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Opening extract from

The Great Rabbit Rescue

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Chapter 1

A Real Rescue

This is a story about Joe-down-the-road, and why he went away, and how he got rescued. Most stories I've read about people getting rescued aren't *Real-Life* Stories. They're Fairy Stories, about Sleeping Beauty, and Rapunzel, and people like that. And they probably aren't true because, in Real Life, people don't prick their fingers on spindles very much and fall asleep for a hundred years. And if they did, they probably wouldn't wake up just because someone gave them a kiss on the cheek, like Sleeping Beauty did. Even if the person who kissed them was a Prince.

Because in Real Life, when people are really *deep* asleep, especially if they've been asleep for a hundred years or something, you normally have to shake them, and shout, "WAKE UP!" in their ear, and hit them on the head with the xylophone sticks. Otherwise they don't wake up at all. My Dad doesn't anyway. And nor does my little brother, Tom. He falls asleep on the floor, and he doesn't wake up when Mum carries him upstairs and puts him in his pyjamas and stands him up at the toilet. Not even once when he weed on his feet. Tom is five. He's four years younger than me. I'm nine. My name is Anna.

Also, in Real Life, people don't let down their hair from towers for other people to climb up and rescue them and things, like happens in *Rapunzel*. Because you can't really climb up *hair* very well, especially not if it's still growing on someone else's head. You can't climb up Emma

Hendry's hair anyway because Graham Roberts once tried to, in PE, when Emma was up the wall bars. And Emma fell off, and Mrs Peters wasn't pleased. And neither was Emma. She was winded. Emma's got the longest hair in school. She can sit on it if she wants to. It's never been cut, ever. Mrs Peters sent a note home to Emma's Mum because Emma's hair kept getting caught in doors, and drawers, and things like that, and she said, "Emma Hendry, that hair is a Death Trap!"

Which is true. Especially with Graham Roberts around. So now Emma's hair gets tied up, and on PE days it has to go under a net.

Anyway, this story isn't a Made-Up Story, or a Fairy Story like *Sleeping Beauty* or *Rapunzel* or anything like that. It's a Real Rescue Story. And that means that everything in it Actually Happened. I know it did because I was there. And so was my little brother, Tom. And so was my friend Suzanne Barry, who lives next door.

This is what it says in my dictionary about what a rescue is:

rescue

to help someone or something out of a dangerous, harmful or unpleasant situation

And this is what it says in my friend Suzanne's dictionary about what a rescue is:

rescue

to free or deliver from confinement or peril.

Mum said that me and Suzanne and Tom were wrong about Joe-down-the-road and that he was never even *in* any danger, or peril, or anything like that.

She said, "Anna, Joe-down-the-road has gone to live with his Dad because he *wants* to. He definitely does *not* need to be rescued!"

But mums don't always know everything about who needs rescuing. Because once, when I was in Big Trouble for falling through the shed roof in the back lane by mistake, I decided that I didn't like living at our house anymore, and I told Mum, "I wish I lived with Mrs Rotherham up the road!"

And Mum said, "So do I!"

So I packed my bag, and I went off up the road.

When I got to Mrs Rotherham's house, I decided I didn't *really* want to live there. But I had to by then, because that's what I'd said. So I went in. And I sat in the window by myself and stared out and didn't speak all day. And, after ages, there was a knock on the door. It was Tom, in his Batman pyjamas, and his Bob the Builder hard hat.

And Mrs Rotherham said, "Hello, Tom, are you all on your own?"

And Tom said, "I am Batman and Bob the Builder. I want Anna to come home."

So I did. And that was a rescue really. What Tom did. Because even though I like Mrs Rotherham a lot, I didn't *really* want to live with her. Because I'd rather live in my own house, with Tom. And Mum and Dad. And Andy and Joanne (that's my other brother and my sister. They aren't in this story because they're older than me and Tom and they don't really care about rescues). Anyway, if Tom *hadn't* rescued me, I would probably still be living with Mrs Rotherham now. So I'm glad that he did. Because for one thing, Mrs Rotherham's house is at the wrong end of the road. And for another thing, it smells a bit funny, of old things, and mothballs, like Nanna's house used to. And for an even other thing, if I lived with Mrs Rotherham I wouldn't live next door to Suzanne anymore. Not unless I made the whole Barry family move up the road too.