

The Secret Life of
Juniper Snow's
RABBITS

A Lethbridge Tale,
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Illustrations created by AI

Episode 2: The Outside World

Mopsy felt invigorated; her heart was pumping “lubiddy-dub-lubiddy-dub” in her little rabbit chest. She stood there like a statue, frozen on Miss Snow’s front lawn.

She forgot how big it was outside of Junie’s yard. Their community was shaped in a U-shaped crown of houses that sheltered their home from the wind. Although tonight was an especially calm night, just perfect for curious rabbits, the vast space stretched out all around her.



How long had it been since she had been out like this?

Abruptly, she remembered the last time that she escaped for an adventure. It had been quite a long time since it happened, and she had told the story so many times that it began to change in her mind, like a big-fish story. She told it so often and changed it enough times that she romanticized it. But in that moment, the truth came racing back.



That time, she met up with Mr. Finch’s dog, Pebbles, who lived three blocks down. Pebbles was not as cute as her name sounded; she was the local chow, with an autumn-coloured winter coat that she wore all summer long. She had a large, black, squished nose, a yippy bark, and a curly tail that made Mopsy think of a pig she had heard about from Mr. Gregory’s farm. She could understand why other animals found them so disgraceful; if they were anything like Pebbles, they must be horrible.





Not only was Pebbles the most pig-like creature she had ever seen... she was notorious for chasing cats and rabbits! She didn't give them a fun chase either, as Cheeto Puff did. Oh no—when Pebbles chased you, she was looking for a chocolate bunny snack. Pebbles was not raised with cats and rabbits as a pup, so instead of seeing her next-door neighbours as friends, she saw them as dinner.

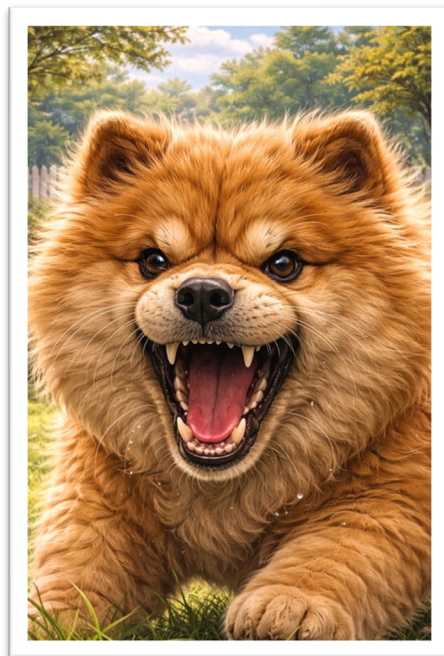


The last time Mopsy dug out—last summer, on an especially hot day, much like earlier that day—she became lost and very thirsty. After wandering for some time down the barren back alley, she took a shortcut, wiggling beneath a fence a few crossroads back that ran behind the houses.

Not knowing much about other households, Mopsy thought that she might find another friendly bunch of cats or rabbits on the other side. She thought that if perhaps she was polite enough, they might allow her a small drink and a snack from their dish.



Only, what awaited her was not another friendly cat or rabbit; it was the notorious Pebbles, smiling with her sharp, yellowing teeth.





It was on this day that Mopsy learned what a dog was, because Pebbles' growl rumbled out loudly from inside her puffy, autumn-coloured chest, and somehow that smile did not look very friendly. It wasn't until Pebbles bellowed out a loud "meow," which sounded much more like "RUFF-RUFF-RUFF," that she realized this was certainly NOT A CAT, and they were most definitely not going to be fast friends. That malicious, berserk monstrosity chased her all around the backyard. Had Mrs. Finch not been peering out her kitchen window at that very moment, Mopsy would have been scared half to death—or worse (gulp), eaten.



Mopsy shook her floppy ears to remove the image from her mind. She would be sure to avoid that delirious monstrosity this time.



In the wide-open space, she was finally able to stretch out her long rabbit legs. At first, she hopped out only a little, stopping to sample the air for predators. Things seemed free from disturbance. Mopsy spied a patch of tall grass in the distance. Miss Snow's family lived on the very edge of town, so she gathered that it was the Gregory Farm. Mopsy couldn't wait to see what a farm looked like up close, as she often heard about the wonderful fun the kids had over there when Juniper Snow spoke to Mr. Gregory, who delivered eggs.





Yes, a fine farm was just the place for a curious young rabbit. She had heard the kids tell tales of a famous rope swing located inside the “big ol’ barn,” where Mr. Gregory stored his close stock of hay for his animals during winter. While it was loaded to the brim in winter, in the summer, there was plenty of room for children to play.





Allegedly, when the Snow children rode their bikes over to play with the simply wild Gregory children—after they had finished up all their chores—they had loads of fun climbing up the tall piles of neatly stacked hay bales. Sometimes, they climbed so high that they reached the tippy top of the pile with that fine, long rope. Once firmly planted, a child wearing long, thick jeans would carefully straddle and seat themselves, wrapping their legs around a large, stiff knot tied tightly at the bottom of the rope, and then... jump! The Snow children said that it swung out “by a mile,” passing back and forth across the vast expanse of the barn until the swinging stopped. Then they got off and passed the rope to the next child waiting patiently at the top of the stack—and off went the next child.

Oh, “what a splendid game!” thought Mopsy, and she took off at top speed down the block, making sure she went in the opposite direction from where Pebbles lived.



Mopsy's little paws rustled softly through the long grass as she hopped deeper into the glowing meadow. Fireflies blinked like tiny lanterns, lighting her way under the big, silver moon.

She paused.

Something wasn't right. The grass ahead of her... moved. Not like the wind, and not like a rabbit.

Slowly... quietly... something else was in there. Mopsy's ears stood straight up. Her heart thumped loudly, bump-budump-bump-budump!

From deep within the grass came a low *crunch... crunch...* Mopsy took one tiny step backward.

Then—

Two glowing eyes appeared in the dark.

They blinked.

And suddenly—

“Wait! Don't run!” a voice whispered.

Mopsy froze.

A voice?

In the grass?

Mopsy needs your help... come back next week for the next adventure!