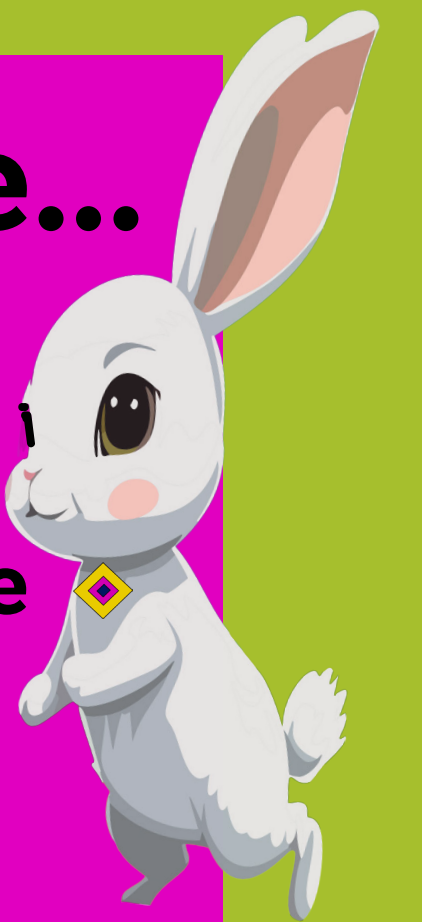




**To Be or Not To Be...
a bunny.**

**(Adapted from a fairy tale
by Brother's Grimm)**



Once upon a time, there was a little, white bunny named Jewel. She loved to hop and play with her friends and her stepbrother, Hopper.

She was a very special bunny with a very special gift from her parents that only her stepparents and Hopper knew about.

One day, when she was playing with her friends, something happened that completely changed her young life.



They were all hopping around the big tree, when suddenly, a giant eagle swept down from the sky, screeching, with its beak wide open. All the bunnies scattered and hopped away as fast as their little feet would hop, but Jewel was snatched up by the eagle and swept away. “HELP! HELP!” she screeched, soaring over the tree. “My tail! My tail’s gonna...!” Suddenly the fluff on Jewel’s tail that the eagle was holding came out, and she went tumbling... free-falling down to the ground. “HELP!” she screeched again.

Luckily, she tumbled into a tree limb and held on for dear life, covering her eyes with her



Jewel, finally, looked up to see Hopper, coming out of the bushes. “Jewel!” he yelled, hopping up to the tree. “Are you alright?”

“I... I think so,” Jewel quivered. “I’m... I’m stuck up here.”

“You want me to go get your necklace?”

“I... I don’t know. Last time, I...” she nearly whispered. “Besides, how would you get it up here?”

“Ruff!” Arf, the dog, came walking toward them.

“Yipe!” Hopper jumped three feet in the air, and then, darted for the bushes.





“Hi, my name’s, Arf,” he said. “How’d you get way up there?” Arf asked, pulling a old, tin tub over to the tree. “This tree isn’t very tall. With a little boost, I think I can reach you.”

“Should you do that?” Jewel asked, unsure if she should be rescued by a dog.

“Sure. Before my Dad died, he was going to teach me to catch rabbits. He’d be proud to know that I learned on my own,” he said, pulling her down from the tree and setting her on the ground.

“Thank you,” Jewel said. “Now, wha... what are you going to do with me?” Her timid voice quivered.

“I don’t know. Dad never said. I guess, I’ll let you go.”

While they were talking, Hopper came back to the other side of the tree with Jewel’s necklace, but when he saw the puppy was still there, he dropped it and ran away.

Jewel rolled her eyes. “I told him, he has to be careful with that thing.”

“What is it?” Arf asked. “It’s pretty. It’s sparkly.”

“It’s powerful and somewhat dangerous. My dad gave it to before he left. He told me if I was ever in trouble....”

“But what’s it do?”

“I don’t know if I should tell you.”

“But I saved your life,” he woofed. “Where’s your family?”

“I... I don’t have one.”

“Me either,” Arf wagged his tail, excited to find a kindred spirit. “Wanna come and see the farm where I live?”



Jewel put on her necklace, ran to tell Hopper where she was going, and then went with Arf on an adventure to see his farm.

Soon, Jewel and Arf were good friends. They had fun running and playing in the woods on the way to the farm. “Come on!” Arf woofed, as he waited for Jewel to catch up.

“I’m coming,” she said, hopping to catch up. “I never knew a puppy and a rabbit could be friends.”

“Why not?” Arf woofed.

“I don’t know. I just didn’t think it was done.”

“Hmm. Well, I don’t know why. I like hopping with you through the woods.”





“See! This is my home.” Arf said, running up to the farm. “See the chickens? They are really fun to chase!”

“Looks very interesting,” Jewel said, hopping after him.

“Yeah!” Arf agreed. “There are all kinds of fun things to do here. Come and see!”



They ran, played, and explored until it was dark, far to late for little Jewel to venture out into the woods on her own. Arf told her the safest place she could spend the night would be in the hen house. Jewel wasn't at all sure about trying to make friends with the loud, cackling, pecky hens, but there was only one in there, at the time, so she ventured inside. "Hel... Hello, Mrs. Hen." She puffed her chest out and tried to look confident.

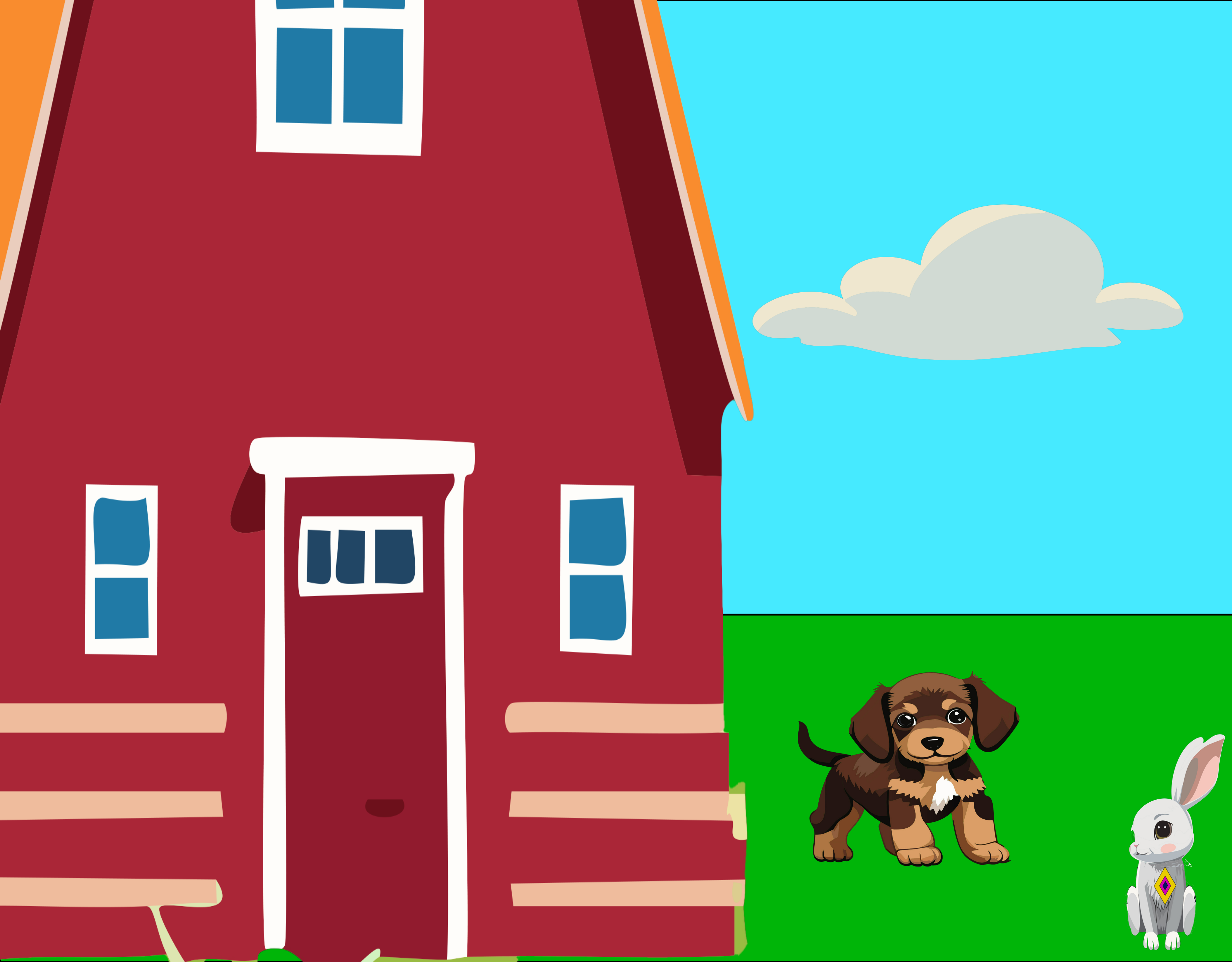
"You be careful of my eggs, young rabbit!" she cackled. "I'll stand for no rough-housing around the babies!"

The next morning, a little annoyed by the bossy, cackling hen, Jewel decided to play a joke on her. When mother hen was out of the room, she quickly took her necklace, wrapped it around one of her eggs and temporarily turned it into an orange. When the mother hen came back, she casually walked up to her nest and counted her eggs like before. Then, she counted them again. Then, she screeched, “No! Who stole the baby?” as she ran around in a circle, feathered fluffed out in a frenzy. “Help! She cackled. ”Kidnappers!” she squawked.



Amazed at the flurry of action she caused, Jewel pulled off the necklace, as soon as the hen wasn't looking, and ran outside. The orange turned back to an egg, only it was blue instead of white. "Oops. Did it again," Jewel sighed, watching the commotion from outside as all the hens gathered around the blue egg, offering suggestions about what could have happened.





“What happened?” Arf asked, running to find Jewel by the barn. “What’d you do to those poor hens? They are all talking about how Penny’s egg turned blue.”

“This necklace gets me in more trouble,” Jewel sighed.

“How?” Arf wagged his tail. “It can turn eggs blue.”

“It can change the shape of the object wearing it, as long as, you change into something close to the size of yourself. It changes back when you take it off, slowly, but if you take it off too quick, it can cause problems. Accidentally, turned my step-brother pink last week.”



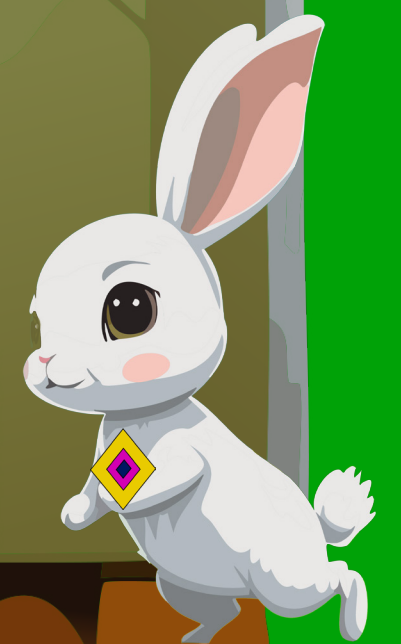
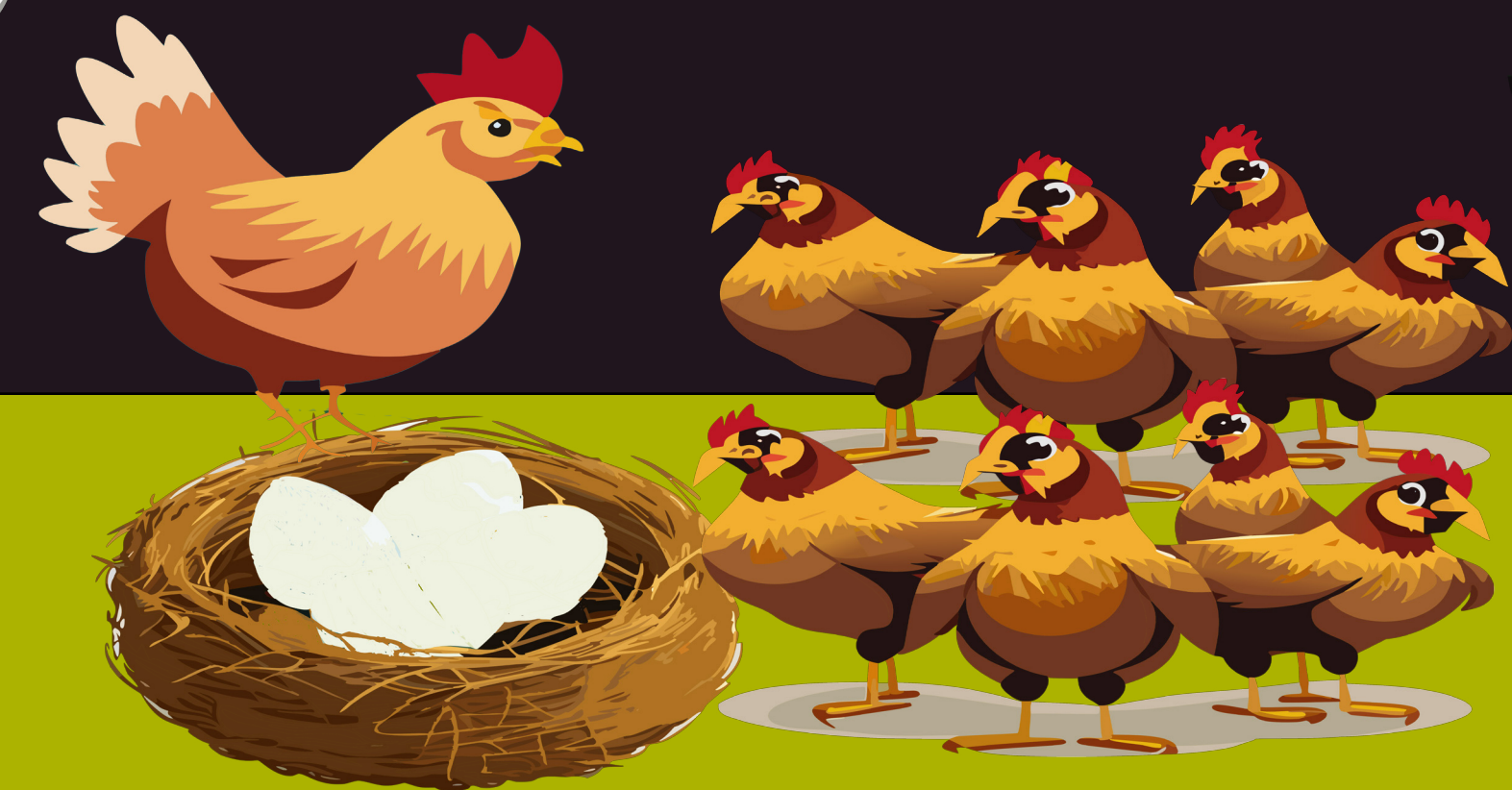
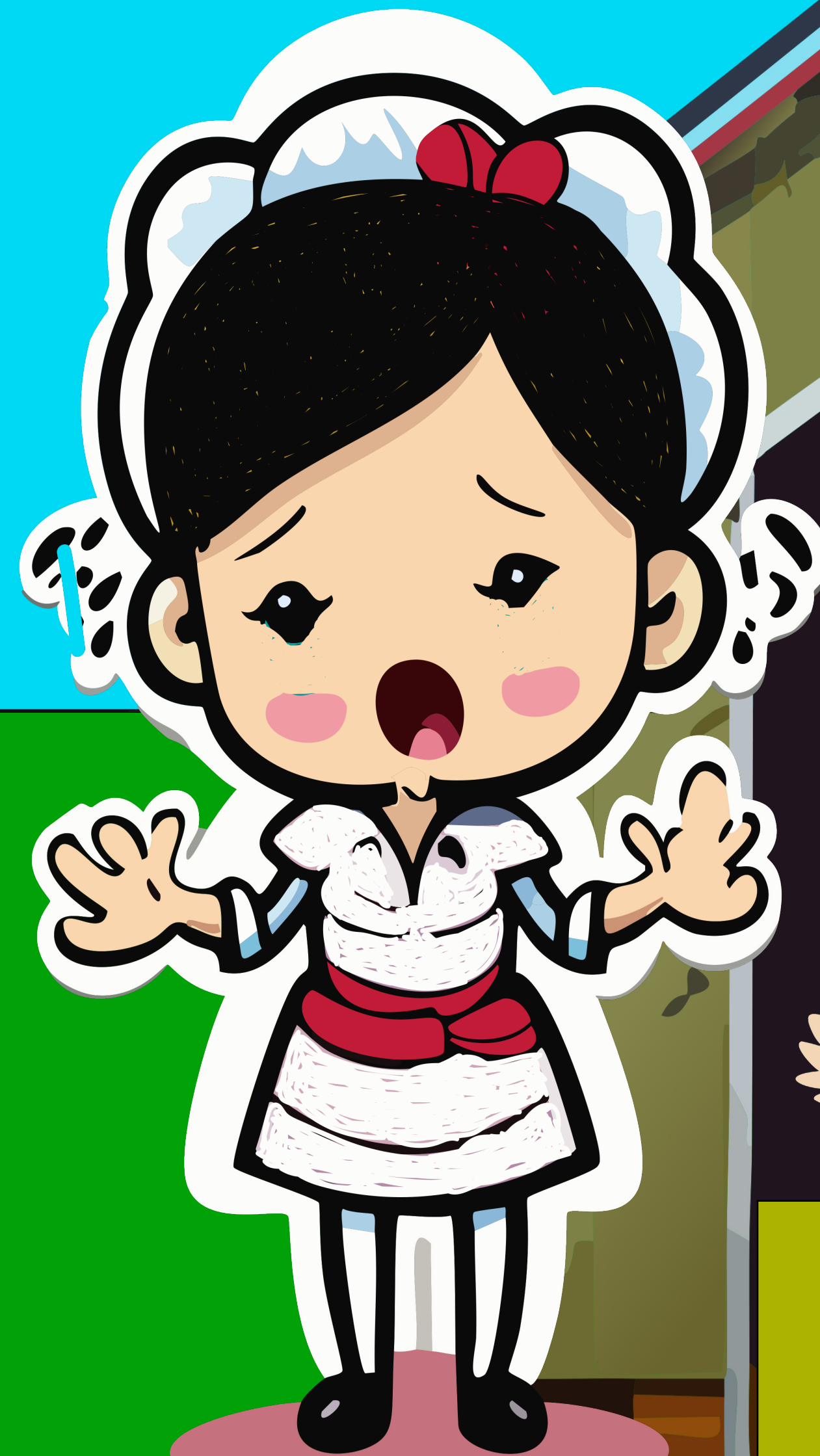
“Show me!” Arf woofed.
“I don’t know.” Jewel hesitated.
“Oh, please! After all, I did save your life.”
“Okay... one quick demonstration...” Jewel said, changing into a small fox.
“Wow! Would that upset the chickens,” Arf woofed.
It upset the horse, too, who was standing nearby eating grass. He reared up in fright when he saw her change.
“I always get that reaction,” Jewel muttered.



The horse's frightened reaction caused the other horses to be scared, causing them to all start rearing and running away. The farmer watched in interest, seeing the horses running, but not seeing what had scared them.

The maid, who was at the chicken coop, gasped when she saw the little rabbit in the distance turn into a fox. "Wow!" she said. "That is amazing! Imagine... Imagine what I could do if I could change myself into anything... a beautiful blonde... a famous movie star... the lady banker in town! Wow! I could be rich!"

Jewel, who was just coming back to the hen house heard her.





Jewel ran back to tell Arf what she had heard. “I think, I think she’s going to try and take my necklace,” Jewel worried.

“That’s not good,” Arf agreed. “She’s not a very nice person. Papa called her vain. It’s cause of her, he ended up getting killed.”

“Then, we can’t let her take it,”

They both ran out into the woods. “Maybe I should hop on home,” Jewel suggested.

“Yeah, as long as, they don’t follow you. She can be pretty determined, and Ralph, our handyman, is a pretty good tracker... better than I am.”

“Oh no,” Jewel whimpered, twitching her nose. “What am I going to do?”

“I don’t know,” Arf said, “But you’d better do something quick. Here comes Ralph, and he doesn’t look happy.”

“Oh... oh... oh....” Jewel cried, hopping around in a frantic circle, trying to come up with an idea.

“Better hurry! Here he comes!”





Unable to come up with a better idea, Jewel quickly turned herself into a sunflower. “How do I look?”

“Well, I would have turned myself into a wolf...”

“A tiny wolf, smaller than you? Besides, I’d still act like a rabbit.”

Arf chuckled. “I guess that would be rather underwhelming. You look like a great sunflower... as long as he doesn’t notice the necklace.”

“Make sure he doesn’t!”



Arf ran up to Ralph. He jumped and barked and did everything he could to distract him. Unfortunately, Ralph wouldn't be distracted. He tracked the bunny straight to the sunflower. Then, he stopped. "Where'd it go?" Ralph looked all around.

Arf stood in front of the sunflower, trying to hide it. "What happens if he decides to pick you?" Arf whispered to her.

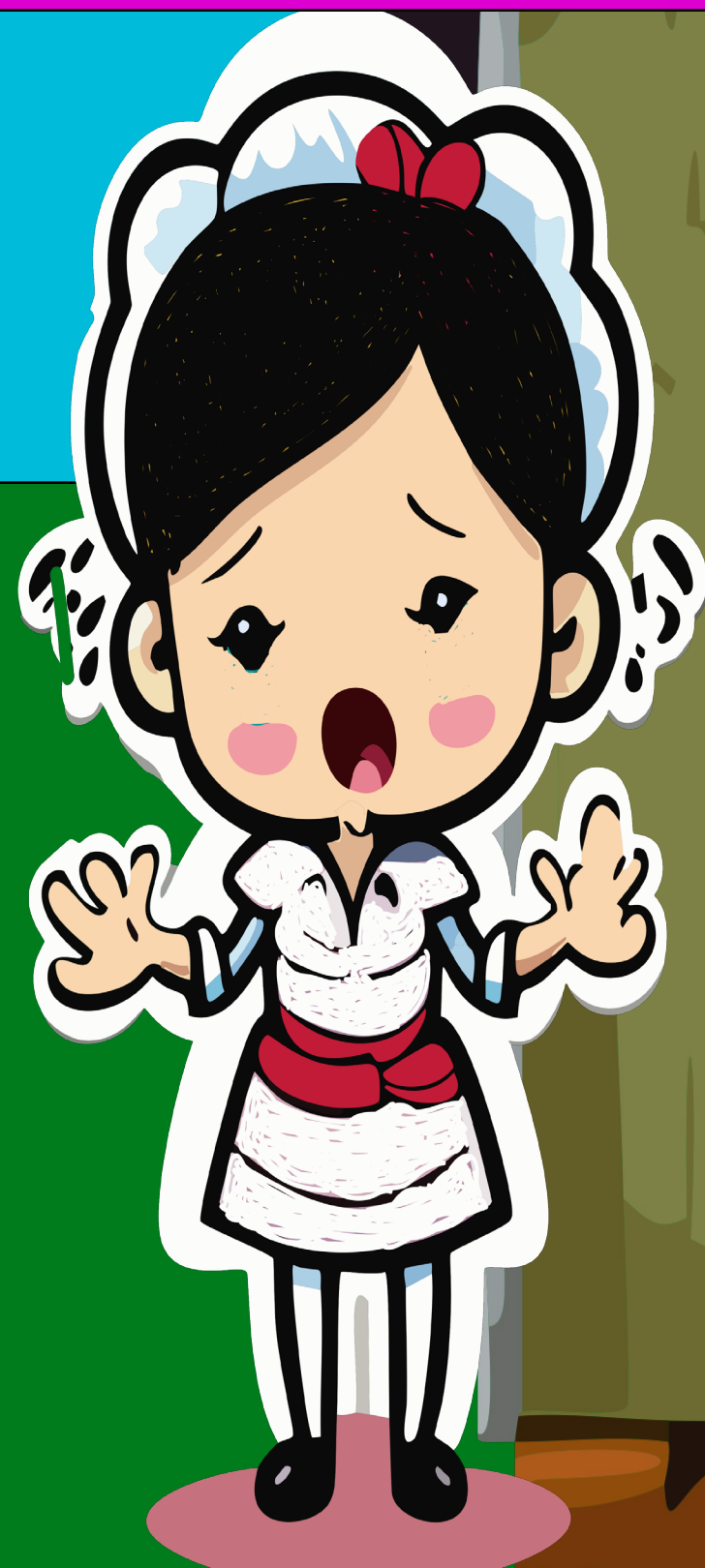
"I don't know. I never thought of that," Jewel squeaked.

Hearing the squeak, Ralph came over and stared at Arf and the sunflower, but then he turned and walked away.

Arf and Jewel followed Ralph home from a distance and listened as he talked to the maid, who was still trying to calm down the chickens.

“I followed that pesky critter for quite a ways, Ma’am. It’s like she just disappeared... right in the middle of a grassy clearing... nothing there but a funny looking sunflower.”

“Funny looking sunflower? That was probably her, you lunkhead! Show me where this sunflower is!”





“Yipe!” Having to think quick as the maid turned and walked straight toward her, Jewel hopped and turned into a chicken midair... a funny-looking little chicken, but a chicken. She ran over to other chickens by the barn and tried to blend in.

“That’s neat,” Arf woofed.





“That’s her!” the maid shouted, running over to the chickens.

“Oh no,” Jewel muttered. “Cluck, cluck, cluck, or cheep, cheep, cheep, or whatever.” She tried to hop around like a chicken and not a bunny, but it just wasn’t working. She wasn’t blending in. The maid chased her around as she weaved in and out of the flock of chickens. “Cheep, I say, cheep!” She flapped her wings, but she couldn’t fly. Suddenly in desperation, barely escaping the maid’s grasp as she reached for her, Jewel turned back into a rabbit and hopped as fast as she could for the woods.

Jewel hopped faster than she had ever hopped before. Arf ran after her. The maid and Ralph ran after them. They ran and ran. Over time, Arf and Jewel got farther and farther ahead as the maid and Ralph dropped further and further behind, until finally they were out of sight.

Jewel and Arf stopped just for a moment to say goodbye. “Well, it was fun meeting you, Arf. Thanks for saving my life, and showing me your home. It was certainly an adventure!”

“It sure was! Come back and visit, anytime. Just don’t wear that necklace next time.”

“I told you it’s always getting me into trouble.”

“Hurry and hop away! I’ll cover your tracks and then lead them the wrong way.”

“Thanks so much!” Jewel called back as she hopped away.





On the way home, Jewel decided to stop and bury her necklace beside a little tree. It was an interesting gift from her father. She would always remember him with the most love. She would always remember his gift for the important lesson it taught her. She learned the best way she knew to solve life's problems was to solve them as a rabbit. She decided there was no point in trying to be something that she wasn't. It never turned out well. She didn't know how to be a fox or a chicken. She was a rabbit and proud to be one. She decided to forget trying to be someone else and to work on being the very best rabbit that she could be.