

Tails

by Marc Lowe

I found a dead bunny one morning. This was about three weeks ago. Its tiny round pom-pom of a tail was missing. A trail of dried blood ran from its backside. It must have bled to death. Poor creature. Who could have done such a thing. Harmless little bunny. I searched for the tail. Looked in the grass, in the bushes, on the pavement. Couldn't find it. I thought people kept rabbits' feet as souvenirs. What would anyone want with the tail. Couldn't figure it out. A mystery. That was the first time. When I returned from work that evening I found a second dead bunny. Its tail, too, was missing. Who was taking bunny tails. That was the question. *The* question. And why. Was there or wasn't there a logical reason for it. And, if there was (a logical reason), what was it. I wanted to know. Perhaps bunny tails had medicinal properties. Or they made great Christmas tree decorations. Or they were fashionable to wear in the lapel of one's jacket. In any case, it was cruel. Poor bunnies. Bled to death. So much blood for such a tiny little hole. Wasn't that a song lyric from the 1990s. Hmm.

The following morning I found two more bunnies, and then five more after work. No tails anywhere in sight. I decided to report my findings to the landlord. Would he have seen them, too, I wondered. He greeted me coldly. When I told him about the rabbits he shrugged. Can't be helped. They're a problem. A problem, I said. Yes, a problem. I've run over them before. You've run over them before, I said. Yes. With my car. The front tire was a mess, he said. Took hours to get the fur off. A problem. I see, I said, not seeing. But shouldn't something be done. Can't be helped, he said. Damn rabbits. I was dismissed. I was distraught, dismayed. I would have to take things into my own hands. Find the culprit. Cut off his tail. Eye for an eye, says the Bible. I decided to hide in the bushes and spy. It was just as the sun was coming up, about 5:19:01 a.m. I wanted to see if anyone came. I was a private I. Me and myself and

the bunny-killer (and the bunnies, too). I waited and waited. But no one came. I stepped out from the bushes. Spotted a rabbit darting across the grass. I ran after it. What was I doing. Should I interrogate it, perhaps. It was too fast for me. It disappeared into a crack in the side of a porous rock. Damn, I said. How to catch a rabbit.

Just then I heard a noise. I turned around. The landlord was standing there, squinting at me. What are you doing, he said. They're a problem, I said. Yes, he said. A problem. Come with me. I followed him. He led me to the wooded part of the grounds. We came to a very tall, sickly looking tree beside a grassy knoll. At its base lay a pile of bloody rabbit tails in a wicker basket. Cute little furry white pom-poms (they were cute if one overlooked the blood). Found these this morning, he said. Know anything about it. No, I said. I only discovered the dead bunnies. Not their tails. A problem, you think. Well, do you. Yes, I said, not thinking. Know who's responsible. No, I said, I told you, I said. I said many things I don't remember now. The landlord gave me the basket. Do what you like with these. I don't care. Just get them out of my sight. OK, I said. I carried the basket back to my apartment. The lawn in front of it was now littered with dead, tailless rabbits. Who was responsible. And why. That was the question. Unfortunately, I couldn't answer it. A problem, I thought, carrying the basket upstairs. So many problems.

I was going to dump the tails in the trash straight away. But I couldn't bear to. There must be some reason someone was so eager to collect rabbit tails. Why, though, did said person leave the basket under the tree, instead of taking it with. I brought my nose close to the pom-pom-like tails. I sniffed. They smelled earthy. I rinsed them off in the sink. They quickly became soggy, so I towel-dried them as best I could. What to do next. I was hungry. I had never eaten rabbit before. It was supposed to be tasty, like chicken. I put some oil in a pan, dropped in three fur-balls. Deep-fried seemed

best. They were both crispy and chewy. In fact, they didn't taste half bad augmented with some salt and pepper. I made three more, ate them with ketchup and a salad. They were addictive. I wrapped six of the raw ones and put them in the freezer. The remaining ones I put on my windowsill to dry. I picked up a large knife from the kitchen. I was going to find the culprit, I decided. Once and for all. Eye for an eye. Justice would be served.

I espied a teenage boy outside my window. I decided that he was the one. He had to be. I could tell from the way he was standing. He was just waiting for the rabbits to come out so he could ambush them. Get their furry white pom-pom tails and fry them up. Who else could it be. I would teach him a lesson. I ran downstairs, but when I got to the ground floor the boy was gone. Rabbits darted hither and thither across the lawn. Did they sense what I had had for lunch, I wondered. Don't worry, I'm on your side, I said aloud. I gripped the knife in my hand. Suddenly, the landlord appeared. He saw the knife. He frowned. I saw the distraught look on his face, looking at me looking at the bunnies. It was him. I knew it at that very moment. Who else could it be. (The boy had fled, at any rate.) I plunged the knife into his belly with confidence. He fell over, dead as a dummy, his mouth forming a lopsided *O*. Problem solved. I felt good about myself. I was a regular Sherlock Holmes. A regular Lönnrot. I wiped the blood from the knife with my shirt and smiled. I welcomed the sounds of the police sirens. I had avenged the helpless bunnies. I had become a friend to animal rights activists the world over. Only problem is that I still crave fried bunny tails from time to time. Can't be helped. The food they serve here is awful. But that's no way to end the narrative. Is it.

