Mothers of the Wild by Alan Devee

Hidden in the hedgerow, in the fragrant summer dusk, I had twice seen a rabbit hopping cautiously to the same spot among the tall grass stems. On her first trip she had remained there, nearly invisible, for an hour. The second visit was shorter, but long enough to make me positive about the guess I had made. There must be a nest of baby rabbits there.

I feasted my eyes on the yellow moon, which hung in a cloudless sky, and I beheld the rabbits’ haunts among the waving grass. I followed as far as the first-born when, just as I walked toward them, it suddenly darted from my sight. I went out to the field and followed it as far as I could. I saw nothing.

Recording the point with my hand and always knowing, if I did, I again came slowly by the rabbit’s haunts. I saw a tiny stir of motion, as if a patch of earth beside a tussock had moved. I bent down and looked. It had seemed to be only a bit of grass, grown earth was actually a tiny, soft, felted blanket. Gently I lifted the little coverlet. Underneath was a nest of four rabbit babies.

I squeezed the blanket gently, feeling that the whole nest was soft and flexible. I smiled, for I had known that a rabbit’s nest would be a soft, delicate one, but I had never known that it would be so beautiful. I lifted the nest and carried it back to my home, where I placed it in a basket. I decided to let the rabbits stay there, for I knew that they were safe in the field.

I learned that rabbit mothers are sociable creatures. The blanket was a quilling made of their own fur and mossed wings of grass. Every time she left her nest babies in the cust, they would cuddle up to the nest and hide under the covering of earth. I learned from the rabbit mother that the nest is not a soft, delicate one, but a strong, sturdy one, with a tough covering of earth.

This practice is only one of many wonderful devotion and ingenuity by which mothers of the wild bring up their little ones. Baby animals are born in all sorts of situations: caves, burrows, hollow trees, nests, trees. Whatever the circumstances, the animal mother has the mother’s love, which is her special care, and a mother’s love, which is her love for the world of woods and fields with its one of the most vital radiances.

Nature’s simplest nursery are “built-in” ones: the table pachyderms of animals called marsupial. Kangaroos belong to this company. So do the anteaters, opossums, and marsupials. Marsupial babies are born incredibly tiny. A big kangaroo stands man-high and may weigh two hundred pounds; but mother roo’s little one at birth is only an inch long. An opossum’s baby is as small as a bee and weighs only two grams.

The kangaroo’s pouch is a special adaptation for carrying its young. The mother kangaroo would never leave her baby alone. When the baby is small, it rides on her back. When the baby is larger, it can climb on her head. When the baby is older, it can ride on her shoulders. When the baby is big enough, it can ride on her back. When the baby is big enough, it can ride on her shoulders. When the baby is big enough, it can ride on her back. When the baby is big enough, it can ride on her shoulders. When the baby is big enough, it can ride on her back. When the baby is big enough, it can ride on her shoulders.