



# HARELINES



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## Bunnies and Me

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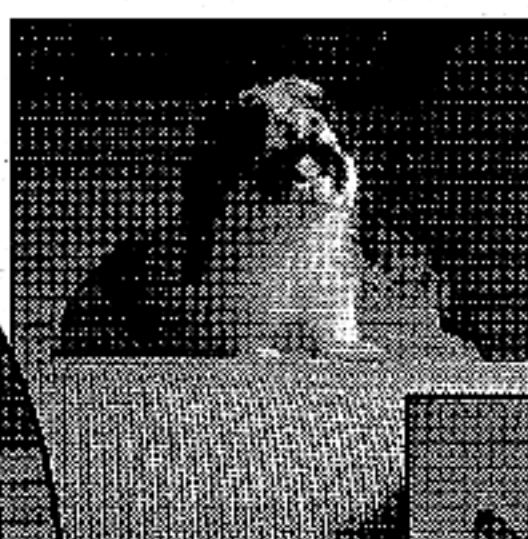
I can barely remember what I ate for lunch yesterday, yet I clearly remember my goal at age two-and-a-half when my grandparents took me to the zoo.

"Let's go pet the bunnies!  
Can we pet the bunnies now?  
When can we see the bunnies?"

"Don't you want to look at the elephants and tigers and monkeys?" my methodical grandmother would ask, and I would shrug and go look at the other animals first, because they were on the way to the petting zoo, and that's where the bunnies were.

I've always loved animals, and my family always had dogs who lived outside. I was always worried about them being cold in the snow, even though my parents assured me "they're wearing fur coats" and "they belong outside." I repeatedly asked my parents for hamsters, because some of my classmates had them and I thought they were really cool. Besides, they were "inside" animals.

"No, they smell like pee," was the stock response.



*From left: Heidi with her first bunny; Hektor; Piglet and Mona look to see what's up.*

Never, however, did it occur to me that bunnies could live inside.

Now that I'm an adult and I can do whatever I wish, I got two dwarf Siberian hamsters (Bubba and Speedy) to come live with me.

(OK, maybe mom was right, maybe they do smell like pee...) One day, while in the pet store buying more outrageously expensive accoutrements for my little guys, I walked past a glass enclosure with little teeny rabbits inside. There were only two, and the one little guy was white with a black mustache that looked like a bowtie and black ears (one stood straight up and the other pointed straight down like a little propeller).

I asked the sales person "could I please just hold that one?" pointing to my predestined entrance into

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bunnydom. I was just going to snuggle him and then put him back down and hustle on home. Yeah, right. He fit in the palm of my hand and crawled up under my chin, where he remained as I walked around the store pointing to things I would need to take him home, and the salesclerk was more than happy to gather them up for me. Now that I know about the plight of abandoned rabbits, I would never buy one from a pet store, but I didn't know that back then...

I had no idea what I was getting into. I thought rabbits were like hamsters - you just sort of put them in their hutch and fed them and pet them once in a while. Next thing I know, I'm reading books about bunnies, magazines and articles, internet blurbs - anything to find out more about my little guy.

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