

Chapter 1

Virginia Kay rolled over and in her normal, methodical fashion pulled the blankets down to expose her eyes. *Yep, just like yesterday the sun is peeking through the blinds,* she reflected. *What a wonderful sign that we'll have another great day.*

She threw off her covers and swung her feet toward the floor, thinking wonderful thoughts about all she had planned for the day. As her eyes went toward the floor, she stopped with a jerk, thrust herself back toward the bed, and screeched, *"Robert Aloysius Trueblood III!"*

She could hear the giggles from the other room. Once again he had removed

her pink, bunny-rabbit slippers that she had placed so carefully at the foot of the bed the night before. She yelled at the top of her lungs, "Mom, the *rat* did it again."

Virginia just loved her long-eared bunny-rabbit slippers and would never think of placing her bare feet on the floor. There was a carpet, of course, but it was prickly and rough instead of soft like the inside of her slippers. She had discovered some time ago that her brother's initials spelled *rat*, and she knew it bugged him, so she took special care to use it every time she had the chance. *After all, she thought, he goes out of his way to make me miserable; he deserves it.*

Once again she peeked over the edge of the bed to see if she could see where he might have put them this time. *Nope. Not under the bed or the nightstand. What did he do with them this time?* Her gaze rose to the window, and she noticed something funny. A set of pink rabbit ears was sticking out from

beneath the blinds. She couldn't see the face on the slippers, but she knew the rabbit was smiling at her. *Oh boy, how am I going to get them way over there?* She looked at the forbidden rug below and just knew she would have to come up with a way. The thought of running over and getting them as fast as she could never entered her mind. That would have required placing her feet on that awful rug.

After a moment's thought, she decided that since she had two pillows, she'd simply put one on the floor and step on it. That way she could put the other one on the floor in front of her and just use them as stepping-stones until she reached her destination. It didn't take long to discover the flaw in her plan. While the pillows were soft and fluffy and provided a comfortable place to lay her head, it was quite another matter to put your feet on them and keep your balance. As she started to fall, she leaped back toward the bed. For a short time, she thought she wouldn't make it and would be spread

out completely on that terrible carpet. Just as she was sure she was going to be eaten up by the floor monster, she regained her balance and with one final thrust catapulted back into the bed.

Oh, that rat, she thought as she once again contemplated how she was going to acquire her beloved slippers. She just had to. Failure was not an option. Then, just as if someone had flipped the switch, the light came on. All she had to do was spread out her blanket on the floor, cross over to the other side, and get her slippers. She quickly stripped the top blanket off the bed and spread it out as far as she could. *Oh, oh, it's still short.* Without giving it a second thought, she pulled the next layer of blankets off and carried it to the edge of the one she had already placed before her. This time it reached.

Task complete! She smiled to herself as she reached up.

"Oh no!" she shouted again.

These windows were high, and even