

# *Forever is Fur Keeps*

## *Blueberry Lane Herb Farm*

### *Chapter One*

**Yippee! Hoo-ha!**

Happiness and a sense of freedom filled the air. April showers gave way to a sunny Saturday at the park. The energy level soared like a kite, and Coral Bell couldn't keep up with Rasmus, Guinevere, and Pedro. They played tag and red rover with their friends until their tummies growled. Coral Bell watched them play while she set out a picnic under the maple tree. Pedro, always hungry, lead the gang to the red checked table cloth to enjoy a picnic lunch.

They dined on a fresh salad with blueberries, cilantro, and pansies. They sipped cool strawberry soup. After lunch, Coral Bell had a surprise for them; it was the neatest surprise because it was a game! It went like this. Coral Bell gave Rasmus a neatly folded note. It had clues written on the inside. Together, Pedro, Guinevere, and Rasmus had to figure out the clue, because that would lead to the next hidden clue. It was a mystery solving game! Pedro remarked, "Gee, I wish Tilly were with us, she's really good at figuring things out. I wish she didn't stay home to practice her opera singing." Rasmus considered himself a wise bunny, so he felt obligated to reply. "Pedro, we are clever enough to figure out the clues. It's just that I'm the cleverest of all. I bet I'm twice as clever as you and Guinevere put together!" Pedro agreed, but Guinevere ignored Rasmus's insult, even though she secretly thought he was right.

The first clue led them to a rock. Under the rock they found the next clue that took them to the picnic basket. In the lid they found a clue that led them to a willow tree. In the hole of the tree they found a clue that led them to a tulip bed. Among the red tulips was the last clue that led them to an ordinary brown box. Ordinary. Plain. Boring. Coral Bell watched as they slumped their shoulders in disappointment. Although there was nothing enticing about the box, Pedro anxiously chewed a corner off the box in a second! He rattled the box and heard a familiar sound. Rasmus and Guinevere helped by pulling out tissue paper. They tore the box top off. Voila! Not one, not two, but six packages of Healthy Snacker Samplers were revealed for dessert!

They merrily nibbled Snackers when suddenly Rasmus became cautiously alert. He sat up straight. His tall rabbit ears turned this way and that way. He thumped, just once, to signal something wasn't right. Guinevere sensed the tension. She knew to be quiet; she leaned to Pedro and whispered, "Your crunching on Snackers is loud, just suck on them so you don't upset Rasmus. He's in serious bunny mode." Quietly, very quietly, they sat. They watched. They waited.

**Scratch, scratch, scratch**

"¿Qué es eso? (*What was that noise*)," Pedro blurted. Rasmus made a scowling face with a soft thump of disapproval then turned his tail to Pedro. He was determined to find the source of the scratching. He thought it came from a nearby lavender patch. Slowly, he took small hops toward the patch where green sprouts were waking up from a winter nap. Amidst the green, he saw something white. It dashed quickly. It darted between clumps of lavender. It zigged. It zagged. Suddenly, Coral Bell picked up a small, white bunny. She held the little ball of shaking fur close to her heart. Pedro, Guinevere, and Rasmus gathered around with curiosity.

"Hello, my name is Guinevere, or Guin, for short. These are my brothers, Rasmus and Pedro. That's our human mom, Coral Bell. What is your name? Where is your family?" The little bunny froze with fear and buried her head in the crook of Coral Bell's elbow. When little bunny relaxed, Coral Bell set her down on the picnic cloth and everyone circled around her. They offered her salad, but she refused. They offered Snackers, and again she refused. Her eyes were wide with freight. She sat frozen like a statue, and she dare not blink an eye.

“Please don’t be afraid, we will not hurt you. If you lost your family, we can help you find them,” Pedro explained in his best English. Little bunny started to cry. Big, sad tears rolled down little bunny’s cheeks. As they comforted her, little bunny softly said, “I do not remember my name, the people I thought were my family left me here in the dark of night. I don’t know where my bunny family is. I don’t know any one and I don’t know how to find food by myself.”

Teary-eyed Guinevere put her arms around her, and Pedro made her a salad. Rasmus asked Coral Bell if they could bring little bunny home. Coral Bell explained they first had to learn more about her.

## Chapter Two

Little bunny was starving from hunger. She reluctantly snatched a romaine leaf from the salad. While she nibbled, she wondered if she could trust them. She wondered how to protect herself from being rejected again. She wondered what she would do if she did not take a chance. So, she decided to share her story because she felt desperate.

“I used to live in a small cage in a pet shop. One day some grown-ups asked the shop owner for an Easter bunny. They wanted a present for their children. Being an Easter present made me feel extra special, like the queen of all bunnies. On Easter morning, I was put in a fancy basket and given to the three children. It was overwhelming, I wasn’t used to children. They had to learn how to be gentle with me and not pull my ears and tail. They had to learn that I am fragile, and my bones can break. They had to remember to feed me, but mostly I just got pellets. I was hungry for natural food like parsley and romaine. A few days later, they didn’t play with me. They didn’t want to take care of me or my litter box. They didn’t even talk to me. I wondered what I did wrong and why they didn’t like me. At night, when it was dark and quiet, I cried alone in my small pen. I didn’t even have enough room to do binkies. But I was grateful to have a family of my own. Or so I thought.

Three moons ago, the grown-ups wrapped me in a towel and brought me here. I thought we came to the park to play. They set me in the lavender patch and I foolishly ran in a circle to stretch my legs. When I turned around, they were gone. I stay near the lavender patch in case they come back. I haven’t seen them yet.

I must figure out how to survive. It’s scary here. I stay hidden under shrubs, so the fox won’t see me. I hide from the hawks flying above. On the bright side, I did find some clover to eat and maple twigs to chew on. Do you think they will ever come back for me?”

By now, Guinevere was bawling her eyes out. Pedro was so nervous from the story that he ate a whole bag of Snackers by himself. Rasmus was hopping mad that little bunny was abandoned in the park. He wondered why some humans are so cruel. Coral Bell promised little bunny she would find a solution.

## Chapter Three

Rasmus and little bunny hopped side by side all the way home to Blueberry Lane Herb Farm. On the way to the house, they visited Boulder Hill who was grazing in the pasture. Boulder was curious to meet the tiny visitor.

“Enjoying the fine weather?  
I see you have a little guest.  
You are tiny, and light as a feather.

My, my, you are a tiny one,  
So tiny you would fit in my ear  
And you look as soft as cashmere! “

After visiting Boulder Hill, Guinevere invited the little bunny to take a nap in her bed. Primping her fur in the mirror, Guinevere said, “I am a girl too, I am a long-haired guinea pig. Us girls better stick together. My brothers like to do boy things. Pedro, my little brother is a chinchilla. In case you haven’t noticed, he speaks with a Spanish accent because he

is from a country called Peru. Rasmus is my big brother. He thinks he's in charge around here. Honestly, he is very smart and sensible, but he doesn't know anything about girls, and clothes, and being pretty. You haven't met Tilly yet. She must be upstairs in her bird cage. Tilly is a nosey parrot, and she loves to sing". Guinevere turned around, and little bunny was sound asleep.

## Chapter Four

Rasmus got to work. He read the lost and found column of the new paper in hope that someone posted a notice for a lost white bunny. Then he read the local news flyer. No luck. He called a meeting with everyone at the official meeting spot, outside at the pond. Even though she was napping, he did not want to risk little bunny over hearing them. Afterall, rabbits have very keen hearing. Besides, it was a nice afternoon to look for frogs in the pond.

He took attendance, everyone was present, including Tilly. "The meeting is in order," Rasmus announced with a stomp of his foot. "We must figure out how to put an end to the thoughtless purchase and adoption of animals for Easter, birthday, and Christmas gifts, then only to be abandoned. Humans are supposed to be smart, but they do harmful things to animals. How can we teach them that abandoned pets don't have survival skills? Pets are not to be discarded. Pets are not temporary. Some pets are prey, and prey are fearful for their lives. All abandoned pets have broken and lonely hearts."

Tilly chirped in, "Yeah, and another thing. Human's must realize we are a lifetime commitment. Rasmus, how long will you live? I want to know how long I'm stuck with you" With a loud thump and a raised eyebrow Rasmus replied, "Tilly, you will have the pleasure of my company for about 10 years, maybe 15 if you're lucky! Guinea pigs and chinchillas, cats and dogs, every animal has its own life expectancy. Humans must make a lifelong commitment before adopting and rescuing. What can we do to spread the word?"

The group conspired at the official meeting spot until they had a plan. Rasmus wrote a letter to the editor of the local newspaper. The letter got so much attention that he was invited to give lectures on responsible pet ownership. He spoke at local pet shops, the library, animal rescue leagues, and a radio station.

At Blueberry Lane, everyone spent time with little bunny to help her feel comfortable and secure. Rasmus would cuddle next to her and give rabbit advice. Pedro shared the hay stash he keeps under the sofa cushion. Tilly sang her lullaby songs. Coral Bell spent extra time snuggling little bunny on her lap. And all the while that little bunny was receiving attention, Guinevere was feeling more and more jealous.

Tilly groomed little bunny's fur as Coral Bell had asked. Tilly gently removed the stickers and brambles from the bushes in the park while little bunny sat on the piano bench. Guinevere watched from under the living room chair. She was green with envy until she could no longer take it.

**Tilly, Tilly, Tilly !!!**

"That's my comb you are using. That's my piano bench for styling my fur . Who said you could use my comb? Who said you could use my bench?" Guinevere's shouting caused a ruckus. Tilly dropped the comb from her beak. Pedro fell off the sofa and bonked his head. Rasmus thumped his rear legs like thunder. Little bunny jumped off the piano bench and ran away.

Coral Bell rushed in, "Young lady, what has gotten into you? I can see you are upset. And you know you are loved very much. Guin, we are here to take care of each other. That means we willingly share our love, time, talents and even our combs with others, especially those in need."

Coral Bell sat on the floor to comfort Guinevere. “Guin, just last month you were worried about all the animals in shelters and foster care. You were the one who cried over little bunny’s story. How would you like to be her? Imagine yourself in her place. I know you remember what it was like in a shelter. Guin, Aunt Pinkie said little bunny can live with her. She misses her cat so much, and she was thinking about visiting the shelter this week for a new pet. Little bunny would have the life of luxury, and you know Aunt Pinkie will take supremely good care of her. Tomorrow, we visit Aunt Pinkie and we will give little bunny the option of staying with her or staying with us.

Guinevere felt deep remorse for her selfish thoughts. She started crying again, “Oh, little bunny will never forgive me. I must think of a way to make it up to her. I want to be her best friend, her BFF.”

## *Chapter Five*

### **Ding Dong**

Rasmus, Pedro, and Guinevere stood on their tippy toes spying into the antique glass doors. Tilly perched in a basket of spring pansies and called out “Ola, Heeello, Anybody Home? Yoo-hoo!” A visit to Penny Square Inn was always a delight. The elegant Victorian oozed charm, and the aroma of fresh baked goodies scented the air. They were so excited, Rasmus jumped up and rang the bell again, and again!

### **Ding Dong, Ding Dong**

The stately doors opened wide, and the visitors were greeted with squeeze hugs and juicy kisses from Aunt Pinkie. She was delighted to see everyone. “Welcome everyone, and where is our special guest? I can’t wait to meet her. I have a cozy spot just for her in the kitchen where I spend a lot time!”

Two white ears poked out from Coral Bell’s jacket. They wiggled with delight. Penny Square Inn already sounded like a safe haven for her. From the foyer, they traveled down the elegant center hall to the big sunny kitchen. The breakfast nook was already set up for a bunny. Coral Bell put her on the large quilt that covered the floor. It was sprinkled with hay and toys for little bunny. She hopped into the hidey box in the corner, it had peep holes! She hopped out the other side of the hidey box and jumped into a quilt covered basket. “Oh my, a plush bed, all for me?” she wondered.

Aunt Pinkie sat on the floor and little bunny nudged her hand, then hopped into her lap. She described life at Penny Square Inn to little bunny. She talked about how the guests come and go, but that she wanted little bunny to live with her forever. She told her she could be the guest ambassador on days she felt like it. Little bunny liked the idea of having a job and greeting new guests. Most of all little bunny was charmed by Aunt Pinkie and the idea of having a forever home to call her own.

“Little bunny, you may stay with Aunt Pinkie if you wish, or you may stay with us. You are welcome to make the choice that is best for you,” Coral Bell said. Then, Guinevere piped up, “little bunny, I brought you a gift. It’s my own bed, the one you napped in when you first came to Blueberry Lane. I would like you to keep it as a sign of my friendship.”

Little bunny nodded in agreement. With joyful tears she said “I would like to stay at Penny Square because Aunt Pinkie is lonely and so am I. We can be a family together. I just have one request; may I have a real name please?” Aunt Pinkie hugged her tenderly and said, “How would you like to be named Daisy? You are fresh as a daisy, sweet and pretty as a daisy.” Everyone applauded, even Miss Daisy!

*The End*

*Peggy Macasay*