

Sneezes and Strawberries

It was a sunny spring day in the woods. Rhonda and Julie Bunny got up early and set out to pick wild strawberries.

“Let’s pick lots of strawberries,” said Rhonda. “We can freeze some, make jelly with some, and have strawberry shortcake for dinner.”



“Yum, yum!” Julie popped a berry in her mouth. “Strawberry shortcake is my favorite food.”

“Don’t eat more berries than you put in your basket,” warned Rhonda. “My basket is much fuller than yours.”

The bunny sisters set to work, and soon both of their baskets were overflowing. Julie ended up with a bright red mustache.

“Let’s go home and make jelly,” Rhonda said.

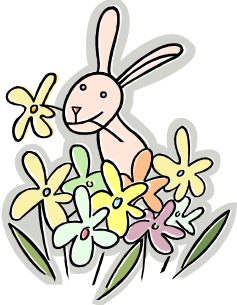
“And shortcake!” said Julie.

On their way home, they came to a big patch of daisies.

“Look!” Rhonda exclaimed.

“So beautiful!” Julie agreed. “Daisies are my favorite flowers.”

“Let’s pick some and take them home,” said Rhonda. They picked a bunch of daisies.



Julie carried both baskets of strawberries, and Rhonda carried the

daisies. They were almost home when all of a sudden Julie sneezed.

“Ah-ah-choo!”

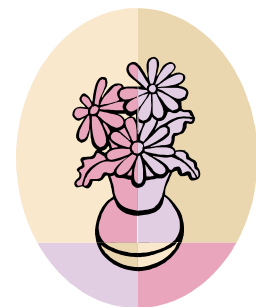
“Bless you,” said Rhonda.

“It must be a dusty day,” Julie said.

Back home in their oak tree Rhonda put the flowers in a vase. She set them on the table so that she and Julie could enjoy them as they prepared the strawberries.

“Ahhhh-choo!” Julie sneezed again.

“Oh, no.” Rhonda frowned. “I hope you’re not catching a cold.”



Julie sniffed. "I don't—ahhh-choo—understand it. I felt fine this morning."
Julie sat down at the table and sneezed again.

"Julie Bunny, you are allergic to the strawberries!" Rhonda exclaimed.

"The strawberries? I can't be. I love them."

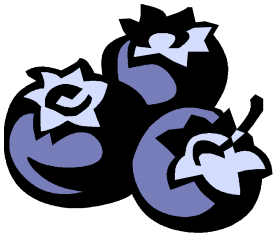
"Every time you eat them, you sneeze."

"Well, I will just have to get used to it. I'm not going to give up strawberries!"

Julie's eyes became swollen and red. She sneezed many times. "I can't stand it," she cried. "No more strawberries for me. Oh, this is terrible!" And she ran out of the room.

"Poor Julie." Rhonda thought for a minute. "I have an idea to fix everything."

Rhonda took out her paints and some paper. She quickly painted a picture of the strawberries. Then Rhonda framed the picture and took the real strawberries next door to Granny Squirrel.



That evening Rhonda and Julie sat looking at the picture of the strawberries while they ate blueberry shortcake with whipped topping.

Just then, Granny Squirrel came over and asked Rhonda and Julie why they weren't eating strawberry shortcake. Julie replied, "The strawberries make me sneeze and I don't feel well, so I don't eat them anymore."



This story is adapted from *Strawberries and Daisies* by Victoria Smith Peters, Highlights for Children, June 1986.



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