

I Have a Word for You

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And Puppy Dog Tails



A week or so ago, I was gathering sweet slice cucumbers and golden cherry tomatoes from the garden, when I spotted a little brown rabbit along the hedgerow. Our eyes locked and he froze for a moment, but then he calmly resumed nibbling on the long grass. I whisper-called Trace and told her to get Anabel's quiet attention. A bunny sighting in this neighbourhood is hardly rare, but it's one thing to catch a glimpse of one bounding across the lawn as you drive in and quite another to watch one enjoying a nice, light snack a few feet away.

Anabel was awestruck as only a 22-month old girl can be at the spectacle of a plush toy come to life and wiggling its nose at her. She allowed Trace to hold her for a minute or two, then squirmed from her mother's arms and introduced herself to her new pet. Bunny scampered away, of course, and Anabel burst into tears, of course. "Gone?!" she wailed, checking and rechecking the thick (admittedly weedy) growth around the tomato plants. "Gone!? *Gone!?*" Poor Anabel. She was grief-stricken at the loss.

Poorer still was the baby bunny that ventured into our yard the following afternoon. We don't know for sure what happened to him—and we're not entirely unconvinced that Huddie wasn't involved—but this little guy lay quite dead on the patio stones in front of the BBQ. The girls all kept a squeamish distance, but the boys had a good look. In fact, Sam and Carter edged up repeatedly and then took turns fleeing the scene of fly-encrusted carnage, squealing the words "It's *aliivvvve*: I saw it move!" When Jeremy arrived on the scene, he decided that a proper burial, rather than an unseemly Glad bag send-off, was in order.

Now, I can remember burying the bodies of little sparrows that had broken their necks flying into our windows, of bidding teary farewells to round after round of gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, and budgies. Little girls would do this up right—a gravemarker would be fashioned; someone would say a few words; poetry might be read. But this isn't, apparently, how boys do animal death at all. When Jeremy came in to report that the grisly deed was done, I asked how Sam and Carter reacted. "Oh, they're fine," he answered. "In fact, they'd like to know if we can dig the bunny up in the spring and look at the skeleton."

The skeleton.

So sugar & spice laments losing the mere sight of her bunny friend, while snakes & snails remain happy in the knowledge that their bunny may be gone, but he certainly won't be forgotten.

Labels: [eyes of a child](#)