



Fall 2013

In a small rural village known as Avon lived Abigail Fieldmouse in the Pine Grove School, a one-room schoolhouse, where she made her nest under the wooden floorboards. It was a quite comfortable abode with her cozy bed made of straw, leaves, and bits and pieces of rags that she found. She had a half walnut shell as a wash basin for her face and paws, a shard of broken mirror glass to look into when she brushed her whiskers, and a small chest of drawers for her clothing made from small boxes.

The coming of Fall was an exciting time of the year for Abigail. The crisp, cool air now signaled her that winter would soon be here and she needed to ready her house for the long, cold months ahead. The school will be closed in winter so she needs to make her nest extra warm and have plenty of food stored up. But alas, the days now were sunny and bright and Abigail felt more like playing than working. She knew she would feel guilty if she did no work, so she thought about combining the two. How could she have fun and yet be productive? Hmmm. Then, it struck her. She thought of a way to store food for winter and have fun at the same time. Her plan was ingenious- especially for a little brown mouse!

Her idea was much like the board game of the future known as "Mousetrap" by Milton Bradley- except for the trap part! If you know of the game, you know that the steel marble runs through a series of obstacles until it triggers the trap to catch the mouse. Abigail's plan was to set up a similar contraption but to gather acorns instead! But she would need help. Abigail set to writing, on mousey letterhead stationary of course, little notes to her woodland friends. The notes were delivered by air mail by a friend Robin, Robin. Her nearby friends were glad to help because even in the early farming days of Avon's past, neighbor helped neighbor. Her plan called for some supplies: the school teacher's sun parasol and some long string, a funnel, a milk pail and lots of rhubarb from the garden. Rhubarb is a vegetable that looks a lot like celery but is a deep red color on the ends. The friends collected each of these items for the plan from the nearby farm and rolled or pulled them together across the dirt road to the school house. They were laughing and playing all along the way. What fun! The idea was to hoist the open, upside-down parasol tied with the string up over the limb of the nearby oak tree standing right outside the school. One of Abigail's squirrel friends, Seth, clutched the string in his mouth and ran it up the tree. Her other woodland friends, Heathcliff the chipmunk, Perfume the skunk, and her little bunny friend Button helped. They all pulled the string to raise the parasol up under the branches of the old oak tree. Abigail had gnawed a small hole in the parasol near the tip. Directly under the parasol was a funnel over a milk bucket with a rusted out hole in the side and it was propped up on a rock that created an incline. Next the rhubarb was laid end to end leading right up to the edge of the school house. This is where there is a small opening that Abigail uses as a door to go in and out to get to her nest.

Now do you see what Abigail's plan was? Her a-corn-y idea was that as the oak tree dropped its acorns, they would fall into the parasol, go out the hole, fall into the funnel, and roll out onto the curved trough of the rhubarb, and then roll right into the school house for her winter food supply. Clever Abigail! And lucky Abigail for having such good friends to play with and create memories with in the fanciful olden days of Avon's little Pine Grove School House.