



Katherine Hannigan

Emmaline and the Bunny
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Dear Readers,

Because of the meadow and the woods behind my house (and because I don't spray the lawn, so there are dandelions and clover and other bunny-delicious treats), there are many bunnies here. And my cats like the bunnies a lot. I've been brought quite a few of them, alive, as presents. One bunny was given to me, however, in bad shape—it was missing a big patch of fur in front of its ear, and one of its back legs wasn't quite right. So it spent some time with me. I kept it quiet at night, and during the day I set it out in the grass and clover, safely away from cats, with water and a box for shade. But every hour or so, I would bring it into the house, put antibiotic ointment on its wound, hold it close to my belly, stroke its head, and tell it, "You are a marvelous bunny. I know you can get better. I know you can do this." Soon, it was hopping in small little circles, the injured leg staying in one place, the bunny going around and around. Actually, I was discouraged—I was afraid the leg was permanently damaged. Still, I told the bunny, "Look at you, you marvelous bunny, you're doing it, you're getting

better." Later, it hopped for me in larger circles, always coming back to me, looking at me till it heard, "Oh, you marvelous bunny, look what you can do." After a while, though, marvelous wasn't the right word. It was a *fantastic* bunny, an *amazing* bunny, a *stupendous* one. Finally, one day, the bunny looked up at me and I told it, "You know, bunny, I didn't used to think bunnies were so smart. But I was wrong. Now stay away from cats, and have a good life." Then the bunny hopped in its biggest circle, out, out, away from me and into some bushes. And I did not see it again. I wrote *Emmaline and the Bunny* in honor of that brave bunny, and for kids everywhere who long for an animal friend to love. Like Ida B. Applewood, Emmaline is a girl who lives by her own rules and who, during the course of this story, shares one of those great truths: that everything is precious, even a little bunny. Sincerely,
Katherine Hannigan