

Contents

1	Midnight Mouse	1
2	A Nice Family After All	7
3	Not Like the Prodigal.	13
4	The Good Humor Truck	19
5	Two Davids in One Family?	27
6	What's That Noise?.	33
7	Confusing Cousins	39
8	Big Brother	45
9	The Mean Maze	51
10	A Satisfying Evening	59
11	The White "Apple"	63
12	Foxes or a Hospital Bed?.	69
13	Stopping the Worries.	75
14	One Hundred Times Better	83
15	Owl Eyes	89
16	Where's the Roof?	97
17	Who Is Coughing?	103
18	Safe From the Indians	111
19	More Special Than Binoculars.	119
20	"Come Again Sometime!"	127
	About the Author	135
	With Gratitude....	137

Midnight Mouse



“Randy!” Mom called. “I heard that mouse trap snap again. Please go empty it, will you?”

“Sure,” Randy said. Butterfinger, the family dog, seemed to like fresh mouse meat even better than she liked dog food. Randy reached under the kitchen sink and pulled out the mouse trap. Sure enough, another mouse was caught. This was the third one since he had set the trap yesterday morning. Randy started for the entry door with the mouse trap and almost ran into his younger sister Ralenda. Quickly, he put the trap behind his back. “Guess what I have,” he teased.

“What?” Ralenda asked. “Is it something nice?”

“I think it’s nice.” Randy jerked the trap from behind his back and dangled it in front of Ralenda’s face. The slender gray tail wiggled at the end of the trap.

Chapter 1

“Randy!” shrieked Ralenda. “You are not nice!” She burst into tears and ran into the kitchen. “Mom!” she wailed. “Randy tried to . . .”

Randy didn’t stay to hear more. He grinned to himself and carried the mouse outside to Butterfinger. It made no sense to him why girls were so scared of a little old mouse.



Randy whistled for the dog. When she bounded toward him, he opened the trap and let the mouse slide out. Butterfinger caught it before it hit the ground.

“Good job!” Randy praised. He liked how well Butterfinger could catch. “I’ll be back out soon with a ball,” he promised her before running the empty trap back inside.

Mom was waiting for him in the entry. He tried to brush past her, but she stopped him. “Randy,” she said, “dangling mice in front of your sister’s face is very unkind.”

“Aw,” Randy said, “it was in a trap. It was harmless. Besides,” he added, “*I* liked it.”

“You’re a boy,” Mom said. “Most boys seem to like mice. But most girls hate them.”

“That doesn’t make sense,” Randy said. “A mouse can’t hurt anybody. Especially after it’s caught in a trap.”

“I know it doesn’t make sense,” Mom agreed. “But that’s just the way it is. Did you know that I can’t stand mice either?”

Randy shrugged. “I never thought about it,” he said. Was that why Mom always asked Dad or one of the boys to empty the traps?

“Dad can tell you a story about me and a mouse,” Mom said, with a half smile. “Go find Dad and ask him about the first mouse he killed for me.”

This sounded interesting! Randy found Dad in the shop working on the corn planter. “Dad! Mom said you have a mouse story.”

Chapter 1

“A mouse story?” Dad wiped his hands on a shop rag.
“What mouse story?”

“I don’t know. Something about the first time you killed a mouse for Mom.”

“Oh. That.” Dad grinned. “Soon after we were married, Mom heard a noise in the middle of the night. She woke me and said she was sure there was a mouse in the room. I didn’t believe her. Anyway, I thought, what did it matter if there was a mouse? It wouldn’t hurt us.” Dad shook his head. “I was wrong.”

“What?” Randy asked. “You mean a mouse hurt you?”

“Well...” Dad said. “Mom kept telling me she was sure she heard a mouse, so I finally got out of bed and turned on the light. Sure enough, I saw a gray tail scurry under the closet door. Mom had no peace until I went after it. I still can hardly believe it, but I did manage to catch the thing. Then I made a mistake. I carried the mouse by its tail over to show to Mom. She shrieked something awful.” Dad held his hands over his ears as if he could still hear her. “Her shrieking scared me so badly that I dropped that mouse, and guess what it did?”

“Ran away?”

“Worse than that,” Dad said. “It got tangled up in the sheet and squeaked loudly. Mom stood straight up in bed and shrieked some more. The mouse was squeaking, and Mom was shrieking, and well . . . that was the worst midnight I’ve ever had.”

By now Randy was doubled over laughing. It was too funny, picturing Dad running after a mouse while Mom stood on the bed shrieking. “Did you catch it?” he asked.

Dad nodded. “I finally balled the sheet up around it and carried the whole works outside. I went far out into the field and dumped the critter out. When I got back into the house, Mom was still standing on the bed.”

“Still shrieking?” Randy asked with a chuckle.

“No, but she wasn’t very happy. That was the night I learned how horrified of mice most girls and ladies are. Ever since then, I try to sneak the trap out when none of them are looking.” Dad stopped and looked long at Randy. “Mom must have had a reason for wanting you to hear this story. What was the reason?”

Randy looked down. “I just tried showing a mouse to Ralenda, and she didn’t like it.”

“Ah-ha,” Dad said.

“But it doesn’t make sense!” Randy protested. “Why was she scared of a little old mouse? Especially if it was in a trap?”

Dad shook his head. “I really don’t know. I can’t say I understand it either. But we need to accept that it’s one of the ways God made most girls and ladies different from boys and men. God makes most men braver and stronger than ladies. It’s our job to be kind and protective of them even if we don’t understand their fears. Does that make sense?”

“Sort of,” Randy said.

Chapter 1

“So even if you think Ralenda shouldn’t have been scared of your mouse, you had no business dangling it in front of her face. Please go apologize to her, and I don’t want you to ever do such a thing again,” Dad said. “All right?”

“Okay,” Randy agreed.

The next morning Randy heard a *snap* under the sink. Before Mom noticed, he quietly opened the cupboard door and grabbed the trap. He sneaked out the back door, threw the mouse to Butterfinger, crept back in, and reset the trap. To his surprise, this secret made him feel a whole lot happier than teasing his sister had.

A Nice Family After All



Randy's heart beat faster as he gently separated the wiggling mound of fur and counted the puppies again. Sure enough, there were ten. He could hardly believe Butterfinger had ten puppies! He slid the squeaking bodies together before running to the shop to tell Dad.

"Dad, guess what!" Randy announced.

Dad poked his head out from under the big McCormick tractor. "What's that?"

"Butterfinger had *ten* puppies!"

Dad grinned. "I noticed. Cute, aren't they?"

"Sure are," Randy agreed. "I'm glad it's summertime so I can be with them more."

"I guess that's all you'll do now," his brother Landon teased from where he was rummaging in the bolt bin.