Many readers will already be familiar with Uncle Remus’ favorite animal characters – Br’er Rabbit and Br’er Fox among them – and some of the popular tales concerning them. (To this day, “tar baby” as an expression for a particularly sticky situation that is almost impossible to solve, has passed into the English language and common use.) Even people who have never read any of these tales will know exactly why you don’t throw a rabbit into a briar patch, mainly because Walt Disney produced his first movie ever to use professional actors with animation, called “Song of the South,” based on the Uncle Remus tales.

Joel Chandler Harris, a newsman in Georgia, grew up listening to folktales told by the local black population. Later, he published his version of these tales in a series of stories printed in the “Atlanta Constitution.” The tales of, and by, Harris’ chief character Uncle Remus, an old black man scrabbling to make his living in the post-Civil War South, were extremely popular and widely read. Harris’ use of innovative spelling to give the reader a sense of the black dialect was considered novel.

While this is not a book that will pass a current political correctness test, due to its use of labels for black folks which have gone out of polite conversation, Uncle Remus is a largely sympathetic look at post-war plantation life. Uncle Remus himself is a warm, folksy man of good humor and dry wit, and after finishing his animal stories, the remaining sayings and tales are a moment of history frozen in amber. (Summary by Mark)

Read by Mark F. Smith. Total Running Time: 06:12:44

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