House Rabbits: 1, Carpet: 0

For my wife Linda, who has put up with my numerous eccentricities these many decades.

Chapter 1

Forgive me for starting in the middle of the story, but things will make more sense this way.

This real-life tale has 5 main characters:

Mocha – Brown Holland lop Buck (Male) Rabbit that got this whole insanity started.

Latte – Grey/White Holland lop Doe (Female) rabbit that joined the family 6 months after Mocha.

Linda – My loving and (generally) patient wife who loves the bunnies as much as I do. She also loves me or she would not put up with having them take over the second floor of our home.

The Upstairs Carpet – While it has no speaking parts, but the carpet is a central player. Any indoor animal can be hard on a carpet, but most critters don’t pull it up and shred it like rabbits often do. It was getting old and needed to be replaced anyway, but we still feel very sorry for it. I am convinced the carpet hates me now.

Marc – Yours truly and the author of the story. When I reached past 50 years of age, my life-long severe animal allergies just stopped. With the new novelty of being able to have an indoor pet running high, I talked my wife into having a house rabbit. Then we got a second one. No wonder the carpet hates me.

In my defense, we had talked about replacing the carpet before Mocha came into our lives. I suggested to Linda we ‘do the rabbit thing’ first, then replace the carpet afterward. This plan had two significant advantages to me: (1) I got to have a house rabbit and (2) I could postpone the expensive replacement of the carpet by at least 5 years. That s Win-Win for a husband!

Like any person trying to be a responsible pet owner, I read several books on house rabbits and studies about them on the internet, too. I felt very prepared to be a good bunny ‘owner’ by the time we brought Mocha home. Of course, confidence is really is just that feeling you have before you truly understand the situation. The bulk of my education of being a proper bunny ‘guardian’ came on-the-job.

‘Guardian’ is the phrase The House Rabbit Society uses for humans who share a home with a rabbit or two. I would quickly learn I had four rabbit-related titles: (1) ‘Guardian’ (2) ‘Housekeeping’ (3) ‘Room Service’ and (4) ‘In room masseuse’. I really don’t mind the work these titles bestow, but it was something of a surprise.

Chapter 2

We headed south from a rural area near Olympia Washington to our home in a suburb of Portland Oregon. The weather was typical for October in the North West as we drove down Interstate 5. Bands of rain pelted my wife’s Subaru, with short sun breaks here and there. While the Subaru is my wife’s car; I was driving so she could be free to keep a watchful eye on our newest family member: Mocha, a seven-week-old Holland Lop rabbit who was chocolate brown from head to toe. Even his eyes were brown so as not to break up coloring.

We had meet Lilly and her fiancé outside of Olympia where she introduced us to several well behaved and friendly young rabbits she had raised. The choice of which one to adopt was a struggle for us, but in the end Mocha’s smaller size and calm demeanor lead us to choose him. Lilly had given Mocha his name based on his appearance. We liked the name and didn’t change it after we adopted him.

Mocha sat in a cardboard box that was carefully buckled into the back seat. The box had generous viewing windows cut out on three sides. He rode to his new home with the top of the box open. A piddle pad lined the very bottom of the box, with white towels forming a soft floor for him to rest on. He sat up most of the trip to see us and to respond to Linda’s talking to him.

We stopped every 30 minutes or so to give him water and food. He happily accepted both from us and visibly enjoyed being pet as much as we enjoyed petting him. He never tried to escape the box; rather he settled into his first-class travel accommodations and enjoyed the care and attention he was getting. Being waited on by humans definitely agreed with him.

Holland Lops rabbits are (in part) identified by their unique ears. They ‘flop down’ on both sides of their head, rather than stand up like most rabbits. At seven weeks, Mochas ears were still standing up. Within a month they would drop down and make him even more adorable, but for now the tips of his still-standing ears were visible as he sat up in his box to sniff the air and stare at Linda as she spoke softly to him.

Mocha was adopted to become a house rabbit. This means living in the house with his humans and being a full fledge family member. We had a ‘large starter’ cage for him until he became comfortable living without one, toys and food all ready to go. Yes indeed: I felt certainly felt prepared. In reality I wasn’t, but of course didn’t know it yet. Not that I would regret adopting him, mind you. I just had a lot to learn about house rabbits.

Our drive home went without incident and soon Mocha was in a cage by himself in the guest room. We had been instructed to give him time to himself for a day or two so he could adjust to the new home before we spent time with him. However, every time we walked by the guest room door Mocha was staring out the cage and was very excited we were in his line of sight. He refused the offer to come out of the cage, but was happily be pet while he laid by the cage door. Within the hour his cage was rolled into the ‘Man Cave’ where the three of us would spend many hours together over the coming months.

Mocha settled into family life with use that first evening. He didn’t want to be alone and was very happy to accept us as companions.

That first night, we closed the cage door when we went to sleep. That would be the only night is was closed.