

The Rabbit Story: An Imaginary Tale

Part I: The Lady and the Rabbit

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In the early evening on a summer day, a lady sat on a bench reading a book. The bench was located in a grove of trees in a quiet place, mostly undisturbed by people and things. As she was reading, along came a cottontail rabbit, with soft colors of brown, tan, and white. Upon seeing the lady, the rabbit sat motionless, but fixed its gaze on the lady, not daring to move.

The lady also stared at the rabbit. Neither one WAS bold enough to say or do anything for what seemed like an eternity, but was really only minutes. The lady admired the softness of the rabbit, its colors, and watched its deep brown eyes. As she watched she thought that she saw the rabbit smile.

Sometimes our gaze can play tricks on us, and over time things move or change in ways that we are no longer sure of. "But this rabbit smiled," thought the lady, and she grew curious. Finally, unable to control herself, the lady asked, "Why are you smiling, rabbit?"

"We are both alike, you and I," answered the rabbit.

The lady was somewhat taken by the reply, but yet in this place and in this moment, she was not so surprised as curious. She replied, "How so?"

"We are both in between."

"What so you mean by in between?" said the lady, now smiling herself at this cottontail rabbit who dared to both smile and speak.

"We are in between shadows and light, day and night, awake and in dreams. We are in between someone and alone," said the rabbit. "Do you know what I mean?"

The lady's smile grew deeper and wiser. "You are quite right, rabbit. We are alike in sharing that feeling. But what does it mean to be in between?"

"To be in between is a place of possibilities," said the rabbit. "It is rooted in a past, but with a sense of the future. It is a place of choices yet to come. I can stay or I can run, I can go this way or that, I can be or do anything, but the decision is yet to come. I am in between."

A wise rabbit, thought the lady. She was impressed and taken by the rabbit. Perhaps it was the evening hour, the long day behind her, or the quiet of this place, but somehow the rabbit's words touched her deeply. "Should I fear being in between?" she asked.

"I do not fear it," said the rabbit. "But I have been trained to watch and listen, and to be ready to choose one way or another. For me, it is a place to wait."

"But I do not feel ready to choose," said the lady. I am enjoying this place, this moment, and this book!"

At this, the rabbit recited a poem, much to the lady's surprise.

*Tell me again,
of secret places,
in fields of snow,
past haunted faces,
of angry lovers,
who forgot lost traces
of treasured gifts,
and secret places.*

"The rabbit is a poet as well!" thought the lady. She was even more impressed. She kept a secret place as well and the words of the poem touched her deeply. She held that place dear to her, and worried at times whether she would lose it to bitterness, jealousy, or fear. And yet, the secret place warmed her heart and was precious to her.

Just then a stranger's footsteps could be heard as he started down the path toward the grove of trees. The lady turned to look, and with that the rabbit disappeared, no longer in between.

The stranger walked past and out of view, but the damage had been done. The rabbit was gone and the moment was lost. The lady knew the stranger and ever so slightly lifted her eyes to look at him, and then he was gone as well.

The lady still smiled at the chance encounter, and returned to her book. She thought of how precious was this secret place, how much she loved to escape in her book, the chance to think, the chance to dream somewhere in between, even if for a short while.

She wondered if the rabbit was really gone, or perhaps just hiding in the bushes, waiting for another time to return to her. She knew she would return again, that the path would lead her footsteps to this secret place. She hoped that the rabbit would come back and help her understand this place she had come to love so much.

At that thought a single tear welled up in the lady's eye. The tear began to roll down her face, somewhere in between her cheek and falling.