

Baby Burrow

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This is a cute little story based off an amazing short that came out from a certain animation company that begins with a P. I absolutely loved that short and so wanted more of that story. And then my creative mind kicked in and said "But what if... diapers?" I hope you enjoy the resulting wholesome tale of community, caring, and crinkles.

Our story begins with a young rabbit holding a hammer in a field. A rabbit who had just finished putting the final touches on his new home with the help of his neighbors. It was a momentous occasion moving into his own burrow, and the project had really come together thanks to a whole network of critters who made up his underground community, especially the mole and field mouse who had first greeted him as he began digging his new home. He had been nervous and shy at first, but the neighbors were there to help.

"Stronger together!" they had exclaimed as they set to work. Soon what had been a humble one-room plan now branched out into multiple rooms including a bathroom/disco, a bedroom, and a nursery.

"Why do you need a nursery? Are you planning on starting a family soon?" the field mouse had asked, once they finally got a look at the reluctant rabbit's plans.

"Yeah, something like that," the rabbit had said, not wanting to give the real reason for his interest in the infantile room.

Now it was all done, and the rabbit's friendly neighbors were putting away the last of his items. Excitement and the smell of Mrs. Hedgehog's' fresh-baked cookies were in the air because it was nearly time for the burrow warming to begin.

"I don't know why I was so nervous," said the rabbit, coming back down into his burrow after fixing the always-askew mailbox one last time. "They didn't make fun of my crude diagram or my ideas of what I wanted. Not even the disco ball. They've even been kind enough to help me unpack my..." The rabbit's thoughts trailed off when he walked into his bedroom where the mouse and the mole were. When he saw the mouse unzipping his backpack to put away the last of his things, his heart skipped a beat. "Hey! D-don't open that!"

"No worries, it's not a problem... Lemme just..." the mouse's eyes went wide as he realized what he had pulled from the rabbit's bag. It was a diaper. A diaper too big for a baby. The mouse and the mole blinked a couple of times, too stunned to react.

The rabbit's face went crimson. He quickly dashed forward and grabbed the diaper and the backpack. "Th-that's really not necessary," he said, stuffing the diaper inside and zipping up the backpack. He scooted off to the nursery and closed the door before they could respond. He would say they were for a baby if they asked. Maybe they would drop it. "Yeah, that's what I'll tell them," he said, as he stashed the diapers in his backpack on the shelf under the changing table.

"Tell us what?" asked the mole, who had tunneled in and was now right behind the rabbit. The rabbit jumped and hit his head on the ceiling.

"Guh! Owwwwwww.... darn my legs..."

"Careful, bud," said the field mouse, coming in through the new hole the mole had made. "We didn't build the ceiling in this room too high. If you want your rooms taller, it's gonna take another few hours.

"N-no thanks," said the rabbit, not sure whether to be more embarrassed about what his neighbors had seen or how he'd just knocked himself flat on his butt.

"What's a matter? You look like you seen a ghost," said the mole, bending down to help the rabbit to his feet.

"Nah, he's just a jumpy little critter," said the field mouse with a little grin. "I think he must just like to hide things."

"You should talk, small fry," said the rabbit, dusting himself off. "And thanks for the hand," he said addressing the mole as he tried to recover from his adrenaline rush.

"Small?! I never talked about your size," said the mouse, crossing his arms and turning his head, but he looked back at the rabbit with a smile and one eye open to let him know he wasn't really mad.

"Okay, okay," said the rabbit. "I am a bit jumpy... and I guess I'm a bit secretive too. I'm just embarrassed is all. You all are so knowledgeable and experienced. You have so many talents, and I'm just a dumb ol' bunny."

"Hey now," said the field mouse, giving the rabbit a pat on the back. "Don't think of it like that. We're all helping each other. Stronger together, right?" he said, turning to the mole for confirmation.

"That's right," said the mole. "Stronger together!"

Thanks guys, said the rabbit, "but can we move it to the living room?"

"Hold up," said the mole, grabbing the rabbit's wrist as he made for the door.

The rabbit felt the tug and stopped, his heart thundering in his chest once more. Were they going to say something about the diapers? Did they know? Did they not like him now? Was he too weird? Would they talk about him behind his...

"You've got a little schmutz on your..."

The rabbit crossed his eyes to see what the mole was reaching at, but the mole stepped forward and his paws went right past the rabbit's little nose to come around his back and envelop him in a big hug. The field mouse soon joined in.

"What was that for?" the rabbit asked, as the two of them let go with a final comforting squeeze.

"You looked like you needed it," said the mole. And to the rabbit's surprise, he was right. He *had* needed that hug.

The three of them went back to the living room to find it occupied by the great mass of creatures who had pitched in to help. From badgers to wood-mice, animals occupied every piece of furniture, doorway, and nearly every room of the rabbit's humble home save the nursery and bedroom. Momma Mouse was running around frantically trying to gather up all the squealing younglings from underfoot, and she was quite thankful to be pointed to the nursery, which was just past the rabbit's bedroom.

"Announcement, announcement," said the rabbit, doing his best to get everyone's attention, but no one seemed to hear him above the excited chattering of their neighbors.

The large badger, who was standing nearby, saw what was happening and let out his famous roar, which effectively caught the attention of everyone in the burrow. The bunny nearly hit his head on the ceiling again at the unexpected outburst but was fortunately held back by the mole. All eyes were now on the badger as critters from all the other rooms peeped their heads in to see what was up.

"Proceed," said the badger, leading all eyes to rest on the rabbit with a sweep of his paw. It seemed like the whole neighborhood was watching.

"Uh... th-thank you," said the rabbit, his heart still hammering in his chest from the sudden scare. He took a deep breath and thought of his friends. Then, he spoke. "I just wanted to say thank you, everyone. You made my dreams come true. And... well, I'd like to invite all of you to pitch in one more time to help me celebrate this new chapter of my life."

"Hear, hear!" said the badger. "You heard the rabbit! Let's all make this the best burrow warming yet!"

The animals were quite animated by this speech and clamored to contribute in whatever way they could.

"I'll bring cookies," said Mr. Hedgehog.

"We've got a boom box," said the neighbor mole's fitness fanatic boyfriend.

"We've got plenty of nuts to share," said the chipmunks, who lived two burrows down.

"And I've got towels," said the bath-loving lizard, who stood there in nothing but a towel.

"Eh... I think we can skip the towels for now," said the rabbit with an awkward smile, "but thank you. Thank you, everyone, for your generosity!"

Before long, the party was underway, and every room of the house was once more taken up by animals chatting, snacking, and having a good time.

"Hey, what's with the nursery?" asked the mole's boyfriend.

"Hush," said the mole, cuffing his nosy boyfriend on the back of his head while the rabbit's face went bright red.

"What did I do?" asked the fitness-loving mole, rubbing his sweatband.

"Heyyy! Look what I found," said the lizard, sauntering into the room in nothing but a diaper. "This is much better than a towel!"

"H-hey! Take that off!" said the rabbit, who was about ready to have a heart attack as he saw his deepest secret paraded around in front of everyone.

"Those look great! Where'd you get those?" asked Mr. Hedgehog.

"Oh, I just found 'em in the nursery," the lizard said, holding up a couple more. "I don't know where they came from, you'll have to ask *him*." The lizard pointed a finger squarely at the bunny. Everyone's gaze turned to the rabbit, who went wide-eyed, as he was suddenly the center of attention.

"Eh, uh... hehe, I dunno. The store? Th-they're not for me!" he added quickly, waving his paws in denial. He looked around for some escape route, but there was none. He was stuck here while his neighbors judged him. The stress was beginning to make him feel light headed.

“Hey, you okay?” Asked the field mouse, grabbing a paper bag he had thoughtfully stashed by the couch in case the bunny had another of his rather frequent panic attacks. “Here, breathe into this.”

The mole rubbed the rabbit’s back as he sat down on the floor and breathed into the bag. “You’re ok, buddy. Just breathe.”

The music stopped and animals gathered around with concerned faces, but that just made the bunny more nervous.

“I think I know what’s going on here,” said Mr. Badger, stepping in. “Everybody back away, give the little guy some space.” He got down to the rabbit’s level and put a paw on his shoulder.

“I want you to tell the truth. You don’t have to say anything. Just nod for yes and shake your head for no.”

The rabbit looked up to the badger with wide, fearful eyes as he blew a final few breaths into the bag. Then, he slowly lowered the bag, gulped, and nodded.

“Are these for you?”

The rabbit nodded.

“Do you have a medical issue we should be concerned about?”

The rabbit shook his head.

“So, you just wear them because you like them? For comfort?”

The rabbit nodded yes to both questions.

The badger looked around to the neighbors and nodded, like he knew exactly what was going on.

“Tell me, little bunny. Does this help calm you down?” Asked the badger as he held up one of the diapers.

The bunny squeezed his eyes shut and nodded vigorously.

“Would a diaper help right now?”

The bunny’s eyes shot open at the unexpected query. For several breaths, he didn’t move, but the badger was patient. Eventually, the bunny gave the most imperceptible of nods.

“Okay then,” said the badger, grabbing the rabbit by one paw and holding a diaper in the other. “As you were, everyone. Everything’s fine. I’m just going to help the bunny calm down. Be right back.” His authoritative tone reassured everyone but also let them know that it was not an invitation for an audience.

“So, who wants cookies?” asked Mrs. Hedgehog, breaking the silence. Everyone resumed their merrymaking, and the mole’s boyfriend started his workout mix back up on the boombox. Meanwhile, Mr. Badger slipped out of the room with the rabbit in tow. Mr. Badger nodded to the mole and field mouse to join him and the three of them made their way to the nursery.

A couple of the moms were already there watching all the neighbors’ children. There was certainly enough room for it since the nursery was especially large. That was not unusual for a rabbit warren.

“Excuse me, coming through,” said the Badger, walking up to the big changing table and lifting the rabbit to set him gently on the soft padding.

“What... what are you-”

“I think you know very well what I’m doing,” said Mr. Badger, flapping the diaper open, and fluffing it. “And I think it’s exactly what you need, don’t you, little bunny?”

The rabbit covered his face and nodded, blushing brightly under his fur. Soon, Mr. Badger was grabbing the rabbit’s ankles and lifting his tush up in the air to set it on the fresh fluffy undergarment

“You two better pay attention,” said the badger. “I’m not coming up here every time the baby bunny needs a change.

“Ch-change?” squeaked the rabbit. “I don’t actually *use* them...”

“I never said you had to use them,” said the badger in an even tone. “But you better believe you’re taking a trip right back here next time your little bunny heart starts pounding. If this is how you relax, then this is what we’ll do. It’s for your health, you understand. Everyone deserves to feel safe and comfortable in their own burrow, Isn’t that right, boys?”

The field mouse and the mole looked to each other, then back to the badger and nodded, wide eyed. Admittedly they had never changed a diaper themselves. That was usually their mom’s job.

“Well, come on,” said the Badger. “You can’t see what’s happening from there.”

The bunny covered his face with his paws as he lay there on the diaper, his two closest friends and neighbors pressing up against the changing table.

“Here,” said momma mouse, handing the badger a mouse plush. “These tend to help keep the little ones distracted while you take care of ‘em.”

The badger nodded and handed the plush over to the bunny, who immediately squeezed it tight and closed his eyes. He used the plush as a shield between himself and the three furs as he tried to imagine he really was a baby bunny and not an embarrassed, supposedly independent young rabbit. And so he didn’t see his friends’ fascinated stares as Badger diapered him up. He only felt the cool powder, and then the comforting bulk of the diaper as it enclosed him, crinkling all the while.

“And that’s all there is to it,” said the badger, sitting the rabbit up and giving him a pat on the back of his diaper. “How do you feel?”

The bunny looked down between his legs to squeeze them against the fluffy padding, looked back at his poofy butt to wiggle his tail with a *crink* *crink* *crink*. “I... I feel *good*,” he said, giving a shy little smile as he looked back at his companions.

“Good. Then you can keep it on for the rest of the party,” said the badger. “And don’t even think about arguing with me. You deserve to be healthy and happy, got it?”

“Y-you don’t think they’ll make fun of me?” asked the bunny, with worry on his face.

“Not a chance,” said the badger, making a fist. “Not on my watch.”

“No fighting,” said Momma mouse. “You’ll set a bad example for the little ones. Speaking of little ones, this nursery would make a wonderful daycare for all the pups, kits, and hatchies... would you think of sharing this wonderful space, bunny?”

The bunny nodded reluctantly. “Yeah... It’s kind of a private thing for me but... I suppose I can share.” He felt guilty saying no right off the bat, but he was still getting used to the idea of other people even knowing about his biggest secret, much less being in his space for what had always been a solitary indulgence. “I might just think about it a bit.”

Mr. Badger picked up the bunny on one arm and carried him out of the nursery, patting his butt and praising him for being such a good little bunny. Soon, the four of them appeared in the living room once more, the bunny clinging to Mr. Badger and hiding his face in his shoulder. The badger set the understandably nervous bunny down and patted his butt. “There we are. Much better. Now go play, little bunny friend.”

“Hey, broski!” said the lizard, who was still in a diaper. “We’re twins! How about that? These diapers are great!”

The bunny looked up from his fidgeting paws as he heard murmurs of agreement around the room and saw that many of the other animals were diapered as well. His jaw dropped. He was speechless for a minute, then he began to tear up.

“Th-thank you!” said the bunny, and he hugged the bigger lizard around the waist.

“Was it something I said?” asked the lizard, shrugging. But of course, he understood what the rabbit meant. He patted the bunny’s back and stroked his fur.

“To our new neighbor. Happy burrow warming!” There was applause and cheers from all his neighbors.

“And guess what?” added the field mouse. “He’s agreed to let us use the nursery as our daycare!” This drew an excited response as the moms and dads were only too happy for the respite daycare offered. The bunny stood up a little straighter after that, feeling a little proud that he could help out after everything everyone had done for him.

“So,” said the field mouse turning back to the bunny and taking his paws. “No more secrets, okay? We help each other, and that means being open and honest with each other. Stronger together, right everyone?”

“Stronger together,” the other animals called in response to hearing their favorite motto.

The bunny nodded meekly. “I understand. No more secrets.”

After that day, the bunny no longer hid his drawing skills or his diapers from the rest of the burrow denizens. In fact, it made such a difference in his anxiety, his neighbors took turns making sure he was diapered all the time. Like Mr. Badger said, it took a village to raise a pup, and luckily, this one had a daycare that was just perfect for him.