

The Story of Little Mouse Sister
by Delmar Johnnie

The story of little mouse sister... finds the river. Back a long, long time ago. Way far away. About a hundred yards that way, lived a mouse. And you all know how big a mouse is. Big ears, long trunk... oh no, that's an elephant.

Anyways...the mouse, yeah, here we go. Everybody knows what little mice are like. Not very tall and they don't have homes like we do. They live underground you see. Little tunnels all over the place. And because they are so small, many things feed on them. And they need to always, always, be careful about going out above ground. They use their nose, (sniff, sniff, sniff), smelling. Their eyes are out, really big round eyes. Always looking, listening. Their ears just twitching back and forth. Listening for sounds, the sound of danger, the smell of danger. The sight of danger.

Every morning, little mouse sister and all her friends would see who was awake first, because they had chores to do, and little mouse sister and her group were to collect seeds and nuts and all the grasses. This one morning, little mouse sister was awake first and she would rush to the opening to the outside, stick her nose out, (sniff) (No danger!), stick her head out, and peek and look around. Listen, everything done really quick. She'd jump out and she'd say, "Come on come on," to her friends. Oh, and they'd all pile out of the hole (stretching and yawning noises). They'd stretch and stretch and yawn and go (moaning) aaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhh.

"Yeah, time to do chores. Can do a little before breakfast," and then they'd all run out and they ran on all fours just like this you know. They would get out there, and then pick all the seeds. Fairly soon, there was no more seeds on the ground. And they were standing around looking and looking. "What do we do, what do we do?" Then, little mouse sister looks up, way up there on these tall grasses. There were some seeds. Whoa, there they are! They haven't fell to the ground yet. So, then little sister started to climb, and climb. As she got higher and higher, the grass starts swerving back and forth. She loved to swing on these things. Oh, she would get up there right next to the seeds. And rather than pick them, she'd turn and look down below and said, "Watch out, watch out!" and then she'd shake it. Seeds were all over the place. Everybody was covering and running, hiding. There were seeds all over and then she'd swerve back and forth, and grab onto another grass and shake it and it looked like fun, so a whole bunch of her friends would climb up there and shake.

Pretty soon there were lots of seeds and nuts on the ground. And they would climb down and then they would gather them up, and they couldn't gather them up like we do. They didn't have hands. Oh no. Where would they put them? They would put them here, in the mouth. And they would be just filled up, and swollen, and round and then they'd run back to their home, and go into the home and then turn off to the left, go to the storage area and all the seeds set for winter were stored there. And then they would do this every day. Somebody would get up and run and check if there was any danger out and about. They'd smell, and they'd look and they'd listen and they'd jump out.

This one day the wind was blowing different. It was blowing from the west. She could hear the sound (wind sound) and then she'd stand up on her hind legs and she'd put her little paw at her ear and she would listen. (wind

sound) She'd say, "What is that?" And her friends would kind of freakily look at each other and say, "Hmm. I don't hear nothing." Then all of a sudden, one of them would stand up and listen and say, "Oh, I've heard that before but it's way over there and doesn't come any closer, doesn't go away, nothing to be afraid of." "Yeah, but what is it?" She thought, "Hmmm, Uncle would know". And she runs over to Uncle and grabs him, "Uncle, uncle, uncle." She is really excited. "Uncle, uncle, do you hear that?" He stops and he looks around and he makes a squeak and everybody freezes still. "What, what, hear what?" and he thinks it's danger and she says, "Do you hear that?" He stands up and he listens. "Hmm, oh that, it never comes any closer, never goes away. Some days the wind is blowing and it gets louder, but it's nothing to be afraid of." "But what is it?" "Oh, I have never gone that way so I can't really tell you what it is." "Grandpa ought to know, he's the oldest."

So, she runs over and sees Grandpa, and wakes him up. He's sleeping on his chair. "What's going on, what's going on?" She says, "Do you hear that?" "Is it danger, is it danger? Should we be getting.....?" "No," she says. "No, no listen, listen!" So he stands up and stretches for a while. (stretching noises) Then he listens. "Oh that, it's way over there, um, I don't think anybody has been that far, beyond our territory. No, we don't know what that is. It's nothing to be afraid of. Yeah, go about your chores and yeah, it doesn't come any closer and doesn't go away. I can hear it really loud some days, and some days you can't, so nothing to worry about." And she's sitting there thinking, but what is it? I gotta know what it is. And she goes to her parents and says "I want to go see what it is." And her parents are humming and hawing and humming and hawing. Finally they broke down because she would say "PPPPPlease sweet mom, PPPPPPlease sweet dad" and they would soften up and then they would say, "Ok, ok, tomorrow you can go." And she was so excited, so excited, and she couldn't sleep (sighing), and moving around, talking to her friends.

Finally, she went to sleep, and then one of them came and woke her up and said, "It's daybreak already, everybody's out. You're the last one sleeping!" "Oh, oh, I was going to head out." She kind of grabbed at everything and just kind of ran out. "I'm too excited to eat, I'm too excited to do anything. I'm going to see what it is." They all followed her and followed her to the edge of their territory. And it was like an invisible line. And they stopped there. And no one has been beyond that, and then she was ready to go. And everyone was saying, "Be careful Little Mouse Sister. Always look and smell and listen for danger." And she says, " Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah," and then she'd run off.

All fours just going. Run to a little clump of grass, look around really quick, look in the sky. Run, run, run, run, run. Pretty soon she'd was still running along and comes to this great big huge tree. For sure the owl or hawk or somebody would be sitting in the tree. So she starts sneaking, and sneaking, and looking. Runs from grass to grass, hide, look around. And she started getting closer and closer to the tree and she's gotta go right by it. Pretty soon she sees movement in the tree and she stops, and it's moving around, going from branch to branch. Pretty soon it comes down the tree. Runs right into a bunch of leaves. And this creatures like "OH, OH", and she's peaking and watching and watching. And he comes running back out and his mouth is just full of stuff. And he runs back out and disappears in the tree hole. "What is that thing?" and

she kind of sneaks over and she realizes that it is a four legged animal and he doesn't seem to be any danger so I'll go and ask him.

Then she kind of sneaks over there and he comes running down and she says, "Hi there!" He jumps way up in the sky and "AAAAHHHH" lands in the leaves, turns around and his eyes are really big and he's like "Holy, don't you ever scare me like that again. Hey what are you doing over here? You guys live way over there. What are you doing here, I mean, you lost? You want me to bring you home? I can walk you that way you know." "No, no, you hear that?" and he stopped and he said "Danger? Is it danger? What is it? You hear a coyote?" "No that sound?" and he listens. "Oh, that, it's a river." "River? What's a river?" "It's a big body of water, and it's all moving down that way. Just over there you go about 100 yards or so and then there is a pile of rocks there. And then you gotta climb up over it and there it is. I've got things to do" and he runs off.

She says, "A river." She has never seen a river before. She doesn't even know what it is. A big body of water. Hmmm, then she runs off again, just runnin, runnin, runnin. And then she forgets to look around, and all of a sudden she turns and says, "Oh no, a hawk I think or an owl may eat me, oh, I am toast." All of a sudden, he comes really close and he lands "Caw, Caw, what are you doing here little mouse sister?" And she's like, "Oh," and her eyes are really big. "Little mouse, you called me Little Mouse Sister", he goes, "Yeah, I fly by your guys' home all the time," and the he said, "I know where you live. What are you doing all the way out here? Are you lost? Do you want me to take you back home? You can climb on my back, and I can..." "But I am not going home." "Oh, hmm, what are you doing out here?" "I'm going over there to see the river." "Oh, the river. Oh yeah, it's just over there," he says, "It's not far. Yeah, somebody your size...hmm.... kind of small. Anyway, you get over there, and you jump really high, I mean, you know what I mean. You gotta jump really high, for you anyway. Um, you'll be able to see the other side. I see the other side all the time. I fly over there. Anyway, I got things to do. You be careful eh."

He flies off and she's like and her hearts just pounding. "Holy Smokes," and she runs and pretty soon she can see all the rocks they talk about. And she runs over and she looks around really quick, nothing, no danger, and she runs up to the rocks and she could hear it. She climbs up over the top of the rocks and she peeks. "Ah, there it is! A big body of water, all moving that way. Holy, I gotta run and tell,No, I think I have to check it out first."

And she runs down right to the riverside, sticks her paw in, and right through the stuff and she licks it. "Ahh, and that tastes good. I gotta to, I gotta go and tell that...oh Raven said if I jump high enough I'll be able to see the other side." So she crouches way down and gathers all her energy. She jumps really high, eyes wide open, hits the rocks. "Holy, I didn't see anything, oh but then again, I didn't jump as hard as I could or as high as I could." So she tries again, gathers all her energy, and she crouches way down, and jumps as high as she could and then, there it is. Big fields and trees and mountains, and whoa, and she bounces, she goes right into the water. She comes up (gasping) and she's swimming, grabs on the rocks, pulls herself up and she says "OH, Oh, I fell right through this stuff." She licks her arm, and it tastes good. "I gotta tell everybody" and she climbs up the rocks and takes a quick look around, sniffs a

little bit, nothing, and she's just running, running, running, running, running, and does not even stop for another look. And she sees, comes right by squirrel's tree, squirrel's still standing there gathering stuff and she says "Hi Squirrel" and gone by, and squirrel looks around and says, "Hi little mouse sister" and she's gone.

Then her friends are all standing there looking at her, watching, waiting to see her, and here she comes running, running, running. And then their eyes are all really big, and they all kind of back up slowly, and she comes into the crowd. She's like, and everyone backs away. She's all wet. She starts (panting) "I've seen, I've seen the river." "What? Slow down, slow down. What are you talking about?" She's breathing and everyone gathers around, and they don't come too close and they're looking at her. And she says, "I've seen the river." "River? What's a river?" "It's a big body of water, and it's all moving that way. And it rubs up on the rocks it makes this noise. That's the noise we have been hearing." And then one of her friends says, "OOH, you're all wet! It looks like coyote swallowed you and spit you out. OOH!!" "No, no, no. I fell in the river. That's why I'm wet. Taste it." Then everybody backs up. "Taste it, taste it". "No, no, no, I'm not licking you!" Everyone backs up and says, "Ok, ok, we believe you, we believe you, yes, yes, yes. But we're not licking you!" "Ahhhhh, it tastes really good!" Grandpa comes along. "Is there any seeds and nuts over there?" And she stops to think and she says, "Hmm, I wasn't looking for seeds and nuts. I'm not really sure if there is any over there." Grandpa turns and walked away, and says "Well, I guess we're not moving over there. We'll just stay here."

And that's the end of Little Mouse Sister. Part 1.