

Bunny Names:

Shnozzle—leadership skills

Shnookey—knowledge and observant

Shnizzle—quiet, shy, likes to stay with friends

Shniggy—easy going, agreeable, follower, likes doing and saying what snippy says and does

Snippy—opinionated, is a friend of Shniggy particularly, very fast moving, doesn't want to linger in indecision

Shnibble and **Shnhoppy**—new friends

Shnip, Shnup, Shnap, and Zoezo—New baby rabbits

Chapter 1—Grass Options

Chapter 2—Lots of Change

Chapter 3—A Nook for the Night

Chapter 4—Nibbling and New Things

Chapter 5—Bunny Baths and Furry Feet

Chapter 6—A Meeting in Starlight

Chapter 7—Shnookey and Snacks

Chapter 8—Perfect Haven

Chapter 9—Stories in the Green Garden

Chapter 10—Backyard Fun

Chapter 11—Bunnies Hop, Hop, Hop

Chapter 1—Grass Options

Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy and Snippy sniffed and nibbled in the drying grass where they lived. This team of bunny rabbits had dug together, ate grass together, and generally enjoyed a good life so far together, for as long as they could remember.

But that day, while the pickings were getting scarce, and greenery couldn't be called abundant, they were having to make some choices.

Shnozzle said, "Basically, as I see it, we have one of two choices—either we hop to higher and better places, or we have a hard time trying to stay put. Unless rain comes mighty fast, and all of a sudden the grass and options for food suddenly spring up, we're going to be facing some hard times."

Shnookey agreed and added,

"I've been noticing we aren't the only ones noticing. One moment you see them the next moment you don't. Bunnies, kangaroos and all sorts of other grass nibblers are moving on out. I don't know why we haven't taken the natural hint yet and made a move."

Shnizzle was a quiet type of rabbit and seldom raised her voice enough to be heard. But this was a time when it would be wise to speak up.

"I'm willing to go, even though it means leaving much of what I know to be home. If leaving this place means we can all stick together, then I'll go."

Shniggy and Snippy, amazed by her boldness agreed that it was more important to stick together, than to stick with a place, even if it was all they knew as home so far.

Shnozzle continued to lead the meeting that he started and said, "So do we all agree that moving on is the best option—and are we all agreed; everyone wants to look out for each other and move to find better lands where we can feed comfortably?"

Shniggy, Shnookey, Shnizzle, and Snippy all sniffed in agreement and perked their ears up tall, as if raising their hands for a vote of agreement.

"Then it's agreed," Shnozzle announced, then asked one last question: "When?"

Shniggy, Shnookey, Shnizzle, and Snippy had a bit of a discussion and then came to a united agreement.

"Tomorrow, first thing in the morning."

There was a chance of some dew being on some sparse patches of

grass and low lying plants. The bunnies could lick this off to hydrate them as they made their way.

“And,” Shnookey suggested, “at the first sign of a good enough place to eat, we’ll all stop and take a break to feed and rest, and decide then just how long we’ll stay.

“Agreed!” they all shook their heads, wiggled their noses, flipped up their ears, and gave a wee little hop.

Chapter 2—Lots of Change

“Mommy, Mommy! I see some bunnies hopping over there!” the boy who was travelling through this now dry looking area, pointed out. They were driving home from their visit with the boy’s great-grandmother—his mother’s grandmother.

She’d lived a long time. It was fascinating for the boy to hear of all the things she’d learned and done, and the places she had been in her life. Change and travel were just part of her life.

“Lots of change,” she had said, “was the colour of life. Like the seasons put on new colours, so does the colour of change keep a life interesting and filled with zest.”

She wasn’t afraid of change, but rather welcomed it, and she thinks that is why she lived to be as old as she was—98 years old!

The boy remembered what she said as they sat with her in the garden.

“The first big change I had—the very first change—was when I was born! Just think I was nearly like a fish. I was swimming in water, well more like soaking in the warm bath inside my mother one day, not needing to even breathe, then all of a sudden, out I come.

“I’m then dried off and start to breathe air, I can see lights, and hear things much clearer. Then instead of being inside my mother and hearing her heart beating, I am being held in her arms in this world outside.

“But of course I don’t remember all that, at least not so well. But I do know that if I didn’t make that big change, and learn to do things

differently—like getting my nourishment through my mouth and throat, instead of through a chord to my belly, then I wouldn't be here talking to you today, would I?"

That was a thought to think about. For every situation you are in, you are there because of the very first change you made, when you were born, and probably a whole lot more after that.

"What do you think was the next big change in my life?" Great-grandmother asked the boy.

"Did you move to a new country?" he replied, trying to guess.

"Well, it's true I did, but a few more changes happened before that. And one of them was that I learned to walk, rather than to be carried, in some way, all the time—be it in a baby buggy, or baby backpack, or in my mother's arms, or in a sling on her chest.

"There are lots of ways babies can be carried, but learning to walk on my own two feet was a very big change that came with several bumps and falls. Well, probably most all my bumps and falls all throughout my life came because I did learn to walk.

Great-grandma then asked,

"So, do you think I should have given up, and been pushed in a chair with wheels for the rest of my life? I would have missed out on a heap of fun too, if I had never wanted to graduate from a stroller to a set of legs moving me along.

"Just think, I wouldn't have been able to run and play, while caring for your grandmother—your mother's mother. There's a good chance even you might not be here today, if I only wanted to stay safe and not make that change."

With this, the boy stood and marched and leapt and ran in place, did a little dance step, and kicked as if he was kicking a ball. He pretended he was climbing, and then swimming, riding a bike, and chasing after a dog.

There sure was a lot that he could do, since he too had learned to walk, and took the time trying and trying it again until his legs were able to hold him up consistently.

"Yes, that's right!" Great-grandma smiled and commented, "There sure is a lot you can do."

“What change happened next?”

“Of course I have not mentioned every change that I had to make before I was even the age of three, but there were many. But when I was three, that was the first time I took a boat ride with my parents. I have a photo of it, and that’s how I remember it.

“It was the first time I wasn’t on the solid ground. It was quite a different feeling for me. We were on that big old ship for quite a while.

“On it I could walk around, but I couldn’t go to the park, or pick flowers. I couldn’t even roll in the grass. It was very different.

“But that was the ship that took me to my mother’s native land. If I hadn’t taken that ship and flowed with that change, I wouldn’t have met my own grandmother and many others of my relations. I stayed there for some years and learned many things.

“One of the changes that I had there was learning to speak a new language, for all my relations on my mother’s side spoke a language I was unfamiliar with. That was a change, but I learned it well enough rather quickly.”

The boy interjected, “Great-Grandma, did you see any bunnies on your trip to your grandmother?” he asked, forgetting that it was a watery trip.

“Well, on the ship, no, but later on I saw them. Did you get to see some on your trip here to visit me?” she asked.

“No, but I’d really like to see some,” the boy expressed.

“Well, maybe on your way back you just might, if you are driving and moving at the time they are hopping and moving too. They like to be on the go, on the move, and move quite quickly, too. You’ve gotta be fast at spotting them, or you miss it!”

So when the boy and his mother were making their way back home, it was a great joy for him to see these bunnies. He thought it was a special treat.

Mother was able to stop the car for a while so they could look a bit longer at the field beside the road. It was the time of day for the moving hopping, furry creatures to be scurrying about.

Chapter 3—A Nook for the Night

Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy and Snippy had found the place for their first stop. This open field had enough patches of grass and edible shrubbery and plant life that they could enjoy a good break.

They'd travelled quite far that day. Now as they sat around, after getting a good fill of green nibbles, they had time to talk.

Shniggy was quite content to stay here for awhile, as in days. As long as they could get what they needed, why the hurry. But when Snippy said he'd rather move on the next day, as he was sure there was a chance of even more greenery, then Shniggy changed his mind and said, "I'll go with that then."

He liked to be agreeable and wasn't fussed if someone had a different and better idea.

As they sat underneath the stars they all got very quiet. This was the first time that any of them had dared to do something so new, so different. They were all trying to get used to the new changes.

"Shall we return?" Shnozzle said to his fellow Bunnies. It wasn't that he actually wanted to, though there were things he was definitely missing about their former location and home, but mostly he asked this to see how others were feeling.

Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy and Snippy chorused, in response to his question, a unanimous "No". They all wanted to keep on with their journey and enjoy the adventure of it.

They found some rocks and soft soil to nook around and dig themselves some beds, and a bit of bunny sleep, that they called, "Snedging" was enjoyed, though it was disturbed every now and again with the passing of vehicles on the nearby road. The same road the boy and his mother had travelled on that very day.

Shnookey, wanting to make sure he had all the right information to pass on to the others, crept out a bit to take a look around. It was dangerous to do so, as there certainly were animals they didn't want to meet with. And that is exactly why he was doing this bit of research.

It was best they didn't just base decisions on feelings alone, but that

they knew the facts that were involved, or what the consequences would be if they were to do this or that.

Slowly and ever so quietly, Shnookey made his way around, aiming to hide behind different plants and rocks. He was listening, looking and smelling, and whatever else rabbits do when trying to detect if there is danger, namely in the form of a frisky fox, or other four-legged creatures that run rather than hop.

At one point he thought he saw some movement in the shadows. Well, he DID see some movement, but it wasn't something to cause worry. A wombat waddled out of his hole in the ground in search of succulent scrubs and snacks.

"I hope he has the sense to not cross the long black line!" Shnookey shuddered at the thought. He meant the road, of course. "At least not when the metal mobiles are moving along it."

Yes, cars were a danger, and they never knew when the next one was going to come. It posed a tricky challenge in deed.

As Shnookey made his way back to the others, he was satisfied that at least for that night, right then, the main danger was the moving vehicles. There were no foxes in the range--at least as far as he could see.

"Where have you been?" Snippy perked up and asked, as Shnookey was relocating his nook for the night and snuggling down. Shniggy was quick to hear, and wanted to find out what was going on as well.

"Shhh," Shnookey said, "I'll tell you in the morning. Let's not wake the others. Good night."

And so they remained as quiet as they could, though at one point Shnizzle let out an unexpected gasp of amazement. This caused all the others to wake briefly.

When she was asked, she said, "I just saw a shooting star."

So for awhile after that, the others not wanting to miss a spectacular show—if there was one going on in the sky—kept their eyes open. But eventually sleep took over, and at least for that night it was a one-star show.

There would be more nights, plenty of them. They would have lots of chances on their trip to each see as many zooming lights in the sky as

would please them.

That is because they wouldn't be settling down and building a tunnel town, not yet. Journeying was on the schedule, and onward they pressed.

Chapter 4—Nibbling and New Things

The next week Great-grandma was resting and listening to some soothing music when she heard a knock at the door. The nurse caring for her announced she had visitors, and within a second her granddaughter and great-grandson were back in the room for another visit.

"I brought you something Great-grandma," as he held in his hand a picture he had drawn.

"I got to see these bunnies on our drive away last week," the boy explained.

"Let me see. Yes. You've drawn very nicely. Do they have names, these five furry friends you have painted?" she asked.

Well, the boy knew they didn't really have names, and he hadn't even thought of giving them names, but it was a fun idea.

So the boy and his great-grandma made a game of thinking up names for each of them. Mother helped to write them down at the back of the picture. The boy was pleased with the names they thought up.

"Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy, and Snippy are five fun, fast and furry friends I saw on my trippy."

A fun little rhyme about a fun moment in time.

"Care for some water?" the boy's mother offered their elderly relative, and poured her a glass.

"Well, now where were we in our story time? Would you like to know more about the changes in my life?"

Yes, nodded the boy, and so she began where they left off last time.

"Remember you were three years old and started to learn a new

language,” the boy prompted.

Great-grandmother began,

“Well, when I was about six years old something very new started happening in my teeth—something you might come across soon too. Did you know that the first batch of teeth that grow are just temporary ones? But as your mouth grows bigger, then bigger teeth you will need. And as you get even older, new teeth are added—ones that wouldn’t have fit in your mouth before.

“It’s all cleverly designed so you have what you need to eat your food. Well, that is unless you take poor care of them, through unhealthy living and eating habits. Then they might not last as good as they potentially could.”

The boy was curious as to just how many teeth he did have and so opened his mouth in the mirror to take a look.

“Your teeth look great!” she said, and mother helped him count them by two’s. The count came to 20 teeth.

“You’ll get a few more later on, but take good care of the ones you have, as that’s very important. It’ll help the new ones coming in be healthy as well,” Great-grandma said, and continued her story.

“Well, when I was about six years old it was the first time one of my teeth became loose and fell out. My mother helped place my dear little tooth in a container. She would keep in there every tooth I lost.

“These teeth were special and I had taken good care of them. But they came out just because my mouth needed to have a bigger set. I was older and needed bigger tools for the job of eating.

“And so one by one, over the next several years, each and every one of those original teeth came loose, and a new one grew and filled its place.

:It would have been hard to lose something that was so essential to me, if I didn’t get something to fill in the gap. But when I got something bigger that worked just as well, or even better, then I didn’t mind. In fact, I think I liked my new set of teeth better than the first, and I certainly took better care of them than the first.

“The next set of teeth would need to last me a lifetime, so it was very

important that they got good care, and I didn't misuse them by using them to chew and nibble on and eat things that would harm them or me. And I needed to clean them by rinsing them very well with water when I did eat, and I used other ways of cleaning them too, when they needed it.

"One thing that helped them to get clean was to chew on good and clean types of veggies, good raw ones. Or a piece of a raw white and chewy coconut. That helped.

"Of course you have a toothbrush, don't you? But even that can make your teeth unwell if it's not clean enough and instead of only removing the food remnants, it spreads bacteria in your mouth.

"But if you dip your brush in salt or salty water with a very good type of natural salt, and then brush and rinse them well, this is something that those sickness-causing bacteria don't like and it will clean them out. Then your breath will smell better, and your gums will be healthier too."

"Great-grandma, if the bacteria doesn't like salt and goes away, is there something they like and that makes them stay and make my gums unwell?" the boy asked.

"Sugar—any kind. That makes that type of thing grow. For example if you eat some raisins and dried fruit, and you don't really clean your teeth, then that will feed the farm of very tiny things—called bacteria—on your teeth and gums.

"You might find your gums start to bleed when you brush them. And that's not healthy. So salt is a good solution. And try not to have sweet things all the time.

"Just every now and then. Of course I know you don't eat junky sweet things, as your mama feeds you the best. But even good sweet things like honey and molasses and dried fruit, should only be on your teeth every now and then for a treat and to give your body the good things they can offer. But just not every day or that much, okay?"

The boy looked again at his drawn picture and realised that one thing the bunnies had was strong teeth. And they needed them if they were to eat and eat as much as they liked to.

Mother spoke about how special rabbit's teeth were—and some other

creatures that used them plenty.

“Their teeth just keep growing, and so they need to keep using them so they don’t get too long. And at the same time, as they use their teeth, they wear down a bit, but they don’t have to worry, as the teeth just keep growing!

“It’s a great design, and so the bunnies have what they need,” mother explained.

Ready to move on from bunnies’ and boys’ teeth, he asked what happened next in the life of his great-grandmother.

“Well, of course growing from a child into a woman was a pretty big change, but it didn’t come all of a sudden one night or day. But slowly, over a few years, my body changed and got some new additions—certain ones that were particularly helpful later on when I had a baby to feed.

“I got my own ‘milk dispensers’ that were the key to survival for when your grandmother was born. There were other changes too, but that was the most noticeable one.

“I had to get new clothes and shirts that would fit my new chest shape. Some dresses that I really liked to wear, no longer fit me and so I gave them away. “Some shoes I really liked no longer fit me as I grew out of them.

“So change was a big part of my childhood and early teenhood. Young growing ones are always having something new, and something they need to give up—whether it be teeth or clothes and shoes.

“Even if I never moved from one house or city to another, my own body would bring plenty of changes into my life that I had to cheerfully go along with and learn to enjoy.

“But usually, young people don’t mind the changes that make them bigger and taller, and looking more manly or more like a woman. They think the benefits outweigh the cost of what they have to give up or can’t use anymore.

“Do you have anything you like to wear and are glad to have?” she asked the boy.

He looked down at his shoes. These were his special shiny ones.

He liked to wear them on special occasions, and had chosen to wear them today on his visit with his great-grandmother.

“These are my favourite shoes. They used to not fit me, but now they do,” he replied.

“Yes, you have grown so much, and so fast. I’m glad you can enjoy them. It’s hard to think that one day you’ll no longer be able to fit into them. But one thing that makes it kind of easier, or should I say helps motivate you to move on and pass the too-small-shoes to others is when they start to hurt your feet.

“Have you had that happen to you yet with some shoes? Your toes start getting too jammed in and it rubs them the wrong way, and then when you take your shoes off your feet feel so much better. Then just the thought of putting them on again is an uncomfortable thought. So this makes you no longer want them anyway. “Sometimes pain in some way makes you glad to change something that normally you would never want to change or have to give up.

“This has happened in my life. Like when I got a sickness due to the type of food and drink I was accustomed to having. I really did like eating certain things. But eventually my body said, ‘Enough.’

“I was sick for quite some time and it took a long while to heal. But since I knew what was the cause of it, then it made me want to change and learn to eat new types of food, and to even enjoy them just as much as the ones I had before.

“This made me start to learn how to grow my own food also. This was a good learning experience, a good change for me, and helped me last a whole lot longer. If I had chosen to keep eating the foods that brought down my health, I probably wouldn’t be here talking to you today.”

Great-grandma had a lifetime of experience and had so much she could share that would help her great-grandson to live a happy and long life. Being ready to make changes was a key to survival throughout her life.

Chapter 5—Bunny Baths and Furry Feet

When the boy and his mother were driving home later on he was thinking about the bunnies, yes, about Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy, and Snippy. That is because as he looked out the window, he saw them again. They'd stayed an extra day, as the place seemed safe, and the food was sufficient.

"Mama, Mama, look! There they are again!" he exclaimed.

They sure knew how to hop quickly, here and there. But there was something they didn't need in order to run—running shoes! They never had to outgrow shoes. Their feet just last long and do the job.

"What if I had a good pair of feet that didn't ever need shoes..." he said aloud, thinking about the bunnies.

Mother replied,

"Then you'd never have to learn to tie the laces on shoes, but you'd probably want to wash your feet quite often. But you know there are many people who have lived on earth and who still survive today who never have worn shoes. Their feet get pretty tough I guess."

The boy imagined what it would be like to go out and play in the muddy puddles—without any boots.

Or what it might feel like to suddenly step on a thorn or a sharp rock, unprotected.

Or how he might manage it if he got hurt while doing some jobs around the house and something fell on his toes.

He remembered how much it did hurt when once he stubbed his toe, and whacked it suddenly against the leg of a big wooden chair.

Although he would never grow out of shoes, as the skin on his feet wonderfully would just keep growing the needed amount, however big his foot bones grew, he did like the protection that shoes provided.

"Well, some shoes are made with the furry skins of animals, so in some way's that's like having the same type of shoes that the bunnies have—padded and furry and thick skins.

"I suppose if you had what they have, walking and hopping and climbing and running would be easier than in bare feet when you aren't used to it."

“Let’s think of all the differences between the bunnies and you,” mother suggested as a game to play as they drove along, hoping to spot a few more.

“I have to brush and clean my teeth each day—but the bunnies’ teeth just keep growing, and the things they eat all the time never cause them tooth decay.”

“Yes,” replied mother. “Maybe we can learn from that, and eat the things that make our teeth the healthiest—like raw carrots, and other raw veggies.” She was already imagining the salad she would make for dinner, along with a nice coconut to chew on.

The boy continued,

“I have to wear shoes most of the time when I go out, and we have to put on clothes. But the bunnies grow their own clothes and feet coverings. They’ve got what they need to survive the cold.”

“Yes,” mother said, “We grow some of our clothes too, but not on our bodies. We farm and grow the cotton, or linen, or raise sheep for wool, or use things from other animals whose hair can be made into yarn and woven. So it takes us work to do it, and then we can use it to make warm or nice clothes, or protective clothing.”

The boy yawned. It had been a long, though happy day, and he was getting ready for a warm bath and a soft bed to sleep in, after the nice dinner he was sure to have. This gave him a few more things to realise:

“I sleep in a bed, not in the dirt. I sleep at night, not go hopping around at night. I wouldn’t see well in the dark anyway, like some animals can.”

“And you take baths” mother added.

“Do rabbits stay dirty all the time?” the boy asked.

“No, they like to be very clean, and they have their own built in cleaning tools and water,” mother replied.

“Really? What is that?” he asked.

“Bunnies and other furry creatures, like to keep themselves as clean as they can. I know this won’t sound very nice for you—and that’s because you are a person and not an animal—but they use their own wet tongue like a cloth to clean whatever their mouth can reach. They

take time daily for cleaning,” mother said.

“Animals have built-in cleaning systems; clothes and shoes that grow on them; is there anything else that they are equipped with, but that us humans need to work to make, or need to help each other with?” he asked.

As mother pulled into the driveway she said one last thought, “They house themselves in what is naturally available. They don’t work to built houses! They might need to dig, but the dirt has been created just right for them.

“Lots of creatures just dig in and make themselves their home in the soil below. Others use sticks and leaves to make nests, or just sleep in the tree—like birds and some climbing creatures. Fish just sleep in the water, wherever they can. But we like to make rooms, and fancy structures, and use all kinds of decorative things.

“Of course we don’t need all that to survive. We could just use the natural materials around—like rocks and sticks and mud, grass and leaves. And those do make good building material. But humans tend to like to get more creative. We like to make things look artistic.

“Also, we do need strong houses, as our little babies can’t suddenly run and hop away, if danger comes—like a dangerous animal.

“Many animal babies can walk quite soon after they are born. People take more time to grow up in body. And that is because their minds have so much to learn before they are ready to be given the tool of a big and strong body that can do all sorts of things.

“It’s important that the mind is wise and knowledgeable about a good many things before a person can have the ability and strength to go and do all that they think up.

They need to learn to wisely and carefully use tools, for example. So, that is why a strong house is good for us humans, as it can be used for protecting growing children and can be a place to teach them about safe and happy living.”

The boy was glad for a nice house to stay in.

“Thank you, Mama, for making our house a nice one on the inside,” the boy said with a hug as they got out of the car.

“And you can thank your Papa for making it nice on the outside! I’m sure he’s ready now to hear all your stories from today.”

Chapter 6—A Meeting in Starlight

That night Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy and Snippy had a meeting under the stars.

Shnozzle began the discussion, “I say we make a move as soon as the daylight comes. We’ve been safe so far, but maybe we should move before we get detected.”

Shnookey, who had done some extra exploration that day said knowledgably, “I agree. I did spot some signs of predators today. On the ground were droppings that seemed about a week old. I’m glad that we’ve been undisturbed for this week here, but we might be in a place that they regularly patrol.”

At this, Shnizzle got a bit worried and her teeth started to chatter, though she tried to quiet them by nibbling on some grass roots.

“Don’t worry,” Shniggy said, always ready to be a friend. “Everything is going to be alright. You’re with us! And if anything happens, Snippy and me will do our zig-zag running trick, Okay?”

Shniggy and Snippy had this way of running and criss-crossing each other, as a way to distract an animal who was unwanted.

For example a fox could be watching this running trick they’d do, rather bravely of course, right in front of the creature. Meanwhile, all the rest would hop away to safety—especially the real young ones, and the older ones, who needed more time to get away and were slower on their feet.

Or those who were just too scared to know where to run, and might need more time to figure things out before making their getaway, such as would be the case with Shnizzle.

Then, after a fox--who wouldn’t know which one to catch of the two--nearly making himself dizzy watching them zigzagging across, Shniggy and Snippy would dash off to safety, fast and far away, in different

directions. By that time, the others would have also hopped down some hole or between some rocks, or far enough away.

Shniggy and Snippy were the fastest of the team, they were strong and nearly full grown. They knew it was their job to do what they could to look after the others.

When Shniggy encouraged Shnizzle she did feel better, and her teeth stopped chattering.

Snippy added his opinion last. Though he always had one, he often liked to wait until he'd heard what others had to say, just in case he needed to update his thoughts and give the most appropriate statement or suggestion.

“Sounds like we'd all feel better if we kept on the move. I agree that we get going sooner rather than later. But rather than waiting all the way until the light breaks, I think we should start slightly before.

“There are daytime troubles as well in these parts I do believe. Large birds were hovering in the sky, not so far away. I didn't want to scare anyone—and I don't want to do so now. But perhaps if we make as much headway on our journey as we can, at the time when four-legged creatures are finally settling down to sleep, and the birds don't have as much daylight to do their 'shh-hopping'—that is trying to get some hopping things from the vast store of nature.”

Shnozzle pondered this suggestion. He was older and waking too early wasn't something he really wished to do. But part of being wise meant being willing to do things you don't like, if it will help to save the lives and well-being of others.

Wisdom wasn't just in sitting around and thinking up nice thoughts that would make your life more comfortable, but it also meant committing to doing, and then actually doing those things that were kind and helpful, even if it cost you something.

In this case it would cost him a bit of sleep. Was he willing to do that? He'd have to be, if they all wanted to stick together.

Sometimes it was other's turn to help him, and other times he needed to help the others by doing something unselfish.

“Okay,” he ended the meeting, making a decision that would require

something slightly uncomfortable for him.

“So we’ll go at the time Snippy thinks is best. He can be our wake-up alarm clock.”

Shniggy then chimed in with a very quickly composed rhyme:

We’ll go when the air is nippy, to the wake-up call of snippy.

The four others chuckled, and nodded in agreement.

“Now, let’s get some sleep. But be ready to move and go when the call comes,” Shnozzle closed with saying. And a peaceful night was enjoyed.

Chapter 7—Shnookey and Snacks

“Okay,” whispered Snippy, who had been awake for some time. He didn’t need a lot of sleep and was usually awake before the others.

“It’s up and at’em time. Good morning, and get ready for a new day of adventure.”

Shnookey was the one to lead the way this time, since he had a general idea of where a good, more permanent living spot would be. Everyone moved like a team and good headway was made.

They were very happily hopping along until they came to a sudden... “Halt!” called out by Snippy who was the first one to notice the strange behaviour.

“Odd. I wonder why Snippy, who hopped ahead, suddenly bounced back?”

The others stopped when the call was made.

“There’s something blocking the way!” he realised, and called others to stop moving quite so fast. Perhaps they could stop for a nibble break, under the branches of the tree. It was daylight now, and this would hide them somewhat.

Whatever was in their path needed to be checked out and an alternative route planned, or a way to get across.

Snippy picked himself up and rather dazed walked over to nestle under a bush.

“Wow, that was sure unexpected. Those bushes completely covered the, whatever it was, that I hit against.”

There were vines and bushes covering the solid wooden and wire fence leading to some property.

But as the bunnies peered in to this well-guarded property there was one thing they really noticed—and licked their lips just seeing it.

Grass! There was green and luscious grass. Some large dandelion plants on the edges and other tasty treats.

“Why is this place oh so green and growing well, but out here it is not?” Snippy wondered, now feeling a bit better, especially at the sight of all that was in there.

“I think I see the reason,” Shniggy replied, and sniffed and wiggled his nose trying to get a whiff of the new scent.

A woman had come out of the house that this lush grassy area belonged to, and turned off the hose. She had watered the grass with a sprinkler, but it had had enough.

“Did you see that? She made it rain only on her yard!” Shnozzle exclaimed. He’d never seen the like before.

“Just think!” added Shnookey, “If we could have one of those neat thingies, we could take it anywhere we lived and make the grass grow well!”

Though Shnizzle was quiet, she wasn’t unobservant. She knew it took more than a “thingie” to make it rain. She’d been carefully looking at all the neat things in this yard.

The large water tank that the rain from the roof filled, had a faucet that hooked to a hose that went over the grass to join with the sprinkler. She knew there was a whole system going that did have something to do with the natural rain fall.

“It is rain water,” she blurted out boldly.

Everyone was surprised, and listened.

“See,” she said, and pointed out all the different elements that worked

together to make this wonderful watering system happen when there wasn't much rain coming down right then.

"Ah, you're right," said Shnookey. "I was so busy looking at the great food and snacks growing I missed seeing the water tank and all that. You are good at noticing important things.

"Maybe it is better to be quiet, like you usually are, if it helps me to see things and realise things." Shnookey gave Shnizzle a bunny hug, encouraging her for what she contributed to their team.

"Now the real question I have; probably we all have, is: How do we get in there?" Shnozzle expressed, and all nodded.

"Perhaps if we go around it we'll come to a break in the fence?" Shniggy suggested.

And so they decided to go with this plan. They didn't know how long they were going to have to go around and along in their attempt to enter.

"Hey, wait, everyone!" Snippy soon called out, as he was in the lead. "I think we are not the only ones that have needed to get inside!"

When everyone came to where Snippy was they happily examined the hole dug somewhat under the fence. Some of the wire fencing was pushed up.

Then just before they were going to quietly slip in they noticed a bit of hopping going on, on the other side of the fence—just inside the property.

Chapter 8—Perfect Haven

The visitors had been detected, and soon enough a rabbit they had never met was sniffing face to face with them.

"Hello," he said. "I was just leaving now. I don't stay here in the day. I like to keep my presence as undetected as possible. But you're welcome to come on in and have a bite to eat."

He then crawled under the fence using the dug out rut that he had used daily, it seemed. Before he hopped on and away they caught his name, "Shnibble" he said. And it seemed he lived up to his name well. From his round form they knew nibbles and nibbling was what he did

best. He'd found a great place to live.

When the five new visitors made their way into the garden, the woman in the kitchen looked out the window. She smiled.

She didn't mind them enjoying the grounds. In fact that is why she tried to keep the grass and plants growing somewhat longer than most others did. She always did like these furry little ones.

When one hopped in, then two, then three, four, and at last the fifth, she laughed and said, "How many of you are there? What a happy team you are."

Though they couldn't hear her talking she said aloud, "Yes, be my guests. There is plenty for you to enjoy. You must be hungry and thirsty too."

Her yard was the perfect haven, kind of like a little oasis for the struggling wild life during times of heat and lack of rain. Her big water tank would last, if she used it wisely, until fresh rain fell to fill it up again.

If you looked around her yard you would see all the ways she tried to provide for all the good little creatures. Well, first of all the strong and tall fence kept the animals away that were not wanted.

But for the big creatures that might be thirsty, she kept a small tub with water for them to drink on the outside of her fence.

There were bird feeders hanging in the trees. Flowers were kept growing so the bees would have what they needed and liked too.

She grew various veggies, and although some were for her own consumption, she didn't mind when a bunny or two got to share a growing carrot, or the birds ate some berries. She would just try to grow enough so those coming for refreshment could have a bit to share.

The birds were never greedy. They didn't take more than they actually needed. They didn't grab and store up supplies. They were polite and would leave the rest for others.

"Good lesson," she would think. "We humans can really learn a whole lot from these amazing creatures."

And she kept some old rotting logs that she knew were filled with bugs. This delighted the birds, who came here very hungry and in need

of protein, occasionally rolling them over to reveal the many bugs nestled under it.

She kept a bird bath, and lower bowls of water for bunnies and other creatures that might come for a visit.

“What a wonderful day this has been!” Shniggy said. He liked when they all had a good time being together and everyone getting their needs met. “This place has all a bunny could wish for—food, water, shade, and soft digging ground.

Shnozzle added, “It was nice of Shnibble to let us come. It’s good when others aren’t keeping to themselves what they’d never have time or tummy to eat all on their own anyway.”

They all nodded that if it hadn’t been for Shnibble being willing to share, then they wouldn’t be having this great time.

“How long shall we stay around here, do you think?” Shnookey asked. There were the needs of each of the bunnies to consider. There were the wishes and needs of the one who lived there—they wouldn’t want to wear out their welcome. There were the wishes of the resident creatures who were sharing the place.

Snippy suggested they take it a day at a time, as they really didn’t know the area. But if it was working well, and going good, then they could stay on. Shniggy chimed in, “I like that idea.”

That night they had the best night sleep they ever had. There was a rocky area with some branches that made for a snug place, and there they settled down. --That is when they weren’t hopping around nibbling in the night.

That’s why it was such a good night, they could sleep and eat, sleep and eat, and repeat and repeat.

Chapter 9—Stories in the Green Garden

In the morning they peered out between some of the leaves that formed their branch covering. They saw just what it took to keep this place the haven it was. On went the sprinkler system to water the

ground.

Seeds were placed in the bird feeders. Weeds were plucked from the garden and placed in a bucket of water to make some nutrient filled liquid for the plants.

A container was used to pick some of the ready berries, herbs and some other veggies.

A hole was dug to plant a new little fruit tree that was big enough to grow on its own. Some rather interesting smelling compost was fed to the roots of the new tree being planted.

Then the woman disappeared into the house again, but before too long was out again with a book and a bowl. She'd made herself a fresh salad from the freshly picked garden produce—a salad with berries and some other things added.

She sat in the cool of the morning to read serenely and watch as the busy little creatures went about their own morning tasks.

There were the ants working as hard as they could to keep building tunnels and hauling out the miniature rocks, as well as storing up as much food as they could, while it was so abundant.

She noticed a great find they had today—an apple core. She knew they would find it soon enough, and had placed it on the ground near to the hole of their underground home. And she was right. First one came, then another, and soon a whole hard-working team were taking off little chunks, one by one.

They had quite a task ahead of them, but a very happy and enjoyable one indeed.

There were some very small birds sitting and moving along with the flexible berry branches, chirping as they surveyed the situation and spotted a berry or two that were ready to eat. But every now and then a bug would catch their eye and then down on to the ground it would fly, and would make fast work of cleaning up in this way.

When it seemed safe, one of the hiding bunnies hopped out. Snippy was, as always, the first to hop out. He was brave in this way. First he nibbled on a plant fairly close to where his bed for the night was. When nothing stopped him, or scared him, he took a step or rather a hop

further. When he was some distance away, then the others started to slowly come out of their hiding spot and begin the nibbling time again, this time in the daylight.

Just then a friendly voice was heard, “Hi, how are you all?” It was Shnibble. He knew the right time to be here. He’d stay away for the morning shower, the watering of the garden that is. But came to eat when it was all fresh and wet and not too late in the morning.

He was brown and big, and had very fast legs. He’d have lots to talk about, about living in this part of the land.

They were glad to see Shnibble, as they did want to know what life was like in this area. They needed to make wise decisions about where to go and when to go—or just how long to stay.

“It was a close one last night!” Shnibble said to an eager group of listeners.

“I was nibbling and walking under the starlight with my friend Shnhoppy when all of a sudden, from nowhere, it seemed, suddenly there was a big red fox. I couldn’t believe my eyes!”

At just the thought of it, Shnizzle’s teeth started chattering and he started trembling just a little.

Shniggy and Snippy noticed and quickly came and stood close on either side of him, making him feel warm and snug and safe.

“So what did you and Shnhoppy do then?” asked Shnookey.

“Well, we did what all good, long-lasting Rabbits do, we stopped our nibbling and started our hopping. –Which of course Shnhoppy is very good at. Thankfully our rabbit hole was nearby and we were safe. But we didn’t get out for quite some time,” Shnibble said.

Shnozzle, wanting to get some safety tips for caring for this team, asked, “Obviously you were able to get out and are still safe, but how did you know when the way was clear and it was safe to come on out?”

“I know those foxes can be very determined, especially if there isn’t much else for them to go after.”

Just as Shnibble was about to reply, in hopped Shnhoppy himself to

add his bit to the telling of the night's events, and exclaimed:

"The dog! The barking of the dog was a good sign that the fox wouldn't want to linger around more."

"A dog!" whispered Shnizzle.

Shnhoppy noticing that this young one was rather shy and somewhat afraid about dangers in these parts, came over and greeted him with a friendly rabbit sniff and nudge.

"Come here to Shnhoppy, little one, and I'll tell you about this dog. This isn't just any barking around and sniffing under every log kind of dog, the kind that folks like us need to be aware of. No, sirree, this is a special one.

The owner of this dog, that I've heard him call, "Rooks" or "Rookie" if he's in a friendly sort of mood, takes him out to do some fox finding. See, they have chickens a few houses up, and foxes are nothing they want hanging around.

"So every now and then, the man takes Rookie out and around to keep the foxes aware that they are on forbidden territory and best beware and take themselves somewhere else to shop. But that is good for us. That dog won't hurt us a bit, at least not when his master has him on a leash."

Shnibble continued with the next part of their adventure filled night.

"The fox was so busy sniffing down our hole that he missed detecting the closing in on him by Rookie and his master.

"If I could have heard the fox speaking as he took off very suddenly, nearly before it was too late, he probably was saying something similar to what we were saying, while we tried to calm our nerves, 'Boy that was a close one'. But I do wonder if Rookie dog did get a little nip at that old fox's tail, as he did let out a sort of yelp, but then got away."

Shnhoppy finished off the story with, "We knew then that it was the best time to get out, because while Rookie was not too far away, the fox wouldn't get too near.

"We've been around this property, just on the other side nibbling this and that, napping here and there. And decided to drop in now for a visit."

Shnizzle was happily starting to nibble grass again, and was feeling safe and fine with so many friends, and with hearing the good end of the story.

Shnozzle hopped up on a large rock to look around, hoping to get a better view that would help him make good decisions about what they were to do that day, and if to go out and explore around.

Shniggy and Snippy were off to explore the furthest corner of the yard where an old wooden barrel lay on its side, fitted out with hay. Looked perfect for a snug up and rest time.

Meanwhile Shnookey decided to have a good meeting with Shnibble and Shnhoppy about living life around there.

These local rabbits were more than happy to share all they knew about the plant life, the animal life, the humans, what sorts of dangers there were, how many casualties there are on the road nearby, what are the living accommodations like—such as soil type and how populated the area is by other rabbits and the like.

“As far as soil type goes, it’s rather dusty here, and fairly easy to dig. But most rabbits have left due to the dry conditions. Seems you are on the move also,” Shnhoppy said.

“Yes, in search of greenery and water. It’s a nice place to stop off at here. We are trying to decide how long to rest and get strengthened before moving on to a place we can stay for a good while,” Shnookey replied.

Shnibble who knew the value of good places to feed offered a small suggestion, though he didn’t know places all that far away.

“I stayed, some months back, at a lovely place. There was a stream flowing, long grass, easy soil to dig in. It’s in the valley between hilly mounds. There were all kinds of flowers growing and the songs of birds daily inspired the dwellers.”

“That sounds so great. I mean, why aren’t you still there? Why would anyone want to move from there?” Shnookey asked, glad to hear about this wonderful place.

Shnibble replied, “This is where I grew up, and I don’t mind it. I know

how to survive and have what I need.

“But I can help direct you there, if you like, whenever you all want to be on your way. But no rush, take your time. It’ll be a good day’s journey, or night’s travel; and you never know what you’ll encounter. There are all kinds of unexpected challenges in these parts. Just like there always is in new territory.”

By this time Shnhoppy had gone over to chat with, or just to be with young Shnizzle.

“What kind of grass do you like best?” he stared saying, trying to make friends.

Shnizzle just smiled and kept nibbling. She didn’t usually feel comfortable saying things she liked or didn’t like, especially to those she didn’t know very well or hadn’t developed a sense of trust with.

Shnhoppy, undeterred, wishing to be a friend, just stayed quiet and nibbled there also, then stretched out to rest in the shade of a rock.

Shnizzle just kept on slowly eating, and soon was getting tired herself. So she too settled down for a bit of a rest as the sun rose higher.

She was fast asleep when Shnhoppy rose, very quietly, picked a dandelion and brought this flower gift to Shnizzle. She opened her eyes just in time to see it placed beside her, and so Shnhoppy whispered, “I want to be your friend, but I’ll let you rest now. Maybe later we can nibble together again.” And off Shnhoppy hopped.

Shnizzle smiled. That was the kind of friend that did make her feel nice; the kind that could just relax with her and not make her talk or do things that she was uncomfortable doing or wasn’t ready for yet. She just needed time to get to know a fellow rabbit first, before opening up and chatting. Because Shnhoppy was patient, and quiet also, there was a chance that Shnizzle might soon be ready to respond to the friendliness.

Chapter 10—Backyard Fun

It was time for her midday meal, and so the woman brought a basket outside to pick a bit of fruit. She’d made some yoghurt that was made from the milk she got from a farmer up the road. She added some honey that she had in jars from the hives she kept, and sprinkled on some crushed almonds that she kept in a big barrel to last for long time. Now

all she needed was some fruit and the juice of a one lemon. She walked in the garden and picked enough to last for a couple of days.

Along with this was a slice of freshly made pumpkin seed bread—made with pumpkin and a variety of seeds. On it she would spread some nut butter and strawberry jam. She didn't grow enough berries to make jam, but up the other side of the road a certain Mrs. Milderera grew more than enough for her family's needs. The woman living here got a little bucket of strawberries that she picked herself. Now they were jarred and on hand for use throughout the next months.

And as always, or so the bunnies were discovering, she had a book, a thick book with her as she sat on her favourite chair to eat her meal.

The birds seemed to know when she was eating her seedy bread. They'd come hop, hop, hopping just as close as they could get. Any crumb that fell would never be unnoticed.

But they weren't the only ones glad when the lady sat to eat and read. She liked to put a little bit of honey water on the table, so the bees would smell it, feed on it, and then explore the garden as well. She had many plants that needed to be pollinated, and honey that she needed the bees to cleverly make. A little of their own honey mixed with water seemed to give them strength to keep doing the work they needed to do.

Shnizzle decided to imitate the book reading. She'd never seen a book before. But it seemed it was the thing to do, along with eating. Shnizzle took a couple of leaves from the ground, and placed one by each of her front paws, nodded her head studiously. But oh! There wasn't anything written on her little leaf book. She'd have to change that. So with her teeth she made some markings. Now, that was better. A book she could "read".

As she was enjoying her game, Shniggy and Snippy were just stretching out to enjoy a very comfortable nap in the hay of the old wooden barrel.

"Oh, hello!" a little squeaky voice sounded, along with a somewhat pointed nose of a very small yet very fast grey creature.—The type that was glad to see it was rabbits and not a couple of cats joining her there.

"I see you have found my favourite place to sleep," the mouse said in a welcoming way to the furry visitors.

“I wish I was as big and furry as you are... and what happened to your tail?” she said, having never seen a rabbit up that close.

The rabbits were a little surprised. They had thought the barrel was uninhabited, but now they were concerned.

“Shniggy, is my tail still on?” Snippy asked. He couldn’t see it really, so wanted to get a confirmation, since the question had been raised by a certain mouse with a very long tail.

“Yup. It’s there just fine. And what about mine?” Shniggy asked, to which Snippy confirmed that all was fine and well.

Then they realised that mousey just didn’t know what to expect. But now she felt rather embarrassed for asking such a thing. She should have known better, but sometimes that’s the only way to learn.

So with tails all confirmed to each be the proper length, shape and size, they could relax. None of them were making each other feel incomplete just because they didn’t have what the other creature had.

Soon the mouse was off to scamper somewhere else, and Shniggy and Snippy settled for a rest.

Shnozzle was taking mental note of all that was going around in the garden, as well as with the other rabbits. He was keeping an eye on the safety as well as the comfort and needs of the others, and if they were happy and at peace staying here. This would help him to make good choices about the length of time they were to stay there.

Her lunch now complete, the woman closed the book and went inside for her own bit of rest. She’d need it before the long afternoon time of working a new patch of ground. She had her own mini tractor and was going to do a bit of ploughing.

Later as she got to work, the tractor could be seen driving to a certain area.

Both Shnhoppy and Shnibble said, “Oh no!” as they saw those wheels heading for the very place they had their burrow. “What’s she going to do?” they wondered.

The other bunnies saw that the local rabbits were concerned about

something and together they hopped right close up to the fence to get a good look at what was going on.

“Well, I guess we can always dig new ones, if we must,” said Shnibble. It’s not so bad. I mean, we can always stay the night in here until things settled down somewhat out there.

“Oh!” said Shnhoppy cheerily, “And remember what happened to us last night. It wasn’t that great out there, with the fox and all. But if she makes a new place for her food to grow, she might put a fence all around, keeping the dangerous animals away from us...”

“And!” added in an always eager to eat Shnibble, “more food for us too will be right there, if she plants the right kinds.”

“We can always re-dig the entrance to our home anyway, once the dust clears,” Shnhoppy concluded.

So with that worry no longer a worry, the seven friends got back to munching, hopping, and resting, as they felt was best, and in whatever order worked for them.

And so it was for about the next week or so. Every day they watched the progress on the new patch of garden and farm land, and they all enjoyed living in the woman’s back yard, though they stayed mostly out of sight, and occasionally did take short trips out to scamper carefully around.

The birds were always glad for freshly ploughed ground—more bugs and things to discover. That was a fun thing to watch; all the bird activity and getting to see what types lived in this part of the land.

Finally, after they’d been there plenty long, this team of bunnies thought it best to move on and explore this other lovely place that Shnibble told them about. While the new bit of land was being set up, it was a good time for the local resident rabbits to take some time away. They’d get back to life here later on, and have fun seeing what had changed and what had become of their burrow.

Chapter 11—Bunnies Hop, Hop, Hop

The following morning two teams were getting ready for travel—there was the bunny team, as well as the boy and his mother. Today was the day they were all to travel. The bunnies were going to make their way to a new and lush place, and the boy with this mother was going to visit his great-grandmother again. But this time they were to stay for a whole month. It was going to be Great-grandmother's 99th birthday. And for a special time they would stay in a lovely cottage all together, in the most beautiful place around. It was called, "Spring Dale Cottage". People could rent its use and enjoy being in a place of nature.

As they were driving, there was one thing on the boy's mind--bunnies. Would he get to see them again? Or had they moved on? Since they weren't going to drive back again to their home at night, he wouldn't be able to see them hopping in the dim light. But what he didn't know was that the bunnies were on the move too.

When they got first to his great-grandmother's place, they helped to load into the car the rest of the needed items for their special month together. They didn't know just how long this very elderly lady would keep living, so they wanted to enjoy this time. Games and special food were brought, and lots of blankets in case she got cold, and nice music to listen to. The boy brought plenty of paper and colours for doing art. His mama brought books to read, and all the cooking items needed to prepare the food. A care taking nurse would come along with them as well to meet any special needs that Great-grandma had.

Soon they were ready to go. A soothing album of music was put on and away they drove.

It had been quite a while since Great-grandmother had been out for a drive like this. It was a very special event. The boy's father would come on the weekend, but return to their home in town during the week for work and for looking after things. It would be an interesting time. It certainly was what Great-grandma would call "a change". The scenery would be different, the plants and animals too. The house was different, and the company the boy lived with would be a change for him as well. He wouldn't be around other children, but he was happy for all the story time, and animal spotting he was hoping to get.

"Changes are good," his great-grandmother often said. So every time he thought of something that he might miss while they were away in this

new place for while, he would repeat these words to himself. “Changes are good. I can learn new things I wouldn’t get to learn about and see in my usually place.”

Meanwhile, the team of rabbits was making their way to a place called, “Spring Dale Nooks”. A place they knew would be enjoyable indeed.

“Are there any humans that live around there?” Shnookey asked Shnibble, who replied:

“Not really; not much. There is one house there, a cottage of sorts, but it’s only lived in for part of the year. Might be some folks there. I think they’ll keep mostly to themselves.”

The bunnies would hop, hop, hop, as fast as they could go, and then hide and rest until they were ready to continue. You might ask how they were able to get to a place just as far away as a car, when they only had little bunny feet. But see, they knew the back way, the short cut way to Spring Dale. They didn’t need to go all around, like this road did.

These bunnies who lived there had a quick way they could go. Their feet could take them straight over the rugged terrain, unlike a car that needed to stay on a flat, or nearly flat surface. The car had to keep all four of its wheels on the ground, but the bunnies could use anywhere between 2-4 paws touching the ground surface, according to the need.

Though the trip was a tiring one, especially for Shnizzle, they looked forward to the great time they would have that night and the following days.

Sometimes to make the time pass quickly the younger ones would play games, like, “I’ll race you over to that rock with the flower growing beside it!” And then whoever got there first could choose the next place to race to. They would hop and run fast, and then rest for a while, so the others could catch up. Or they’d let the others get a wee bit ahead of them, before they dashed ahead with another race.

One time, however, Shnizzle was nowhere to be seen. The others who had hopped on ahead, expected her to catch up. But when they turned around to look, she wasn’t there.

Shnozzle called a halt on all hopping rabbits, until the lost little one could be found. Immediately everyone did so, and spread out, hopping

slowly back, looking beside every rock and log, and into each wombat hole.

Just as Snippy was bravely entering into one wombat home, he was met with the nose of a fellow little rabbit.

“Oh, hi! I was just looking for you. It’s good to see you!” he said.

It was Shnizzle! She explained what happened, though she felt somewhat dazed still.

“I was hopping and then down I fell. I missed seeing this one as my eyes were on you all, seeing how very fast you were all going.”

“We all missed you. I’m so glad we found you. Are you alright?” he said as the two made their way over to the others.

Shnozzle called out to the others, “We found her!”

“Gotta watch them holes. I did the same, several times at least, when I was younger...” started off Shnhoppy, trying to make Shnizzle not feel embarrassed. The others gathered to hear the story, as they moved a bit more slowly now, all together, giving Shnizzle time to feel better.

“Oh, yes, but it was a good time to fall in pit. I was playing chase with my brothers, and before they knew it, poof, I was out of sight. They didn’t catch me that time. They thought I was surely faster than they ever knew I could be, and went bounding off in the other direction. I saw them scurrying off as I emerged.”

Everyone had a good laugh, and the laughter and funny way Shnhoppy told the story helped make everyone feel better. It had been a bit stressful to suddenly see someone missing from their team. And it was just as uncomfortable and surprising for little Shnizzle to feel alone, and wonder if anyone knew or cared if she was missing. It was good to know that they did care.

“Let’s stay at a pace where we can keep a better eye on one another,” Shnozzle said.

Shnookey added, “Since we are unfamiliar with the area and just what we might encounter, perhaps we should proceed with more caution and care.”

Everyone agreed.

Chapter 1—Spring Dale Cottage

Chapter 2—New Friends

Chapter 3—Treehouse

Chapter 4—Island

Chapter 5—Lively, Friendly Bunnies

Chapter 6—Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy, Snippy, Shnibble and Shnhoppy!

Chapter 7—Fun Here and There

Chapter 8--Zoezo

Chapter 9—Shnip, Shnup, Snap

Chapter 10—The First Pat Ever Given to a Bunny

Chapter 1—Spring Dale Cottage

When at last Great-grandmother and her team were settled into the house, it was time for some nature fun. So Great-grandmother and her great-grandson sat on the porch, very quietly, and just watched what was going on. Mother brought snacks, and even a pair of binoculars, and also read a book while sitting nearby.

The birds were busy and cheery, the water rippled in the stream, and the bug life was active too. It was quiet, yet very busy too. The trees looked beautiful, as did the lush plant life by the water's edge.

“Mama can I go down with you to see what's by the water? I brought my boots you know,” the boy asked.

“Let's go after our afternoon snack, I have some apple pie baking for it. Would you like that? Perhaps you could ask Great-grandma to tell you about some of the places she's lived in while you wait.”

The boy nodded. It sounded like a great idea—stories and snack, and then time by the stream.

He didn't miss hearing the constant traffic of cars that he usually heard in the town. But it wasn't all quiet, just good kinds of relaxing and thought-inspiring sounds here. Birds and bugs and leaves rustling, and... and what was that?

It didn't make a noise, not a sound at all. What? There was another one, and soon another and a few more.

Hop, hop, hop. He counted seven of these hopping friends!

He happily pointed, yet in a whisper, to these bunnies that were making their way across one part of the area nearby the house. Great grandma smiled, then whispered, "Looks like Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy and Snippy found a few more friends!"

The boy was very, very happy!

"They came to us!" he exclaimed, after they had started munching, and seemed unperturbed by the humans on the porch overlooking this area.

The boy got out a piece of paper and started drawing what he was seeing. The stream, the greenery, and the now seven furry friends.

When mother came to serve the pie, she saw his picture and asked, "So what are you going to call the two new friends?"

The boy thought about it. "I know!" and mother wrote it down for him, as best as she could figure out they could be written: "Shnibble and Shnhoppy!"

And so it was that for the whole of their time at Spring Dale Cottage, every day, for at least some part of the day Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy, Snippy, Shnibble and Shnhoppy were to be seen enjoying this place as well.

Great grandma said, "I'll tell you at supper tonight some of the places I've lived in, and more of the changes I've been through, okay? So you and your mother can enjoy a nice time exploring around here. Because if

I start, I might take a long time. I've got so many stories to tell.”

The boy liked both the idea of exploring around, as well as hearing about all kind of changes in his great-grandmother's life. It was going to be a great day.

“Can you please just tell me one thing, while I finish my pie—and then the rest you can tell me later? Please?” the boy requested.

“Alright then. I'll tell you about my first trip to Albania. It was a cold winter and we had to buy all these types of clothes that would keep us through it. I was much more accustomed to wearing less. But boy was I glad I listened to my parents. They knew things I didn't know. I thought, silly as it sounds, that just because I imagined I would be warm enough, that would make it so. But there are many things that can't be, just because you wish them to be. There are many things that are totally beyond what we can make or not make happen. There are things we just can't change. So we have to prepare for them, and then also be brave if we find things aren't comfortable and easy. And this trip taught me the importance of listening to the advice of others who know things that I don't know. Thankfully I didn't have to learn the hard way, by refusing to bring the extra clothing. I just didn't think I would ever use it. Besides, I thought, “who would be able to see all my nice new clothes if I'm always bundled up in a coat?” But was I ever glad that I listened and followed advice that was totally different than what I wanted to do. We stayed there for three months, all through the winter, with an aging aunt. We helped her make it through and I learned all kinds of skills I hadn't learned before. Like how to cook certain foods, how to mend clothing and sew patches on to old garments that had seen better days. I even learned to sing, for that is what we liked to do in the evenings. It gave us something pleasant and cheery to do. I think I even felt warmer when we were singing, it was a nice way to end the day.

“And I see you have finished off your snack and your mother is here with some water to clean your month with. She takes good care of you. I'm glad for that. I'll see you later then. Make sure to tell me about all you see, okay?” Great-grandmother said.

“Bye! We'll see you later,” the boy waved. It was nice to feel loved, cared

for, and be able to explore new things.

Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy, Snippy, Shnibble and Shnhoppy peeked out from some bushes. They had just had a great snack themselves. They were feeling content with this place and the happy day they had had as well.

Chapter 2—New Friends

With a sunhat on and a bag to put special collectables in, the boy and his mother set out for an exploring walk.

“Mommy, do you think we’ll see those bunny friends?” he asked, hoping for such a thing.

“Well, I do think that is quite likely. And I certainly hope we do!” mother responded.

And it wasn’t too long before his wish became reality.

“Oh, look, over there!” the boy exclaimed, and then began to call out their names, hoping they would feel less shy. He wanted them to know that they were welcome to come as close to him as they could.

“Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy, Snippy, Shnibble and Shnhoppy—I’m your friend!” the boy called out to the bunnies that seemed to go even faster away at the sound of the startling voice.

“Let’s sit real still and quietly, and maybe they will come back,” mother suggested.

So, the boy sat on a stump and mother on a log beside. It was clear the stump belonged to the log that lay on the ground.

Mother was examining the log. It had clearly been cut by a tree feller. It was not an easy task. “I guess carrying it away was bigger a job than the cutting it seems, for here, many years later, it still rests.”

Sometimes mother felt that way about many of the jobs she had started out doing. They were tough to start, and never were able to be finished,

as they were beyond what she could do on her own.

“With a team helping out with this tree project, the setting here would look differently. Thought it was no longer growing, at least it could have been put to good use.” Mother mused. It was the answer she needed. It wasn’t that some of her projects were too hard to finish, it’s just that she needed more help. And help wasn’t always easy to come up with—not when everyone else felt the same way.

“Maybe I should be willing to help others with their projects too, first of all. I’m sure there are many who feel just as I do, with so many undone works and half begun projects. Maybe then they’d be willing to help me as well. If we each just struggle on our own with loads that are too big for any of us, and refuse to help others because our work load is too heavy, we’ll stay in a sorry mess of non-finished ideas for the rest of our lives.”

It was true, and this tree she was sitting on was a big, a very big object lesson teaching her something useful.

However, though the tree never got to its destination, it wasn’t completely useless. What mother didn’t notice was that it had sat so long and been a feast for many bugs and creatures, that the inside was completely hollowed out.

Before too long, as they sat in quietness, the boy was about to get a very special reward for his stillness and patience.

“Did you see those humans?” Shnozzle asked Shnibble and Shnhoppy, their new friends.

They looked up, “Yep,” replied Shnibble, as soon as he’d swallowed his next big bite of grass and roots. “And I’m not too keen to get too near. I like to keep my distance with those of the human kind, most of the time.”

Shnhoppy added, “But there is a way to get out of sight. Look at that tunnel over there!”

When Shnozzle began to make his way over to the interesting tunnel’s entrance, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy, Snippy, Shnibble and Shnhoppy

took notice, and cautiously made their way over.

They didn't make a rush for it, for there were plenty of snacks to be eaten in this plenteous place.

But when Snippy disappeared into this tunnel, soon followed by Shniggy, the rest of the team realised it was safe and worth the adventure of discovery.

Shnizzle, however, was the last to enter, wanting to be very sure it was a good place to explore. She had to be sure of things before just hopping in to them.

"At least we're not seen by the humans now, while in this long wooden tunnel," Shnizzle encouraged herself.

It was quite a feat of self control for the boy, who happened to be at the other end of this special tunnel, to keep himself very quiet.

He had seen the rabbits nearing the other side of the log "tunnel" and was really hoping they would hop all the way through it, which would bring them right beside him. –If he was quiet, and they weren't too shy.

He and his mother had been sitting here for 15 minutes or so, a very long time for a young boy to sit still. But somethings are too good to miss. After all, much nature fun could only be enjoyed if one was patient and quiet—like fishing, or bird watching. Somethings didn't require quietness, but they did require stillness and observance, like watching a sunset slowly transform the sky to a variety of coloured light, or gazing at the stars at a time when it was quite likely to see many shooting stars.

For this activity he needed to be both still and quiet.

His mother looked at him with a smile, when they knew all the bunnies were somewhere inside the long log. They maintained utter stillness, hardly making even the sound of their breath.

Then one, two, and three bunnies emerged right beside the stall stump where the boy sat very quietly observing. He knew there were seven, and hoped the rest would follow, and not just turn the other way and hop out again.

Meanwhile in the log the conversations went something like this:

Shnozzle asked Shnookey, “Have you ever been in a place like this? They say it takes years for something like this to happen.”

Shnookey replied, being the most knowledgeable on the subject, “Never seen one this long, nor been in one like this before. Doing is far better than hearing about it for sure. Best knowledge comes through experience. Ah, there is the light coming now. Good. It would be rather hard for us to all turn around and head out the other direction. Rather narrow, though it sure is long.”

Shnibble and Shnhoppy, who were just behind were very familiar with this log in particular. It had been their refuge before. It was just the right size for a small bunny to travel through, but too small for other larger creatures—such as the dog pets of visitors to this area.

As they made their way out and began feeding at the base of the tree stump, mother and the boy smiled, and the boy kept count on his fingers. An extra large and shiny smile beamed on his face as he held up his hands with seven fingers held up. Mother knew what this meant. They would have a great story to tell to Great-grandmother when they got back later.

It was a long while, or so it seemed, that these seven friends ate and hoped and then ate some more, right in the nearby area where the boy and his mother sat.

Mother mused on it, and thought:

“I guess even an old tree that seemed to have miss what it was designated to do, has found some way to make a boy happy. That should encourage anyone. No matter how old, and how many plans are laid to rest, how many things didn’t work out in one’s life, there is still hope that you can help a smile form on the face of a child.

“How long this log had to sit here, just decaying, seeming to get worse by the day, weak and unable to stand up again like it used to; cut down and then all hope of being used vanished. But all the while it was getting better in some ways, better to be a place for little creatures of all sorts to

enjoy. And it sure made it fun for my son and I today.

“I think if I was old, and couldn’t do much, I think I should like to remember this log. It might not be everyday I can do something great, but even once in awhile I can help to spread some cheer. Everyone has something they are good for, no matter how weak or even immobile—like some people, and trees, are.”

Then led by Shnozzle, the team eventually headed back through their special log tunnel. They were having a great time discovering all the new features of this area.

When the rabbits clearly had gone to a new area, it was only then that the boy at last spoke and made an attempt to move off the log.

“There you go,” mother said, helping him down. “That sure was fun!”

The boy smiled. He could hardly think of something better happening on their walk out in nature. He was bursting for joy and showed it as he hopped and skipped through the grassy areas—the very places that the rabbits had also explored.

“Maybe we’ll see them again tomorrow,” the boy thought hopefully.

Though the sky seemed to be clouding over, and faint sound of thunder was heard.

“I do hope the sun shines for tomorrow’s walk,” mother said.

They weren’t done their walk just yet, but the rabbits were clearly nowhere to be seen at that time.

Chapter 3--Treehouse

“Oh, mother!” the boy exclaimed, looking and pointing upward.

“Well, now how fun is that?” she replied.

“Can we go in it?” the boy asked.

“We’ll have to check out that neat looking treehouse—and find a way to get up there as well,” mother replied.

Up high in a tree was a treehouse. It was a ledge built around the tree, with a little guard rail. It was perfect for forest watching.

They walked around the big tree to see on all sides of it if there was a way to get up.

And there was! But one would need to be clever and somewhat strong to climb up the built-on ladder that led up.

“Before you try it,” mother suggested, “are you going to want anything up there—like paper and pens, or perhaps a bottle of water, a pillow and a snack?”

Now that was a very fun idea. So before going up into it, they first made their way back to the cottage. Quietly they entered, just in case Great-grandmother was sleeping. And it’s good they did, for indeed she was. And though the boy was more than eager to tell of the many splendid things that had happened so far, he decided to wait until later when she would feel more refreshed and ready to hear.

Mother placed the items they came to gather in to a little backpack. The boy could take it with him up into the tree, as he carried it on his back.

Just as they were leaving the cottage they heard the voice of Great-grandmother.

“Are you back already?”

“We just came back to get a few needed items for a bit more fun,” mother said.

“I’ll see you later then,” Great-grandmother replied.

But the boy couldn’t wait any longer and ran over to her bedside,

“I got to see all seven of the bunnies, really close by! It was so fun! They came running through an old log, that was like a very long tunnel for them. Of course, I had to wait and be quiet for a very long time. But then they came!”

Great-grandmother smiled. She was enjoying hearing about it from a joy-filled boy, just as much if not more than the boy himself who experienced that special treat.

“Now we are going to check out a treehouse we just discovered. That’s why I have my backpack on. I’m going to bring snacks and drawing paper up into it. Then I can see what is happening all around!” The boy ended his happy announcement, and off he went to enjoy the rest of his time out.

“Hmmm,” expressed his mother. “Some of the rungs on this tree ladder are missing. It’s going to be a challenge getting up there. Is there any other way to make it easier?”

“If we just had a tree climber’s rope, then it would be easier. Oh, look Mama I see one. It’s way up in the tree house,” the boy pointed out. “If only it was unwound and let down, I could hold on to it, or something.”

Mother got an idea to look for a long branch or stick. She could loosen the rope in this way. When it was hanging down, she could tug on it to ensure it was strong enough.

After a good work at it, the rope was at last available for use. It looked strong and good, like it had been recently placed there by other visitors to the cottage.

“Okay, tree climber, up you go!” mother encouraged.

With two hands on the knotted rope, and two climbing feet making their way up, the determined boy at last reached the treehouse ledge. He got himself in a comfortable position and wasted no time pulling out snacks and paper.

After about 20 minutes or so, Billy was ready to descend again. Mother coached him and watched over him well.

When he safely reached the ground again, mother questioned him about what he’d seen up there.

“I saw all we already saw, but it was very different seeing it from up high. Things looked smaller, and I could see more at the same time than when we were walking along,” he said.

“Getting up high helps us see things differently, or at least see more. And we don’t have to worry about muddy feet, or thorns that poke, or plants in our way,” mother added.

“But it’s not always so easy getting into a high up position, and it’s not so safe either, if you wish to be wiggling and running and moving around,” the boy expressed.

“I guess each place is special in its own way. So, now that we are down here, right on the ground, let’s enjoy what we have here,” mother suggested.

“What’s that?” the boy said as the leafy bush in front of him begin wiggling. He squatted down to get a closer look, but was almost too late to see the fast-moving creature. But saw it he did, before it was hidden from view once again.

“Mama! A bunny!” he exclaimed.

He thought there was just one, and he didn’t keep his silence this time. But that seemed to startle another and another who came hopping past him, and vanished into the leafy area.

The boy smiled very joyfully and did a leap in the air as his mother held his hand.

“I’m sooo glad we came here today! And here to this place!” the boy said. And off they went to return to the cottage.

He would help great-grandmother get the little fire going in the fireplace, help bring her a warm drink, and then sit to hear some more stories from her life.

“Great-grandma, we’re back!” he said, nearly bursting through the door.

He flew into her waiting arms as she sat on the chair near the cold fireplace.

“I can see you have had a wonderful time. And I am very glad for it. Now, would you like to help me build the fire, then you can tell me all about what you saw and what you did. I can tell you had a special time,” Great-grandmother said.

“Yes I did,” the boys said, and began to get the needed items ready.

When the fire was warm and glowing well, and both of them held a mug of something warm, the boy told of each special moment on their enjoyable walk in the nature area.

“And then I looked way down on the ground below,” the boy was saying. Mother heard the whole conversation and smiled, while she was preparing the meal.

“You got to see the whole team of bunnies, two times?” Great-grandmother questioned.

Then once again the boy explained the happy events. He didn’t mind saying it all over again. It made him feel happy just talking about it. And it certainly made Great-grandmother glad hearing about it.

“Now, would you like to hear more about my travels and the changes in my life?” Great-grandmother asked, when it was clear the boy was ready to hear more stories.

He nodded, and so she began.

“Once when I was a very little girl I used to wish I could fly. Have you ever thought of that?”

The boy nodded, for even just today he had wished to.

“I could have gotten way up into the treehouse, so easily, if only I could fly. I don’t want to always, but just sometimes like today,” he replied.

“Well,” Great-grandmother continued, “Sometimes I even dreamt about it, and it was always so very fun. But one day I DID get to actually fly through the air, way, way up high!”

The boy’s eyes became very wide. He knew his great-grandmother was telling him the truth, in some way, and he wanted to know more.

Because as far as he knew, she didn't have, nor ever had had wings.

"That surprised you, didn't it?"

The boy nodded and asked, getting a clever thought, "But how did you? Since you can't fly just on your own."

"Ha! That's right. I needed help. I remember my first flight on an airplane. Up and up and away in the air we went. It was a small plane and so we really felt the moving of it. And I could see out as well, far down below. I thought, 'This must be what a bird feels like, way up high!'"

"I was a young woman when I took this flight. Some friends and I were going to an island that had just opened up for tourists. It wasn't well known by all at that time. We wanted to see what it was like there, and this was the only means of travel we could take, or at least that was available. First we had to go to one island and refuel the little airplane, then we travelled to the next island and waited for good weather conditions. At last we made it to the island we'd set out for. That was quite a trip indeed."

The boy asked, "What did you see there? What did you do?"

Chapter 4--Island

Great-grandmother took a deep breath, closed her eyes and seemed to be reliving it visually. Then she spoke:

"Coconuts! Lots of coconuts! That's what we saw and tasted while there. I hardly remembering eating much else, besides some fresh fish roasted on the hot coals of fire, right there on the beach. Some of the native island dwellers would welcome people by singing and making music with their special instruments. We sat there on the sand of the beach, looked at the stars, and listened to the music, the voices, and the waves.

"But we had to watch out for the crabs!" Great-grandmother exclaimed.

"What did they do?" the boy asked, curious.

"They just might pinch my toe! Or so I thought one night. They were big

crabs too. Real big! This big across,” she demonstrated the size.

The boy wouldn't have wanted a pinch or nibble from one of those either.

“So what did you do when you saw one near you?” he asked.

“I kept a stick with me, and I'd flip the crab away if it was wandering too near where I was,” she again demonstrated.

“But what did you do when you needed to sleep? Did the crabs or other creatures disturb you at night?”

“They and other creatures might have. Who knows what would have been around? But I didn't have to worry about it too much because I slept in a cabin on a bed way up high. It had a ladder to climb up, and there was some cloth to cover all around me to keep away some of the flying beetles as well as mosquitos and such,” Great-grandmother explained.

“Oh, that's good. And what did you do in the day time when you weren't sitting on the beach?” the boy asked.

“We wanted to see all around the island. We wanted to see what it was like, and we wanted to see if there was some need that we could fill. We knew these people didn't have much in the way of possessions. And that can be good. But if there were other things they needed, like food or medical attention, clothing, or places for the children to learn new things, maybe we could help with that. At least that was the idea, and one of the reasons we went there—to check out the situation.”

Great-grandmother smiled and nodded as she told of this special time in her life to a very eager young one.

“And did anyone have things that they needed?” the boy asked.

“Oh, yes!” the reply came. “There were so many needs we didn't know where to start. We didn't bring all that many supplies, but we share all that we had with them. And while we tended to their physical needs, we shared stories of faith and cheer with them. Some people could speak both our languages and theirs. They helped to explain to the people what we were trying to say—and explain to us what the people were

trying to say to us.

“It became a guessing game for us sometimes when we’d hear the words that some native was saying, and we tried to guess what it might be, while we waited for the translator to tell us what was said.

Sometimes we got it right, in our mind, but other times it was very different than what we thought they were saying. We were very glad to have someone to explain things to us. And people were so very grateful to have us there. See, it was open for some tourist to come, and that meant people were coming to be made happy, and expected the people there to do nice things for them. But when they saw that we were there to see what we could do to help and make them happy, they really liked that. That’s why they’d sit with us on the beach at night, listen to the stories we’d tell, share some of their fish with us, and share some of their own stories and songs.”

“How long were you there for, Great-grandmother?” the boy asked.

“Not that long really,” she replied. “But if you put your mind and muscle to things sometimes, you can do a lot in a short amount of time. The plane had to leave the next day, for it had people that were ready and eager to leave. But we wanted to do what we came there to do. It was nearly two weeks later when we at last said good-bye to all our new friends. I thought I saw some of them cry. They really were glad to have a team of people just there to help.”

“Did you ever go back?” the boy asked.

Great-grandmother smiled, and looked over at her granddaughter, the boy’s mother.

“Why, yes I did! For that is when I first met your mother!”

At first the boy was puzzled. What did she mean?

His mother said, “That’s where I was born dear. My parents lived there for some time, knowing how much their mother enjoyed it. And so, the first months of my life were spent there on that little island. Our whole family were together there for awhile.”

The next question could almost be predicted, the boy asked, “Can I go there too some time?”

He felt like the only one of the many generations that had not yet visited.

“I’m sure you can dear,” Great-grandmother replied.

The boy smiled.

Maybe it wouldn’t happen right away. Maybe it would even be when he was more grown up a bit, big enough to fish and built a fire, and open a tough coconut. But it was fun thinking that he’d visit one day.

After they’d had these and other stories, it was time for dinner and a bath, and a good night’s sleep. There would be plenty to dream about. What would it be this time? Flying? Discovering more bunnies out in nature? Traveling to distant places? Well, there was only one way to find out, and that was to get to sleep as soon as possible, then the dreamland adventures could start.

Chapter 5—Lively, Friendly Bunnies

Billy’s mother helped him to place his clothes neatly on the end of his bed, brush his teeth, and curl up into bed. He had his favourite stuffed bunny to hold while he drifted off to sleep.

In the living room Great-grandmother lingered a while, looking at some pictures she’d brought. Her granddaughter sat with her chatting as well.

“Remember that time?” and “Oh, look at that face!” and “What a day that was!” comments were shared while glancing through these memories. Just then a thought came into Great-grandmother’s mind. Her eyes lit up and she spoke:

“What was the name of that man, the one who helped you last year when you were lost, on the wrong subway? He worked for a travel agent? I bet he’s got some good ideas of where you and Billy could go for next year’s time away.”

Her granddaughter replied, “Arnald Shmits. I still keep in touch every

now and then. He likes to send me the latest deals and sales on trips overseas, and so forth. I sometimes think about it, but then things just get too busy. I wonder if I'll ever really get to travel again. I know Billy would certainly enjoy it."

"Well, see what he's got. Maybe there is some special deal to a not-too-far away place—but a place Billy would enjoy. Maybe he and your and your husband can't go just yet to anywhere, but somewhere nearby might be fun. And let me know what you think up," Great-grandmother encouraged.

That night before going to sleep, Talita, Billy's mother, wrote an email to Arnald Shmits, stating the when, and how far, and for how much, she'd like to go with her family for a short time away. Meanwhile, Billy wasn't just sleeping, but dreaming of going to far and distant lands, so distant they hadn't yet been discovered.

In his dream he was about to board a plane, when all of a sudden he realised that he didn't have a ticket. "Oh! What am I going to do?" he thought in his dream. But just then, like special dreams contain, something unusual worked out. "You can have this shell!" he said to the person looking at the tickets and allowing people to board the plane.

"Well, if you've got a shell, then that's even better than a ticket. Have a good trip!" the person in his dream replied and waved for him to go ahead on to the plane.

As he sat there on the plane, in his dream, still holding the shell and looking at it, all of a sudden it got bigger and bigger and became a sandwich that he could eat. Well, it was more like there was a sandwich wrapped up inside of it. "Oh, good. I was just getting hungry," the boy said in his dream.

When that was done, he looked again, and the shell now had some liquid inside.

"Could it be water?" he thought, as he was getting pretty thirsty. It tasted like water, good refreshing water.

"Ummm, so nice," he said. This shell was sure amazing. Whatever he

needed, he had. What a great dream indeed—and he was only just beginning.

“I sure don’t need lots of stuff, as long as I keep this shell in my hands and in my pocket. I know this trip is going to be great.”

It wasn’t long before morning came, and Billy remembered his dream very clearly. He woke with the last scenes of the dream on his mind.

“Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy, Snippy, Shnibble and Shnhoppy” he had called out, and over to him had hopped this fun, furry and friendly team. They’d leapt over his lap and ran in a circle around the place he sat, and came back again to do it more. They were so lively and so very friendly. He would blow into his shell, and music would be heard, and the rabbits liked to listen and play and dance and put on this friendly show.

Billy woke with a smile. He was nearly laughing still from the dream. He didn’t remember where he had been traveling to, but he did remember the fun he had with his bunny friends.

“Can we go see them again today?” he asked, when his mother was at his side this sunny morning. He forgot that his mother didn’t just come from the same dreamland as he. He might have to explain what he was talking about.

“See who? Where?” his mother asked.

“The Bunnies! I was on a trip and they were with me at the end, hopping all around me. It was so fun!” the boy exclaimed.

“I think that would be great fun,” she replied. “And there might even be a bit more fun as well, sometime later on, when we are back at our house.”

His mother had already received a note back with some travel suggestions. It wasn’t a for-sure plan, but it was fun to think about. Billy would enjoy the thoughts and anticipation.

Chapter 6--Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy, Snippy,

Shnibble and Shnhoppy!

A month later the boy and his mother were taking the very same drive they had taken before, to go and see his great-grandmother. It was going to be great telling her of the amazing time away they'd had on their trip.

A lot had happened in these four short weeks.

As they drove past the place where the boy had seen the rabbit friends the first time, he remembered it well. Only this time it was no longer all dry and bare, but had some greenery to nibble on.

Just as he was about to tell his mother that he missed his bunny friends, all of a sudden out they popped from behind a log. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven! He counted and they were all there.

The boy remembered the colouring that some of them had.

"Mother!" he expressed. "I saw them again! All of them! Oh, that was so fun. As we drove past, they hopped out right where I could see them."

Mother smiled and was glad.

"What were their names again?" she asked.

The boy knew them well, as he had often looked at the picture with their names written on it. He counted on his fingers to make sure not to miss any of them, and spoke their names out:

"Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy, Snippy, Shnibble and Shnhoppy!"

"Oh, that's right!" mother recalled.

They chatted and recalled their visit to the cottage and the fun with those hopping friends that they'd had, and all the fun enjoyed with Great-grandmother.

Soon they were at the residence where she stayed.

Billy-boy could hardly contain his joy. He felt bursting with excitement of all the things to tell his Great-grandmother. He thought the trip was enough, but now seeing the bunnies again just gave him all the more to say.

Chapter 7—Fun Here and There

“Great-grandma... where are you?” he was calling out, as he walked faster and got to her room before his mother.

She wasn’t in the bed, but soon he saw that she was on the porch, just out the sliding glass door on one side of her room.

“I’m outside here,” she called out. Soon the boy was right beside her, taking his pace on a little stool he brought over.

“What are you making, Great-grandmother,” he asked.

“Just a little something for your cousin,” she replied. She was knitting and smiling. “Seems I’m going to have another great-grandchild!”

It made her real glad to think of the extended family that was continuing to be added to.

“What a lovely family I have. And you are a boy that makes an elderly woman glad,” she said looking at Billy-boy.

“Great-grandmother! Guess what I saw!” he began with enthusiasm.

He was very glad that his great-grandmother was well enough to be sitting up, spending time outdoors, and working on projects that made her happy. It seemed the more she thought about children, the bigger her smile grew. Almost as big as the boy’s smile when he thought of rabbits that he’d see, and considered his friends.

So the boy told of the most recent sighting of his furry and hopping friends. Then he answered questions that his great-grandmother asked about his time traveling to visit a new place.

“First we took a ferry boat all down the river, and then we got out and

took a bus. After that we went to the beach. It was fun,” the boy started out.

Great-grandmother then asked, “And what was something you really weren’t expecting?”

The boy thought for a moment, then recalled,

“That’d I’d get a sick tummy on just the second day of the trip. I didn’t like that. I sort of forgot that things like that can happen.”

“Yes, that can happen when you go to new places. Sometimes your body has to get used to the new types of water and food, and air even. I hope you were well soon, were you?”

The boy nodded.

“And what is something you wished could have happened, but you ran out of time and had to return?” Great-grandmother asked.

“I really wanted to go ice-skating at the place for it. But it was closed. It was going to open again, but we weren’t there anymore,” he replied.

“Yes, there’s always more things to do than you’ll ever get to do when you travel and visit new places,” she commented.

Then the boy got a thought, “Maybe if I lived there I’d get to do all the things?”

“Maybe,” his great-grandmother answered. “But even then, there is still too many things to get done. You’d get busy with other things—and you’d miss doing all the fun that there is right where you live now here!

“So what are you going to do that’s fun, when you go home?” she asked as the last question on their visit.

The boy’s mother answered, “We’re going to a birthday party the day after tomorrow. –A real birthday party!”

The boy looked up and wondered what that meant.

Mother continued,

My sister-in-law just had her baby. I got a message now! They will need help for sure around the home for a few days. And I think you'd be the best friend needed for their little boy. I could help with the cooking and help with the baby, while your uncle is gone in the day, and you could help play with little Nathan. Would you like that?"

The boy thought that was a great idea! And added,

"And we can have a birthday party, and make a snack, and sing some songs to welcome the baby to the family!"

Mother smile. "Yes, that's right! So when we go home, we can have one day to get ready and to pack what we need—and yes all the food and snacks that would be good."

The boy continued the ideas, "And bring a big box of my toys to share, too. And maybe some books."

"I can see you are going to have a great time," Great-grandmother exclaimed.

Now the boy knew who she was knitting some soft clothing for.

"Do you want us to take something with us that you made, Great-grandmother?" the boy asked.

"Well, I am still making this little pair of booties, so that will need to be sent next week, if you come here to visit. But I do have a blanket I have been making for a much longer time. It's in this box here. Maybe you and mother could wrap it up like a gift and give it for me. Will you do that?"

The boy nodded, and was very glad to do so. He carried the box in his arms after saying good bye, and placed it in the car.

"When we come back next week, we can tell Great-grandmother all about the newest and cute addition to our big family," mother said as they drove away.

Chapter 8--Zoezo

Meanwhile, a bunny home was having much the same discussion.

“Oh, they are so cute,” a grandmother rabbit was saying to the latest additions to the team living in the field that the boy and his mother drove past.

Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy, Snippy, Shnibble and Shnhoppy were happy to be living once again with their friends and family here in the grassy meadow. At last it was that again.

Tonight they had been invited to quietly come and celebrate the birthday of a new kit of baby bunnies. Today was the first day that they all had their eyes open. They were growing up fast and had so much to learn.

“What are their names?” Shnizzle whispered.

Their mother, carefully guarding them, replied, while everyone eagerly listened:

“Shnip, Shnup, Shnap, and Zoezo!”

Every one smiled as she listed the names. But, huh? The last name sure took them by surprise.

The others were named in the traditional fashion as bunnies are.

The bunny mother laughed.

“Yep, it’s good to do something really different every once in a while!”

Several months later, the newest additions were venturing out to play with some of their friends and relatives.

Zoezo proved to be the funniest of them all. He sure lived up to his name. He always had ways to surprised his playmates.

One time he and his sisters, Shnip and Shnap were hiding, while Shnup was trying to find them. It was a game that took a long while, as they thought they each needed to first dig themselves new hiding places. It was great exercise, and a game could go on for a long while—and the

prep for it take days.

Shnip and Shnap were in the new hole they had dug, most of the way, and had pulled over their heads a piece of paper that had blown over the field from someone's picnic the day before. They tried to be real still and quiet, so that it would take Shnup a long time to find them.

Well, they tried to be still, but thinking ahead, they had brought with them several yellow dandelions. They didn't want to be stuck without a nice snack. So, every so slowly they nibbled, while trying to keep the paper on them, and their bodies mostly down the new little hole they made.

As Shnup neared them he called, "I found you, Shnip and Shnap!" and out they hopped, laughing.

Now, Shnup thought they were just laughing because they were having fun, but actually it was because of Zoezo. He hadn't been hiding at all, really. He had been behind a rock for some time. But then he was just hopping ever so carefully behind Shnup. Every time he'd turn one day, Zoezo would move the same, always keeping behind his brother.

"I just haven't been able to find Zoezo!" Shnup said to his sisters, who were trying not to giggle too much, and trying not to give away the fact that Zoezo was right there too, just keeping out of sight.

Shnup continued, "I've looked in every hollow log, and behind the rocks, and over the grass..."

Then in a moment of silent laughter, trying to concentrate on not bursting out loudly, Zoezo was discovered.

As Shnup suddenly turned around to run and find him, and that is just what he did!

They all laughed and joined in a game to see who could hop the fastest over their burrow.

Mother bunny was glad to see them, and commented on how very fast they were able to hop now.

"It's good you can keep up at a fast pace. You might be real glad you can

one of these days,” she commented, as her little ones snuggled down for a rest.

Chapter 9—Shnip, Shnup, Snap

When the day was over a team of friends were having a good discussion.

Shnozzle started off, as he usually did, liking to take a leadership role, “Have you noticed something going on lately in the plot of land nearby? Seems like a house building project is beginning. Or am I mistaken?” He had learned that it was good to find out what others thought and had noticed; he knew by now that he wasn’t always right, and needed others.

Shnookey was the first to reply, “I haven’t wanted to say anything lately, as we’ve been having such a pleasant time here. I didn’t want to upset things. But I have noticed that very thing. How long do you think it will be safe for us to continue living here?” He had learned that always saying what he thought or thought he learned wasn’t always helpful, but now it seemed right to speak up.

Shnizzle looked over to the place in question, and would have gotten worried. But she was wiser now, she told herself. After all, the last time they had to move, it had all worked out. And they even got new friends to join them. So her worried face relaxed as she listened to what others might want to say. She was braver now.

Snippy filled in the silence rather quickly and said, “Well, I say tonight when the workers have all gone home to their overland burrows, their human homes, that we go for a night stroll around. Best not to make fast moves without finding out more about the facts.” He had learned that it was best to look and learn, before leaping to a decision.

Shniggy took the time to think it out. He used to just go along with whatever Snippy did. But he’d learned to stop and think about his suggestions, just in case a new and better idea came to him. He then agreed, “That would be good I think. But maybe we shouldn’t all be gone at the same time. I think I’ll stay back in case the younger ones need

help.” He was thinking of Shnip, Shnup, Shnap, and Zoezo.

Shnibble added, “I think those are good ideas, and I offer to also stay back here. I have hole to work on. Need to make it deeper and safer.

Shnhoppy was already thinking about things. He was in fact thinking and planning where they could all move to next, if that ended up happening. “I’ll come with you to check it out. And I have some ideas we could discuss about new places to move, if that is best.”

And so it happened.

Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Snippy, and Shnhoppy waited until dark before taking their trip to check out the building site. Shniggy nibbled and rested nearby where Shnip, Shnup, Shnap, and Zoezo were resting in their burrow. And Shnibble kept at his project and made good progress into the ground.

Chapter 10—The First Pat Ever Given to a Bunny

A few months later, Billy-boy and his mother were looking at their new home. It was built very simply, and didn’t take long at all to build. It was no longer a worksite. Though simple, it was a big house. They could fit a couple families in it now.

Now the boy could play with Nathan every day! And his mother could help her sister-in-law with her baby any time it was need. The boy’s uncle, his mother’s brother, would play games with the boys in the field, and his dad helped to fix up the furnishings that the house needed.

One of the first nights they were in their new house, the boy and his mother and father sat outside on the little porch, very very quietly.

There was no blaring lights shining, only the stars over head and some moon light.

Then with a burst of a smile, yet in silence, the Billy-boy pointed out over the field! There they were! The rabbit team was there! They had left for some time, back to the lovely place where the cottage was. –In fact right

at the time when the boy and his mother had spent some more time living there with his great-grandmother, while their house was being built.

The boy had been so happy to see his friends. But on the last two days of staying in the cottage, the bunnies were no where to be seen.

“Maybe they know it’s now safe and quiet and have returned to the field beside our new house,” his mother suggested. The boy had hoped so.

And so they had.

He spotted and counted all seven of them, Shnozzle, Shnookey, Shnizzle, Shniggy, Snippy, Shnibble and Shnhoppy!

But then he was even more delighted to see another team hopping also. A team of three smaller bunnies, but very fast indeed. Shnip, Shnup, and Snap were starting their evening graze. It was as if they were called on to make a special welcoming show for the families.

But where was Zoezo?

Well, the boy didn’t know anything about there even being a Zoezo, so he didn’t actually miss him or wonder.

But just like he was, suddenly, out of the empty flower pot on the porch, out popped a certain Zoezo, who did a little hippity, hoppity dance, before zipping back out to join the others.

The boy laughed! What a fun show it was.

Then his mother took his hand and inside they went. There were hammocks set up for them to sleep on. It would be a special night, with new sounds, and new things to dream about.

“Can we see the bunnies again tomorrow?” the boy asked his mother.

“I’m sure we can. We live here now, and they can be our new neighbours,” she replied.

His father sat beside him on a little wooden crate and began to softly play a tune on his guitar. Before to long, the boy was fast asleep.

Well, he didn't actually realise that he was asleep, for in his dream he had climbed out of his hammock bed and walked back out to the front porch. But rather than hopping away from him, all the bunnies of the field came and sat very nearby, and he told them a story.

"This is the story of the first bunny that ever lived... and that is why you are here today!" the boy started out.

"One day, when the only animals around were some birds flying around and playing in the water, and there were fish and creatures in the water too of course, the very first two bunnies opened their eyes to see a wonderful place all around. There was so much grass and plants that were good to eat. They ate all day. That's what they liked to do best.

"They weren't the only animals by the end of that day. There were so many new friends to chat with and run and play with. Everyone was friendly together. Then came a very special moment. The first pat that ever was given to a bunny happened on that very day. A man and his wife, the only people around, were living right outside with them. They didn't have a house, and there wasn't any cars or anything that would trouble them. Everything was lovely. Everyone was very happy. And bunnies are still on Earth today."

Then "Good night!" the boy said in his dream. "I'll see you tomorrow night!"
