

Baby Bunny Back and Forth

1 One warm afternoon, Abby and her friend Lucas were exploring the community vegetable garden while Abby's mom tended to the plants. Suddenly, Abby stopped at the end of a row of bushy carrot tops.

2 "Look, Lucas!" she exclaimed, pointing to a small hollow in the grass. "See that fur? That's a rabbit's nest!"

3 Lucas's eyes widened. "How can you tell it's a rabbit's nest?"

4 "Mama rabbits use fur, grass, and leaves to line their nests," Abby explained. "I'll get my mom. She's a veterinarian and knows more about animals."

5 While Abby fetched her mother, Lucas crept closer to the nest and knelt. "Hey!" he called out. "There are babies in this nest!" He counted six tiny bunnies, all nestled together and sleeping. When Abby returned with her mom, Lucas stood up and said, "These poor babies must be abandoned! We should take them with us."

6 "Lucas," Dr. Grove replied gently, "we can't just pick them up and take them away. The mother is probably nearby. Mother rabbits usually feed their babies only a couple of times a day."

7 Lucas frowned. "But what if something happens to them? We can't just leave them alone out here."

8 "The mother isn't around because she is trying to avoid drawing attention to the nest. That's why she feeds them only at night or very early in the morning," Dr. Grove explained.

9 Abby crouched down for a closer look. "Maybe we can leave some fresh water for them," she suggested.

10 Dr. Grove shook her head. "They're only drinking their mother's milk at this stage. One thing we can do is grab a handful of grass and camouflage the nest a bit more."

11 Lucas hesitated. "Won't the mother reject the babies if she smells humans on the grass?"

12 "That's a myth," Dr. Grove responded. "Rabbits are threatened by our presence, not our scent. Humans and rabbits live in the same areas, so rabbits are used to smelling humans. They are afraid when they see humans."

13 Lucas asked, "But it's not just humans, right? We learned in science class that snakes, birds, and other predators eat rabbits."

14 Abby looked worried. “I don’t like the idea of some predator finding the nest. Can’t we please take the babies so that they’ll be safe? We can feed them milk and then let them go when they’re a little bigger.”

15 “Unfortunately, that kind of interference can also harm wild animals,” said Dr. Grove. “Handling wild animals stresses them. Besides, store-bought milk wouldn’t be good for these little rabbits.” Seeing the children’s sad expressions, she smiled sympathetically. “I know we’re taught to help when we can,” she said, “but in this case, we need to leave these babies alone so that they have the best chance of survival.”

16 Abby watched the tiny sleeping bunnies, a thoughtful expression on her face. “I hope they grow up safe and strong,” she said softly.

17 “Me too,” said Lucas.

Read “Baby Bunny Back and Forth.”

Imagine that Abby and Lucas discover a different rabbit nest with babies in it, but the nest is near a walking path that many people use. Using what you have learned from the passage, write a multi-paragraph opinion essay supporting whether Abby and Lucas should or should not move the baby nest out of the way.

Use details from the passage to support your opinion essay.

Remember to —

- clearly state your opinion
- organize your writing
- develop your ideas in detail
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar

Use the space provided to write your opinion essay.