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A Rabbit's Tale



By Elise Seyfried on September 6, 2011 6:35 AM | [3 Comments](#)

By Elise Seyfried

Lord help me, I've bonded. With a rabbit.

Two months ago, my 16-year-old daughter Julie went to a rabbit rescue organization in Broomall called Luv N'Bunns and adopted Stoli, a fat and furry white bunny. She arrived home laden with bun plus a small fortune in accoutrements: cage and pen and food and hay and toys. We tried to change his name, as we can only assume he was originally named by a vodka lover. Charlie? Cute, but no cigar. Peter? Come on! Tibbar? My personal favorite, "rabbit" spelled backwards. In the end, Stoli he remained.

We've become pretty comfortable with him. Julie adores him and the feeling is mutual. She can even put him in a bunny trance by laying him on his back in her lap (he totally zones out). Stoli enjoys a certain brand of rabbit kibble, a certain little red wire ball, and, apparently, the Weather Channel. He doesn't shed, doesn't smell, doesn't make a sound and is litter-box trained, thus negating most of my objections. Stoli has, in short order, become Stoli Seyfried, a card-carrying member of the family.

Which is why his bizarre behavior one recent morning was so upsetting. Out of the blue, he backed himself into a corner and began to thump, lifting his hind legs and slapping them

against the ground over and over again. His whole body was tensed; you could see his little heart beating through his fur. My immediate worry was that Stoli was having a seizure, so it was off to the internet and a Google search for "rabbit thumping." What I read was somewhat reassuring.



At www.rabbit.org I read the following: *Thumping: He's frightened, or trying to tell you that there's danger (in his opinion).*

At any rate, it didn't seem to be fatal, and he would most likely stop in a little while. But why was he doing it? What was scaring him so? There was a bad thunderstorm early this morning--maybe that was it. Julie had opened the patio door to get his hay--maybe Stoli had seen a squirrel streak across the yard. Whatever it was, something had thoroughly spooked him, and he was the physical embodiment of terror.

It took about an hour for him to calm down. When he did, he relaxed utterly, sprawled on the rug, exhausted and relieved.

There have been many times in my life that I have been a "thumper" too--petrified and paralyzed. Like the time, at age six, I was so afraid of the plot line of my mom's favorite TV soap opera, *The Edge of Night*, that I literally hid in the closet while character Philip Capice tried to escape a ticking time bomb in a building. Young as I was, I still remember my goosebumps, racing pulse, shaking hands, out-of-control panic. I also recall my profound relief when fictitious Phil survived his nightmarish ordeal. Whew! On to the commercial with Madge and her eloquent sales pitch for Palmolive dishwashing liquid!

My fear was about as reasonable as Stoli's, but then, sometimes, fear knows no reason.

Some of my other "thumper" times had more in them of actual peril...the intruder in my folks' Atlanta house when I was 18; the unbalanced neighbor in our Mt. Airy apartment building who threatened to kill us. During the worst year before my bipolar disorder was

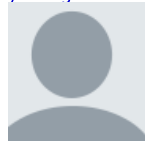
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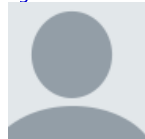
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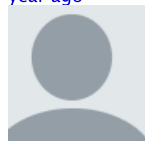
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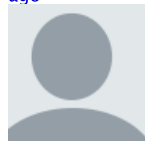
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Are you serious? Maybe we should jump behind the counter and ring our groceries up too (I mean , since we picked them out and put them in a cart and all...) I do help bag sometimes, but if I do it... [Why I Don't Bag My Groceries - Metropolis · 1 year ago](#)



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diagnosed, I was paralyzed often--how could I get through the week? The day? The next hour?

The scariest thing about existence, of course, is its complete unpredictability. We are blindsided by the frightening moments when we thought all was well. The greatest act of courage may be just waking up each morning, ready to face the totally unknown day ahead.

We all have our "thumper" moments when our wildly beating hearts and rigid bodies have to face the worst of this world. Moments when we are nothing but scared rabbits. Things don't improve by magic. It takes time--and the knowledge that we are not alone--to calm us down, to slow our pulses and relax our muscles.

Can we stand in solidarity through this terrifying journey called life? Whisper soothing words into each other's ears? Sometimes all we really need is a little company and a little love to help us keep our demons at bay.

Now Stoli lets us pet him at last, stroke his furry back, whisper words of comfort. His heart rate slows and his back legs quiet down. He looks at us, calm once more, and to me he looks grateful. Grateful to us for just being there, for standing with him through his storm within. How could we do less for this cute and vulnerable little guy?

How can we do less for each other?

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**Mary** · 10 years ago

I fell in love with a rabbit--name of honeybunny. Love affair lasted 10 years. I still miss her, I will always count the day she left as one of the worst in my life. The sight of that little white tail boppin' down the hall or steps, did not ever fail to bring a smile to my face.

In return for a daily plate full of Kale and some baby carrots, an apple--a single yogurt covered raisin=OMG=I swear, she would tap dance for one of those! lol.

In return, I got my eyebrows groomed daily and some of the sweetest nosie kisses ever.

Also, she got me out of a real toxic relationship..."it's me or that rabbit!"..I still gotta chuckle--what a no brainer that was~honeybunny and I, we didn't ever look back!!!

THANKS For your warm and sweetly written article and all the fond memories it brought with. Oh and the thumping--honey hated mice, also at this time of the year (Fall) there's lotsa bees dying off and they're usually on the floors doing so.

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**how to adjust** · 10 years ago

Please
give me more information. I love it, Thanks again.

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**Four98** · 10 years ago

Love this! Your writing is smooth and interesting. You had me on the edge of my seat because I am a bunny owner too and I remember the first time mine starting thumping and I was like "What's wrong?" Nice job of drawing parallels with our own "thumper" moments. PS I'm also involved with a bunny rescue and thank you for giving little Stoli a forever home!

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