

## **"Burden of the Beast"**

Whoever thinks a bunny makes a good pet has never owned one. Bunnies suck. Actually, they don't suck. They bite. And bite hard. Twice I almost lost the tip of my finger to a retched rabbit. While bunnies look cute and cuddly, they're anything but.

Toward the end of my freshman year in college, my roommate, Shannon, returned from the mall with a surprise. And surprised I was. Out of a hole-laden box sprung a fluffy, white bunny with grey pointy ears and a pink scrunched-up nose. The dorm banned fish. Doubt bunnies were the exception. The bunny was my Easter present. I didn't want an Easter present. All I wanted was the semester to end.

The pet store had a No Return policy. Shannon called him Fluffy. I called him Beast. Shannon said that I was mean and was hurting his feelings. It wasn't his feelings I was trying to hurt. One night, when Shannon wasn't around, I invested a whole commercial break to bonding with that smelly sucker. I lured it out from under the bed with a half eaten box of purple Peeps and a dismantled coat hanger. I petted it. Brushed it. Even swaddled it in Shannon's angora sweater to help it overcome abandonment issues. Cuddling with Beast was about as enjoyable as hugging Satan. It hissed. It squirmed. It did nothing like that bunny does on those Cadbury commercials. All that love and what did I get in return? A half-severed finger, seventeen stitches, and an infirmary bill addressed to the folks. I don't know why Beast hated me. The flicking of its nose only started after the emergency room visit.

Regardless of what Shannon said, there was nothing endearing about that vampire varmint. Beast was a beast. A true devil in disguise. He destroyed everything in sight, and out of it. Our room reeked. I couldn't stand to breathe. I tried holding my breath but always forgot once I fell asleep. My morning breath tasted like bunny-butt. Its stench was suffocating. Shannon got used to the pet-store smell. I never did. Something had to be done. Since I was not about to touch the sucker, I needed a solution from afar. Lysol definitely kills germs, but after a few days of dousing that fur ball, I feared it

might kill bunnies too. And a dead bunny has got to smell worse than a live one, so I turned to Shannon for help. Well, actually, I just turned to her side of the room to see what I could find. Within the week, all of Shannon's Eau de Parfumes pretty much went Down de Toilette.

While the perfume might have been gone, Beast's scent was not. After very little thought, and a quick trip to Target, I was the proud owner of a semi-automatic, Snufalufagus-sized, Super-Soaker that took half an hour to fill up. "Bunny Hunt" was fun. And much cheaper than therapy. After a few rounds, Beast lost his appetite for phone cords and term papers. And I lost my sympathy for whimpering, wet, blood-sucking monsters. Shannon's stuff needed to be hosed down anyway. It had been a while since she did laundry. As good as it felt to drench that devil, it did start to poke at my conscious. After two sort-of sleepless naps, I had no choice but to turn to plan C.

Cat carriers aren't very big. I didn't want Beast moving much anyway. In the past, every hop produced a present. Who knew confined quarters could cure incontinence. The bunny bungalow came equipped with a wire door and a lock. Too bad it didn't come with a cat. Beast hated his new home. I hated my new pet. We were even. Since Beast could no longer destroy my things, he did his best to destroy my sanity. All night long Beast would bang his metal Mayonnaise-lid food bowl against the wire door. Bang-bang-bang. Gnaw-gnaw-gnaw. Over and over and over. Shannon thought it was cute. It wasn't cute. Neither was she. I couldn't study. I couldn't sleep. But I could yell. Boy could I yell. I started buying Chloraseptic spray by the case. My final fit must have resonated with that good-for-nothing, I-can't-believe-anyone-actually-calls-this-thing-a-pet, animal. After that, Beast barely moved. At first I thought he was dead. I wasn't so lucky.

Then one day it happened. Beast was gone. Poof. Into thin air. I wasn't surprised Beast disappeared. Bunnies have a reputation of doing that sort of thing. Shannon was convinced I got rid of it. Lord knows I wanted to. But I also wanted to go to heaven and God frowns upon anyone who breaks the

sixth commandment. On purpose, anyway. I remember one of our suitemates saying that her uncle had a farm. I don't know why Shannon cared so much about what happened to that anti-Christ. I know I didn't. Beast either became feed or freed that day. Either one was fine with me.