

# THE KNIGHT MOUSE

~BOOK I~

## A MOUSE PROTECTS





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1st edition, 2025



# Winter 865



# The Fox and the Mouse

Original Telling - The thirtieth of November, two thousand  
and twenty



Nestled just inside a cheery wood that bordered an overgrown grass-filled field was Corin's Nook. Named, of course, after the famed mouse Corin, who bravely fended off a swarm of flies who never had any intention of doing anything other than flying lazily around the clear stream that ran just south of the town.

This was about the most exciting thing that had happened by the time they named the town. All the animals took a vote and they named it after Corin. Of course, by now, Corin's Nook had seen its fair share of excitement, but generally, it was a sleepy little mouse town.

The town was once the bustling center of the forest, with all of the forest animals living in harmony with each other. But as with all things, time marches on and that is no longer the case.

Gone are the days of bunnies playing hide and go hop with the mice children in the field, or deer trotting past on nearby trails. Oh no, ever since the King of the Forest had left The Valley it just wasn't the same place it used to be.

Around the time the King vanished, the other animals started to leave. The squirrels were the first to leave. Once they were gone, it was only a matter of time before the snakes slithered back to the swamps. Then the moles tunneled away. The ladybugs left and took up residence in a grove on the other side of the field, and so on and so forth down the line until only the timid mice held on to the belief that the King would return, and it was that belief that would end up making all the difference.

That's not to say it was a sad, dreary, town. It was in fact a vibrant mouse town. There were many



festivals and holidays celebrated, the town square was always full of children playing or adults talking adult business. Even the mayor could be seen regularly taking a walk and checking in on the citizens of Corin's Nook. The mice waited for the King's return and had faith it would be soon. Months turned to seasons, and seasons turned to years and the mice remained steadfast in Corin's Nook.

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Nine winters after the King had vanished, a lone mouse trudges through the snow near Corin's Nook. The bright red of cloak could be easily seen against the deep white snow that covered the area. He pulled the cloak tight around his little body to ward off the cold. He didn't care that he stuck out like a sore thumb. He wasn't hiding, he was protecting. With his sword tucked into his belt, and a shield slung onto his back, the Knight Mouse, defender of Corin's Nook, was on patrol.

Having lived in Corin's Nook all his life he was proud to be the town's protector. Now that all the forest animals had left, there was only a weak peace between all of them. Sure, the squirrels weren't at war with the mice, but they certainly weren't guarding the trees for them anymore. The moles were friendly enough, but their tunnels that once connected their nearby burrows to Corin's

Nook have long since been overtaken by spiders and centipedes. The mice were exposed and needed protection now.

The Knight Mouse circled wide around the town. He scurried under roots and between tall grasses poking out of the snow drifts. He looked for trouble, and that's when he saw it. Tracks in the snow. He rushed over to investigate.

"What kind of animal leaves these kinds of tracks?" he thought to himself. The Knight Mouse had tracked all sorts of animals through the woods but he'd never seen tracks like these before. They weren't huge, but they were not small either. There were four small toes, each topped with a claw.

"I'll have to be careful," he said aloud.

"Careful of what?" a strange voice said. The Knight Mouse spun to face the voice and drew his sword in one quick motion. His eyes met with a muddy orange...dog? The Knight Mouse had never seen anything like this animal before. It had orange and white fur, a sharp snout with a black nose, and a long bushy tail.

Confused, he lowered his sword, "Of whatever made these tracks," replied the mouse.

"Oh those? I was tracking that animal too. You can't be too careful these days, and strangers



in the forest can mean bad things. Perhaps we can help each other?" the orange dog offered in a silky smooth voice.

Warily, the Knight Mouse agreed and the pair started off into the woods. Side by side, they trudged through the snow.

They walked through the cold, wet snow for half an hour. They followed the tracks through the forest. Eventually, the tracks curved and started to head back towards where they had started. The Knight Mouse was so focused on the tracks that he barely looked ahead. As he followed the tracks, he then saw his own footprints next to the strange tracks. He looked at the orange dog, then down at the footprints and it all started to make sense. The tracks belonged to his companion.

"Who are you?" he cried and pulled his sword for the second time today.

"Who, me? I'm just Sly...the fox. Just a poor hungry animal caught out in the snow," he said through a grin, baring his teeth. The Knight Mouse curled up as much as possible behind his shield and started to circle Sly.

"Hungry?"

"Very. In fact, you look pretty tasty," he said and lunged forward.



The Knight Mouse skipped back out of the way of Sly's snapping teeth.

"Get out of our forest!" The Knight Mouse shouted.

"Our?" Sly asked, licking his lips. "There are more of you?"

The fox stopped and sniffed the air. He looked in the direction of Corin's Nook.

"Ah...yes, I see," Sly said, "Well, let's start with you and then see about the rest of my lunch!"

With that he leapt forwards, towards the little mouse. His bite clanged off the mouse's shield and the mouse was forced a step back. The Knight Mouse started to circle once more, looking for a weak point to attack. He lunged forward with his sword out and it was Sly's turn to back off. The Knight Mouse knew he had been underestimated and started to move forward with more confidence. The Knight Mouse swung his sword at the fox. Sly batted some snow at the Knight Mouse which caused him to stop his attack and wipe the snow from his face. He looked up just in time to see Sly bounding right at him!

With a last ditch effort, the Knight Mouse rolled to the side, then popped up and slashed at Sly's rear haunch. Sly yowled with surprise and

jumped quickly up the hill. Standing atop it, he looked down at the Knight Mouse. "You may have won the day, but I'll be back tomorrow, and the day after that and the day after that!" he barked.

"And I'll be here to stop you every day!" Knight Mouse called back, holding his sword up in the air as Sly ran out of the woods and into the field.

The Knight Mouse waited until he was sure Sly had left, then rushed back to town to speak to the mayor. The Knight Mouse ran through the gates of the town, along the cobbled streets of Corin's Nook, and just on the other side of the town square he came to the mayor's House. He knocked loudly and the mayor appeared in the doorway.

"Mayor, I was patrolling in the woods...and I saw...whew, let me catch my breath," he wheezed as he bent over and put a hand on his knee.

"What? What did you see?" The mayor asked, fear in his eyes.

The mayor was a portly gray mouse who dressed elegantly. It was not uncommon to see him in a suit vest and top hat, twirling his pocket-watch as he walked around, with never a whisker out of place. He was a good leader but not a very brave



one. Even the slightest change in the weather could send him into a cloud of worry.

“A fox,” the Knight Mouse was finally able to get out.

“A fox? There hasn’t been a fox in these woods for almost ten seasons!” The mayor said, “What could a fox want with us?”

His brow furled as he looked at his young protector. “We must be rid of this fox, no good has ever come when a fox is involved.”

The Knight Mouse looked towards the sun as it started to sink below the horizon.

“I know which way he went. First thing in the morning I’ll take up the chase,” he said with determination.

With that, he crossed the town square and turned towards the inn. When he entered the inn, he was greeted with a warm welcome. He nodded to the innkeeper, gave a smile, and headed up the stairs. His feet and eyes were heavy as he flopped down in his bed in the room he rented. He had a house in town, but had not slept there in a long time. He told himself it was because he needed the hustle and bustle of the inn. But the truth was he could not face the feelings his old home made him feel.

The mayor stood, watching the gate in the wall that protected the town, half expecting a fox head to peek over the top and muttered to himself, "No good can come of this, no good at all."



The Knight Mouse is on patrol! As the defender of his town, the Knight Mouse discovers a plot to attack his home and ruin life for every animal in The Valley.

Join him as he makes new friends, quests to unite the forest, and tries to unravel the mystery of the lost King of the Forest.

The Knight Mouse books made great bedtime stories for my children when they were younger, and continue to entertain them and their friends now that they are older.

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