

The Bunny Family

by Henry Close

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BEDTIME

"Peter Bunny!" his Mommy called. "It's almost time for your bath." Mommy had stepped out into the yard and was shaking the crumbs out of her apron.

"In a minute." Peter Bunny was playing hopscotch on the driveway with his friend Roger Bunny. He was not ready to take his bath.

"Peter Bunny," his Mommy called again. "Would you rather take your bath now, or five minutes from now?"

"Five minutes from now."

Mommy went back into the kitchen and finished putting the dishes in the sink. Then she called again. "Peter Bunny, Would you rather hop to the bathtub, or crawl to the tub?"

"I'd rather hop!"

Mommy hopped into the bathroom, turned on the light, and started filling the tub with nice warm water. "Would you rather hop with your right foot or with your left foot?"

"I'd rather hop with both feet!" Peter Bunny hopped on both feet into the bathroom. He leaned on the tub with his left paw, and felt the water with his right paw. "The water's fine."

"Would you rather take your bath before you take your clothes

off, or after you take your clothes off?"

"Oh Mommy!" Peter Bunny said. "Don't be silly."

While he was taking his clothes off, Mommy stood up with both paws behind her back. It looked like was holding something in each paw. "Would you rather use soap or use sandpaper?"

"Sandpaper? Sandpaper might rub off all my white fur!"

"Oh," Mommy said as she handed him the soap. While Peter Bunny was taking his bath, she went into his bedroom and turned down the covers on his bed. "Would you rather dry off before you go to bed, or after you go to bed?"

"Mommy, if I dry off after I go to bed, how would I get the bed dry?"

"Maybe you could use a bed-towel, except we don't have one." Mommy opened the dresser drawer and got out his pajamas. "Would you rather sleep in your bed, or in the dresser drawer?"

"Mommy, if I sleep in the dresser drawer, I'll mess up all my new shirts."

Mommy handed Peter Bunny his pajamas and asked him, "Would you rather put your pajamas on before you go to bed, or after you go to bed?"

"The last time I put on my pajamas after I went to bed, my big ears got stuck in the sleeves."

"Would you rather sleep with your head on the pillow, or with your feet on the pillow?"

"If I slept with my feet on the pillow, my whiskers might get bent!"

After Peter Bunny had dried off, gotten his pajamas on, and was lying with his head on the pillow, Mommy sat on the edge of his bed. She smiled as she tucked him in snugly. "Would you rather I kiss you on the right cheek, or on the left cheek?"

"I want you to kiss me on both cheeks."

As Mommy kissed him on both cheeks and then on his forehead, she whispered in his big ear, "I love you, Peter Bunny."

"I love you, Mommy."

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SAFELY TUCKED AWAY

Note to Parents: This is a poem to help children go to sleep. As far as possible, synchronize each line with the child's exhaling, pausing for one breath after each phrase or word. Start off in a normal, nonchalant tone of voice. Very gradually, speak softer and slower, stretching out each word. By the end of the poem, your voice will be a soft and sleepy whisper.

The light in the sky
was getting softer.

Mommy's voice,
was getting softer.

The soft covers
were warm and cozy.

Peter Bunny's eyes
were beginning to close.

The idle chatter of crickets
seemed farther and farther away.

The soft touch of Mommy's kiss
encircled him with love.

The friendly darkness
surrounded him with safety.

The sound of his breathing,
was slow and regular.

The memories of a happy day
were safely tucked away.

He no longer noticed
the absence of light.

He no longer listened
to the quiet silence.

Softly,

quietly,

warmly,

Peter Bunny

was

asleep.

MORNING IS RUSHING TOWARD US

"Peter Bunny, it's time to get up." Mommy was sitting on the side of his bed, stroking his big ear with a hair brush.

"It's too early." Peter Bunny wiggled around in his bed and pulled the covers tight around his neck.

"I know. But look at the clock. Morning is rushing at us very fast. I want us all to be ready for it." Mommy tugged on the covers just a little bit. Peter Bunny tugged back.

Peter Bunny rolled over, and looked at his Mommy. "Can't I stay in bed, and still be ready for it?"

"I guess you could," Mommy said, "but that would be very complicated. Because if morning comes and we aren't ready for it, it will just go right past us. After that, we would have to do everything backward."

"I like doing things backward." Peter Bunny closed his eyes tight and buried his head in the pillow.

"I do too, sometimes. But it is much easier to do things backward in the afternoon than in the morning."

"There isn't anything I can't do backward." Peter Bunny sat up in bed so he could talk more clearly. He opened his eyes wide to look at his Mommy, and nodded his head so hard that his big ears wiggled.

"I know that. But there are some things that it is much harder to do backward than to do forward."

Peter Bunny looked at his Mommy very seriously. "Like what?"

"Well, it is very hard to open your eyes backward."

"I can do that." He turned his head to the side and made a funny face while closing his eyes very tightly and then opening them. He put his paw over one eye, and then over the other eye and made some more funny looking faces.

"At least I could do it if I knew how," he said

"I'm sure you could do that," his Mommy said. "But it's also very hard to breathe backward. Every time you think you ought to breathe in, you have to breathe out. And every time you think you ought to breathe out, you have to breathe in. It's very hard to remember."

"Here, let me show you!" Peter Bunny started breathing in and out, making a little snort with each breath.

"That's very good," Mommy said with a big smile on her face. "But do you know how to get out of bed backward?"

"Of course!" Peter Bunny slid all the way under the covers. As he wiggled around, his big back foot pushed the pillow on to the floor. Finally he crawled out at the foot of the bed.

Mommy smiled. "Very good!" she said. "You did that better

than I could when I was your age."

"I can do lots of things better than you could."

"Yes, but I think that getting dressed backward would be too hard for almost anybody."

"What do you mean?"

"If you put your shoes and socks on backward, you would have to put your shoes on first, and then your socks. I don't think that would be such a good idea, especially if you had a hole in one of your socks."

"Oh," Peter Bunny said in a very serious tone of voice.

"And if you put your clothes on backward, you would have to put your clothes on first, and then put your underwear on."

"I can do that!" Peter Bunny looked at the clothes Mommy had laid on the bed, and then looked back at Mommy. "I just don't want to do it today."

"Listen, I know what you could do." Mommy was quite excited. She leaned forward and whispered, "You could put on your clothes double backward. That's almost the same as putting them on frontwards."

"How would I do that?"

"You turn around two and a half times, and then put your clothes on very quickly."

"Like this?" Peter Bunny grabbed his school clothes and turned

around so fast he almost fell down. First he put on his underwear, then his shirt, then his pants. Last of all, he put on his socks and then his shoes. He turned and looked at his Mommy with a big smile on his face. "There!" he said.

"That's great! Do you think you can walk to the breakfast table backward?"

"Just watch me!" Peter Bunny turned around with a very determined look on his face. He put each foot firmly on the floor as he marched backward.

"Watch out for the door!"

Peter Bunny glanced quickly over his left shoulder. He saw the door, stopped and changed his direction.

When he got to the breakfast table, he started to sit down in the chair backward. But the back of the chair would have been right in his face. It would be very hard to eat that way.

While he was wiggling around in his chair, Mommy said, "Peter Bunny, look out the window. It's not even morning yet. We got up and ready before morning even got here. We don't have to do anything backward for the rest of the day!"

Peter Bunny looked relieved for just a moment. Then he stared straight at Mommy. "I could keep on doing things backward if I wanted to."

"I know you could, but isn't it nice not to have to?"

Peter Bunny had a delicious breakfast of lettuce juice, scrambled eggs and celery pancakes with carrot syrup. He took his dishes to the sink, grabbed his school books and walked toward the door.

"Good bye, Mommy!"

"Good bye, Peter Bunny."

Mommy gave him a big hug around his neck, and whispered in his big ear, "Have a happy day."

"You too, Mommy."

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THANKSGIVING

The table was all set for Thanksgiving dinner. Grandpa looked at it carefully. "Let's see," he thought to himself, "there's the turkey, the banana pizza, the potatoes, the beans, and the cranberry salad." He looked around some more. "Where's the pumpkin pie?" he asked himself.

He looked all around the room. He noticed a big orange spot on the floor. He leaned over and smelled the spot. "So that's what happened to the pumpkin pie. Somebody was a little bit clumsy, and the pie dropped on the floor."

Grandpa went to the kitchen and got some paper towels. In just a couple minutes, he had cleaned up every bit of the pumpkin pie from the floor.

Then he looked all around. He didn't see Peter Bunny anywhere. But he heard the sound of sniffing coming from his room.

When Grandpa went in, he didn't see anybody at all, but he still heard the sound of sniffing. It seemed to be coming from under the bed.

"Is that you under the bed, Peter Bunny?" Grandpa asked.

"Um hum."

He sat down on the floor. Peter Bunny crawled out just a little bit and looked up at his grandfather. Then he rubbed his eyes and sniffled

again.

"I was walking through the dining room to see what we were having for Thanksgiving dinner," Grandpa said, "but I couldn't see the pie anywhere. But there was a big orange spot on the floor. When I smelled it, it smelled just like pumpkin pie. Do you think maybe somebody dropped the pie on the floor?"

Peter Bunny nodded and sniffled.

"Do you think it was an accident?"

Peter Bunny nodded his head again, and sniffled.

"Do you think the person felt bad about dropping the pie?"

Peter Bunny nodded his head twice this time.

"Do you think the person who dropped the pie was afraid I might be angry at him?"

Peter Bunny nodded and sniffled.

"I'm not angry. People are much more important than pies are. Besides, everybody has an accident sometimes. I remember when I was a little boy I was trying to get some flour out of the pantry. But the flour spilled, all over me, the counter, the cabinets and the floor. But we got it all cleaned up. There isn't much of anything that can't be fixed."

Peter Bunny was looking at Grandpa with both eyes. He nodded his head again.

"I wonder if the person who dropped the pie would like a nice big hug."

Peter Bunny finished crawling out from under the bed and crawled over to where his Grandpa was sitting. Grandpa put his arms out to hug Peter Bunny very tight. "I love you, Peter Bunny," he said.

"I love you too, Grandpa."

"I think we have time to go to the grocery store and buy another pie. Would you like to come with me?"

Peter Bunny jumped to his feet and put on his jacket. Off they went to the store and came back with a beautiful pumpkin pie.

Grandpa looked at Peter Bunny. "Would it be all right with you if we didn't tell anybody about what happened today? Can we just keep it as our little secret?"

Peter Bunny smiled a big smile and nodded. Grandpa smiled back at him and winked.

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After supper, Peter Bunny told Grandpa, "I'm glad we have a little secret together."

"Me too, Peter Bunny. Nobody else ever needs to know."

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GRANDMA'S CHRISTMAS PIE

"Just remember," Mommy said, "be sure to tell Grandma that you really liked her pumpkin pie."

"But what if I don't like it?" Peter Bunny asked.

"It doesn't matter whether you like it or not. Just pretend. Be sure to tell Grandma that you thought it was wonderful."

"Isn't that telling a fib?"

"I guess it is, in a way. But a little fib like that doesn't hurt anybody, and it will make Grandma feel good. There are times when it is better to tell a little fib than to hurt somebody's feelings."

"Well," Peter Bunny said, "I'll try to like it."

"Thank you."

"Grandma used to cook wonderful meals," Mommy said, "and the most wonderful of all was her pumpkin pie. But she's old now, and she doesn't cook anything any more, except for pumpkin pie at Christmas. I'm afraid last year's pie wasn't very good at all, but we all told her we liked it. And we'll tell her that again this year."

"That's kind of the same thing as telling her we love her, isn't it?" Peter Bunny asked.

"That's it exactly. That's one way we tell her we love her."

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Christmas dinner was wonderful! There was plenty of everything: lettuce, spinach, celery and banana pizza with carrot juice.

Then Grandma came in from the kitchen carrying her pumpkin pie. Peter Bunny said he only wanted a small piece. Mommy took a small piece too. So did everybody else.

Peter Bunny took a very small bite. He glanced up, and noticed that Grandma was looking at him. He smiled a big bright smile, and said, "Wow, Grandma, this pie is wonderful!"

He looked across the table at Mommy, who hadn't even started her pie yet. She winked at him.

"This really is good, Mommy."

Mommy smiled and winked again.

"Mommy, this really is good pie."

Mommy nodded her head, smiled, and winked again. Peter Bunny noticed that Grandma was watching them talk.

"Mommy, the pie is great. It's not at all bad like you said it might be. I didn't have to pretend at all when I said I liked it."

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