



Summer 2016

The last days of summer were winding down as the early mornings were beginning to have a bit of a nip in the air. Fall was on the doorstep and the school children at the Pine Grove School House, under which Abigail Fieldmouse lived, would be returning to their studies. Abigail looked forward to the school house coming alive again with the sounds of the children, but she also knew that the change in the air meant winter was not too far off. So after dressing, brushing her whiskers and tidying up her house, Abigail decided to head into town on a passing wagon. She didn't wait long until old Mr. Rood, of a neighboring farm, was headed into town to sell some of his farm produce. She hopped aboard in the back and enjoyed the sunny, bumpy ride. They drove north along Middle Street (now West Avon Road) and passed by farms, a blacksmith shop, a tavern and some sheep being herded down the road in the other direction. Soon the wagon got into town and headed for the train depot on Simsbury Road where the post office is today. Mr. Rood was going to send some corn out of town and he had to wait while his wagon was being unloaded. This gave Abigail an opportunity to jump off the wagon. She brought some corn kernels in her basket for lunch and went to visit her kin at the nearby Church.

It was the middle of the week so no people were in the Church and Abigail scurried inside through a small hole at the base of the door lintel. As soon as she entered the sanctuary, she heard the sound of someone singing in a lovely Irish tenor voice. She knew the sound was coming from the choir loft above so she climbed up the rope behind the pulpit. And, to her surprise, it was not a person, but a mouse singing! Abigail's eyes widened as she watched this gentleman mouse gesture and pour all his emotion into the words he was singing. Abigail swooned! And then, it happened...she accidentally knocked over a stack of hymnal books...THUD! The singing mouse abruptly stopped and turned to see a very embarrassed Abigail. When he recovered from his surprise, he started to hurry away as he was a very shy mouse. But Abigail called after him and apologized for startling him. He turned back toward her and she said "Hello, my name is Abigail and I think your voice is lovely." The gentleman mouse overcame his shyness and meekly said, "hello" and that his name was Clarence Graymouse.

Abigail invited Clarence to join her in eating some corn kernels and they went downstairs outside in the garden. From this vantage point, Abigail would see when Mr. Rood was ready to ride his wagon back to his farm. She and Clarence sat under a shady bush and Abigail was very interested to know how Clarence learned to sing so beautifully. He told her that he was born in Ireland and had stowed away on a ship bound for America. He landed in Boston and made his way to Connecticut and eventually Avon by chance. He learned to sing from his father and he practiced by going into an empty barrel to make use of the acoustic sound in there. When he saw the Avon Church, he had to go inside and try out his voice in that big, two-story building where he knew the sound would resonate. He was hoping he might talk to other Church mice about forming a mouse choir. Abigail thought that was a marvelous idea and offered to speak with her family who lived

under the pulpit as they enjoyed listening to Church music each Sunday.

Abigail saw Mr. Rood watering his horses and knew she had to be at the edge of the road to hop on. Clarence asked if he could see her again. Abigail blushed, as any proper young lady of her time would have. But she said he may call on her for an early Fall picnic at the Pine Grove School House next Sunday. Abigail met a cute gentleman mouse! How would she sleep until Sunday?