to rain so hard right then and there that the water just poured into the old hollow stump, and pretty soon it was very uncomfortable. So the woodchuck said:

"Now don't you ever tell anybody where I'm going to take you. For it's my very own house, and I never let anybody know just where I do live. You see, so many people are after me, some with guns and some with sharp teeth and claws, that I have to be very careful."

So the little rabbit promised, and then he followed the woodchuck through the little door and down a long passage until they came to a nice, large, comfortable room.

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

"Now, this is where I live," said the woodchuck, and he went over to the cupboard and took out a carrot candy gumdrop and gave it to Billy Bunny, and then he lighted a big cigar and sat down in his old armchair and smoked.

And all the time they could hear the rain pattering on the grass overhead, for it's wonderful how you can hear all sorts of sounds when you're under ground and have big ears like a rabbit, you know.

"Now, I'll tell you a story," said the old woodchuck after he had blown some lovely round rings of smoke into the air.

"Once upon a time,  
Not so very long ago,  
A band of tiny fairies  
Lived in the woodland near.  
And often I would hear them  
A-singing soft and low  
When all was dark and quiet  
And the moon shone bright and clear.  
So one evening I stole softly  
Out of the hollow stump,  
And found them dancing merrily  
With tiny skip and jump;  
And just as I was going  
To say how do you do,  
The Fairy Queen began to scream.  
And then away she flew.  
And then her tiny subjects  
Took fright and ran off, too,  
And now I never see them more  
A-dancing near my old stump door."

"That's too bad," said the little rabbit, for he was so interested in what the old woodchuck was saying that he had forgotten all about his lollypop and had dropped it on the floor.

And in the next story he'll pick up his lollypop and eat it, because I hate to have him lose it, don't you?

## STORY XXXVII. BILLY BUNNY AND LITTLE PEEWEE.

Let me stop for a moment and think where I left off last night. Oh, now I remember. Billy Bunny was in the old woodchuck hollow stump, and it was raining.

Oh, my, yes. Cats and dogs, as they say in grown-ups' stories, so we'll say kittens and puppies. Well, after a while the rain stopped and the little rabbit said good-by and hopped away, and pretty soon, not very long, a little bird began to sing:

"Down the shady Forest Trail,  
O'er the hill and through the vale,  
Billy Bunny hops along  
With a whistle and a song.  
And if you have never heard  
A rabbit whistle like a bird,

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

You must ask each little rabbit  
If he has the whistling habit."

"Who's singing?" asked Billy Bunny, and he took his silver policeman's whistle out of his knapsack and blew on it so hard that the little bird began to cry:

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! You will whistle my ear off!" And then, of course, the little rabbit stopped, for he didn't want to hurt that dear little bird. No sireemam.

"Who are you?" he asked, and the little bird replied: "I'm Peewee, the littlest bird in the whole Friendly Forest."

"What do you look like?" said the little rabbit, curiously, gazing here and there and everywhere and behind a tree and under a stone. "I've never seen a Peewee."

And then that little bird flew down from a tree and Billy Bunny saw the tiniest little bird he had ever seen. Why, it wasn't much larger than a butterfly.

"Goodness, but you're small," said Billy Bunny. "Are you so small that you don't like lollypops?"

Of course, the little bird said no, and so would you, no matter how small you were, but when she tried to fly away with the lollypop, she couldn't. No sireemam. Wasn't that too bad? So the little rabbit gave her some sweet cracker crumbs instead, and after that he hopped away looking for another adventure.

And it wasn't long before he had one. For, just as he was hopping across a fallen log that made a narrow bridge over a brook, a little fish swam up to the top of the water and said:

"Here is a letter from your friend, the Whale," and he held up in his mouth a blue envelope. I guess it was made of some kind of waterproof paper, for it wasn't the least bit damp.

And when Billy Bunny opened it, he found a small coral ring inside, and in the letter it said: "This ring is for you, Billy Bunny.

"The pretty mermaid asked me to send it to you, so here it is. Please tell the little fish that you have received it and that it fits you perfectly." And then the Whale signed himself, "Your great big-hearted friend, the Whale."

## **STORY XXXVIII. BILLY BUNNY AND OLD MOTHER MAGPIE.**

Uncle Bullfrog sings a song  
That is never very long.  
All he says is, "Chunk, ker-chunk!"  
Then he splashes in ker-plunk,  
And the little fishes swim,  
Oh, so fast away from him!  
If they didn't, don't you think  
He would eat 'em in a wink?

Now who do you suppose was singing this song? Why, a little tadpole named Taddylegs. And it made Uncle Bullfrog quite cross, for he didn't like tadpoles anyway, and Taddylegs wasn't very polite, as you can see.

"Now swim away," said the old gentleman frog, and he looked angrily at Taddylegs. "Now swim away or I'll

## Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog

swallow you and maybe your cousin and your aunt if they're around." So the little tadpole swam away and after a while Old Uncle Bullfrog saw Billy Bunny not very far away. He was talking to Mrs. Cow about the clover patch.

You see, Mrs. Cow was very fond of clover and so was the little rabbit, and he knew that Mrs. Cow could eat maybe three hundred and forty—seven times as much clover as he could, and so he was afraid she might eat up the whole patch and leave nothing for anybody else.

"Please don't eat all the clover tops; mother wants to preserve some for the winter."

"Don't you worry," replied Mrs. Cow, and she whisked a big horse fly off her side with her long tail. "Don't you worry and don't you fret, there'll be some clover blossoms yet."

So the little rabbit felt ever so much better and hopped away and by and by he came across Old Mother Magpie. And he wasn't a bit pleased, for she was always finding fault with him, and everybody else, for that matter.

Yes, Old Mother Magpie made lots of trouble and Billy Bunny had never liked her. But he couldn't get away without her seeing him, although he tried his best.

"Good morning, Billy Bunny," said the old lady magpie, and she raised her bonnet so she could see him better, for the brim was half over her left eye.

"Good morning," replied the little rabbit. "I'm sorry, but I'm in a dreadful hurry," and he hopped away so fast that he left his shadow a mile behind him.

"Gracious me!" exclaimed Old Mother Magpie. "That bunny doesn't like me very much I guess."

"Yes, you don't have to guess again," cried a voice, and Parson Crow cawed and hawed, and this made the old lady magpie so angry that she flew away to tell Barney Owl that she was a very much abused person.

But here we are at the end of this book, and so we will have to jump to the next, which I will call, "BILLY BUNNY AND UNCLE LUCKY LEFTHINDFOOT."

THE END