

TONIGHT'S STORY

For the night before a big new day



Lily and the Quiet Meadow



A bedtime story for Lily, age 4

Lily was four years old, and tomorrow she was starting somewhere brand new.

Her stuffed elephant Henry was sitting on her pillow, watching her brush her teeth. Lily looked at Henry and said, “I don’t know how to be brave.”

Henry didn’t say anything, because Henry was a stuffed elephant. But his ears looked very kind.

That night, Lily curled up under her purple blanket, and Henry curled up under her arm.

In her dream, Lily was walking through a meadow, and the grass was as soft as a brush. Tiny purple flowers bobbed by her ankles. She was looking for something — she didn’t know what — when she saw a bunny sitting on a stone.

The bunny had long, silly ears and a nose that wouldn’t stop wiggling.

“Hello,” said the bunny. “Are you lost?”

“I think so,” Lily said. “I’m not sure where I’m going.”



“Oh, that’s no problem at all,” the bunny said. “I’ll take you to the Quiet Meadow. It’s very nice. It’s where bunnies go on their first day.”

Lily took the bunny’s paw, which was warm and a little bit fluffy. They walked together down a tiny path lined with purple flowers.

When they came around a bend, Lily saw a hollow in the side of a hill. Inside the hollow, there were lots of bunnies. Some were small. Some were medium. They were all wearing tiny scarves.

“Welcome!” called one of the bunnies. “We’ve been waiting for you!”

“You have?” asked Lily.

“Of course,” said the bunny. “Everyone here is here for the first time. We didn’t know how to be brave either.”

Lily looked at all the bunnies. They didn’t look brave, exactly. They looked a little nervous, like she did. But they also looked happy.



“What do you do here?” Lily asked.

“Oh, lots of things,” said the bunny who had brought her. “We sing songs. We learn the names of leaves. We eat little carrot sandwiches. Sometimes someone cries, and that’s okay too. There’s always a soft place to sit.”

Lily thought about that. A soft place to sit.

“And then what?” she asked.

“Then your grown-up comes back,” said the bunny.

“Always. Every single time.”

Lily smiled.

She and the bunnies sat in a circle. They sang a song about clouds. Lily didn’t know the words, but she hummed along. One of the smallest bunnies leaned against her arm and yawned.

When it was time for the dream to end, the first bunny walked Lily back to the edge of the meadow.

“You’ll come back tomorrow?” Lily asked.



“You’ll come back tomorrow,” said the bunny. “And after that. And after that. And every day, you’ll know a little more of how it works.”

Lily nodded. She felt something small and warm in her chest — not bravery, exactly. Something gentler than that. The knowing that bunnies had done it before her.

In the morning, Lily woke up with Henry under her arm.

“Henry,” she whispered, “I think I might know how to do tomorrow.”

Henry’s ears looked very kind.



A question for after the story



*What's something Lily packed in her heart for
tomorrow? What might you pack in yours?*

(no right answer — just a soft thing to wonder about together)

