



Abigail

Stardust

Galaxy

Moonglow

Celestial

Seamus

The Adventures of Abigail Fieldmouse - Wintertime Family Fun

Winter had come to Avon once again and families, both human and mouse, were enjoying spending time together. Abigail had been busy all Fall stocking the kitchen pantry with food and homemade jams for the winter. Seamus, her husband, was busy scouring the nearby lands for warm bedding for the family. He found hay across the road at Sunrise Farm, he found some cotton string that he shredded to make pillows, and he found some soft bird feathers. The family's home under the floorboards of the one-room Pine Grove School House, would be cozy and they would have plenty of food to carry them through the long winter.

Now that the school children had gone home for the season, the Fieldmouse/Graymouse kids could venture upstairs into the classroom to play. You will remember the four mouse children are named Stardust, Moonglow, Celestial, and Galaxy...three girls and a boy. The kids loved to play in the classroom! Stardust would pretend to be a teacher and hold class. Of course, she was too small to lift the teacher's hand bell but she would take a pencil and strike it to call her 'class' to order. Moonglow loved books so with Galaxy's help (he was a strong, young boy mouse) a book could be pushed off the shelf onto the floor for reading. Oh, how Moonglow loved to read as it opened her mind to faraway places and new ideas. Celestial was interested mostly in the map of the United States hanging on the wall and dreamed about traveling someday to other states. Galaxy, well what can you say? He was a typical boy mouse and loved to play with all things that moved! He would climb up the stand of the classroom world globe and then spin it as fast as he could! Boys!

The winter season was also a time for home, family and celebrating a special mouse holiday. It was called 'Merry Mus'. The word 'mus' is the scientific name for mouse. This holiday is celebrated in January by mice of all different colors and kinds whether field mouse, wood mouse, house mouse, or harvest mouse. Abigail, as her last name implies, is a field mouse (scientific name: *Apodemus*) and Seamus is a house mouse (scientific name: *Musculus*). It was a special time of year for the Fieldmouse/Graymouse family. Everyone was making homemade gifts for their family members. The gift was supposed to be something meaningful to the mouse that received it. The gift could be a piece of cheese shaped like something special; it could be a sweetly written poem about something special; or some found item crafted into something that would be treasured. After gift sharing, then the family would sit down to enjoy a lovely dinner together. Afterwards they gathered to listen to stories told by all the elder mice about their lives. The holiday

served not only as a day for gifts and food, but to pass on family traditions, family lore, and most of all the love of one generation to another.

After stories were shared and dessert of candied raisins and shortbread cookies, was the best part of all...fun in the snow! Behind the school house was a gently-sloped hill that the mouse kids had great fun sliding down. They would use anything they could find as a sled and if the snow was packed down, as it was, it was really a fast ride! After pulling a big, dried, leathery oak leaf out from under a nearby woodpile, Galaxy was up first. He had a club foot so his sisters helped him by holding the leaf for him to sit down. Then OFF he went with a push, flying down the hill like the silver streak of a shooting star! He was laughing all the way until he came to the bottom and got tossed into a snowbank. All of his sisters ran down the hill to see if he was okay, and when he shook himself off, he had white whiskers and a little white beard of snow. All the kids laughed and then took turns sliding until they were cold and tired out.

The kids went inside, back under the floorboards, where they were given a cup of hot tea and then tucked into bed with a kiss on their brow. Merry Mus to all, and to all a good night!