

Coloring fun from the
House Rabbit Society

Kids-n-Bunnies



Illustrations by B.J. Seelig

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Dedication

Once upon a time, there were storybook bunnies named Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail, Peter Rabbit and Bugs Bunny. All these rabbits were loved by children and made children want to share their homes with a pet bunny.

This book is dedicated to all loving children who want their bunnies to be happy and healthy. Enjoy this book and learn what to expect from bunny behavior, what they should eat, the toys they like and other things that will make living with a bunny in your house happy for you, for your parents and for the rabbit.

Long may you and your bunny hop and play together!

Where to Adopt Your Rabbit

There are many bunnies at the animal shelters and Humane Societies waiting to be adopted into loving homes. The House Rabbit Society also has rabbits waiting for indoor homes.

These are good places to look for a pet. When you adopt a rabbit from a shelter, Humane Society or the House Rabbit Society you are saving the life of an animal someone else couldn't keep.

There are shy bunnies and active ones; big rabbits and small ones; some with ears that stick up and some with ears that hang down. There are white, brown, gray and even red-haired bunnies; some have spots, some don't.

The House Rabbit Society also teaches people how to take very good care of their pet rabbits. For example, the Society wrote this book for children and their families.



Where to Adopt Your Rabbit

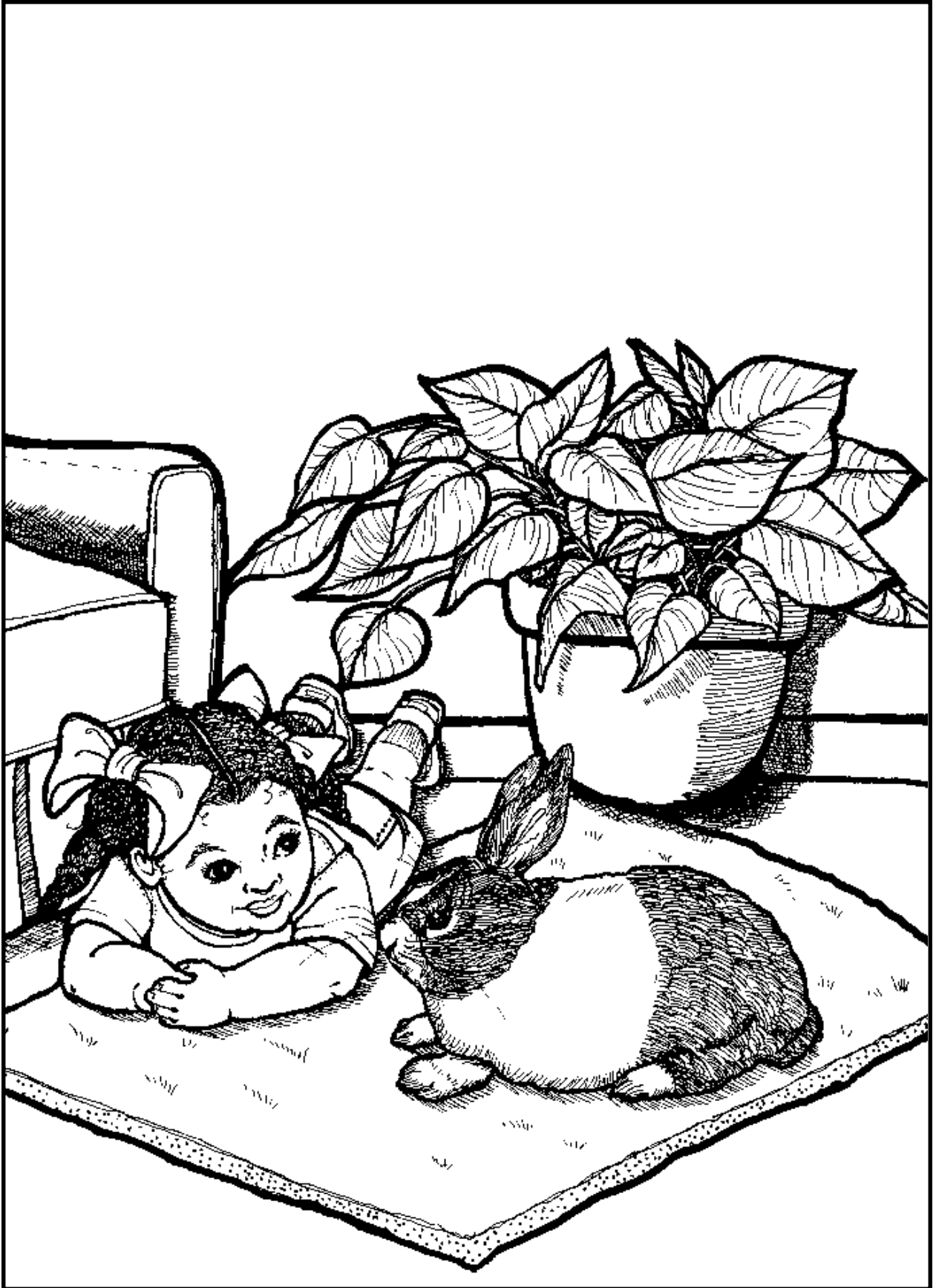
Taking Bunny Home

When Bunny first comes home with you, give her a day or two in a nice, safe cage to rest and get used to her new home.

Then open the cage door and let her explore one room at a time. She also needs time to learn where her food and litter box are. An older rabbit (age one year or more) will learn faster than a young bunny.

Bunny will be more active in the morning and the evening. The rest of the time she will probably want to sleep. This is the way bunnies are.

When bunnies are awake, they like to chew, play, eat and get petted. Some bunnies like to dig in their litter boxes. You can make a bunny play tunnel out of a cardboard box with a hole cut in each end.



Taking Bunny Home

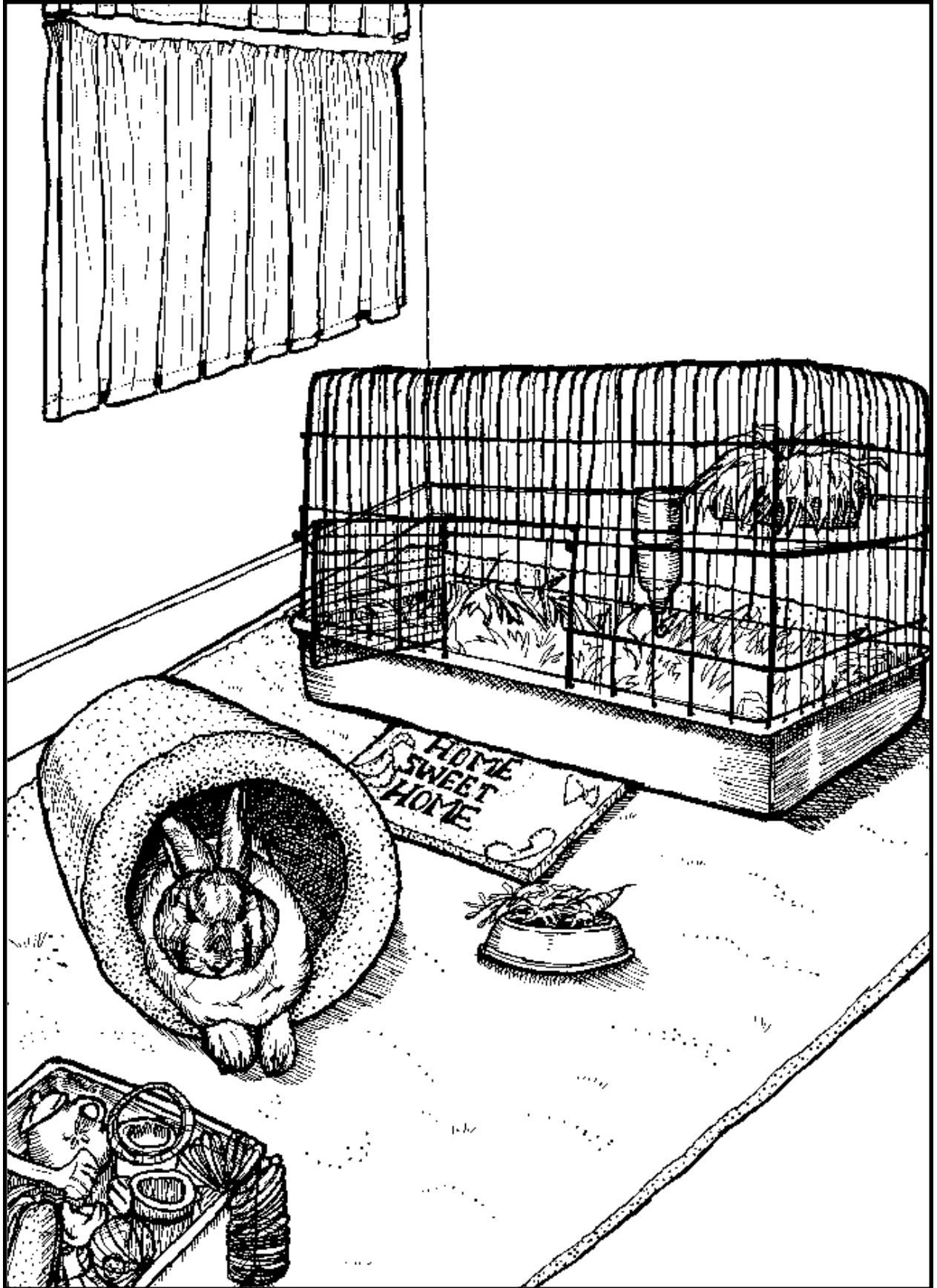
Home Sweet Home

Bunnies like their cages very much and feel safe when they are there. It is like being in a rabbit hole, all snug and safe from animals that might want to hurt them. Keeping Bunny in his cage when you are not there to play with him makes sure that he will not chew the furniture or carpet while you are away.

Some things bunnies like in their cages are:

- A cozy piece of fleece fabric, fake fur or carpet
- A large bowl of fresh, clean water
- A litter box with hay and litter in it
- Toys

Keep Bunny cool on hot days. If the temperature is over 85 degrees, your bunny needs you to turn on the air conditioner or electric fan. A plastic soda bottle filled with water and frozen is nice and cool for Bunny to lie against. Ceramic tiles are cool places to sit.



Home Sweet Home

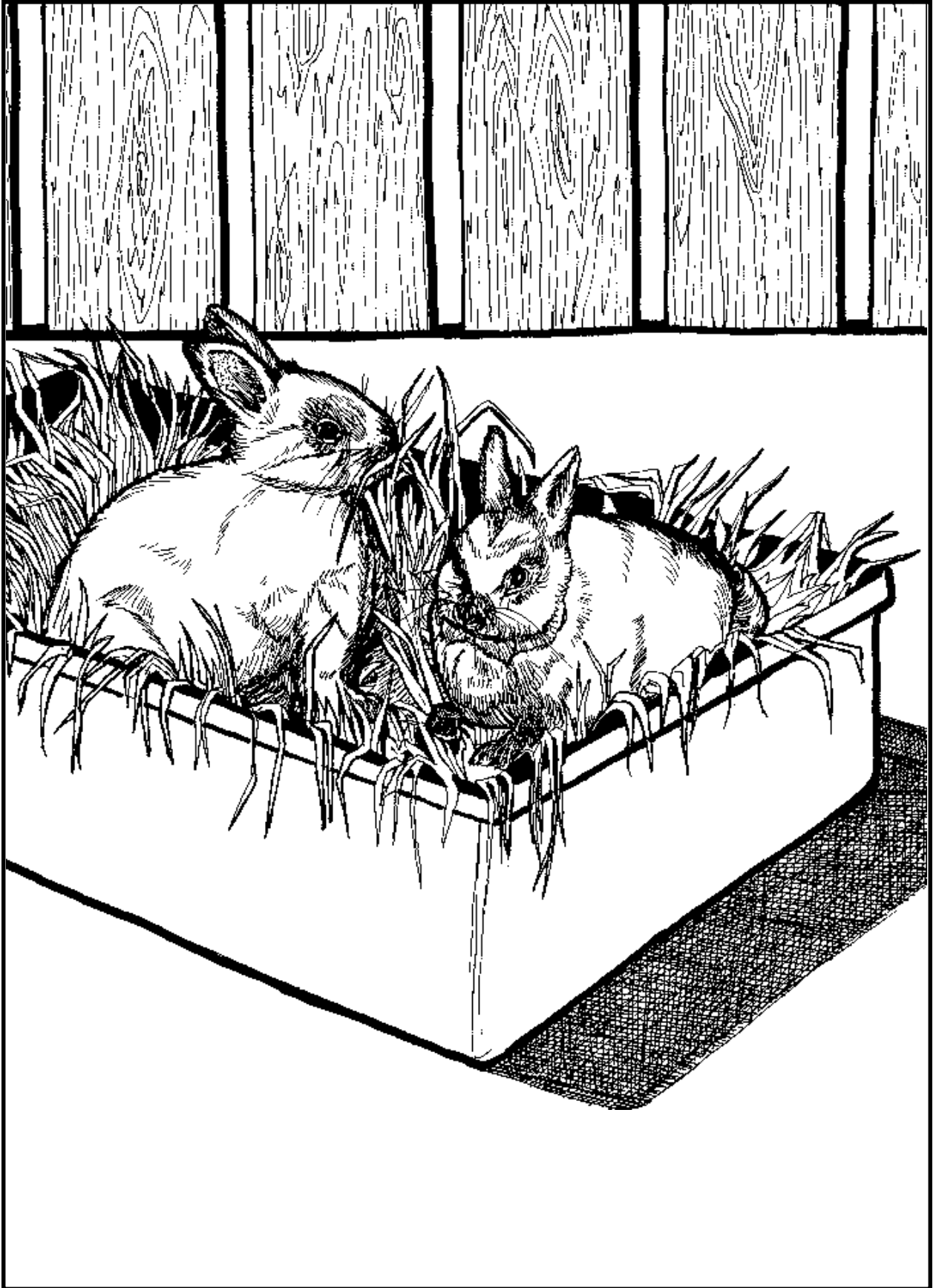
The Litter Box

House rabbits are very clean and can be taught to use a litter box as a bathroom. You want to train them to urinate (pee) in the box.

In a small space like his cage or the kitchen or bathroom, see where Bunny likes to go to the bathroom. Put a litter box there. A little hay in the box encourages bunny to spend time there. Be sure to praise "Good Bunny" when you see him using the box.

Most of your rabbit's droppings will also end up in the litter box or in the bottom of the cage. But even grown-up rabbits sometimes leave poops when they are running and hopping and playing. This is natural; Bunny cannot help this, so don't scold him.

Litters that are good for bunnies and for our environment are made of recycled paper or paper by-products. Look for these litters at your supermarket or pet store. If you do not find a recycled paper litter, you can ask the store to order it. Used hay and paper litter can be put into a compost pile to make fertilizer for your garden.



The Litter Box

What's for Dinner?

Pet rabbits can be very healthy eating only hay and vegetables—and sometimes a little fruit as a special treat. Too much fruit can make Bunny sick.

So can the fancy rabbit food with dried fruit and nuts mixed in with pellets. This is like serving dessert first at every meal—Bunny will eat the sweets and be too full for healthful food. Some rabbit pellets are okay for young, growing bunnies or very large rabbits, but most do not need them.

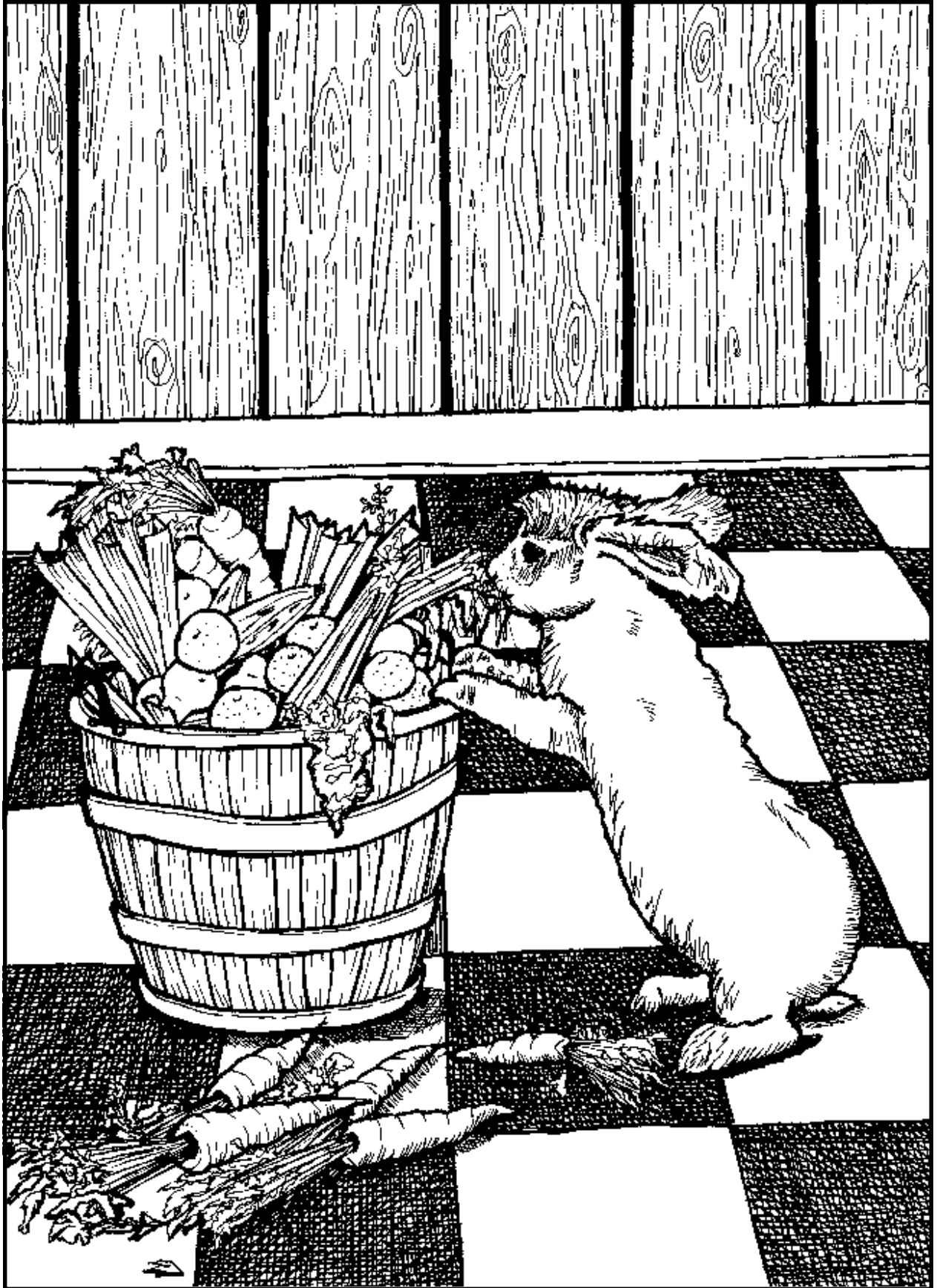
Feed your bunny all the hay she can eat, and one cup of vegetables for every 5 pounds she weighs. (How many cups of vegetables would you feed a 10-pound rabbit?)

These are good vegetables for your bunny:

Carrots and carrot tops; spinach and kale; broccoli and cauliflower; parsley and cilantro; dark green lettuces.

Like people, not all bunnies like all these, so try one at a time.

Never share candy with your bunny or feed her cereal, cookies, crackers, yogurt drops, ice cream or chocolate. These can make Bunny VERY sick.



What's for Dinner?

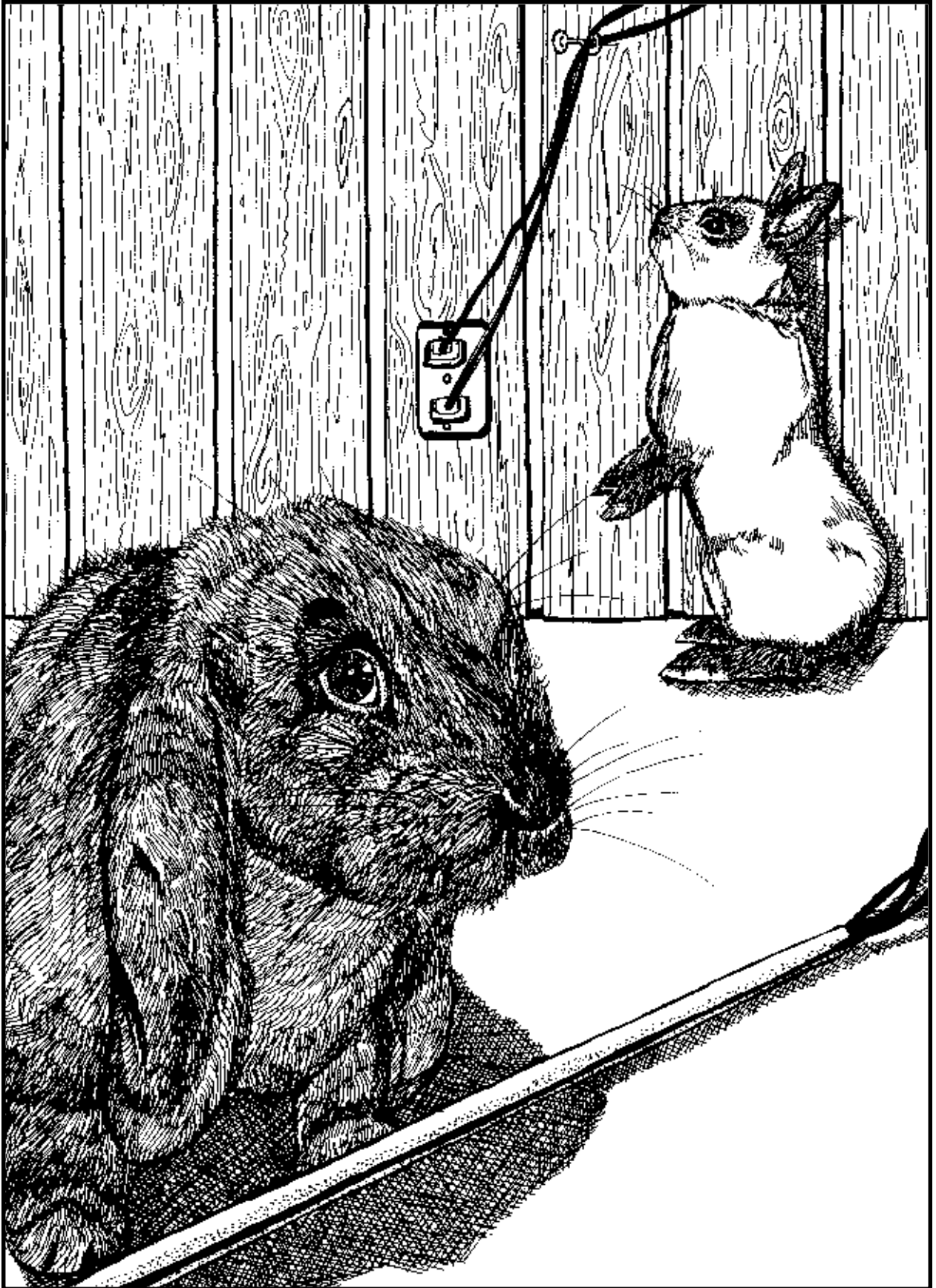
Protecting Home and Bunny

Bunnies need our help to stay safe in our houses. Hide electrical cords and wires behind furniture or inside plastic tubes so Bunny cannot chew them.

Bunnies need toys to play with, too. Otherwise, they may get bored and chew furniture or dig into the carpet, pretending they are making a burrow!

If your bunny likes to dig, give him a safe place to play. Fill a plastic litter box or cardboard box with torn newspaper. Or give him a paper grocery bag to hide in and scratch and chew on.

Fun and safe chewing toys are plain wicker baskets, cardboard boxes, old phone books, empty toilet paper rolls and pine cones.



Protecting Home and Bunny

Cleaning House

Cleaning up after Bunny makes her happier about her home, and less likely to have a bathroom accident. It also shows your parents that you are growing up and can take on responsibility for an animal.

- Provide clean, fresh hay and litter daily. You can put the used hay and biodegradable litter in a compost heap to later enrich your garden.
- Once a week wash the litter box with white vinegar and water. This makes the box smell clean, so bunny will keep using it!
- Once a week, wash Bunny's dishes and replace the newspaper in the tray under her cage floor.
- Use a broom and dustpan to sweep up stray poops, bits of hay and pieces of litter.
- Keep a spray bottle of white vinegar handy to clean up any urine accidents.

Now that's not so much work, and it makes Bunny's cage look and smell so much nicer!



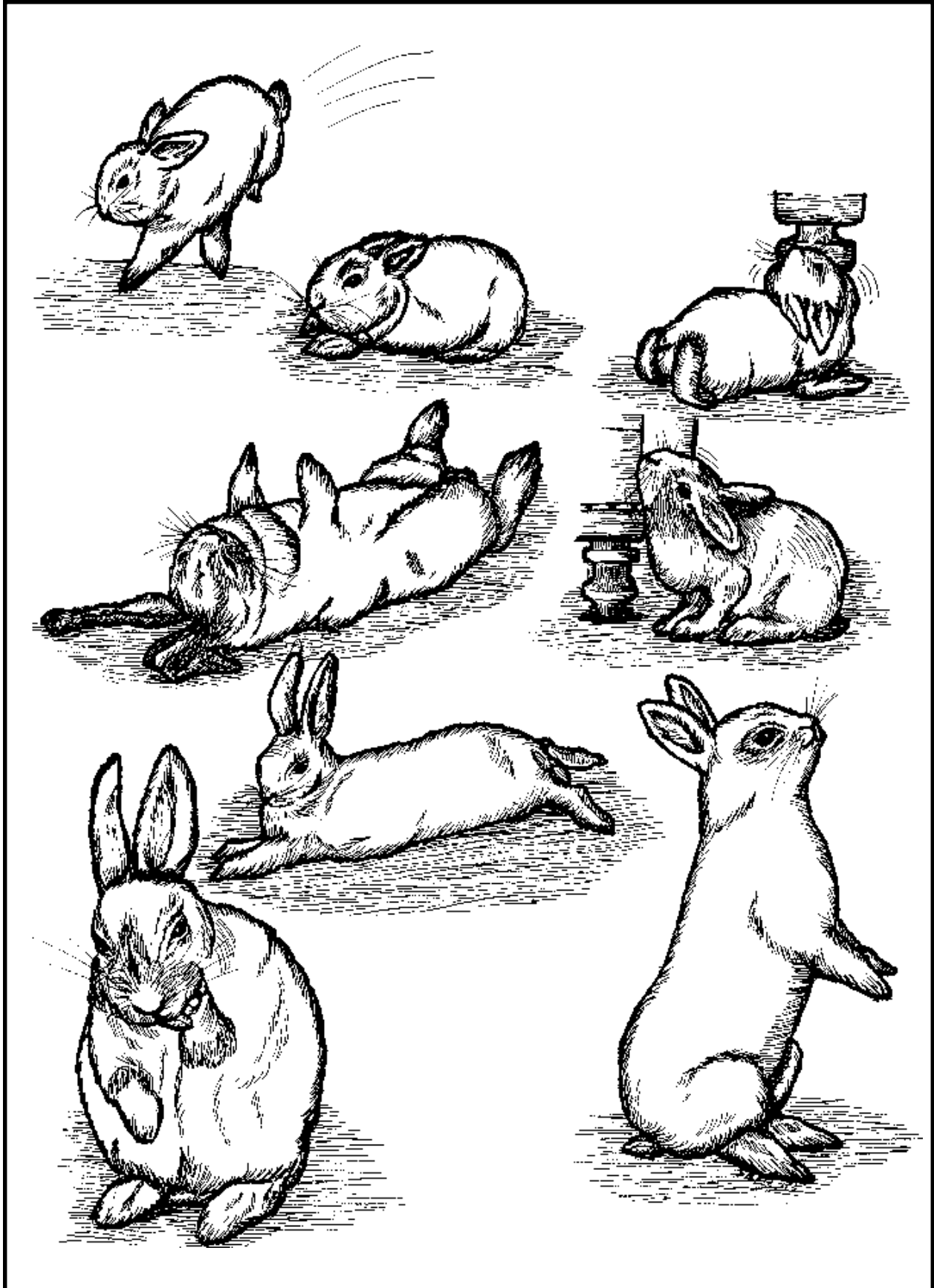
Cleaning House

Understanding Bunny

Bunnies see the world in a different way from dogs and cats. Even before they were people's pets, dogs and cats were hunters. But rabbits were the *hunted* animals. Nature has taught rabbits that loud noises, sudden movements and big things overhead can be signs of a mountain lion, a wolf or an owl trying to eat them, so they are naturally afraid. This is why your bunny may "thump" or run away if you come up fast from behind, or are big and tall over him.

Bunnies have their own special way of telling you what they are thinking.

- Stretching out on the floor—"I'm soooo relaxed."
- Growling—"Leave me alone!"
- Dancing—"I'm having fun!"
- Whiskers and teeth vibrating (usually when being petted)—"I like that."
- Slow, loud teeth crunching and hunched body—"I don't feel very good. Take me to the doctor."
- Nudging—"Pay Attention!"
- Oinking—"I love you. Give me a treat!"
- Stamping and nasal whine—"I don't want to!"
- Thumping only—"I hear/see/smell something funny."
- Licking—"I love you. You're my best friend."



Understanding Bunny

Bunny Companions

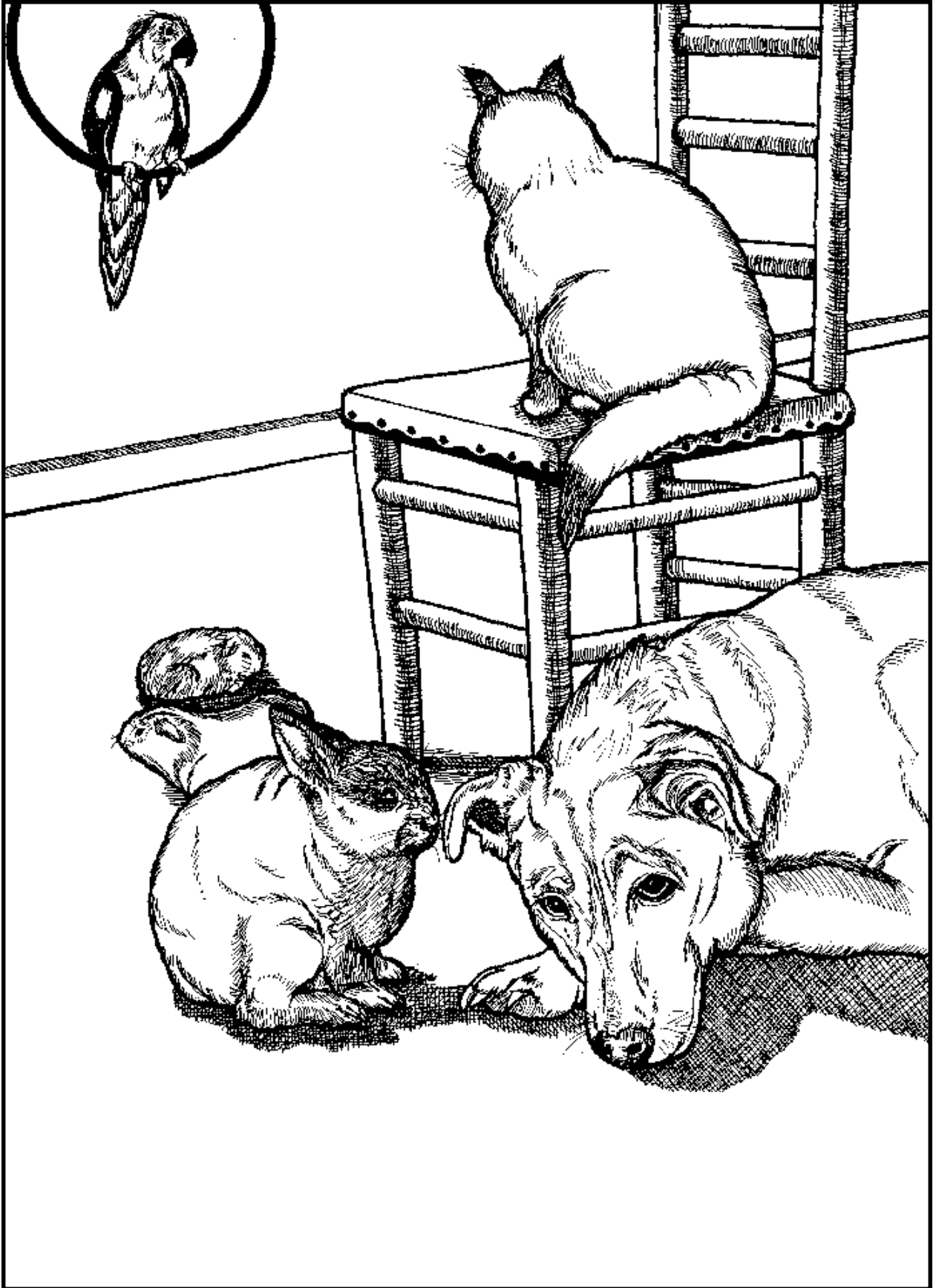
Most bunnies get along well with other animals, even dogs and cats.

Watch the animals carefully in the beginning to make sure they don't play too rough, or get scared and bite or claw each other.

Some dogs, cats, birds and guinea pigs become best friends with rabbits.

Rabbits especially like to have another rabbit to live with. Bunnies are used to living in large family groups; they like to have company. Bonded pairs of rabbits lick each other, and lie side by side, and play and go everywhere together—you can really tell they love each other.

Let your rabbit choose her new friend at one of the House Rabbit Society adoption days.



Bunny Companions

In Sickness and in Health

Bunnies need regular visits to the doctor, just like you do. A bunny's doctor is called a veterinarian. When Bunny goes to the veterinarian, he will have his heart, lungs, eyes, ears and nose checked.

Give your bunny a treat when he has to go to the veterinarian. It makes him happier about going there, just like it makes you happier when your doctor gives you a lollipop. But don't give Bunny sweets. A sprig of parsley or carrot top is a nice treat.

Bunnies do not like to show that they are sick. So, it is very important to take your bunny to the veterinarian right away when you notice something is wrong. Your veterinarian can help Bunny to get well.



In Sickness and in Health

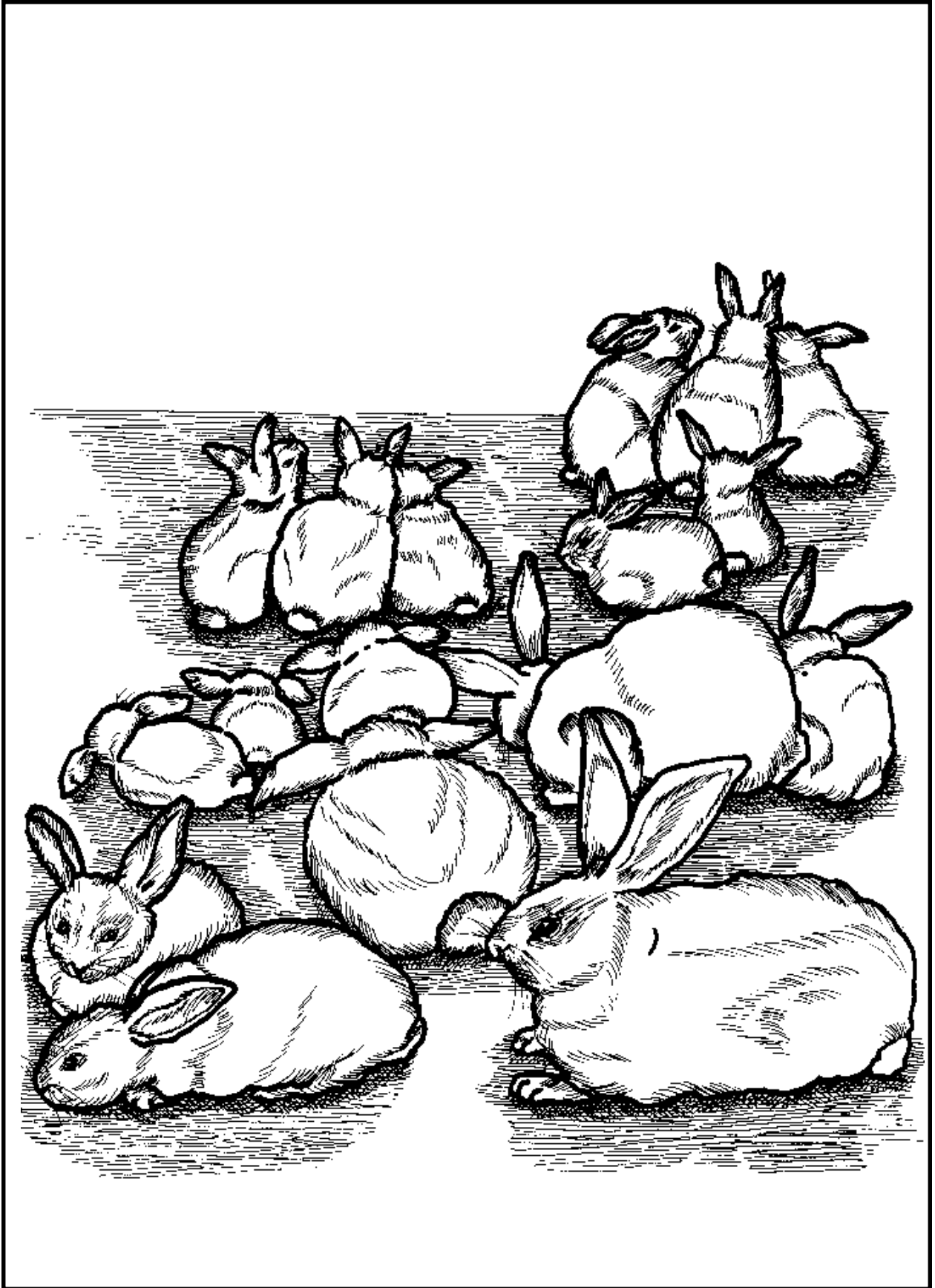
Family Matters

Some people let their bunnies have lots of babies. When that happens, there are more bunnies than there are good homes for them. You can help. Have your girl bunny "spayed" and your boy bunny "neutered" by a veterinarian. This makes sure that your bunnies cannot have babies.

It also helps them behave better indoors, use their litter box and be a good companion.

Lady bunnies have a much better chance of living a long, healthy life if they are spayed.

Bunnies can be spayed and neutered when they are as young as 4-6 months old.



Family Matters

Quiet Time

Bunnies love to spend quiet time stretched out on the floor next to you. Because people are so much bigger than bunnies, we can be scary if we stand tall over them. When we get down on the floor, though, Bunny feels safer and more curious about us.

The best way to get to know a shy bunny is to spend lots of time lying on the floor near his cage. You can read or color in this book. Just let him get comfortable with you nearby. The longer you do this, the braver Bunny will get, until one day he will finally let you gently pat his head...then scratch his nose and cheeks.

Think how nice it is to have a warm, furry special friend like a bunny.



Quiet Time

The End

If you want to know more about living with a house rabbit, have your parents call the House Rabbit Society at 619-718-7777.



The End