

# WELLINGTON RABBIT HERE & BACK AGAIN



Written and Illustrated by

Sandra Leigh Jett Ball

## To Love That Binds Us All

Titles set in Harrington Bold  
Text set in Harrington and Goudy Old Style

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## Preface



It's hard to believe that this is the last book in the series. But fear not gentle reader. It is only the beginning for our Wellington. Next up is to tidy the books and get them ready for market.

It always surprises me when I flip back through the previous books checking continuity points and realize I have

forgotten so much detail. Wellington and his crew have been very busy over the years.

For this edition I thought it would be fun to show you photos of the original stuffed animals. And a photo of that very first edition. The one with no drawings and no chapters. There were photos of the three, Wellington, Uncle Wells and Georg inserted into a glued in sleeve of each book. That should do it I thought at the time knowing that drawings are



hard to get the characters to have the look you need. That's a lot of work, I told myself lacking confidence. Photos will be perfect I justified. Each book was sewn together on my sewing machine. The cover drawings individually sketched for each book and glued on. As you can see Wellington has evolved over the years from his first sketch.

In digging up photos of Wellington I came across some awesome photos of





the five that started this journey. They could not be passed up. Here are but a few. It was hard picking them there are so many priceless ones.



Some battle scenes that go on and seem more distracting than not.

Apologies to Lewis for taking so long to get his character in the series. Once I had him developed in my mind, I kept him back because I knew he would be pivotal and wanted to introduce him full force later on. But then I forgot to bring him in randomly along the way in good fore shadowing form. Writing without guide notes can be hazardous.



Here's to good times everywhere and Easter love for all.

I may have ended the tale on a quicker note than some readers like. Relishing the end of a good series is fun. But I like to get right to the point





## Chapter 1

### Precisely

"Jumpin Jesophats Wellington, you want me to do everything is that it? I suppose if I were the queen of France about to be beheaded you'd want me to catch my head too," Precisely steamed.

"You're in a fowl mood," snapped Wellington in his own grumpy mood. He knew that he should be contacting Lewis the Legendary for help. And Wellington would, he really would, he admired that wizard more than anyone and he knew Lewis the Legendary was more powerful than even he understood. But the time to contact him was not just yet. Wellington felt like he had to try one more thing first. And so he and Precisely were ironing out the details.

"For your information Mr Not Lucky Foot it's f-o-u-l mood and yes I am. Of all the ridiculous notions, this is your craziest one yet. And just to get that vile black rabbit off your back," Precisely fumed some more.

Wellington chewed a whisker. Precisely had a point. And not from her beak either although that could deliver a flurry of hurtful pecks when she deemed the situation necessary. Wellington had been sure to keep his distance from that weapon of destruction during this meeting. "Alright how about this," he started.

Precisely stood waiting. She was not sure why. She could just leave. But Wellington was a good lad. And Wells had charged her with keeping him out of mischief. Did he even know what he was asking of her? She thought not. This bunny was out of control.

"No that's no good," he looked at her with pleading eyes. "Are you sure you can't..."

"Just stop right there, Mister, I can but I won't."

"But..."

"No buts. It is completely out of the question. Think of another way if you must get this black rabbit to bend toward your will."

"Precisely! You know as well as I do that he is a threat to Easter love. He, he ruins everything."

"Well perhaps you're going about it the wrong way."

"I have tried every way I can think of, you know that," a tear formed in Wellington's eye.

"Do not play the weeping card with me young man!" Wellington had never seen Precisely so riled up. All he did was suggest that she get Uncle Wells and the WEB to help thwart Black Veil before he became the Black Evil of the future. Wellington had seen Black Veil in the future. It was not good. That rabbit must be stopped. Precisely just didn't get it.

Wellington took a deep breath. This was not the time to be dramatic. He wiped the tear, a real tear of genuine concern, from his eye. "You're right, I am going about this all wrong." He approached Precisely. He would just have to risk getting pecked.

She puffed up and lifted her chin. "No, Wellington I will not change my mind. We are at an impasse on this."

"I know," said Wellington. "I want to give you a hug for listening to my hare brain



scheme.”

“It’s hair brain you silly rabbit,” the slightest twinkle forming in her eyes.

“You know I cannot spell worth anything,” Wellington felt like they were getting on slightly firmer ground.

“There’s a lot you cannot do. And one of those things is change my mind. So save whatever sweet talk you are getting ready to let flow from your clever lips.” Precisely was not budging one iota, Wellington could see that.

Wellington lifted his paws in resignation. “I give up. You win. I promise I won’t pester you another moment.”

Precisely looked at the rabbit. She was quite fond of him. More fond of his late uncle to be sure, but nevertheless Wellington held a special place in her heart. “It’s just,” she started.

“Nope,” Wellington took her by the shoulders, “there will be no back peddling. I can see it in your eyes. Now that I’ve given up, you are feeling bad about letting me down.”

Precisely laughed, “You know me too well.”

Wellington chuckled. “It’s easy. You’re just like Uncle Wells. No wonder you two hit it off.”

“I do miss him. Do you really think your plan has a chance of working?”

Wellington looked at Precisely. “What are you saying? Only moments ago you were ready to send me into tomorrow for suggesting such a silly plan.”

Precisely sighed. “I know. A girl has a right to change her mind, not that I have mind you. But still the thought is appealing.”

Wellington grinned. “I knew you would think it clever!”

“I never said that.”

“But surely it will work. You and Uncle Wells are bonded.”

Precisely sighed. “We have already wasted a whole page of the story on this endless conversation let’s just give it a try and be done with guessing.”

Wellington gave a little jump, “Really? I love you Precisely? You are awesome!” He hugged her tightly and spun her around.

“You played me. You dastardly bunny. You knew I’d never walk away from an opportunity to see Wells, even however slight,” she giggled like a school girl. No one could stay mad at Wellington for any length of time.

“Are you sure? Really sure?” now he was questioning what he thought only moments ago a clever plan.

“Get the dust,” Precisely held her chin up high. “I am ready.”

“First go home and say goodbye to your father. In case something weird should happen.”

“What? I cannot do that. My dad knows me like pi to the nth degree. He will suspect something. And nothing is going to happen. Right?”

“Well at least go see him on some pretense. So he can remember your last meeting with happiness.”

“You are scaring me,” Precisely shook her head. “You seemed so confident. Now you are second guessing the entire plan.”

“I do have confidence. But you know how many of my ideas on this quest have backfired



into something entirely different than planned, although thankfully they have all come out for the good...eventually."

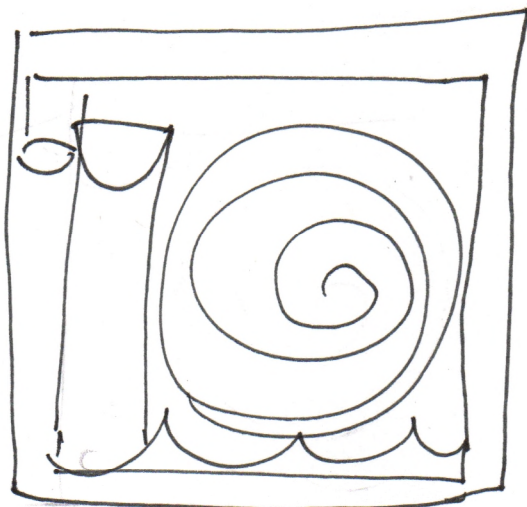
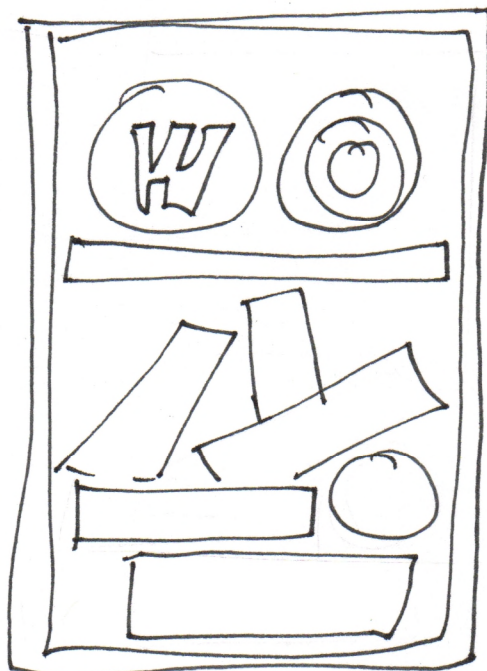
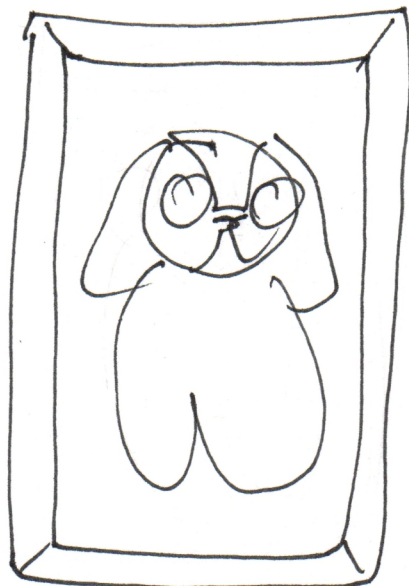
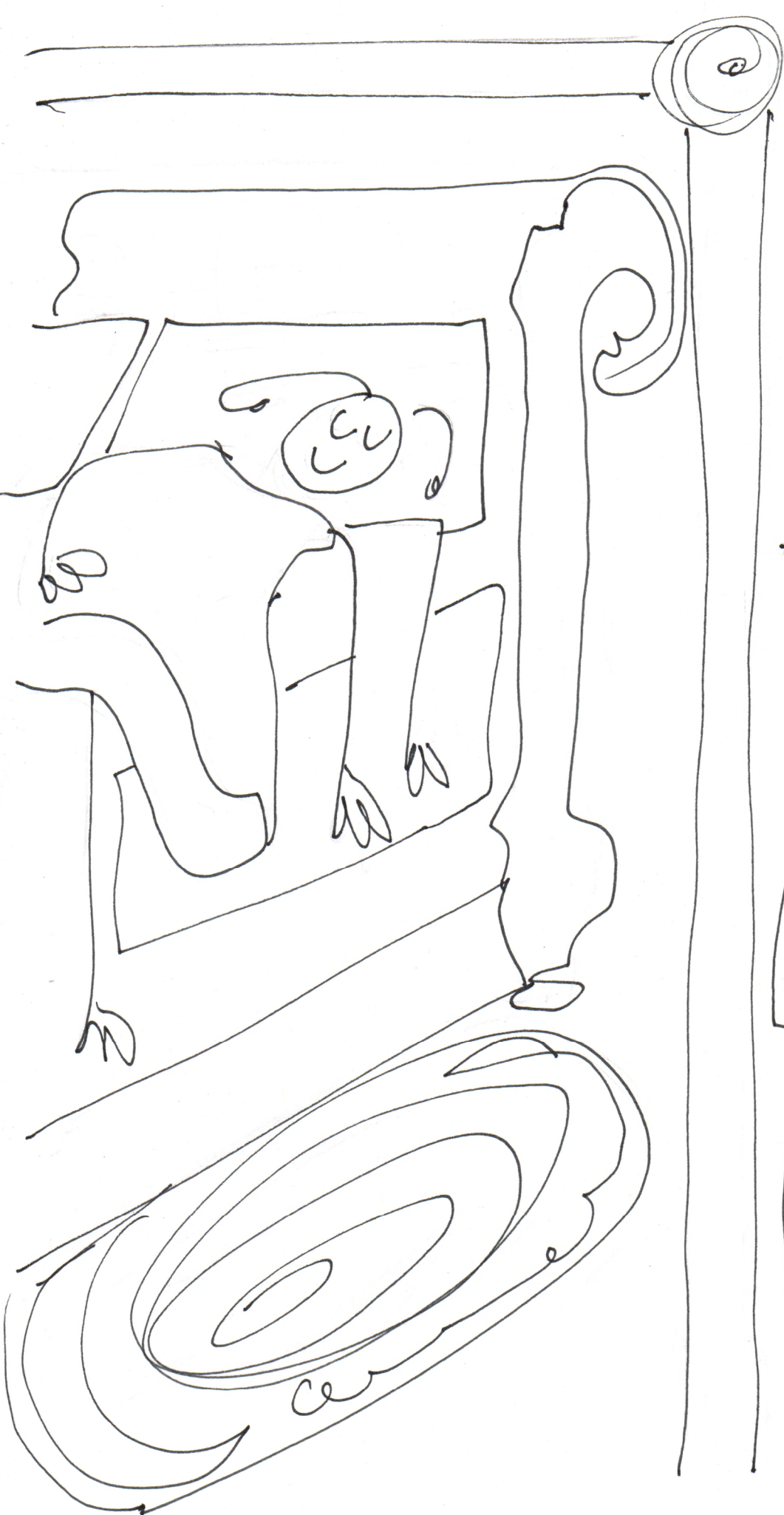
"Perhaps you are right. But now that we've decided to do this I want to get on with it. Don't go anywhere. I'll be back in no time." She hurried out of the cottage her tail feathers flying.

Wellington sighed deeply. What had he just stirred up? He knew he had to get Black Veil refocused. It was just proving so much harder than he had ever anticipated. What happened to the days when he and Georg were a team of two and their only challenge was getting Easter deliveries done on time?

Sometimes he felt like he might be better off if he was just a character in one of the shows he found using his marvelous viewing box that Mr E had invented. Mr E showed him how to twist the knobs to pull moving action stories right out of the air waves. They appeared in his box like magic. He planned to have a big party and show off this special box when he had figured out more of its tricks and yes, even short comings. He would get lots of popcorn from the Pied Popper. It was going to be a glorious unveiling. Everyone would be so impressed.

"Stop," Wellington admonished himself. "Enough thinking about the magic box. There is a task at hand." This thought caused Wellington to worry just a tad, some of his methods for achieving his goals were not exactly on the up and up. He shook his head, "No going back now."

"Hey Wellington are you home?" a friendly voice called through his screen door.



## Chapter 2

### Sir Andrew Ant

“Is that you Sir Andrew Ant?” Wellington fairly flew to the door. “I have missed seeing you so much. How is the Ball? How is everything? Come in. Come in. What brings you my way?” the words flew out of Wellington’s mouth. He had not seen his ant friend in ages.

The tall ant removed his splendid top hat for fear of bumping it on Wellington’s low ceiling and stepped through the doorway. “I’m fine,” he grinned. “The Ball is fine. Keeping me hopping as always but truly fine.” He put his hat on the hall table and gave Wellington a huge hug. “Might you have some of that delicious tea of yours? I’m parched.”

“Of course, of course. Where are my manners? Sit right here and I’ll fix up a pot.” Wellington indicated a chair for Sir Andrew Ant to fold his endless legs into as he reached for the tea pot.

Sir Andrew Ant sat down, stretched a huge stretch that almost upset a great number of things Wellington had sitting in odd spots and then yawned an enormous yawn.

Wellington looked at his friend and reasoned that a nice long nap would do Sir Andrew Ant some good. “Looks like you’ve stretched yourself a bit thin there my thin friend,” Wellington chuckled as he put a cup and saucer in front of the tired ant. “How about a lemon custard while the tea steeps?”

Wellington popped open the ice box and brought out two cups filled with the delicious lemony treat. “You know my heart, Wellington, lemon, lemon, lemon. And then some more.”

Wellington poured the now steeped tea and sat down. “What’s up my friend?”

Sir Andrew Ant held up an arm to signal that he could not speak just then. His mouth was too full of custard. “Well,” he began as he swallowed, “it has come to my attention that you are finding, or rather not finding, things as easily as you had hoped. The Ball and I would like to help,” he yawned again. “Excuse me for being so impolite,” he yawned yet again. “The girls are full of themselves these days and my work never ends keeping them straight. Mind you they are good as gold, just very energetic.”

“Sir Andrew Ant, might I offer a suggestion?”

“Of course.”

“Why don’t you lie down for a quick nap and then we can discuss my problem when you are more rested. The house is quiet. I am not expecting anyone.”

Sir Andrew Ant started to shake his head no, but a big yawn interceded. “Maybe I should take you up on that idea.”

“I promise to wake you before too long. The girls will be fine for a few hours. You have taught them well.”

“Alright then,” Sir Andrew Ant sipped the last of his tea and stood up. “Point the way.”

“Up the stairs, first room on the right. Sheets are fresh and I just aired the comforter. Snooze away my dear friend. I will awaken you shortly.”

“I sure do appreciate this,” yawned Sir Andrew Ant. “Don’t know the last time I’ve had a

nap uninterrupted.” He headed for the stairs, “but don’t let me sleep too long.”

“I won’t,” promised Wellington with his fingers crossed behind his back. “That ant is spent. He needs a good long nap. Those girls will be more than fine for a few hours.” Wellington began to clean up the few dishes that the custard and tea had required.

“Maybe I’ll take a nap too. Sparring with Precisely has worn me out.”

“Wellington, W-e-l-l-i-n-g-t-o-n, W-ELLINGTON!”

“What ever is that racket coming from outside my back door?” Wellington rushed to the door as fast as he could, “Sir Andrew Ant will never get any sleep,” he muttered.

“Wellington!!” someone was banging on the door frame hard.

“I’m coming. Please be quiet. It’s nap time around here.” Wellington pushed open the door to discover a gaggle of ant girls all clustered around the door attempting to talk at the same time.

“We need to see Sir Andrew.”

“He said he was coming to visit you.”

“Is he here?”

“Where is he? I don’t see him?”

“Look there’s his hat on that cupboard. SIR ANDREW!”

Wellington held up his arms. “Enough!” he voiced emphatically in a quiet but amazingly firm voice. The command and the delivery were in such contrast to one another that it rendered the girls speechless. Every single one. Not any easy thing to do with thirteen girls all vying for immediate attention. “Now, everyone sit down and I will choose one of you to explain yourselves.”

“But.”

“No buts, if you don’t sit down and stay quiet I will be forced to do something I will regret.”

“What will you do?”

“Yeah, what will you do?”

Before the entire group could take up the chant Wellington countered with, “Not that’s it’s any of your concern but since you asked and since you are being very still and mostly quiet I will tell you. I will have to wake up Sir Andrew Ant.”

“But we need to see him. So why wouldn’t you wake him up? And anyway why is he sleeping? Sir Andrew never sleeps.”

“Exactly,” Wellington clapped his hands together. “Sir Andrew Ant never sleeps because he is too busy making sure you have shoes in good repair and enough boot black to keep the shine on your shell and a shelter that doesn’t leak when it rains and...”

“But we help with all of that,” a small ant sitting in the front interrupted Wellington.

“Yes, but who makes the plans and figures out the best sources?”

“Sir Andrew,” they all yelled, “because he loves us. He told us so.”

“Shhh,” Wellington reminded them. “Of course he loves you. But he’s tired and he needs to rest so let’s think of something really special to surprise him with when he wakes up.”

“What?”

“Yeah what?” each girl in turn looked at the other and no one could come up with a plan.



“Maybe we could clean his room,” one girl finally volunteered rather reluctantly.

“That sounds good,” cheered Wellington.

“Except that he keeps it pretty clean already and I’m too tired to clean,” piped up one of the smaller ants.

“That’s being lazy,” said the girl sitting next to her as she gave her a shove.

“Well you think of something then.”

“We could bake him a surprise.”

“That’s the ticket,” declared Wellington. “Make it lemon and you’ve got a winner.”

“We don’t have any lemons,” pouted one girl with bouncy dark curls. “And besides we’re not supposed to be in the kitchen alone.”

“You could bake here. But I’m afraid the noise would wake our sleeper even one as tired as he is,” Wellington shook his head. This plan was going no where fast.

“And besides when you bake something it just gets eaten and then it’s gone.”

“What’s wrong with that?”

“Nothing, but I thought we were supposed to be doing something special for Andrew. Something really special.”

Wellington sensed a squabble coming on, “all of your ideas are special. We just have not found the extra special one.”

“Let’s get Sir Andrew a piano.” Everyone turned to look at the girl that had proposed such a bold idea. “We all know how much he loves to play,” her voice trailed off when no one said a word. “It is a silly idea,” she barely whispered.

“No, it’s a great idea.” Wellington leapt into the air. “It is THE idea.”

All the Ball nodded. They had a plan. Now they just needed to figure out how to achieve their goal.

“What did you girls need Sir Andrew Ant for anyway?” questioned Wellington.

They all looked at each other and shook their heads as they stood up ready to go on their new search, “We don’t remember,” one said at last.

Wellington could only marvel at Sir Andrew Ant’s endless patience. He deserved a full sized grand Steinway, with a bench that has an adjustable seat.



## Chapter 3

### Count Donald

Precisely decided to fly home. She really preferred hopping along nipping at bugs and marveling at nature in general but today she was in a hurry. She took three hops and a jump and stretched her wings. Nothing happened. Except that she fell flat on her beak. "That's odd," she mused rubbing her beak and straightening her glasses. She tried again. Nothing happened again. She tried a third time. When nothing still happened, she became very alarmed.

"Dad! Dad!" she squawked causing a stir as she scurried home as quickly as her short legs could get her there. Critters along the way were used to Precisely's occasional harmless high strung moments and thought little of her screechings.

"Precisely what ever is the matter?" Count Donald stood at the doorway having been pulled out of his morning musings by her incessant calling of his name throughout the entire neighborhood. "Even for you this is a bit excessive. Are you alright?" He hurried his distraught daughter into the treehouse before the neighbors decided to become truly alarmed instead of amused.

"I can't...I can't..." Precisely was having a hard time getting the words out.

"Spit it out," Count Donald was getting exasperated.

"I forgot how to fly," Precisely was in tears.

"You what?"

"I forgot how to fly."

"You cannot forget how to fly," Count Donald was losing his patience just a bit.

"Well I did." She began to cry. Her glasses tried to slide down her beak. Precisely kept pushing them back in place but they were winning with the help of the tears.

"Maybe you're coming down with something."

"And that would make me unable to fly?" she shrieked. "Birds get sick all of the time. And you never hear anyone babbling about being grounded." She paused. "Grounded? I never thought about it like that. Guess because I've never been grounded. Hmmm...."

"I never thought much of the practice," said Count Donald. "Much better ways to get your discipline point across."

"Not that kind of grounded," Precisely looked annoyed.

"I actually do know that," Count Donald looked right back at her with his own annoyed expression. "What are you thinking?" he asked.

Precisely did not quite know how to explain what was on her mind. "Ummm..." she hemmed, "Well," she hawed.

"Precisely I do know my own daughter well enough to know that you are keeping something back. Something that you want me to know about but don't quite know how to explain it."

"Really," huffed Precisely, "am I that easy to read?"

"Sometimes. It's a cardinal rule you know. We are unable to keep secrets from one

another. Species trait.”

“I thought that it was a cardinal rule that we liked to bicker and be territorial about everything.”

“That too. Now what’s up?”

“Maybe we should check my flying abilities now,” Precisely stalled for time. “I’ll bet they’re back. Only a momentary glitch.”

Count Donald had his doubts considering how upset Precisely had been, but he bought the stall.

“Alright, let’s step out back and you have a go at it.”

“I’m so hungry. I cannot do anything well when I’m hungry. Let’s have a snack first.” Precisely was an expert staller, but she actually was really hungry. She made a bee line for the kitchen before Count Donald could say a word.

“It needs to be a quick snack. I have numbers waiting,” he called after her. He would do anything for Precisely but when she went into one of her hem haw stall routines he knew it could take a long time before she got to her point. And that usually meant it was not as much of a point as she would have liked. She could create drama. She was a prime example of a drama queen.

Precisely had the waffle iron on the stove to warm and was mixing up some batter. “I thought a waffle with maple syrup and creamery butter with a spot of tea would be quick and filling.”

“Agreed,” Count Donald’s stomach rumbled. He was hungry too. Truth be told he was hungry almost all the time. Even for a bird he could pack away the calories and he never gained an ounce. He was the slightest cardinal in the dell. He got the fixings for tea and by the time the waffles were toasted the tea was steeped. The two birds sat down to dig into their snack.

“Yumfsm,” said Count Donald his mouth full.

“Itsisgooood,” Precisely nodded. They both knew better than to talk with food in their beaks, but everything was so tasty it was hard to stick to manners.

“Now,” said Count Donald when they were quite finished and the kitchen tidy, “let’s give that flying a go.”

“It’s not going to work,” said Precisely. But her eyes were bright and she was smiling.

“How so?” asked Count Donald. “And why are you not upset like you were before?”

“Because I figured out the mystery. I was on the right track before but I had the wrong motive assigned to the culprit.”

“You are talking in riddles,” Count Donald waited for her to reveal the surprise.

“Yes, I am and that is all I can say.”

“Can say or will say?” Count Donald was a stickler for a point.

“Both, I won’t say more that’s true. But I can’t say more because it’s only a theory on my part and I don’t want to start false rumors. Even to only you.”

“Guess I’ll get back to my numbers then,” Count Donald was getting tired of Precisely theatrics.

“I need you to go with me.” Precisely had made up her mind. Her father would know the whole plan but not just yet. And contrary to what she originally thought Precisely did want him



there when Wellington put this plan into action. She very much wanted her dad there.

“Go where?”

“To Wellington’s cottage.”

“What is that rabbit up to now?” Count Donald knew he could always count (he laughed at his own joke) on Wellington to be developing a plan of some sort. His Black Veil quest had taken on quite a life of its own. Count Donald was very aware of each failure and while the quest was an honorable one maybe Wellington just needed to back off. He said as much.

“No, he cannot back off,” Precisely looked her father in the eye. “The children of the world need unconditional Easter love. And Black Veil doesn’t see it that way. Maybe we can change his mind. If not, he has to be stopped.”

Count Donald nodded, “Precisely, Precisely.”



## Chapter 4

### Emily Elf

Emily Elf skipped along singing her favorite e song. Of course it had only e words in it. And she always used the musical note e so it rather had a monotonic chant quality. Just the way she liked it.

Every elephant  
Eats eggplant  
Eleven earworms  
Ebb erratically  
Eight eagles  
Echo earthquakes  
Ending elegantly

Emily Elf used to talk with lots of e words but she soon realized that it confused people. She could not understand why but she decided to only sing songs with E words when she was by herself. She rather thought that Georg would have completely understood her love of e's since he lost his e a long time ago (and found it many adventures later) but even he was not so fond of her constant e chatter.

Enough eggs  
Even elbows  
Emphatically edge  
Everything elopes  
Errata eases  
Easels erase  
Ecosystems end

She sang and skipped and skipped and sang merrily along. And then she stopped. She was at Wellington's cottage. "Wellington!" she sang out. "Are you entirely home?" (Somehow those e words just slipped into her conversation from time to time regardless of how careful Emily Elf was about it).

Wellington came to the door. "Yes, but please be quiet. I have a sleeping guest."

"Egads! I am emotionally sorry." Emily Elf was flustered. "I will come back eventually."

"No, nonsense. Stay, just keep your voice low," Wellington soothed the bewildered elf. "Let's sit out back and chat. That way we won't need to be so concerned about our voices drifting upstairs." He pushed open the door and stepped out into the fine spring air.

Emily Elf was already pulling two chair close together. And from her pouch she pulled out a box of truffles.

"The best edibles to be had," she beamed. "A sip of Evensong tea would fit perfectly."

Here,” she pulled another packet from her pouch and handed it to Wellington.

Wellington took the proffered packet. “Is this indeed Evensong?,” he held the packet reverently. “I don’t believe I have tasted Evensong. It’s exceedingly rare. How lucky for you to come by it!”

“I equally agree. A fellow elf gave it to me in payment for a service I extended to her,” Emily Elf blushed. “I did not need payment but she expressly would not take no for an answer.” She nibbled on a truffle. She closed her eyes. It felt good to be sitting in the warm spring air. She sang a little song, quietly. She knew plenty of e words. She was proud that the letter e is the most often used letter in the English language. While it is true that the amount of common words beginning with the letter e are far outnumbered by words beginning with the letter s, the leader, Emily Elf didn’t care. E was still her favorite letter.

Enormous endive  
Elastic elkhounds  
Enduring elms  
Epistles evaporate  
Emblems endure  
Eggnog encourages  
Eyelashes entertain

While she was singing Emily Elf situated an easy to move table near their chairs. It seemed easier to move one small table than two chairs. She skipped around the yard gathering up an armful of wildflowers which she popped into a watering can she spied next to the garden. “There we shall dine eloquently.”

Wellington reappeared carrying a tray laden with treats. Emily Elf stopped her singing and went to help with the door. Neither she nor Wellington wanted to hear it bang shut. Wellington sat the tray down on the little table. He began by setting each place with a cloth napkin and pretty colorful plate. Beside these he put a saucer and tea cup.

Emily Elf settled the plate of cheese next to the truffles. “Enough,” she drooled. She put the cracker bowl beside that.

Meanwhile Wellington poured the tea. “This smells divine.” He put the pot down and sat down. He put his napkin in his lap and took up his tea cup. “To Evensong and the lovely bearer of such a rare treat.”

Emily Elf lifted her cup. “To Wellington, my favorite rabbit in all the world.”

They both sipped the tea and sighed. “As good as it gets,” declared Wellington.

“Exactly,” agreed Emily Elf. She had slurped hers down in a very unladylike manner. She poured herself some more. She started to put the tea pot down. “Wellington,” she said in a slightly selfish voice. “Would you like a tiny bit more?”

Wellington smiled. “I very much would!” He was so enthused, he did not notice Emily Elf attempting to hoard the rest of the brew. “There is not much left in the packet. Can you obtain more?”

Emily Elf shook her head. “Not likely.” And then feeling bad about hoarding the tea she



added, “but it is good we are brewing this now while it is very fresh. As a rare tea gets older it loses its best flavors. That’s one thing that makes it so rare.”

“Then we should relish this all the more!”

“Brew the rest, Wellington.”

The rabbit needed no encouragement. He was off to the kitchen in a flash. He fairly flew back with the kettle and packet of tea leaves. He carefully put the leaves in the steeper and poured the hot water slowly over them. “I will always remember this scent,” he breathed deeply.

“Evermore,” agreed Emily Elf. They each had an equal amount of the heavenly tea until it was all gone. Every single drop.

“Emily Elf?” the rabbit put down his now empty cup.

“Yes, Wellington.”

“What did you want to see me about?”

“It’s about Black Veil, or Evil, or Vile whatever he is calling himself these days.”

“Wellington’s ears perked up, “Go on.”

“I have an evolutionary plan.”

“I’m all ears.”

“Yes, you are.”

“I’m ready to listen.”

“Oh. Okay. Here’s the way it goes.”



## Chapter 5

### Stephen Stork

Stephen Stork was behind as usual. The delivery business was booming and he simply could not keep up. It did not help that he stopped at practically every tavern along the way from one delivery to another. “Just for a quick nip,” he would tell himself. And true to his word he only had a quick nip but even those brief minutes tallied up and now he found himself late again.

“If I could only take the rails,” he lamented as he tried vainly to pick up his pace. He really did have a great pace. It could even be called an amazing pace. Stephen Stork was very big on working out. He ran every day that he could fit it in. But even his well trained body could not help him complete the deliveries on his full schedule today. He normally would fly, but the weight of his packages was right at the limit he could handle. And the heavier packages were last on the list to be delivered. Plus it was a windy day. Stephen Stork was a risk taker of sorts but he was not one to press his luck where safety was involved. He had been in enough micro-bursts to give them wide berth. So here he was on foot.

“R-ah-ails,” a little voice was dragging out the word rails from here to there and back.

“Rails. The word is rails. Like, well like rails.”

“R-ah-ails.”

“What are you? And more to the point where are you?” Stephen Stork could see no one around at all.

“R-ah-ails,” something tugged at his satchel.

Stephen looked down into the face of the sweetest little bunny he had ever seen. “Why hello there. Where did you come from? How old are you? Where is your family?”

The bunny looked back at Stephen with his big bunny eyes. “R-ah-ails.”

“Is that all you can say?”

“R-ah-ails.” The bunny blinked and pointed to the tracks that ran through a field nearby. “R-ah-ails.”

“Yes but I don’t have a pass and no way to get one.” Stephen Stork showed his empty pockets. He looked at his watch. He was so late. “Gotta go. Nice chatting with you.”

The bunny hopped in front of Stephen Stork. He was not much of a threat to stopping Stephen being so very small. But Stephen Stork found himself stopped anyway. “Wha..” he tried to move. He was stuck.

“R-ah-ails,” again the bunny pointed to the tracks.

“I told you. I don’t have a pass.” Stephen Stork was getting exasperated and later and later. “I really need to go. These deliveries must be taken care of today.” He tried once more to move. “Can you please stop doing that. You are not helping me at all Mr R-ah-ails.”

The bunny nodded. “R-ah-ails.”

Stephen Stork turned toward the rails. He found that he could move in that direction. He took two steps toward the rails and then tried to turn back to the lane. But the bunny was

pushing him from behind. "He's right powerful for such a small tyke," acknowledged Stephen Stork. "He must eat a lot."

With a lot of resisting and even more pushing they finally reached the rails. "R-ah-ails." The bunny looked up and down the track. "Tra-inn."

Stephen Stork looked. Sure enough a train was making its way down the rails. "I still don't have a pass." He wondered what trickery this bunny was up to. But if it got him on the train he didn't care.

The train was getting closer. It was moving pretty slowly but moving nevertheless. And then the tiny bunny did the most amazing thing. He jumped onto the rails and stood there akimbo.

Stephen Stork was more than distraught. Trickery or not. A bunny with no match for a train. "Get off the rails this instant."

"R-ah-ails," the bunny never budged. The engineer was blowing the whistle rather half heartedly it sounded like to Stephen Stork. "R-ah-ails." And then of course the most amazing thing happened. The train drew to a stop right in front of the bunny who looked at Stephen. Stork. "R-ah-ails."

Stephen Stork stared back and then indicated that maybe they should get on the train. After all he was not one to waste a good trick.

"R-ah-ails," the bunny grinned, waved to the engineer and taking hold of Stephen Stork's satchel led him to the conductor who had put down the steps and gotten off the train.

"Ah ha. Now the jigs up," laughed Stephen Stork. "Not a pass between us. We'll never get on this train."

But of course again he was wrong. The conductor ushered two on board as though not only did they have passes they had VIP passes. He showed them to the observation car and asked Stephen Stork if he needed anything. He curiously ignored the small bunny.

"I do need to make several unscheduled stops actually." Stephen Stork reasoned that he may as well play this for all it was worth, whatever this was.

The conductor looked at Stephen Stork's list of deliveries, "very good, sir. I will tell the engineer to give two short whistles as we approach your stops. And fear not the train will wait for your return."

"What if another train is due?"

"Not today sir. Your friend has seen to that," he indicated the bunny who was beginning to look a little peaked. Shall I bring your usual, sir?" the conductor directed this to the bunny.

The bunny smacked his lips and smiled.

"Very well. And your friend here as well?" The bunny clapped his paws together in glee.

Stephen Stork felt the train begin to move. He settled back. Maybe he would get his deliveries done on time after all.

"R-ah-ails," the bunny grinned.

"You are something else I'll say that for you," praised Stephen Stork. "I never would have thought you could stop a train much less get us on board. You must be a magician. I have a few magician friends but I've never seen them do anything like this. Aren't you afraid the dark forces will derail you?"

“R-ah-ails,” was all Stephen Stork could get out of his new friend.

Just then the observation car door opened and a parade of waiters began coming in with trays piled high with every food imaginable. Each put his tray down on the large table in the center of the room and retreated. Stephen Stork counted thirteen waiters in all. The food they left was beyond believable.

The bunny began to eat. And he ate. And he ate. And he ate. Stephen Stork had never seen anything like it. “Where is he putting it all?” he puzzled. Just then two whistle blasts indicated that his first stop was coming up. He grabbed up his satchel and told the bunny he would be back. The bunny did not even look up. He was still packing in the food!

Stop after stop Stephen Stork would exit the train to make his delivery. Upon his return he would discover that the bunny was still eating. “Does he ever stop?” Stephen Stork asked the kindly conductor.

“Never,” sighed the conductor.

“Does he live on the train?”

“Oh no. Fortunately for the kitchen staff. He only very rarely rides the rails. You must have made quite an impression on him. I’ve never known him to bring a friend on board.”

“Does he have a name?”

“We call him PJ because peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are his favorite food.”

“Does he have any family?”

“I really cannot say. He stops our train when it’s between passenger runs. As you know, we have no choice about that but really it’s no trouble except maybe for all the food he packs away. He’s very sweet and thoughtful. Not very talkative though.”

“R-ah-ails.” The two turned to look at the tiny mystery bunny and just then he burped an epically loud belch.

The conductor and Stephen Stork laughed.





## Chapter 6

### Bethleann, Georg, Sebastian & Edward

"This house is a wreck," wailed Bethelann.

Georg looked at her in bewilderment. "We have six kids," as if that explained everything.

"I know how many children we have. And I love every one of them to tomorrow and back but enough is enough," Bethleann was at the end of her rope. Georg could see that.

"How about if I take them down to the Pied Popper for some popcorn while you tidy up?"

"How about if I take them to the Pied Popper while you tidy up?" Bethelann countered.

Georg scowled, not a real scowl but a good fake one. Bethleann could never tell when he was faking and when he was not. She hedged her proposal. "Rock, paper, scissors you for it."

Georg knew this was not going to come out good for him Bethleann always won at rock, paper, scissors. Always. But he was a good sport. "Only if you close your eyes."

"Close my eyes? You'll cheat."

"I do not cheat."

"Sometimes you fudge."

"That's not cheating. And you know you always win. I don't stand a chance," Georg scowled. It was a real scowl this time. "Well, maybe a very slim chance. But my success rate in not to be envied by anyone." He had won once. That time Bethleann was about to deliver Sebastian and so she was not really on top of her game, but Georg counted it as a real win for his sad record.

"I won't close my eyes," Bethleann was determined. "You could just go ahead and say you'll tidy up."

"No I'll take my chances with the game. I might win. You count."

"One, two, three." Bethleann's showed paper.

Georg had chosen rock. "Best two out of three."

"Very well. You count this time."

Georg breathed deeply, "Big win, big win."

"Count for Pete's sake," Bethleann did need a break. She really was in a rather cantankerous mood.

"One, two, three." Georg chose rock again. Bethleann had switched to scissors.

"I won!" Georg was ecstatic.

"We have one more round."

"I know but I won a round. Hooray for me. Hurry up count," he was sure he would win the next round too.

"Very well, One two..."

"Mom!" Sebastian came running into the run. "Edward bite me." Georg rolled his eyes. This game was as good as over. Helping the cubs resolve a squabble was far more important than his self esteem boost over finally winning another game of rock, paper, scissors. He'd count this as half a win.

"I did not," Edward was close on his heels. "He called me Smokey."

"Slow down," said Georg to them both.

"Did you bite your brother?" Bethleann gave Sebastian 'the look' as she directed her question to Edward.

"I might have nibbled."

"Nibbled? You drew blood. Look there's fur in your teeth," Sebastian sniffed playing the martyr exceedingly well.

"That's spinach from breakfast. And I would never bite hard enough to taste your nasty old blood. Gross."

"Boys. Boys. Your mother and I were just talking about taking you to the Pied Popper for a snack, but I don't know. Sounds like you have too much going on here to have time for that."

"The Pied Popper!" both boys cried instantly forgetting their tiff.

"Can I get Confetti flavor?"

"I want Strawberry mixed with Cookies & Cream."

"First things first. Apologize to each other."

"Sorry I nibbled you, Sebastian."

"Sorry I called you names, Smokey, eh Edward. I think it would be cool to say that I got rescued in the nick of time from a big enormous forest fire."

Edward did not say anything. He was happy to be with his new family, but sometimes he missed the forest and his bear family. He was very glad Benji had rescued him because he knew he would have perished in the fire and so he did not dwell on that part of his life too much. He remembered the fun times he had with his brothers and sisters rolling and tumbling down hills and finding trees with honey hives in them. Suddenly he had an inspiration! He would show Sebastian how to find a honey hive. "Can we go to the Pied Popper later?" he asked. "I have something I want to show Sebastian."

Bethleann and Georg looked at each other. Skip the Pied Popper? Edward's plan must be really special. All of the kids loved to go to the Pied Popper. Lydia and Martin even had high hopes of working there. Thoughts of endless uniquely flavored popcorn tasting had them ignoring the fact that there would be actual work involved.

Georg saw no way out of cleaning now. As long as he got to hang the towels on the line to freshen. That was his favorite task. The rest were real chores. Changing sheets. Sweeping. Dusting. Washing dishes. And of course laundry. All tedious tasks that never ended in a big family.

"No fighting?" questioned Bethleann

"No fighting," promised Edward. "Right, Sebastian?"

"No fighting, unless he starts it," agreed Sebastian carefully. He had no idea what Edward was thinking. Maybe it was good. Maybe it was a trick.

"Come on, Sebastian," Edward grabbed Sebastian's arm. "Follow me."

"Where are you going?" asked Georg.

"Outside. To the wild warren over by Bertie's."

"That far?" questioned Bethleann.

"We're big enough now?" said Sebastian warming to the idea. Whatever it may be, a trek

with a purpose outside on a day light today could only be fun. And Edward was really good at thinking of adventuresome things to do.

Georg shook his head. How had it come to be so quickly that his cubs were this independent. "Sebastian's got a good point, Bethleann."

She looked at first one cub and then the other, "Are you sure you know the way?"

Edward shifted from one foot to the other. He did not want to confess that he had been to the wild warren already. Best leave sleeping bears be, a fine saying the woodland bears used for every tricky situation. It was another fond memory he had of his forest days.

"I heard Wellington say that it was easy to get there. Just remember to take the straight path at the fork even if the sign tells you differently." This much was true. Wellington talking about the delicious Burrbear honey was how Edward had stumbled onto his own private cache. Delicious honey was all the incentive he needed. He had scouted out the way and found it not daunting at all. Especially with honey as the reward. He knew how to scoop just enough honey from the hives without disturbing the bees. His Dad had taught him that trick when he was a tiny cub. "Sebastian and I are resourceful. And we will be very careful."

Bethleann could see that both the boys were eager to go on this adventure. "Very well," she gave each a hug. But be home before dark."





## Chapter 7

### Lydia & Martin

“Lydia what is going on?”

“What do you mean Martin?”

“I mean what is going on?”

“I know what you said, but what do you mean?”

“Everybody seems to be rushing here and there like, like, like they’re possessed or something.”

“Who is everybody? I don’t see anyone running around?” Lydia was busy building a world with twigs and pebbles and leaves. She hardly heard what Martin was saying.

“Lydia, listen to me,” Martin knew she was not paying the slightest attention to him, even if she did answer his question on cue. It was a sibling habit practiced and perfected over many years. He knew that was what she was doing because he was quite good at it himself. Maybe even better than Lydia.

“I’m listening.” She was not really.

Martin changed tactics. “What are you making?”

“Building.”

“What are you building?”

“None of your business.”

“What is this pile of pebbles for?” He touched the pile. Several pebbles fell off.

“Martin stop. You’re ruining my castle.”

“Your castle? It looks like pebbles to me.”

“That is because you have no imagination.” Lydia continued to create. She found some tiny flower buds on a branch nearby. She carefully plucked them off, not all of them, just a few. She put them next to the bottle cap she had found. It was her prize possession. It was the center of her masterpiece.

“It still looks like sticks and stone to me.”

“Well it’s not,” Lydia refused to get mad. “Well, it is but it’s not. It’s my special world. I call it Minecraft.”

“Minecraft? What kind of crazy name is that?”

“Mine. I find stuff and make new things using my finds. Very crafty of me, I’d say. And it’s all mine. So it’s Minecraft.” Lydia rolled her eyes at Martin’s lack of imagination. “What were you talking about anyway? Something going on?”

“Well, first I saw Precisely leaving Wellington’s in a big hurry. Then Sir Andrew Ant showed up. He never left. Then a bit later I saw the Ball hanging out in Wellington’s garden chatting with him. They stayed awhile and then rushed off all excited about a great idea and music. Then Emily Elf showed up. I think she’s still there too.”

“Are you spying on Wellington?”

“No.”

"Sounds like spying to me."

"Well, maybe."

"Why are you spying on Wellington?" Lydia arranged a leaf to be a canopy over her stick house.

"He's been acting very weird lately. Even for Wellington. So I think something is in the works."

"How so?"

"I think that Precisely is making her special treats. And the Ball is doing whatever it is they have cooked up but it does involve music. And finally, Sir Andrew Ant and Emily Elf visiting Wellington in the same day. And both of them are still there. Something is up."

"You actually do have a good imagination. I have never heard anything so ridiculous in my life."

"Suit yourself."

"And anyway what's it to us?"

"We might be left out."

"Hardly."

"You don't know that. Georg and Bethleann are so busy with the cubs we barely see Wellington anymore it seems."

"That is absurd. Georg and Wellington were in the dell just the other day making sure everything is on schedule for Easter deliveries. I even helped pack up wishflower seeds. Where were you anyway? You were supposed to help dye eggs."

"Ummm maybe I was busy."

"Doing what?"

"Nothing much," Mr E had given Martin a strange electronic box he had designed when he needed a break from trying to fix the time travel machine. He called it a Wee. It was very clever. It had a screen with moving figures and lots of challenges. It was very small and Martin was able to keep it hidden because, even though he was a very thoughtful rabbit, he really did not want to share this fabulous creation with anyone. Maybe one day. Probably one day. It would be fun to show it off and teach everyone how it works. But not today or any day soon. He played with it every chance he got. He did need to take it back to Mr E when it quit working. Mr E always knew how to fix it. He called it recharging the battery. "Nothing much."

"You should have helped with the eggs."

"I know. I'm sorry."

"Maybe we can help with the party."

"Why are you so sure there is a party?"

"I'm not sure but there might be."

"Where are you going with this?"

"I want to figure out a way to get Mr Marty and the girls from that future place and surprise Wellington."

"I take it all back. Your imagination is far better than mine. How exactly are we supposed to do this even if I agree to your plan which I don't."

"That's the part I need help with."

"A lot of help. You know Mr E has gotten no where with fixing the machine. But even if he had I'm not going anywhere near it ever again. One trip in that contraption was one time too many for me."

"No, not the time machine. I agree with you. That's out even if it was working."

"I'm listening." Lydia really was listening this time.

"I was hoping you had an idea. You really are the creative one. I guess it is just a silly notion," Martin shrugged his shoulders in defeat.

"No wait," Lydia could not stand to see her brother so dejected.

"You thought of something? I knew you could do it. What is it?"

"Hold on. I'm still thinking."

Martin held his breath. "Please think hard, Lydia. You are so good at ideas."

Lydia beamed. Martin's charm was hard to resist. And she was good at ideas. "What if..."

"Yes! I knew it. I knew you'd come up with a plan!"

"I don't know how much of a plan it is."

Martin was not to be dissuaded. "If you thought of it, it will be perfect."

"What if we get Kelly Marie, I mean Clara Leigh, to help us. You know using her mirror friends."

"That's your idea?"

"My best shot."

"Actually, I love it! You are a genius."

"I know that."



## Chapter 8

### Benji & Zach & PJ

Benji and Zach had left the house early that morning and were in the meadow helping each perfect the other's skill. Zach was a whiz at signaling. No one was better than he. And Benji was a warren champ at hop scotch thanks to Wellington and Mr Bunny's excellent coaching. He wanted Zach to win a trophy too. At the moment they were working on Zach's hop scotch technique.

"Come on, Zach, concentrate."

"I am. It's hard." Zach was much better with signaling than leaping his body from one specific place to another toward a designated mark. He was a good bunny hopper just not good at aiming for a target.

"But the championship event is coming up and with a little practice you have a good chance at the trophy."

Zach had to admit that winning a trophy would be fun. "Alright. I'll try harder." Just then he spied Edward and Sebastian jogging along the lane that ran alongside the meadow. "Look," he pointed to Benji.

"Wonder what they're up to," mused Benji.

"We could ask them," suggested Zach.

"Naw, they'll be out of sight before we can reach them."

"Too bad they don't read signaling. We could signal them."

"They're not even looking this way silly. They have to see the signals to read them, if they even could which we both know they can't."

Zach offered another idea, "We could follow them."

"Hmmm...that's a good thought. You game for it?"

"Yes!" Zach was relieved to get out of more practice. He did want to win a trophy but his legs were getting sore. The two bunnies scooted and scurried across the meadow until they reached the lane just in time to see Edward and Sebastian disappear over a rise.

"Hurry up," whispered Benji. "They're getting away."

Zach gathered his strength and bounced ahead of Benji, "Like this," he called back taunting Benji just a little.

"Quiet, they'll hear us." Benji rushed to catch up. They were at the bottom of the rise in a hop, skip and a jump. They tip toed to the top and cautiously peeked over. The bears were nowhere to be seen.

"Where did they go?" asked Zach.

"They weren't that far in front of us," mused Benji.

"Ah ha," a voice belonging to a bear cub bounced from the bushes.

"Caught you," another cub voice leapt from a different bush.

"Why are you following us?" asked Sebastian.

"Yeah, why are sneaking up on us like that?" demanded Edward. "You scared us at first."



We thought you were grown-ups.”

Benji and Zach both laughed. “Do we look like grown-ups?” chuckled Benji.

“No but you make enough noise to be one,” said Edward. I could hear you coming a mile away.” He had learned a lot about survival from his short life in the forest.

“I thought we were being very quiet,” pouted Zach.

“That is such an exaggeration, Edward. We were not a mile away ever,” Benji dared the cub to differ.

“It’s an expression, silly,” Edward was not to be challenged. Not when his forest skills were at stake. Listening for approaching predators was a must learn skill that every young critter took very seriously.

“Where are you going?” asked Zach. “Can we come with you?”

Edward took a deep breath. This excursion had taken on a whole new life. Three novices and two were rabbits, not good a honey gathering group at all. Besides he wasn’t quite ready to reveal his entire plan. Sebastian only knew that they were on an adventure, not what the adventure was about. “How about if we bring you a surprise instead?”

“A surprise? What kind of surprise?” Zach loved surprises.

“A very sweet one.”

“Come on, Zach, they don’t want us along,” Benji was ready to give up.

“Of course you can come along,” Sebastian looked at Edward. “Can’t they?”

Edward knew when he was defeated. “Follow me, boys,” he started up the next rise.

“You’re just saying that. You don’t really mean it,” Benji stood his ground.

“Of course I mean it but how about this,” Edward was suddenly struck with an inspiration. Maybe he could sooth Benji’s hurt feelings and still keep his secret a little longer. He whispered something in Benji’s ear.

Benji’s eyes got very big. “Oh,” was all he said. And then, “You know, Zach, that championship is coming up very quickly and I really think you can win. Let’s get back to practicing. Edward is right, the surprise is going to be a sweet one.” He turned to face Edward and with a wink said, “Beeee careful.”

The bears and rabbits parted ways waving happy goodbyes.

“What did Edward tell you?” asked Zach as they headed back down the little hill toward the meadow.

“It’s a surprise,” beamed Benji. He loved knowing secrets.

“But they’re gone now. Can’t you tell me?”

“Yes, but I’m not going to. It will ruin the surprise. Trust me, you did not want to go.” The thought of bee stings was more than Benji wanted to thing about. Bears might be used to getting a few invading a hive but he knew Zach would freak out as much as he would.

“Please.”

“Oh, alright,” it was hard to keep a secret for long. And besides honey might be a sweet treat but carrots were better. He knew Zach would agree. He divulged Edward’s plan to Zach.

“What! We almost walked into a bee hive?” Zach shuddered. “I’m glad we did not go.” He shuddered again. “We could go raid Mr MacGregor’s garden. His carrots are the best.”

“Better than Mr Bunny’s?”

“Maybe not better, but more fun to get,” Zach loved high adventure. High adventure of his kind anyway. He shuddered again at the thought of bee stings just for sweet honey. Bears were weird sometimes.

“We could also go home if you’re not going to practice the hops right,” Benji had noticed that Zach was getting a little sloppy toward the end of practice.

“My legs are tired,” Zach admitted.

“Then you should stop. Poor practice is junk practice. Rest is just as important.”

“Beat you home,” Zach’s legs suddenly took on new life and he took off.

“Wait for me,” called Benji. They arrived at the back door out of breath and ready for a cool drink of water. Benji began pumping water up from the well with the hand pump.

“Benji, Zach, is that you?” Georg called out. “Come inside after you’ve cleaned up. There’s someone I want you to meet.”

Benji and Zach looked at each other, dropped their drinking cups and raced through the doorway.

“Where are you?” called Benji.

“By the front door,” returned Georg. He was standing there chatting with Stephen Stork who had a small bunny by his side. The bunny looked just like them. Same wiry legs. Same extra long loopy ears. Same big bright eyes.

“Boys, I want you to meet your new brother. His name is PJ.”



## Chapter 9

### Marie Kelly & Clara Leigh

Marie Kelly and Clara Leigh were busy packing up Marie Kelly's things. She, they, were moving to Willis Warren. They were going to become part of Bethleann and Georg's clan. Lydia had made a good case for the move. She was the only girl child (Bethleann didn't count being a grown-up) in the entire family. And they all loved the girls so much. They were cheerful, a pleasure to have around and very hard workers. Bethleann would never have finished the christening gowns for the cubs without their help. They belonged in Willis Warren.

"What do you think?" Bethleann quizzed them the afternoon of the christening party.

"Please say yes," begged Lydia.

"Are you sure?" both girls talked in unison more than not, after all they were mirror images. People easily got used to it.

"We are, but are you?" pressed Bethleann.

"Yes, yes we are," neither girl needed to even consult the other on such a wonderful idea.

"Haley Willow will have no trouble finding a new roommate," declared Marie Kelly (sometimes only one of them talked.)

"Then it's settled," Bethleann beamed. She loved children and a few more girls around really would help even out the numbers.

"I didn't think that Haley Willow would be as upset as she is," sighed Marie Kelly.

"She can come visit you/us anytime," agreed Clara Leigh. "Besides she told me you were usually away most of the time off on adventures of one sort or another."

"Maybe she's going to miss my stories more than me," Marie Kelly laughed. "She always loves to hear about my adventures, especially the ones that involve disguises. Bet you did not recognize me in disguise," Marie Kelly posed the comment proudly. "I fooled you. Right?"

Of course I recognized you. I'm your mirror twin remember?"

Marie Kelly was crestfallen. "But I looked so different."

"You did. They were always really good disguises. I had to scramble to keep up. But that's my job, keeping up with you. I really wanted to know what you were doing, but of course I could not ask. But now I can. Tell me everything."

"Well, I am good friends with Velveteen and Golden, two very well traveled and wise rabbits. Golden's grandmother a few greats back used to deliver Easter cheer before the WEB was created."

"The WEB?"

"It's a long story. It how Easter love is spread now. Wellington is the current titled WEB, or Wellington Easter Bunny. I'll tell you the rest another time because it is a very long story."

"Alright, but what about Golden and Velveteen?"

"They asked me to look out for children that did not get Easter cheer. They know that Georg delivers wishflowers for these children to find but Golden and Velveteen want to leave nothing to chance. So I pop by in one or the other of my disguises when the children are

outdoors playing and join in. Then I make sure they find a wishflower. It's lots of fun. You can help now too."

"I'd love to!" Clara Leigh grinned.

"There, I think we're finished," declared Marie Kelly as she zipped the final bag. The two girls gathered up the baggage and started down the stairs.

"Glad you live light," kidded Clara Leigh. There was a backpack and suitcase apiece. And a trunk they toted between them. Downstairs, Marie Kelly found paper and pen and wrote a goodbye note to Haley Willow. "She must be at the nursery getting more exotic plants. She has the best green thumb of anyone."

"Look, she left something for you," pointed out Clara Leigh.

Marie Kelly saw a piece of paper with her name on it tucked under a small potted plant. "This little plant called a Loverly will remind you of the fun we had together. Come visit soon!" Marie Kelly breathed in the plant's exotic scent. "What a sweet gift. I didn't get anything for Haley Willow," she sighed.

"We'll come visit and bring something for Willis Warren. Maybe some of Georg's wishflowers seeds for her garden."

"That's a great idea! Let's do it soon," Marie Kelly tucked the plant carefully into her backpack and picked up her end of the trunk. Clara Leigh was already holding hers. With a lot of sweating and steaming the girls managed to get the lot of luggage to the train station just before the train arrived. They loaded everything on board and collapsed, happy they had time to recover before they arrived at Willis Warren.

"Maybe someone will meet us," hoped Marie Kelly. Her comment fell on deaf ears. Clara Leigh was out like a light. "Think I'll join you," Marie Kelly yawned to her sleeping friend. And she did.

"Willis Warren next stop," the conductor called out passing through their car. Both girls awoke with a start.

"That's us," yelled Clara Leigh. They gathered their things and headed for the exit. "Are you nervous Marie Kelly?"

"Sort of," Marie Kelly admitted. It was a big change. But considering all the recent changes Clara Leigh had gone through Marie Kelly decided that she should not be complaining. "Actually, I'm good. Our new life is going to be loads of fun." They scooted all of the luggage off of the train and breathed a big sigh.

"We made it," they sang together.

"That you did," said Lydia walking up to them with Martin right behind. "And are we glad to see you." She hugged them both. Martin waved a little wave.

"We are so glad to see you both," the girls spoke in perfect unison.

"Do you have to do that?" asked Martin.

"Do what?" they said.

"Speak together all the time."

"No," they said. "Not if it bothers you."

"We can talk separately," said Clara Leigh.

"See," said Marie Kelly.



“Thank goodness,” said Martin. “I like you both much better that way. Welcome to Willis Warren. Here I can take that trunk.” He hoisted it onto his head in perfect balance.

“Wow,” said the girls together. Martin lifted an eyebrow.

“Oh sorry,” said Kelly Marie. “Habit.”

“We’ll be more careful,” said Clara Leigh.

“Don’t let him bother you,” said Lydia.

“He has a point,” Marie Kelly cast a glance at Martin. He was very handsome she decided.

“Whatever,” said Lydia. “Listen, we have a plan and we need your help. Actually Clara Leigh’s help.”

“What is it?” asked Clara Leigh delighted to be needed.

Lydia told her the idea. Clara Leigh was a bit skeptical at first. But then when Marie Kelly told her that some big changes were coming because Golden and Velveteen eluded to as much. And that they involved Black Evil in a good way.

“Black Evil in a good way. Those two thoughts do not go together,” chuckled Martin. He was very glad that Marie Kelly validated his feelings that something was going to happen soon. And even gladder that it concerned Black Evil, in a good way.



## Chapter 10

### Lewis the Legendary

"There you have it. We're at the end."

"No we're not."

"Close."

Lewis the Legendary and Hilarey were extremely busy working on a very special project.

"Lewis!" Martin burst into the kitchen of the bakery.

"What?" Wizard Lewis continued his decorating not even looking up.

"Wellington needs you now!"

"I'm really busy. He'll just have to wait. Tell him that I'll be there as soon."

"We're bringing cake," said Hilarey as she too continued diligently working.

"But..."

"No buts now scoot before I put you to work." This time Wizard Lewis did look up.

Martin swiftly backed out of the doorway, not sure if Lewis the Legendary meant what he said about working or not.

"Wellington," gasped Martin out of breath, "Wizard Lewis said he'll come as soon as he can. And Hilarey said that they're bringing cake," he added.

"The cake's a lie," said Sir Andrew Ant.

"What?"

"The cake's a lie," Sir Andrew Ant affirmed. "Just saying."

"Nevermind about that," said Wellington. "We are in a minor crisis here."

"Minor?" Count Donald wailed. "My child is gone. You sent her into the, the whatever you call it...nether, wether, somewhere other than here world. When will she come back?"

"I thought it would work," Wellington looked small. Again his grand plan had taken a strange turn. He had hoped that Precisely would somehow be able to bring Uncle Wells here if only just for a short period. But so far nothing had happened.

"By sprinkling powder on her and whispering mumbo jumbo?"

"It was my very own fading dust. And I was simply asking Uncle Wells to accept Precisely into the WEB. Which apparently he did because she faded just like he did when he joined the WEB. She waved goodbye. Did you see her huge smile? She was going to be with Uncle Wells, or Wells as she calls him," The words finally stopped tumbling out of Wellington's mouth.

"I did," admitted Count Donald. "I did see her beautiful smile. And she did. She did wave. And she even blew me a kiss," he sat down. "I just didn't think she would be gone forever. She is gone forever. Isn't she?"

Wellington could not lie. "She might be. But it was the only thing I could think of to stop Black Evil. And she was willing to take the chance."

"Lewis the Legendary is your best chance," said Emily Elf. "I told you that. And so did Andrew Ant."

"Why do you think he can do what Uncle Wells and the WEB cannot."

"Because he is a powerful wizard," said Emily Elf.

"And he is in this dimension," added Sir Andrew Ant.

"And you can forget about the time travel machine," said Mr E walking through the back door. "I have tried everything. It's just not fixable," he looked miserable.

"Don't worry Mr E, Lewis the Legendary will save the day," said Emily Elf.

"If he ever gets here," groaned Wellington in a bad mood. "Easter is just around the corner. And Black Veil is getting stronger every year. We all know how bad the future is with his antics at work."

"Wizard Lewis said he's almost finished," said Stephen Stork strolling in munching on a pastry. "He mumbled something about needing a portal."

"A what?"

"I'm pretty sure he said portal. I thought you would know what he was talking about," he polished off the pastry. "Hilarey said to remind you that they're bringing cake."

"The cake's a lie," this time it was Emily Elf being certain there would be no cake this day.

"Nevermind," said Wellington, "What's a portal? I know nothing about it."

"Ask Sebastian," suggested Bethleann. She and Georg had just entered the cottage. "He's always talking about portals. He is here isn't he?"

"No," Wellington muttered, more and more certain he would never solve the problem.

"I'm here," said Sebastian with Edward right behind him. "And we brought wild warren honey. And I only got stung twice."

"Stung twice?" cringed Benji. Zach shuddered. PJ looked at the sack dripping with honey.

"Wow," said Martin. "I'm impressed and ready for some biscuits and honey. Let's get cooking." The entire gaggle of guys headed toward the kitchen. They all loved to bake.

"Stop!" shouted Wellington. "No one move. Now tell me about portals, Sebastian. Please."

"You need a gun," said Sebastian rapidly. He was hungry. Warm fresh biscuits with their hard harvested honey sounded mighty good.

"A what?"

"A gun."

"I don't have a gun. They're pretty dangerous."

"Not that kind of gun. A portal gun."

"Not so fast cub," Wellington grabbed Sebastian by the arm just as he was about to escape the room. "How do you know so much about this portal business?"

"A human kid dropped a portal gun. Well," he mumbled, "I guess we actually scared him into dropping it. But the things he could do with it looked really cool. We never could make it work like he did though. Guess it takes more magic than I thought."

"Where is this portal gun now?" Wellington interrupted Sebastian's memory.

"Right here," said a voice. Wellington whirled around letting go of Sebastian who made a bee line for the sanctity of the kitchen. "When I saw the boys playing with it, I knew things could easily get out of hand, so I confiscated it."

"Wizard Lewis, you're here finally." Wellington's relief was evident. "My boy, they tell me you have the answer to our problem." Wizard Lewis may be a revered wizard to most but Wellington had known him forever. He would always be a young whipper snapper to him.

“We’ll see,” said Wizard Lewis not willing to paint himself into a corner.

“What do I do?” asked Wellington.

“Not you,” said Lewis the Legendary. “Me.”

Wellington was unsure. “I always thought I needed to be the one to undo Black Veil.”

“You have set the stage,” said Wizard Lewis. “Trust me. And the WEB. Thanks to Precisely they are ready to help.”

“Precisely succeeded?”

“Yes, the WEB does get distracted. Precisely has pulled them back to task. You cannot just put a portal anywhere even with a portal gun. You need special spots. The WEB is ready to help with that.” Lewis the Legendary looked around the room and then aimed his portal gun at the corner of a nearby wall and pressed a button. A shimmering blue circle of light appeared. Without looking at anyone, Lewis dove into the light, his cape flying.

“Where did he go?” Wellington nervously nibbled a whisker. “Oh no, the circle disappeared! We’ve lost him.” Wellington sank down in defeat. “Whatever will we do?”

“He’ll be back,” said Sebastian confidently remembering how easily that kid bounced around. But the clock ticked on and no wizard appeared. Wellington was near tears.

Suddenly a voice boomed out. “Hold hands and paws everyone. Quickly. And now chant as loudly as you can. Black Live. Black Live. Black Live.” Too stunned to do anything but obey everyone in the room gathered close together grasped tightly to the one on either side and slowly at first, then more strongly, “Black Live. Black Live! BLACK LIVE!” Just as the last chant faded a shimmering orange circle appeared in the ceiling and Lewis the Legendary popped through dropping right into the middle of the circle.

“What did you do? Where did you go? Did you succeed?” Wellington demanded.

“First I went to the beginning.”

“The beginning ?” asked Wellington.

“The birth of a very black baby rabbit.” Lewis rubbed his whiskers. “He was the blackest rabbit anyone had ever seen and so they decided to name him Black Veil. But just as his parents spoke his name at the naming ceremony I switched the letters and out came the name Black Live. And he was so named.”

“Couldn’t he change his name?” piped up PJ who was hoping for a longer name one day.

“Being very mischievous he did exactly that. He tried Black Veil. Black Evil. Even Black Vile for a short while. But because I was able to change his birthing name nothing stuck for long. Still every time his name began to change back to good he weaseled out of it. So with the help of the WEB I created a portal to the last time you met.”

“And got us to chant his birthing name!” exclaimed Wellington. “Then what happened?”

“As you chanted Black Veil grew violent rushing about looking for the culprit. When he entered Peaceful Park, his Black Live self was beginning to emerge. In this vulnerable state, which only lasts a very short time, I was able to turn him to stone. He is now a new statue for the park you might say.”

Wellington got giddy. Everyone began to shout and cheer, “Well done!” And so it was that the story of how Lewis the Legendary saved Easter became known all over the world from here to there and back again.



## Epilogue

"Martin, look who's here," Lydia grabbed her brother by the arm and pulled him outside. There stood Marty and Terri and Sarah and Jenn.

"You did it! You actually did it," Martin was astounded.

"Clara Leigh and her mirror friends are not to be underestimated. Once they understood that it was a matter of life and death, they were in. They really do not go snatching people out of mirrors on a whim," Lydia said proudly.

"We got to them just in time too," said Clara Leigh "We could see that entire world changing just as my friends pulled the band through the mirror," Clara Leigh shivered at how close they had come to losing Marty and the girls altogether.

"We're here!" the Ball shouted just then as they arrived pushing an upright piano, "Get Sir Andrew."

"I'm right here," said Sir Andrew Ant striking up a tune before they could even stop maneuvering the beast. "This is so perfect. Thank you all. Thank you so much. I love it!"

"Come on girls let's add our two cents worth," Marty motioned to his singers as he pulled a penny whistle from his pocket. The trio started harmonizing on cue.

"Can I join you?" Count Donald asked Sir Andrew Ant, nudging him over without waiting for a reply. The blended into a keyboard duet like they had been practicing together forever.

"The celebration party is beginning to take great shape," Wellington said elatedly to Emily Elf who was setting out plates of food.

"But there's no cake," Benji wailed.

"Cake!" PJ's eyes got bigger than ever.

"The cake's a lie," said Zach sadly.

"Cake!" PJ pointed. His brothers and everyone else looked to where he pointed.

"Did I hear someone say cake," said Hilarey walking across the lawn bearing a big bakery box. Stephen Stork followed with mysterious food boxes of his own. "Sorry I'm late." Lewis the Legendary met her and together they revealed the contents of the box. The cake they had made just for this party. Everyone started clapping and lining up for a slice.

It was the merriest party any of them had ever been to. All the kids got to stay up far past their bed time and dinner, well dinner, was a mishmash of treats and delightful finger foods.

"Edward," said Mr E as the party began winding down. "Do you know that we have the same name?" Edward shook his head no. He was in awe of Mr E. Mr E could make anything. Edward could make a lot of things but Mr E could make more. "Would you like to be my official helper?" continued Mr E. "I could really use an assistant like you in my shop." Edward could only gulp and nod yes.

"Oh my," grinned Wellington eaves dropping just a bit. "This could be the start of something big."