

My Little One



Author's Note

“My Little One” is a classic novel meant for all audience, bus especially intended for the ones who are more proclived to or in some way or another, practise tolerance for inter-species love and affection.

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Prologue

"I love you, master," the little rabbit whispered as he snuggled in his master's arm, lovingly wrapped in his favourite beige fur-towel.

"I know," his master whispered back into his left erect ear as he softly stroked the drooped one and gently kissed his head.

The little rabbit fell quiet, knowing his heart-felt love would never be reciprocated the way he wanted it to be. Every time he told his master *I love you very much, master*, his master would smile and ruffle his little head fur gently and touch his little nose, and mock, "do you now," it broke his little heart, but he could never say it out loud. He would always muster enough courage to go up to his master and confess his heart out to him, wishing and praying that this time, everything works out, but then again, all his master would ever say was, "I know, my dear," and add a kiss to his open wound. He would sometimes silently sit up at night and gaze at the waning moon high in the sky. He would sit in his little pink fur coat and think what he should do. He could usually think best when he was recently fed with a lot of milk and carrot. He would think about what he could do to make his master see the overwhelming love that he had for him in his little bunny heart. "Why aren't you in bed yet?" his master would demand in a stern and gentle voice, picking him up in his arms and walking toward his cot. He would then place him in and cover him upto his ears. "Good night, baby," he would whisper.

Little Cas would look pleadingly at his master and say, "I'm not sleepy yet." His master then planted a loving kiss on his tummy to which the little pet would ticklishly giggle in laughter, "Go to sleep you little naughty rabbit," Cas would become serious again and mutter, "I love you, master." To which his master would smile and pinch his little cheek, "I love you too, sweetheart, always have." And leave.

Cas would spend hours looking at the ceiling and wonder what it would be like to have him say that for real one day, at least for one time in his little rabbit life.

In the morning his alarm clock would go off, and as usual, he would turn it off and fall asleep again.

But that day he overslept. He was woken by a small kiss on his forehead. He jumped up as he popped open his eyes. His alarm clock pointed cruelly at 8:30 a.m., one hour late.

"I am leaving for work, darling, please close the door, sorry I had to wake you." His master said to him. He was dressed up for office, in a light cyan

shirt and serpent striped tie, with dark navy pants and dark blazers hung on one arm and a brief in the other. Cas blushed a light pink as he always did when he saw his master so well-dressed, but this time his embarrassment at getting late added to its pinkness.

He would usually wake up about 7.25 in the morning, take a shower while listening to his favourite “Bunny Rox” then go into the kitchen and make tea and warm water for his master and set his bath ready. He would then wake his master and help him to get ready and then he would serve breakfast. Finally he would send his master off to work with a hot glass of milk, and a little rabbit kiss. “I can’t do any of that now,” he sadly wondered as he gaped at his master’s handsome smiling face.

“I—I’m sorry, master,” he muttered in a low embarrassed voice.

His master ruffled the fur on his little bunny head and laughed, “Look who overslept,” and planted a fulsome kiss on his cheek, “I’ll see you at noon, little Carrot, don’t be asleep then,” and he got up to leave.

“Please, master, let me make you some tea,” Cas pleaded with big pitiful eyes as his master headed for the door.

“It’s okay, baby, I’ll get some on my way,” Brian replied and left Cas with a warm flying kiss.

Chapter One

The storm that raged that night was cruel. So much that even natives who were habituated to it, refused to leave their domicile to go out for work, labourers refused to go out even to earn their daily bread. Not even the street dogs that prowl around at this hour, were to be seen anywhere. Everywhere it prevailed the silence as though of the grave - the heavy kind, that, when it descends, leaves its mark on all it touches, only now and then perturbed by growls of fury of the storm prevailed, like a lone soldier protesting amidst the battlefield for want of rivals.

From time to time the low growl of the thunder could be heard, and here and there a tree would break off in surrender to the magnificent strength of the winds, and they would screech in rejoicement. There amidst raving nature's wrath and rampant disrupt, inside a little tin cup, huddled together in himself and fearing every drop of rain an enemy, there sat a little bunny.

Brian was late from work. And as soon as he left, he regretted it.

"Bloody Dankers and his extra load of work", he cursed under his breath, being aware that Dankers was close by given his vehicle was still parked in the lot. Its not that the thought of staying back at office didn't cross Brian's mind, and perhaps he might have even succumbed to it, if the overwhelming memory of his leftover burritos in his fridge didn't immediately hit him.

"Gotta make it back," he swore with new motivation.

However it didn't look promising since the very beginning. His Rover coughed and blurted, stopping and taking long breaths in between, and sometimes pulling up all of a sudden, then straining back into action, and Brian remembers having all but wanted to get home to his burritos. The weather chased him like a villain in an action film, and it almost seemed like it would win.

Just about a dingy and isolated alley that Brian usually always rash drove past because he said *the smell of it drove him crazy* his Rover gave way. Brian hit his wrist hard on the steer and cursed. After sitting and waiting for what seemed forever for the weather to get a bit calmer, he got up and left the car. There he was, taking off the hood of his past aged engine as he peered

and tried to make sense of all the entanglement in there. That's when his eye caught it.

The Rover's headlight which were yet alive, and pointed to the end of a little dingy alley which faced a dead-end entangled in pipes and sluice conduits, there lay rolling on the floor a little tin cup, and from one of its ends there was a little fluffy ear that popped out, although indefinitely stiff and cold by now in the cold and rain. Brian left his engine and walked slowly and carefully toward it, picked up the little can and slowly poured its content into his arms, he was surprised at what he saw — a little bunny lay unconscious in his arm, his fur fully drenched and drooped. The first thing he did was to check the poor animal's pulse. Brian wasn't a man of many emotions, and had often been tagged at his place of work with such words as slug, sloth, no-emo-dude, and all the sorts, and honestly he even found them reasonable since to this day he didn't acknowledge himself to possess that particular trait - normal human emotion. However that was all to be proven wrong by a little knocked bunny rabbit in his arms.

He felt for its pulse and thankfully found a sign of life. He brought the poor animal into his car and placed it gently into the backseat. He took off his jacket which was also drenched and placed it over the rabbit for good intention, but sadly not as much use. He got back into his car and dialled for an ambulance.

The little rabbit opened his eyes to the handsome smiling face of a stranger over him. He heard the voice of a woman next to him, "You can touch him now, sir, if you want." The man's eye seemed to suddenly beam up as he gave the rabbit the gentlest touch on his nose. The bunny stared back wide-eyed at the man, just gazing in a blank stare. The woman giggled softly, "maybe he is a bit dazed, as you can see, just give him some time, he'll be alright."

"Alright," the man smiled and got up. "The dispatch formalities have been completed, also the adoption process has been taken care of so that you can directly take him home by the noon, sir," the nurse added. The voices sounded ruffled and blurred to the little rabbit's ear, which still seemed to buzz with distance sirens and thundering noises. "Thank you very much," he heard the man respond in a clear resounding voice.

What happened to me? The bunny tried to remember, with no effect. He just seemed to be lost. He looked up to see the man still looking at him, in a way no one ever had, as far as he could remember. The look could only have been of a rescuer to a survivor, or maybe of Jesus to a child. The little rabbit

looked on as the man smiled at him one last time and left through the front door.

It was almost evening by the time all the dispatch formalities could be completed, so Brian patiently waited in the lobby. As he did, his life took a flashback before his eyes. Since the time he was a child, he got the tag of being *irresponsible, nonchalant, careless, harum-scarum*, and the like. Mostly because he allowed for these rumours to be spread about him, as he himself liked living in that light. Too much of care and concern shook him to the guts, made him want to be sick.

He was responsible, however. He always drank responsibly, drove responsibly, not one rash-drive, not one felony, not one traffic disobedience, not one tax pay overdue on his name to date, that's Brian Steigne for you.

"No bullshit" was his clause, a reason why girls both loved and loathed him. Loved him because he would be ideal for one-nighters, and loathed because he definitely was not even remotely the "father" material, or even husband, for the matter. He accepted both the cause and effect whole-heartedly, because that forever seemed to be nothing but the ultimate truth about himself, but now, as he waited patiently in the hospital lobby to be handed over with a little life that he had saved with his own hands, and that he had decided to bring him in and take care of him, made him less sure about his past self, and somewhat more focused on his new one.

Almost an hour later an older woman emerged from one of the private rooms with a something draped in white cloth and towel. Two brown fluffy ears popping out from the wrapping betrayed its contents though. The nurse came up to Brian and addressed him, as Brian rose, "Mr. Steigne, I presume?" she demanded in a stern voice. "Yes, that would be me," Brian said.

"You are free to take him home, just put a signature while you leave," the nurse said and very gently handed the little furry patient to his rightful owner. Of all people in the world who least expect to know what motherhood feels like, Brian would yet appear at the end of the list. And yet there he was, in the middle of the Hallway, with a little rabbit in his arms, wrapped in towel, looking at him with two big piteous eyes and a little warm blush while his fluffy big ears hung out behind him, and he wondered what their future would look like, together.

"Take good care of him, my dear," the old nurse did away with her stern voice and said somewhat gently and added a smirk to her words, "something tells me he is special."

Chapter Two

The last thing the little bunny remembered was falling asleep in the hospital amidst the raw smell of blood and syringe and strangers. When he woke up, he saw nothing like it, everything around him smelled of flowers, he was snugly tucked in a small cot, covered with soft blankets. There was a bowl of what smelled like hot milk right next to him, and right beside it was a big palette decorated with a lot of carrot mixtures. His tongue lolled out at its sight. He touched his stomach and heard the sound of growling in there, then he realised that he could not remember the last time he had had a satisfying meal. He left his cot, looked here and there to ensure no one was watching, he delved deep into the hot milk and carrot, and not fearing poison or panacea or God, he ate like there's no tomorrow.

After he was done, he heard the sound of someone pushing the door open, followed by light footsteps. Instinctively, he ran back into his cot and hid. Soon after he felt the cover being lifted from him, he panicked and wanted to run, but he found himself looking into the eyes of a man he suddenly remembered. *I didn't fall asleep on my own, a man rocked me to sleep because I felt panicked*, he suddenly remembered. The man held up a small piece of a carrot from the plate and said softly,

"I'm sorry, little one, I didn't mean to frighten you, I just wanted to make sure you were doing well, and I also wanted to talk with you, of course, please finish your lunch," the rabbit's nose twitched as it sniffed the piece of carrot in the man's hand, then, in a moment of trust that is so rare among the prey cast of animals especially the rabbit, he nibbled at the small piece of carrot. It tasted really good, so good that he didn't realise when the man swept him off his little paws and made him sit on his lap, and stole his little twitching nose, and played with his whisker, and then proceeded to softly fondle the fur on his head and tummy. The rabbit happily munched on his little carrot piece and when it was finished pricked Brian's finger with a little bite indicating he wanted more. Brian chuckled and took up another bigger piece and held it near his nose. As he sniffed and advanced to get it, Brian pulled it a millimetre away. The bunny followed the scent and climbed higher, only to see it going further away, after a few failed attempts he finally got his paw on it and

munched hurriedly lest it should again be taken from him. Brian gently laughed and stroked the rabbit's head. After being fed full, the little bunny let out a yawn and closed shut his eyes.

"Sleepy time again, baby", Brian whispered, and picked up his little sleepy doll and put him back into his cot. He covered him upto his ears. The little animal slept comfortably without fear or worry.

Brian was half-asleep when he heard a soft ruffling somewhere near him. His sleep-induced senses ignored it. He heard it again, louder this time, followed by the soft clinging of metal. He sat up erect. He scanned the room around him eagerly to discover the source of the noise, only to see nothing. He rubbed his sleepy eyes to look properly, only to no avail. He was about to fall back to sleep when he noticed something on his little bed-table. A proper tea-set with steaming hot tea and biscuits ready in plate with spoon and ice. The tea-kettle seemed nicely polished and well scented. Scented napkins were laid out with spoons properly in place on it. He sprang back up.

What the...

He left his bed and walked slowly out of his room only to be greeted with sounds of more clanking of metal. He followed the sound and discovered that it emanated from the kitchen. He went in and as he did he grabbed a knife from the shelves. As he peered into the clearing, he could not help but to give out a little whelp of surprise.

The little rabbit, dressed in a little pink apron and armed with a big spoon and towel turned back around in surprise, but greeted Brian with a smile,

"Good morning, master. You're up already? I've set your tea and snacks on your dressing table", said the little bunny.

"I—er— you... I mean..." Brian thoughtlessly blabbered at the sight in front of him, not knowing what to do or say. He turned his head here and there, hoping to find Michael pop out of somewhere and yell that *it's a prank* or something similar to happen, but nothing did. The little bunny stared back at Brian with wide-eyes and drooped ears and asked softly,

“Didn’t you like the tea, master? Give me a minute, I’ll make some again.”

“Umm, no, that’s not the point,” said Brian in an attempt to sound sane, while he slowly approached the bunny. The poor rabbit’s ears drooped further down as he receded two steps back, and mewed,

“I—I’m sorry if I’ve disappointed you, master, please don’t punish me.”

Brian held up and hands and said consolingly,

“It’s okay, I won’t hurt you there, little one, just hold still.”

The rabbit was now almost in the verge of tears, but obeying his master, he didn’t move. He stood very still on the cantilever slab with the hot water simmering behind him.

It was not until Brian came up very close to him that he realised that the poor animal was scared not of him but of the knife in his hands. He quickly dropped it and knelt in front of the cantilever. He held his arms out to the little bunny as he did so. The rabbit advanced his little nose and it twitched as he sniffed, before walking into his master’s hands. Brian picked him up gently as he stood, and managed to hold him on his arm like a little baby. The bunny stared back into his eyes with anticipation and fear.

“Hey, it’s okay, don’t be scared. It’s just that I’ve never seen a talking and working bunny before. I’m sorry if I’ve scared you. He touched the bunny’s little nose which was twitching with fearful deep breaths, and he teased it till the rabbit gave him a cute smile and giggled. He tickled the bunny’s white tummy that was turned up because of the way he was holding him. The little animal laughed and kicked his feet in the air as his little bunny-ears flapped and shook on Brian’s arm.

“You really are a wonder, you know,” Brian concluded after he was done playing with him and he slowly put him down on the slab.

“But I’m afraid for you,” Brian continued pensively, “what if something were to happen to you because of the fire or the sharp knives? No, I couldn’t possibly let you work here for me.”

The little bunny looked at him with pleading eyes and said,

“Please at least give me a chance to serve you, master. Please do not dismiss me yet. I’d feel incomplete if I didn’t get a chance to serve you, sire. You’re my saviour divine, you saved my life, please let me express my gratitude to you by serving you, be it for a little while, and if at any time in the future you feel that I am inadequate and not worth your while to keep, I’ll leave master, never to come back again. You’ll never see me again,” he added quite a lot of emotion into that last sentence, as he drew a small sniff to indicate the same.

Brian had not often felt term “cuteness overload” to be applicable to several things on the internet — kitten sleeping, hamsters digging, dogs singing, to him, they seemed adorable, but normal. However when he saw this little creature he’d found in a tin-can, brought home and now found out that it’d made some of the best tea he’d smelt in a long while and wanted to serve him now to extend its heart-felt gratitude to him for saving its life, he began to have second thoughts on what he deigns to call “cute.”

“O—okay, but its at your own risk, alright? I’ll not be held responsible for a little animal getting hurt in the kitchen while expressing its heartfelt love, okay?”

“Done,” agreed the bunny with a happy smile.

Chapter Three

It was late that day for Brian to return. When he came back home tired and enervated from Dankers' disciplinary speech, he shut the door rather loudly behind him.

However as the smell of lavender and sandalwood hit his nostrils all at once, he felt his anger leaving him. *Scented candles*, he wondered with a smile. He looked around for his little wonder rabbit, he had for a time forgotten about this little piece of fortune of his and how much joy and love filled his heart on his very sight.

"Hey, little bunny, where are you my dear?" Brian called out.

He looked beneath the table, on the couch, behind the cupboard, but he was nowhere to be seen. He realised then that it would be tough job searching for him.

Brian was tired. He decided to take off his tie and shirt before continuing with his search. Just as he did, he heard a washroom door click open, as he turned he caught a glimpse of a smokey fog amidst which the little bunny stepped carefully out, one step at a time, concentrating really hard as could be seen from the little tongue sticking out at the corner of his mouth, he was fully wet and draped from ear to toe in a towel and wore really big slippers for his size.

Brian couldn't help but give out a little chuckle at his sight, "Oh, there you are," he smiled in half-relief, half-amusement.

The little rabbit panicked, then as he looked up, he gaped wide-eyed at his shirtless master, and slowly his cheeks turned bright pink, he then hurried into his room and closed the door.

"Hey—"

Brian ran after him and knocked on the door, "Come out already, it's all right, we're both men, er— right?"

After an awkward pause he continued, "okay, I'm sorry, I won't ever undress in front of you again, now come out, I need to dry your fur before you get dressed."

The little bunny sat huddled together against the door, shivering and blushing, with his ears drooping to the floor.

After a while when Brian had stopped knocking, he slowly opened the door and peered out. Brian caught him from behind and picked him up. "Got you," he smirked.

The little rabbit was still warm from blushing as his master sat him down into his couch and slowly dried his fur with a hair-dryer. The two of them were silent, one in quiet admiration of such over-cuteness that had entered unannounced into his life and he hoped would never leave, the other in utter apprehension of his embarrassment and confusion at his newly discovered emotions.

Chapter Four

And so Can stayed with Brian. He would make some delicious food for him for when he would return at night, he would bake some cookies that even the neighbours who smelt couldn't resist, he would work and cook and do the laundry and keep busy all day long, till his master got home in the evening and picked him up in his arms and scolded lightly,

“Thats enough of work, baby, get some rest.”

Then the two of them would have dinner together and then fall asleep in each other's arms. The only discrepancy in his day and in his heart being the way he felt for his master all the time that he was with him. Even at night, he found himself gaping widely at his master's sleeping angelic face, as the moonlight struck his manly features and made the cuts and edges of his countenance look so unreal as though hewn out of the perfect ivory. If haps Brian moved in search for some water, Cas would hurriedly look away or pretend to be deeply asleep. Brian would feel something amiss about his behaviour sometimes, it was true that he did, but he mostly ignored it as probable bunny habit. They were extremely shy creatures, after all. Brian would plant a cozy kiss on his rabbit's little forehead and go back to sleep.

Slowly, but surely, the neighbours got news of some *strange creature* caught in Brian's loft. Did Cas's untimely appearance at Brian's office— at lunchtime during which he *told* the watchman “my master forgot his lunch” making the poor guy suffer a third heart-attack in the same month— help the situation?

Probably not.

Brian retributed the poor bunny for his immature behaviour, during which the poor rabbit drooped both his ears to the floor and listened carefully, and softly mewed, almost in the verge of tears,

“I'm sorry, master, I didn't mean to embarrass you, it will never happen again.”

Brian pulled the little bunny close to him and picked him up and kissed his tears away, “Its about you that I'm worried my dear, look at you, such a little blessing you are, anyone would want to pick you up and take you home, would you like that, huh? I surely wouldn't.”

“S—sorry, master,” the bunny sobbed, and they both held each other in a long, warm embrace.

There was a loud ding at the front door one of the days,
“I’ll get that master,” Cas called from the kitchen, Brian was bathing when he first saw Ms. Luca walk up the front yard and make her way inside. Just as Cas reached for the lock, Brian put a hand on his mouth and picked him up from behind, like a goon kidnapping a little child, planted him in his room, and locked the door from outside.

“Hey there,” Brian said with a big grin on his face, as Luca peered into the apartment, “can I come in?” she said as she scanned Brian’s half draped towel gown and perfectly drenched hair.

“Um, I’m sorry, wrong time?” she asked.

“Well, I was bathing, but no biggie. Get in,” Brian suggested.

He kicked aside one of Cas’s squeaky carrot toys as she entered. it squeaked. She got alarmed at it and screamed, “rats!”

Brian gave out an embarrassed laugh and rubbed his wet hair,

“Yeah, there are— quite a few in here.”

“Really! How do you put up with those?”

“Can’t really help it when you’re living alone,” he made a point to make the last two words loud and clear so Cas could be warned.

Cas put one of his long ears on the door and listened to their conversation. Their voices seemed muffled but he could make words out here and there.

“Say, this place is quite well-kempt for a single guy, and oh— do I smell muffins?”

Before Brian could stop her, she made her way into the kitchen to discover a neatly laid tray with muffins waiting to be dressed.

“Wow, these are so cute, can I get some, please?”

“Yeah, sure!” Brian deigned, having no idea Cas was baking muffins. He thought he was asleep or something.

“Teach me, wouldn't you, Brian?” Luca pleaded.

“Uh— yeah, anytime!” Brian immediately regretted it.

“How about now?” Luca looked at him with pleading eyes, “you know how much I love cookies and baking but sadly there's not one site that teaches you to do proper muffins, and dear me! All this time I didn't even know such a great baker was just among us! Bri, you silly hidden fox! Wait till I tell Michael!”

Brian laughed nervously and rubbed his hair again, which had almost begun to dry out of fear.

Just as all doors seemed closed and Luca seemed hell-bent on learning how to bake muffins, Brian received a call on his cell and as he took it, it said, *Home* on his screen. Someone was calling him from his home telecom. He received it. Cas's quiet voice rang into his ears,

“Master, there's a magazine in the left drawer of the kitchen, on page 122 there's the recipe you need,” and there was a still sound as Cas hung up.

Brian was quite for a long time, before he finally said, “yes, okay, immediately,” he kept down the cell rather hastily and muttered to Luca, “I'm sorry, I've some work, I need to leave asap, but here,” he said as he drew the magazine from the kitchen drawer, “this has the perfect recipe you're looking for,” and handed it over to Luca, and before she could respond he held open the door and smiled, “Please come over another time, we'll enjoy muffins together,” Luca looked suspiciously at him as she stepped out,

“Thanks,” she said dubiously and left, looking back twice on her way down the streets.