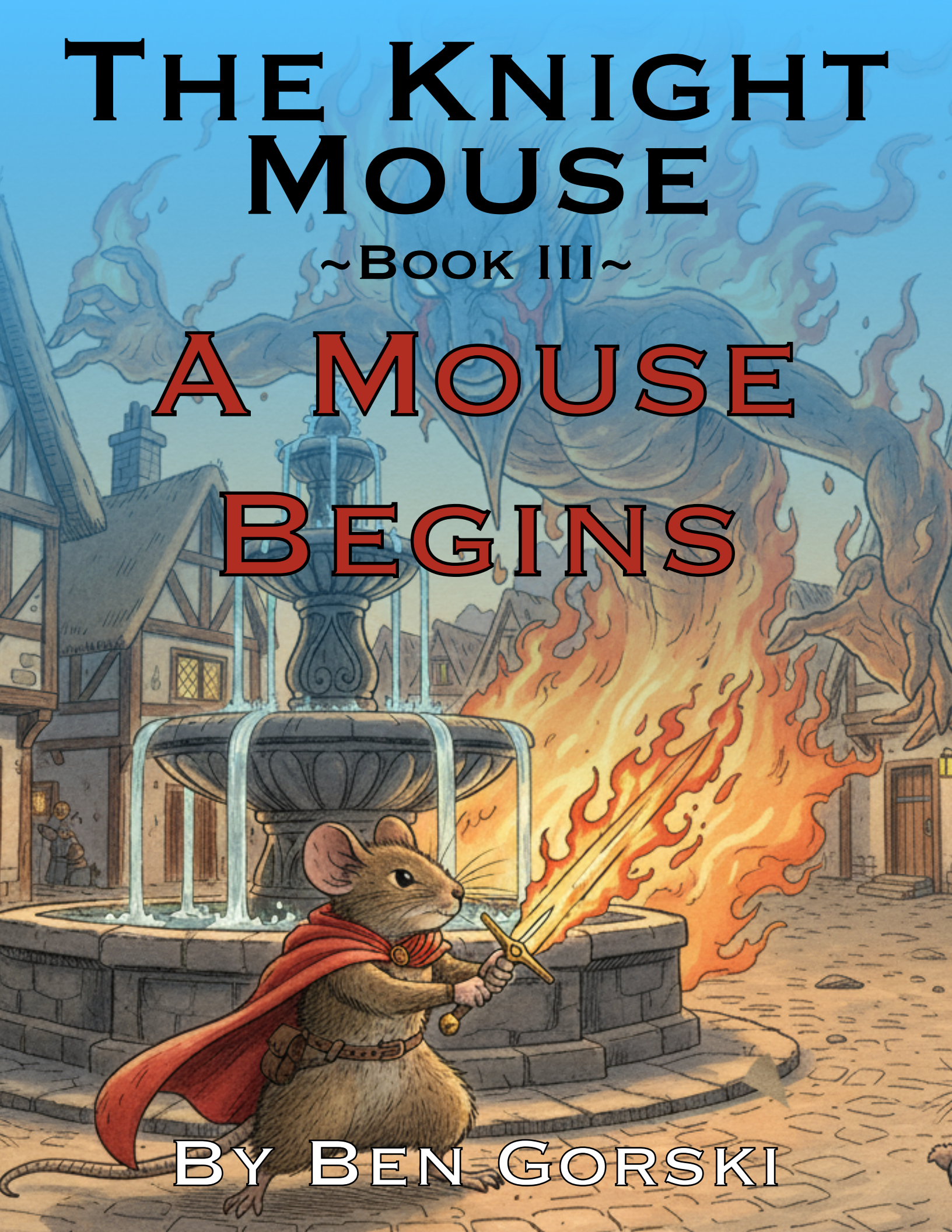


THE KNIGHT MOUSE

~ BOOK III ~

A MOUSE BEGINS

BY BEN GORSKI



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Table Of contents

Preface -----	5
Map of the Valley -----	6
Map of Corin's Nook -----	7
The Birth of Peter-----	9
The Library of the Forest King -----	16
The Sword in the Swamp -----	21
On the Way to the Grove -----	26
The Spotted Potion -----	29
A Ladybug's Spots-----	38
The Caves -----	43
Luna-----	48
A Knight...Mouse -----	53
The Battle with Baron-----	56

Heroes are ordinary ~~people~~ MICE
who make themselves
extraordinary.

Preface

The Knight Mouse was a story I told my children night after night at bedtime. It became a long story with many adventures. After writing the first book, and reading it aloud to my children's classrooms, I thought I might really have something special.

I had always expected that my kids liked it because it was their dad telling them the stories, but with the reaction I received from the entire classroom, I became motivated to get more of the story down onto the page.

This is a collection of the next eight stories. This is a prequel that explores how the Knight Mouse became...well...the Knight Mouse.

There are many more adventures to be had, animals to meet, and places to explore for the Knight Mouse.

I hope you or you and your children can love it as much as mine did.

Visit knightmouse.com for updates on the next adventure.

Map of the Valley



Map of Corin's Nook





Spring 856

The Birth of Peter

Original Telling - The sixteenth of December, two thousand and twenty



The town of Corin's Nook was a happy bustling town, filled with many different types of forest animals.

The town was in a small wood, with a stream running past it that children loved to play in on lazy summer afternoons. To the north, just past the trees, was a large field that was the centerpiece to The Valley.

In town, there was a master baker named Lilia, a small gray mouse. A huge black badger named Charlie was the blacksmith. He made anything a towns person would need. Nails, barrel hoops, and even the torch holders all over town that kept Corin's Nook lit up at night. The Innkeeper was small brown mole named Ruth whose warm tap house welcomed any traveler.

The streets were filled with hearty hellos and smiles. Yes, Corin's Nook was a fantastic place to be.

While there was plenty of happiness around town, there was one home just across from the inn where mostly sadness lived.

"Oh Timothy," Bella said as she paced the room, "When will it happen for me?" she asked with a quiver in her voice. Bella was a mouse with white fur, a kind heart, and a smile that could light up a whole room. She and her husband Timothy had been married many years now and still had not had a child. It just did not seem to be in their stars.

"We will go to the King of the Forest tomorrow, and put this to rest once and for all. If anyone can help, he can," Timothy said with certainty. Although he put on a brave face for Bella, he was still not sure that the King could fix this.

The next day, Bella was up with the sun, pacing around the house in excitement. Timothy stretched and yawned as he walked downstairs in his white nightshirt.

"I have our lunches packed, we should be there before noon, but I thought it was best to be prepared," Bella's words quickly fell out of her one after the other. She was very nervous.

Timothy put his hands on her shoulders, looked her deep in the eyes and said, "The lunches look great."

Bella was immediately calmed, the strong, gentle words of her husband putting her at ease. The pair walked out of the door and headed into the field that was between King's Court and Corin's Nook.

The field was a long abandoned crop field. It had since been overgrown with dandelions, tall grasses, and wildflowers of every color.

It was a long walk from Corin's Nook to the King's Court, especially, for a pair of mice. With the warm spring and tall, green grasses the walk was a pleasant one. The grass hid Bella and Timothy from larger animals as they made their way directly across the field, rather than circling around through the forest which was safer when the field did not provide much cover. The pair were mostly quiet as they took the route north, both lost in thought and very nervous. Seeing the King was not something that one took lightly, especially when asking a favor.

The court itself was unnatural yet beautiful. A dirt path led up to the court, with tall, silver trees on each side, arching over it. The building, if it could be called that, was built of large wooden arches, each filled with clear glass. It felt more like an meadow than an actual building. These walls let in the views of the trees around it, making you feel more outside than inside. There was no roof but it never rained nor was it ever cold inside. Soft green grass carpeted the entire floor year round. A simple stone path led the way to a grove of more of the same silver trees growing outside. Inside the grove, the creatures of the court all sat around a dais made of an old stump that never seemed to rot or age. It was from this stump that King, a large white stag, took council.

Many other animals were waiting here. They all had different reasons to be there, but they were all here to see the King.

Bella and Timothy patiently waited their turn and when their names were called they walked up the small stone path to where the white deer sat. Bella stepped up to the King and made her plea.

"Your Highness," she curtsied as she started, "We'd like to have a child, but we have not been able to after such a long time. We really do have a lot. I'm not trying to say we don't," she stammered as she continued. "It's just that we would like to add more to our family, but

we have not been able to after such a long time,” she said, tears welling up in her eyes.

The King nodded and looked at Timothy.

“And you too?” The King asked, “This is your wish as well?”

“Of course your majesty. We have so much love to give.”

The King peered at the little mouse couple. Bella and Timothy felt like they were being stared through, rather than at. After a long pause, one of the Kings eyebrows raised and he smiled.

“I see great things in your child’s future, come...step forward,” he beckoned. The pair stepped forward and the King leaned his head low to the ground, his antlers touching each of their heads. A warm feeling spread over the two of them and they bowed low and left, smiling.

The walk back to Corin’s Nook was indeed a much less worrisome affair. The two mice chatted excitedly and even stopped for lunch under some purple tulips. Timothy had been right, the lunches were great.



BANG

The front door slammed against the side of the house as it swung open and a young mouse scurried outside.

“Peter!” Bella called from inside. “How many times have I told you...don’t slam the door!”

“Sorry Mom!” Peter called out as he ran up the street to the town square. Bella smiled at her son. It had been fourteen years since they had visited the King and every day had been a blessing...even the days he slammed the door.

The town square was a place where all the streets of Corin's Nook intersected. It was paved, and most of the businesses were directly on the square. The square had a fountain that had been built in the center and was the centerpiece for many celebrations, meetings, and day to day activities. It had a big white stone basin, with a pillar rising out of the center. There were three bowls, each smaller in size. As you looked up the pillar, the spout at the top spilled water into the first bowl, cascading water down into the bowl below it until it reached the basin where it was pumped back up to the top to continue the cycle. It was not uncommon to see animals sitting near the fountain eating lunch or having a conversation.

The boys in the village liked to play ball here, because it was flat and open, much to the chagrin of the adults of the town, especially the mayor.

"Boys! Be careful you don't kick your ball..."

Just at that moment the ball launched into the air and splashed down into the basin of the fountain, soaking the mayor who was standing nearby. Peter and the other kids laughed as the mayor tried to shake off the water. The mayor was the type of mouse who was always well put together, so the surprise soaking was a bigger problem than it would have been for anyone else.

"Don't worry, Mayor, I'll get the ball," Peter said and he crawled up on the edge of the basin.

"The ball was not what I was worried about," the mayor said, wiping the water from his eyes.

Peter climbed up to the rim of the basin and stretched his paw out to try and get the floating ball when suddenly the water stopped pouring from the top. The water all dribbled down into the basin and the top of the fountain started to shoot flames. Peter tumbled back

onto the ground, unable to grab the ball. Laying there on his back, he stared up at the flames as they started to form into a face.

The face looked to be made out of stone, with small rivers of lava breaking through here and there, running down his face. He had a long, pointed chin and sharp eyes which flickered like a campfire as he stared down the mice in town. His hair was made of flames and danced back and forth as if it was alive.

"Citizens of Corin's Nook," the face boomed, "your doom comes. Ages ago you built your town and pushed us spirits from the forest. I am coming to take back what is rightfully mine. Soon your little town will be no more than ashes. I, Baron, will see to that!"

With a huge laugh, the fire died and the face faded away.

Peter was stunned. No one else had been as close as he had to the face and he could still feel the heat on his whiskers.

The mayor looked worried, and terrified all at the same time. His face was frozen for what felt like a long time and then he started to sputter, unable to form sentences.

The mayor could tell there was fear spreading through the square but he needed time to get his fear under control or it would infect everyone.

"We will have a meeting tonight," he finally managed to get out. "We can figure out what to do then."

That night a few animals met inside the mayor's house to discuss the fire spirit's message from earlier that day. In attendance was one of the larger moles named Nuggetbump, a spirited gray squirrel named Samantha, a slick rabbit called Rose, and Peter's father Timothy. They all sat around a table along with the mayor.

"I don't think tha King can fix this," Nuggetbump started off.

"I spoke to my people and the squirrels agree. Besides that, we should have heard from the King by now. Nothing happens without him knowing," Samantha said.

"There has to be a reason. We should send somebody to King's Court and deliver this message in person. Perhaps he just has not been made aware yet?" Timothy offered.

There was a thud from the window. The mayor jumped out of his chair and fell onto the floor. Everyone else turned and saw Peter standing outside the window rubbing his nose. He had been spying on the adults and had leaned in close to hear. That made him bump his face against the glass, hurting his nose.

Timothy rolled his eyes, but gave a little smile to his son as he stood up and opened the front door. "You might as well come in, it will save you from any more injuries," he said. The other animals chuckled.

"Now, back to the problem at hand..." the mayor said as he tried to steer the conversation back on track.

"Yes, who will go to the King's Court?" Timothy asked. He looked around the table. He looked at the Mayor, then to Nuggetbump. When he saw no sign of volunteering, his gaze moved to Samantha, then Rose, and finally he saw one little hand up in the air. Peter was volunteering.

"I will go, I'm the fastest mouse we have," Peter squeaked.

Timothy's first reaction was of surprise, then rejection, but he finally ended up on acceptance.

Timothy nodded his permission to the mayor.

"Then...off you go boy," the Mayor said. "First thing in the morning."