

Rabbit Island



Judith Anderson



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by

Judith Anderson

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Helping Out

'Oh, no!' Mrs Grey Nose cried, in a very soft voice. 'Our burrow is very old now and beginning to fall apart.'

'Well,
well,

well!' said Mr Grey Nose pacing up and down their crumbling lounge. 'I think that as we have children, we should build a new home.'

'I knew you would have a solution, I knew it,' said Mrs Grey Nose, dancing up and down round the room with her nose twitching and small tail bobbing.

'Oh, that's nothing,' said Mr Grey Nose modestly, with his grey nose high in the air.

When morning came, Mr and Mrs Grey Nose started packing their things. The children got up later than their parents, so when Mrs Grey Nose put her little chubby face round the door all she could see was the twins, who were both boys of five, lying in their beds. At the end of their beds they had their names carved in big letters: BOBTAIL and LUCKY.

Then Mrs Grey Nose put her face round the door a bit more, and saw two larger beds with two eight-year-old twin girls. Their names were carved on their beds too: SNOWDROP and BUTTERCUP.

'My little dears. I won't wake you up,' whispered Mrs Grey Nose. Then she quietly closed the door.



By the time Mrs Grey Nose had finished all her packing, the children had just begun to do theirs, so Mrs Grey Nose helped them out. When the packing was done, the Grey Nose family all went out of the burrow and covered the entrance over with earth.

'Now then, to find a new place. But where do we find it?' said Mrs Grey Nose in a troubled voice.

'Ha,
ha,

ha!' laughed Mr Grey Nose, walking into the middle of Rabbit Island. 'You know this Island has water all around it. Well, our home is going to be right near the edge of the water, then we can have running water.'

'That's a marvellous idea,' said Mrs Grey Nose with a glow on her fat cheeks.

As the Grey Nose family were walking along the Island, they met Miss Nibbles, who looked very worried.

'What's the matter, Miss Nibbles?' asked Mrs Grey Nose.

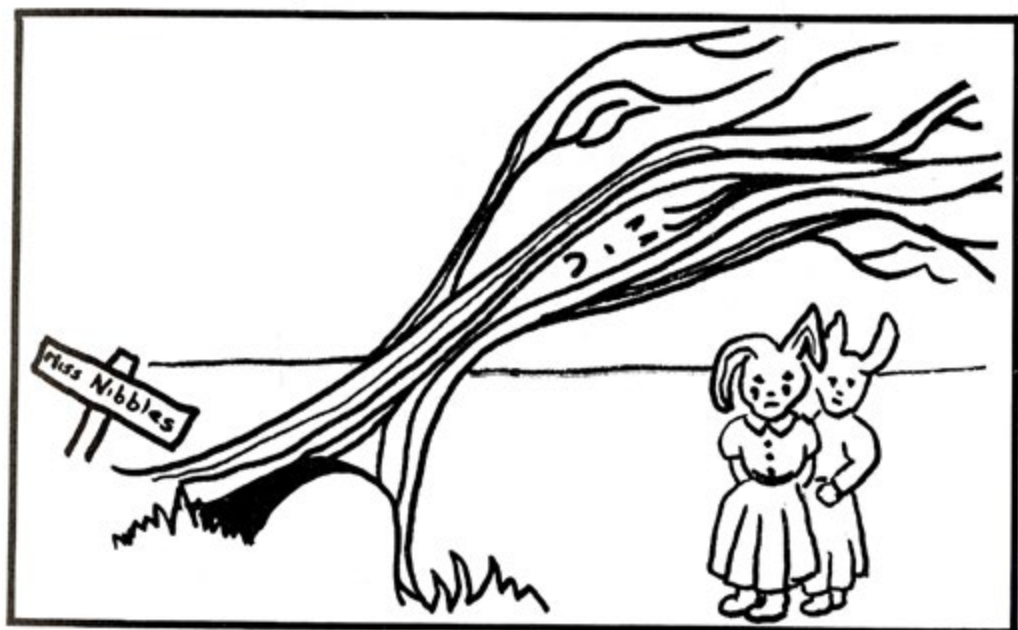
'Well,' said Miss Nibbles, 'You know that I live under a tree? Well, you know that there was a storm last night? Well, the t...t...tree g...g...got struck and my little h...h...home g...g...got burnt down.' Then a big fat round tear rolled down Miss Nibble's cheek. Then another tear rolled down her furry nose and dropped off at the end and went plop on the floor. Soon there was a big puddle of salty water.

Mrs Grey Nose hated to see animals crying.

'Don't worry. I've got a good idea. You see we're moving, so you can have our old burrow. It is crumbling a bit, so as we have children we can't very well live there. It needs a bit of touching up, though.'

'That would be a grand idea,' said Miss Nibbles smiling.

'Well, I'll take you to your new home,' said Mrs Grey Nose.



When they got to the burrow, Mrs Grey Nose and Miss Nibbles started uncovering the burrow. When it was done, Miss Nibbles said 'Thank you' and went down into her new home.

'Now then,' thought Mrs Grey Nose, 'where can the rest of my family be? They can't be in the market, because it's closed. There is only one place where they could be at this time of evening, and that is in our new home.'

So Mrs Grey Nose started looking all round the Island until she had almost given up hope. Then she came to a very pretty burrow and she knocked on the door.

Tap,
tap,
tap!

When the door opened, Mrs Grey Nose was just going to say, 'Have you seen my family walking past here?' when she saw it was her daughter standing in this beautiful house. Before Mrs Grey Nose could say anything, Snow-drop said,

'Welcome home, Mum. When Miss Nibbles was talking to you we all got bored so we slipped off to make our new home. When you have unpacked all your things we will show you around.'

So in went Mrs Grey Nose, making sure she wiped her paws. She was very surprised and pleased when she had only reached half-way down the passage, so you can guess how lovely the rest of their new home was..

Settling In

There was hardly ever any trouble in Rabbit Island, for there were only rabbits and birds living there.

After tea the Grey Nose family felt very tired and the children were already asleep in their chairs. Lucky had some cake on his paws and tea spilled down his fur. When the children were woken up by their parents, they went straight up to bed without moaning (which was a change!).

When morning finally came, the Grey Nose family all got up early and found that the summer sun was shining down all the hundreds of burrows in Rabbit Island. This was a great relief for the Grey Nose family because they had got up at five o'clock and wanted to make the most of the day.

After breakfast, Mrs Grey Nose said,

'I think that the children could go outside and play and make some new friends while I do the cleaning and shopping.'

'Well I think that I should show you around our new home first. Then you can do whatever you fancy,' said Mr Grey Nose.

'Mr Grey Nose,' said Mrs Grey Nose, 'you are clever. I forgot I was in our new home.' Then she started singing a silly little song going like this:

'Oh! Mr Grey Nose

You're such a clever Mr Grey Nose.

Why, you wipe your toes

With your funny grey nose!

You're just a clever funny lovely

Mr Grey Nose.'



'It's not true, that silly song. Maybe I'm clever, but not that clever,' said Mr Grey Nose.

'Oh, I think you are. Never mind, lets do what we planned,' answered back Mrs Grey Nose.

'Goodbye! We'll be back at dinner time!' called the children, and saying that they went out. They hopped out from their dark burrow into the summer sun. Across the lake they caught sight of a beautiful corn field. Suddenly Bobtail said in a bold voice,

'When I'm older or grown up, I'm going to go outside this world to see what it's like.'

'Oh please shut up, Bobtail,' said Lucky in a bored voice. But just as Bobtail was going to start arguing, a young rabbit came along and said,

'Hello, I s'pose you're new round here. My name's Pip, and my sister's called Tiny. She's eight years old. I forgot to tell you how old I am - I'm five. Here, have some cake!' And saying that, Pip brought out some rather crumbly cake.

'Blow!

Blow!

Blow!' Pip yelled. 'Tiny and I have to go to school tomorrow for it's now the end of the summer holidays. Oh! School, horrid old school! Why do we have to go?'

'We will be going to your school because it's the nearest round here. I am pleased to know you, we can be friends,' said Lucky in an excited voice.

'Listen,' whispered Pip. 'Tiny and I have the biggest secret in the whole world. Oh I'd better get Tiny and see if she likes you, because if she doesn't I won't be able to tell you the secret.'

So Pip went off to find his sister, and soon he was back with a very small girl rabbit with dark blue eyes.

'Are these all your friends?' asked Tiny in a shy voice.

'Yes,' answered Pip, then he introduced the Grey Nose family. After that Tiny squeaked,

'My name's Tiny, I do think you're nice and merry. Have some corn cake, I made it myself.'

Then all the corn cake was handed round, and soon all the children had their mouths full of Tiny's cake.

'It's delicious,' cried Buttercup.

'Oh, can I have the recipe?' asked Snow-drop.

'Yes, of course you can,' Tiny replied, pleased with herself.'

'Do you like my friends, Tiny?' asked Pip.

'Yes I do. Tell them our secret, Pip. Be a sport,' begged Tiny.

So Pip began to tell his great secret, while all the children crowded round.

'Well, it started like this. Tiny and I were playing hide and seek. When it was my turn to hide, I hid under the bush - look, over there by the lake where I'm pointing. But when Tiny found me, she fell into the water, and as she's so small she couldn't touch the bottom. But she was lucky, because she felt something hard and put her paws on it. Then I helped her out, and she told me about the thing she had been standing on. We thought it might be a big box of carrots or something, so we pulled it out of the water. Guess what it was? A lovely wooden rowing boat!

'It doesn't belong to anyone on Rabbit Island, because there's only one rabbit here who has a boat, and that is Mr Trotter. His boat is all painted and says 'Trotter's Boat'. Also, his boat is smaller than ours, and he's too scared to go out in it. Now, where had I got to? Oh yes, I remember. When we got our boat out of the water, there was a big hole in it. It was even bigger than all our hind legs put together. So we got some lumps of wood and banged them over the hole so it would not leak and then we went to the library and got out a book on rowing boats which showed us how to paint them and row them. I tell you what - we'll all come here tonight, exactly where we are standing now and go out on the lake in our boat. Mind, don't tell your parents, because they will just take our boat away. Besides, it would not be so much fun.'

'Right, tonight we'll come,' said the rest of the rabbits.

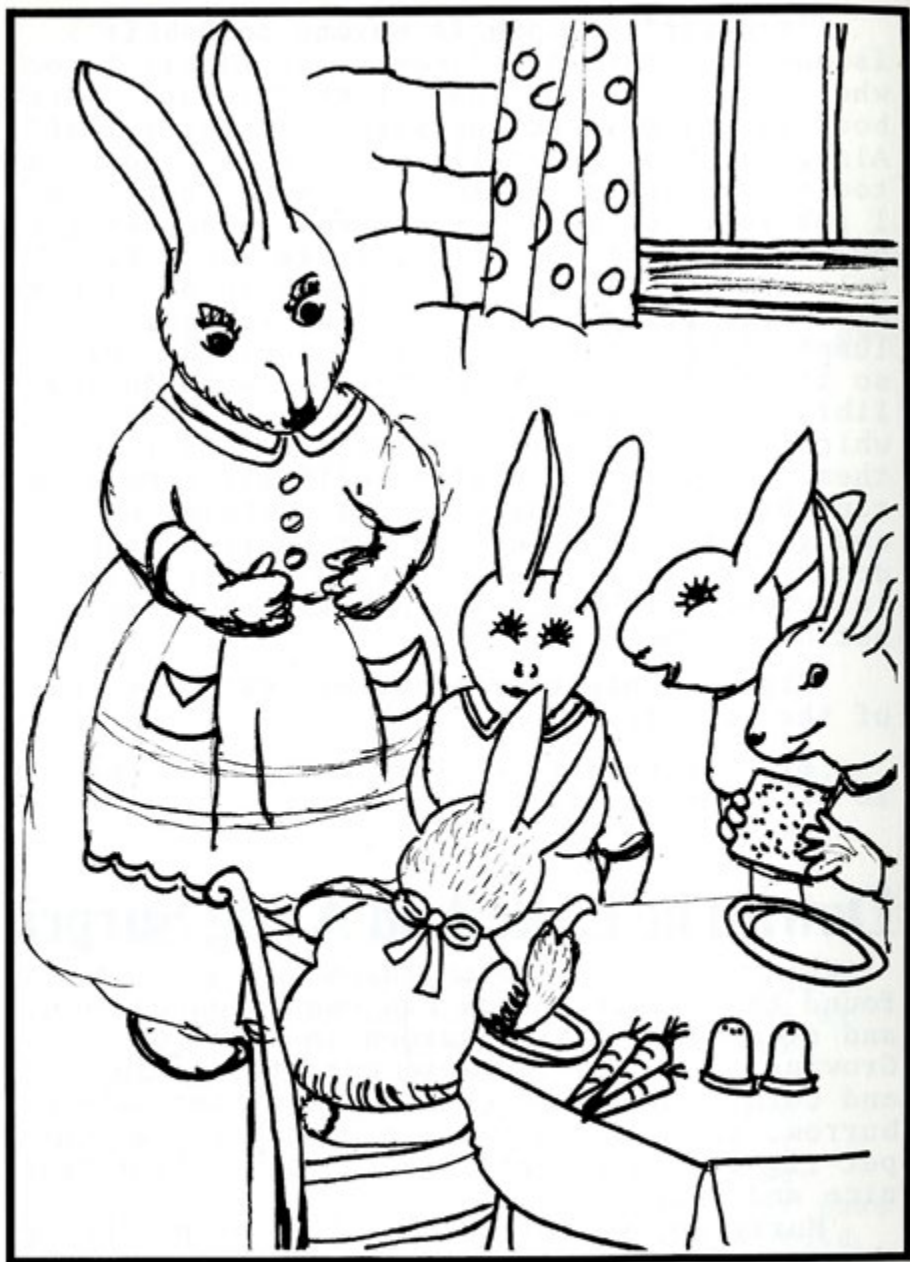
'Bring some warm clothes and some things to eat,' added Tiny.

Down The Lake And A Big Surprise

When the Grey Nose children got home, they found that their burrow had been cleaned out, and even had a little garden in front of it. Growing in the garden were carrots, lettuces and corn. When the children went into the burrow, they saw it had a nice rabbit fur carpet right down the passage. It really looked nice and cosy.

'Hurry up, you sillies! I've been ringing the gong for tea for ages. Go and get washed and changed, tea's already on the table. You've all got to go to school tomorrow, don't forget!' shouted out Mrs Grey Nose.

'So what,' whispered Bobtail.



The Grey Nose family had a lovely big tea and every now and again the children kept slipping food under the table and into their pockets. When the tea was finished, the Grey Nose children had to go to bed. When they got into their bedrooms Lucky said,

'Shall we put our pillows down our beds, then Mum and Dad will think we're still in bed?'

'Yes, that's a good idea,' replied the rest of the children, and, saying that, they pushed their pillows down their beds and slipped out into the passage. Then they went through their garden and ran for all they were worth. When they got to the beach, they saw Pip and Tiny painting something on a beautiful bright green boat. They went up to them and Lucky demanded,

'What are you painting on the boat for? It won't dry.'

'We're painting our names on the boat. The paint is quick-drying. Look, the boat's already dry,' answered Pip in a proud voice.

'We can get in it now. Tiny and I have brought some sandwiches, for we will soon get hungry, and some warm blankets.'

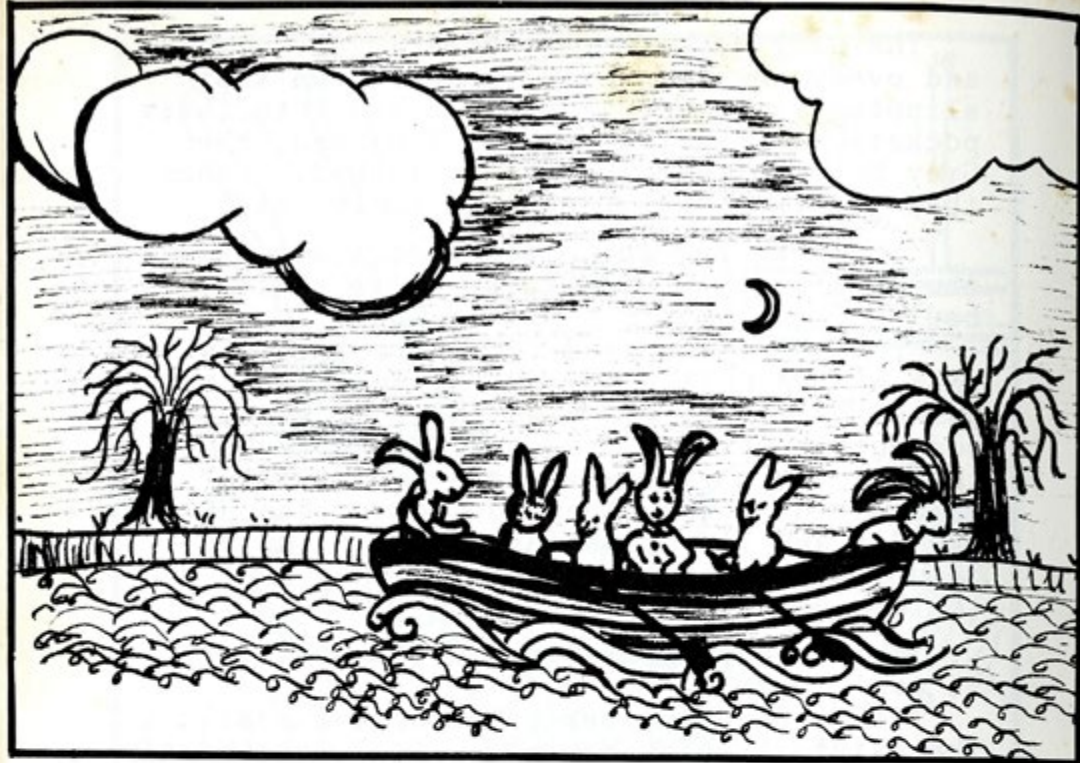
'We've brought a lot of food too,' chuckled Bobtail.

'It will be fun,' said Tiny in delight.

Soon all the things the children had brought were neatly packed in their wonderful boat.

'Well, let's get in,' said Lucky. All the children were in the boat almost before Lucky could finish what he was saying.

Bobtail was stronger than Pip or Lucky, so Pip and Lucky shared one oar and Bobtail had the other. Soon the children were off down the moonlit lake. Tiny put some rugs at the bottom of the boat and handed some cake to the others.



'Where shall we go?' asked Pip.

'Well,' replied Lucky in a thoughtful voice, 'If we row straight down the lake we can easily find our way back.'

So straight down the lake went the six rabbits in their wonderful boat with the moonlight shining down on the peaceful dark blue water. After a while it began to get cold, so all the children wrapped blankets round themselves. Snowdrop, Buttercup and Tiny were all cuddled up together at one end of the boat. This made the boat dip down at one end while the other end was high above the water. So Pip said,

'If we put the food at the end where the boat goes up, it will be just right, because the food will weigh it down. It's harder to row when it's like this.'

So the boys stopped rowing, and pushed the food down the other end of the boat. Their legs were shaking when the boat swayed, for they were scared they would fall into the dee' lake. After they had done that they had to go on rowing. Slowly the moon disappeared and it got dark. The children became hungry and started eating their sandwiches. They had been in the boat for quite a long time when Snowdrop spotted something and yelled out,

'There's an island. Look! A very small island, shall we go and see it now?'

'Oh, isn't it beautiful?' cried Tiny.

'No, I think that we could go another time, but it's late now and our parents might find out about our secret. Let's turn round and go home. We can come again at the weekend,' said Pip.

So Bobtail turned the boat round and they rowed straight home. The rabbits pushed the boat under a bush, and then went home, calling out goodbye to each other. When the Grey Nose children got home they slipped into their pleasant dreams about their secret island.

Back To School

Next morning the Grey Nose children got up very early to put on their new school uniforms.

'Hurry up children. When you've finished getting dressed, you can come and have your breakfast,' called Mrs Grey Nose.

When the children had finished their breakfast, Pip and Tiny called at the front door and waited. Soon the Grey Nose children were ready, and off to school they all went. When the children got to school, there was a lot of chatter and laughter. Then one cheeky boy said,

'I hope old Sharp-Eyes doesn't come today.'

Mr Sharp-Eyes was the teacher and was an owl. The boy who was talking was called Scamp.

'Why don't you want Mr Sharp-Eyes to come today?' asked Pip.

'Well, because I've brought my little pet worm with me. He's called Chuckles,' answered Scamp.

Suddenly, all the children heard a noise coming from Scamp's pocket, going like this:

'Hee,
 hee,
 hee,
 ho,
 ho,
 ho!'

'That's only my worm giggling as usual, laughed Scamp.

'Let's see your worm. Please, oh please!' cried out all the little rabbits.

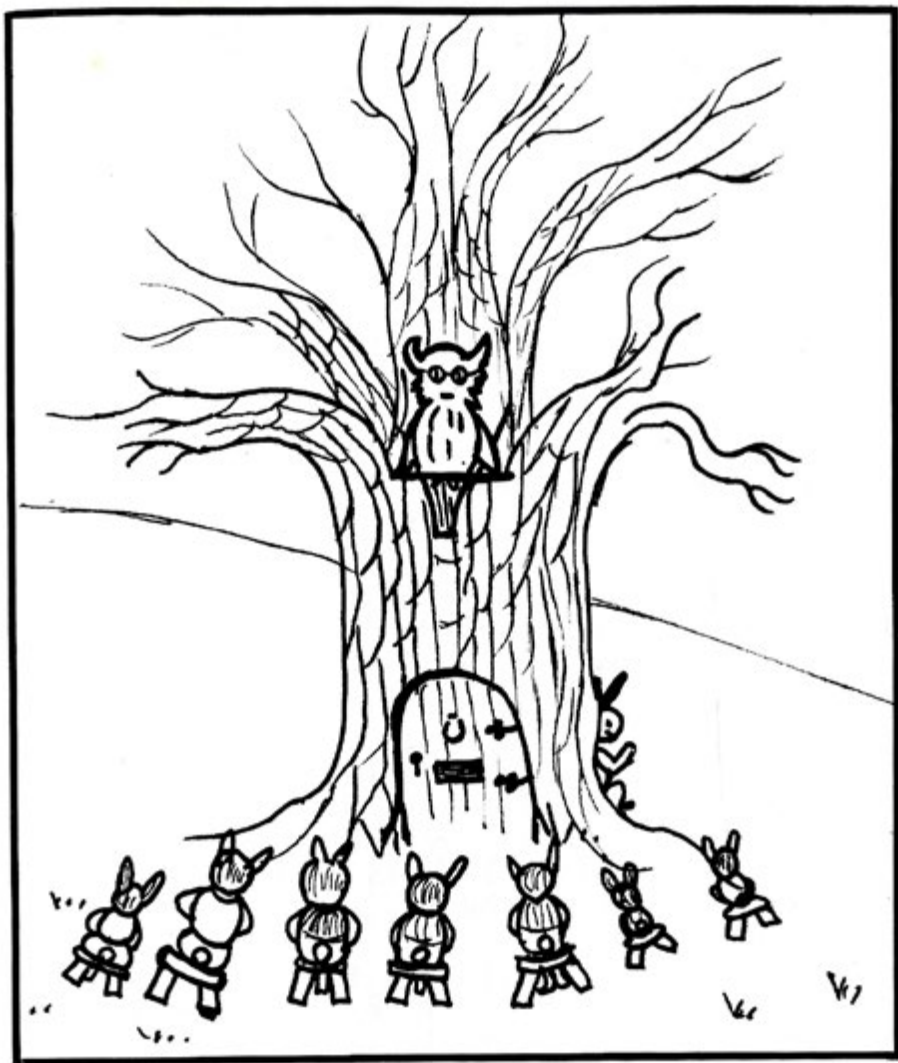
So Scamp pulled out of his pocket a small worm which had a lead attached to a gold collar. There was a pipe hanging out of the worm's mouth, and a pair of glasses at the end of his long nose.

'You are sweet. I wish I had you for a pet instead of just carrots that grow in our garden,' said Buttercup.

'Ha,
 ha,
 ha!' laughed Scamp. Then he said,
'You don't have carrots for pets, you only have insects, silly.'

Poor Buttercup. She did feel small and silly in front of all the children.

'I'd like to have Chuckles because he's small like me, so we would be good friends,' said Tiny.



But Scamp had to put Chuckles into his pocket, for he saw Mr Sharp-Eyes coming along. He was a very big owl with large eyes.

'I hope you all had a good holiday. Now get into school. I've got to call all your names out before we do any work,' he said.

So all the rabbits went into school and sat down at little desks. When Mr Sharp-Eyes had finished calling the rabbits' names out he heard this:

'Hip, hip, hip!
Ho,
ho,
ha,
ho!'

'Be quiet,' whispered Scamp to Chuckles,
who was in his desk.

'Tee, hee,
ha,
pah,
ha,
hee,
hee!'

'Scamp! You Scamp! Don't be so rude to
me. Fancy laughing when I'm...'

But before Mr Sharp-Eyes could finish what
he was saying, Chuckles started laughing
again. This made Mr Sharp-Eyes even angrier
than before. Still thinking that it was
Scamp who was laughing, he said,

'Scamp, you're to stay behind at school to-
night when the other rabbits go home. I will
teach you not to be cheeky. Go and stand in
the corner.'

When all the rabbits had finished doing
sums and writing, Mr Sharp-Eyes let them do
painting. This was what Scamp liked doing.
But Mr Sharp-Eyes wouldn't let him do any at
all. So while all the other rabbits were
painting, Scamp did nothing but horrible sums
and writing. This made him very sad. One
very small tear rolled down his fluffy face
and went plop onto his work and made a big
smudge over it all.

When home time came, all the rabbits went
home except Scamp, who had to stay behind.
One of the rabbits took Chuckles out of Scamp's
desk so that he could go home. When all the

children had gone, Mr Sharp-Eyes got hold of Scamp's long ears and spanked him hard. Poor Scamp! When he went home he was aching all over. It was all Chuckles' fault, he thought.

Days went by at school, and whenever the weekends came, Pip, Tiny, Lucky, Bobtail, Buttercup and Snowdrop always had so much work homework to do that they never had enough time to go on the island. So they planned to go in the Christmas holidays. When it was the last day of term, the rabbits were allowed to play games instead of doing work. Suddenly Scamp said,

'Buttercup, Snowdrop and Tiny. I've got you all a Christmas present.'

Saying that he brought out of his pocket three small boxes and gave one box to each of them. When they opened the boxes they had a nice surprise. Guess what was inside? Well, there was a worm in each one. Then Scamp said,

'I gave you these because you liked Chuckles. But these don't chuckle like Chuckles does.'

'Oh, just what I wanted, thank you ever so much!' exclaimed Tiny. Then Buttercup and Snowdrop said thank you.

When all the children were going home for the Christmas holidays, Pip, Tiny, Buttercup, Snowdrop, Bobtail and Lucky walked home together, and had a talk about going that night to their island. In the end they decided that they would.

So tonight they will be going, and we will be seeing them.

On The Island And A Big Adventure

In the middle of the night the rabbits went down to the beach. When they were all together, they go into the boat and sailed down the lake until they came to the island.

'Now, all climb on,' said Pip when they reached there, and on to the island they clambered. When they had all finally landed, they had a big surprise. Everywhere they looked they could see food that rabbits liked to eat. There were corn cakes, carrots, lettuces, and even Christmas puddings. All the the rabbits started eating up the lovely food.

'Oh we are lucky to have found an island like this,' said Tiny, very excited and speaking with her mouth full. But suddenly:

'Mee-ow, prrr, mee-ow, prrr, prrr,' went a sound. Then a voice came up behind them:

'This is my island, not your's. I'm the King of this island.'

When the rabbits turned round to see where the voice was coming from, they saw a black cat. But the little rabbits did not know it was a cat. Tiny screamed, and ran away in fright. All the rabbits ran to the shore, but when they got there, the boat was gone.

'What shall we do?' cried Buttercup.

'Let's burrow under the lake,' said Lucky.

'No, the water would come through,' said Pip.

'Well, we'll just have to swim,' said Bobtail desperately.

So all the rabbits tried to swim, but it was no good, for they simply couldn't. All they could do was to try to stand up to the cat, and get their boat back.

So when the rabbits had found enough courage, they walked back up to the big black cat. Snowdrop bit his tail. When the cat turned round and saw the rabbits, he got very angry and started to wave his tail furiously. Then Buttercup got hold of it, and held it flat on the ground with her paws. The cat tried to twist round and bite the rabbits, but he couldn't.

'Give us our boat back that you stole, then we won't hurt you. But if you don't, we will!' cried Pip in a brave voice.

The cat got very angry, and a little scared too. His back went into an arch shape, and all his fur began to prick up. Then he tried to look brave and said,

'Come and try to fight me, you little horrors. Then we'll see who wins.'

So all the rabbits, except Tiny who was shaking in a corner, ran to the cat and jumped on him. They bit him and kicked him and threw stones at him.

In the end the big cat felt very sorry for himself, and the rabbits had won the big fight. But suddenly the rabbits saw four playful kittens coming out of a small cover. After them came their mother and she said,

'Has Fluffy been fighting with you poor rabbits?'

'Well...er...we did have a bit of a scramble,' replied Lucky.

The mother cat said,

'You see, Fluffy doesn't know what rabbits are. He's never seen them before. He probably thought you were going to take our island. I am terribly sorry. Here, to make up for it, you can have all this food to take back with you to where you live. Don't forget, you can come and see us whenever you want to.'

'Oh thank you ever so much,' called the young rabbits as they started to pile up the boat with food.

'Someone's missing, I'm sure,' said Pip suddenly.

'Oh, it's Tiny. She's not here. She's gone!' cried Buttercup.

'It's no good crying!' shouted Bobtail.

'Well let's search, not sit here staring like carrots,' said Pip in a worried voice. So they all began looking for Tiny everywhere. But to their dismay and fright she was nowhere to be seen. Everyone ended up crying. The mother cat went into her house to make them all a warm drink. But suddenly she called out,

'Come here, look what I've found!'

Then they all went in to have a look. Guess what they saw? Four little kittens who belonged to the mother cat, and with them was Tiny, curled up asleep. Everyone was so happy that they all cried again.

They carried Tiny to the boat, which had now been returned to its place, and all the rabbits climbed in and sat on top of the food, because there was so much.

'Goodbye!' called out all the rabbits.

'You can call us Fluffy cats!' replied the Fluffy cats.

When the rabbits had left the island, they felt tired and happy.

'What shall we do with all this food? We can't very well eat it all up, for there is too much,' remarked Pip.

'Well, I suppose we could share it between every rabbit on Rabbit Island,' answered Lucky.

'Yes, that's a good idea,' chorised all the rabbits together.

'But let's go home now. We can make plans tomorrow,' suggested Bobtail.



When the rabbits finally reached their beach, they got out of their boat and pushed it under the bush with a cover over the top of the food. Then they all parted, calling out goodbyes. When the Grey Nose children got home, they crept through the passage and into their bedrooms and lay down in their warm beds. They were soon asleep and having happy dreams.

A Happy Ending

When morning came, the Grey Nose children woke up early, had their breakfast and went down to the beach to meet Pip and Tiny. When Pip and Tiny came along, they went and sat under the bush where their boat was.

'What will we do with all this food?' asked Tiny.

'Well, we could share it round Rabbit Island and keep some for our own families,' answered Lucky.

'Yes, but the trouble is, if we do, we will have to tell everyone about our secret boat and everything,' replied Pip.

'Well our secret is bound to be found out sooner or later. And I don't think our parents would be very angry,' said Buttercup.

Everyone agreed with her. So all the rabbits went home to tell their parents. When the Grey Nose children got home, they went and told their mother and father the whole story in detail. When they had finished, their mother said,

'Oh, you brave children, of course you can keep your little boat. Oh, you must show your boat to me. Oh, I'll see your friends too.'

Then Mr Grey Nose said,

'Oh, Mrs Grey Nose, stop saying Oh! You can see they get all their bravery from me.'

'Well, we're going out now to share all the food round the Island, and keep some for ourselves. Come on let's go!' said Pip.

'Bye Mum, 'bye Dad. See you soon!' they all called out.

'Don't forget to come back for dinner!' Mrs Grey Nose called after them.

When they got out of their burrow, Buttercup said,

'See, I told you they wouldn't mind.'

Then they heard running footsteps. It was Pip and Tiny with big smiles on their faces. Pip said in a merry voice,

'Our parents don't mind, and they said that we can go out in our boat whenever we like.'

'Ours said the same,' said Snowdrop.

'Well, let's go and share the food round now,' ordered Tiny.

The young rabbits went and got the food and started to share it around all the rabbits. They told them all about what they had found on the island and what had happened there. All the rabbits kept saying,

'Oh, you are brave!

Or,

'I wonder what those black furry animals you saw are?'

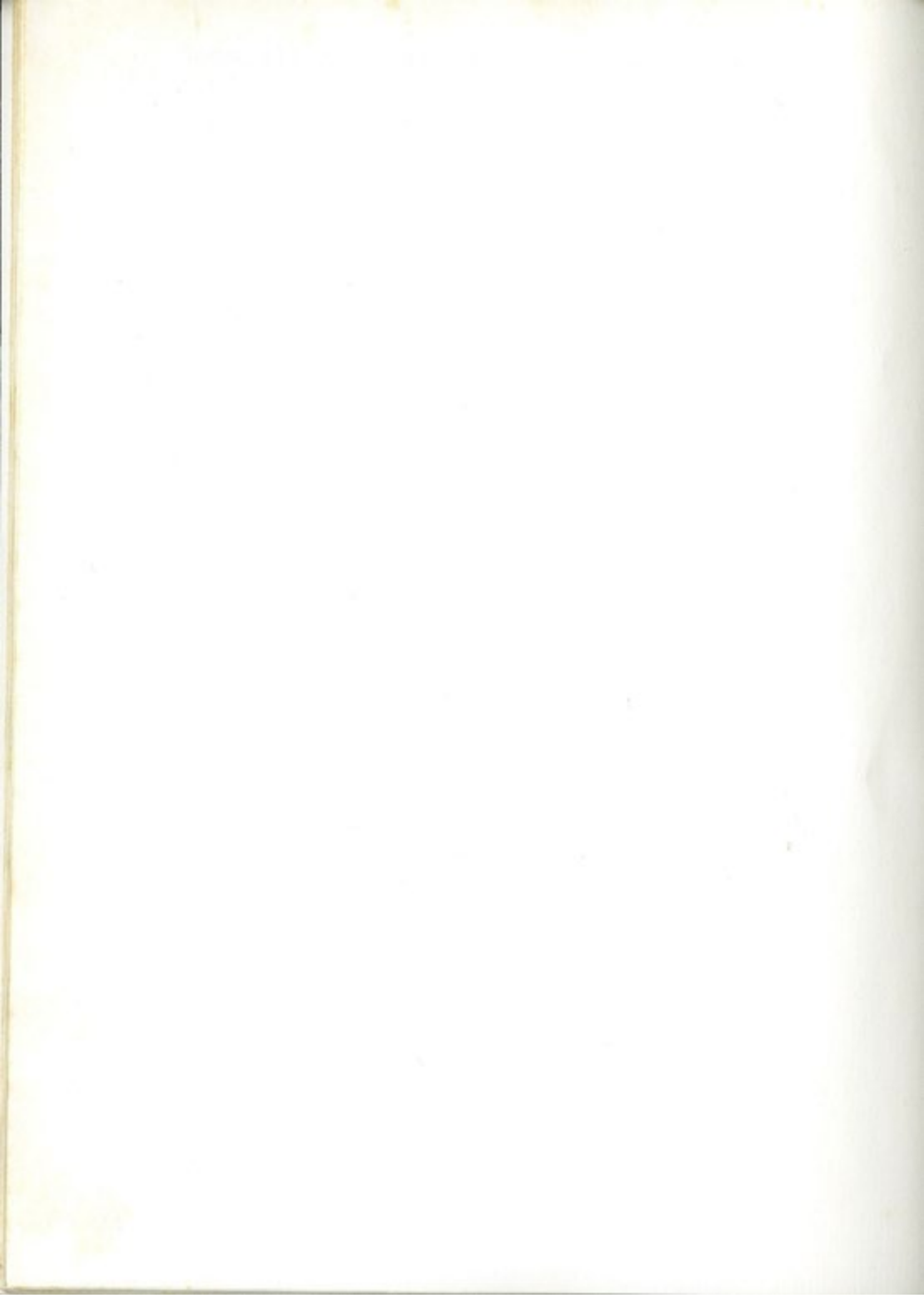
Soon all the rabbits went home carrying bags of food.

'Let's pack our food up to take home,' reminded Buttercup. But before the children could do that, they had a big surprise. For they saw a boat coming across the lake filled with decorated Christmas trees. Then the rabbits realised that it was rowed by the Fluffy cats. Then Mrs Fluffy Cat called out,

'Take these Christmas trees to decorate your island!' Saying that, she bundled all the trees into the surprised rabbits' arms, and said goodbye. When the Fluffy cats had gone, the rabbits began to put the colourful trees in the spaces on the Island.

Soon all the rabbits on Rabbit Island were dancing around and helping to decorate the Island. It began to snow. All the children rabbits were throwing snowballs at each other. And so for now we will leave all those friendly little rabbits until we meet them again some day.

Goodbye,
Goodbye.



Judith Anderson is twelve years old and is a pupil at Woodberry Downs School. She wrote this story when she was eleven. Apart from being a very keen reader, she spends a lot of her spare time looking after the twelve rabbits she keeps as pets. Her mother did the drawings that accompany this story.

The Centerprise Publishing Project, by publishing this story and other writings by local children, hopes to encourage children to see themselves as potential authors, writing for others rather than just for themselves. We welcome all kinds of writing from children in Hackney.

