

The Brothers Lionheart

Two brothers, RUSKY and Jonathan, have been reunited in Nangiyala, a land of legend and adventure. But Rusky's older brother Jonathan has now left him at their home, Knights Farm, to go and face a fearful enemy alone. Rusky fears for his brother's safety and wonders what he should do.

RUSKY: It felt cold as I crept into my bed, but I soon fell asleep. And I dreamt about Jonathan. The dream was so terrifying that it woke me up. "Yes, Jonathan!" I cried. "I'm coming!" And I rushed out of bed. In the darkness around me, there seemed to be echoes of wild cries. Jonathan's cries! He had called to me in my dream that he needed help. I knew it. I could still hear him, and I wanted to rush straight out into the dark night to get to him, wherever he was. But I realised how impossible that was.

What could I do? No one was as helpless as I was! I could only creep back into my bed again and lie there trembling, feeling lost and small and afraid and lonely, the loneliest person in the whole world, I thought.

The next morning, I sat for hours out with my rabbits and thought about what I should do. I had no one to talk to, no one to ask. My brother had called for me, so didn't I have to go out and try to find him? I had to decide for myself. I couldn't go to Sofia, because she would stop me. She would never let me go. She was not that foolish. It was foolish, I'm sure, what I wanted to do. And dangerous, too. The most dangerous thing of all. And I wasn't at all brave.

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I don't know how long I sat there, leaning against the stable wall, tearing up grass. I tore off every blade of grass around about me, but I didn't notice until afterwards, not while I'd been sitting there being tormented. The hours went by. Perhaps I would be sitting there still, if I hadn't suddenly remembered what Jonathan had said. That sometimes you have to do things that are dangerous. Otherwise you weren't a human being, but a bit of filth.

So I decided. I banged my fist down on the rabbit hutch so that the rabbits jumped and I said out loud so that it should be certain: "I'll do it! I'll do it! I'm not a bit of filth."

*by Astrid Lindgren, translated by Joan Tate and
adapted by LAMDA*