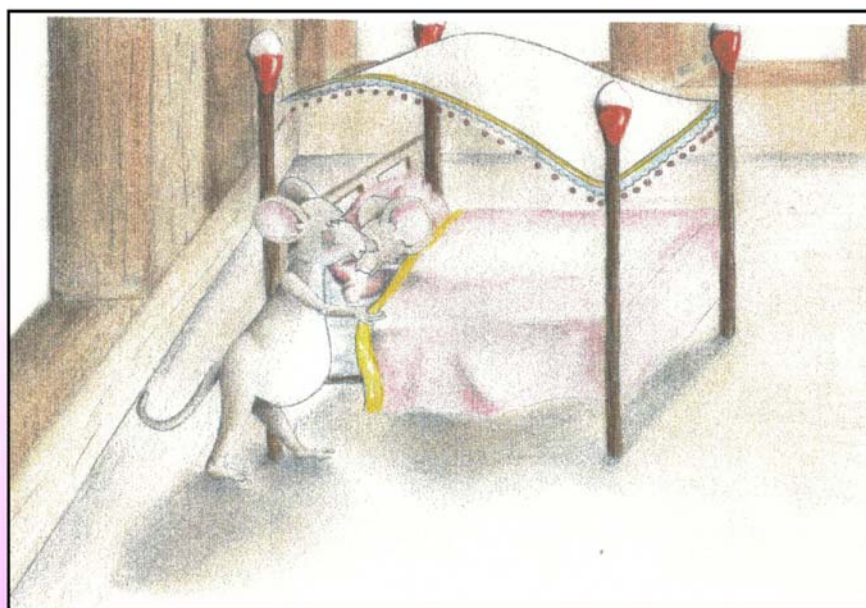


# **A Mouse In The House**



**By Ruth Y. Nott**  
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# A Mouse in the House

By Ruth Y. Nott

A New Fable for the Child in All of Us



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By Ruth Y. Nott



## Dedication

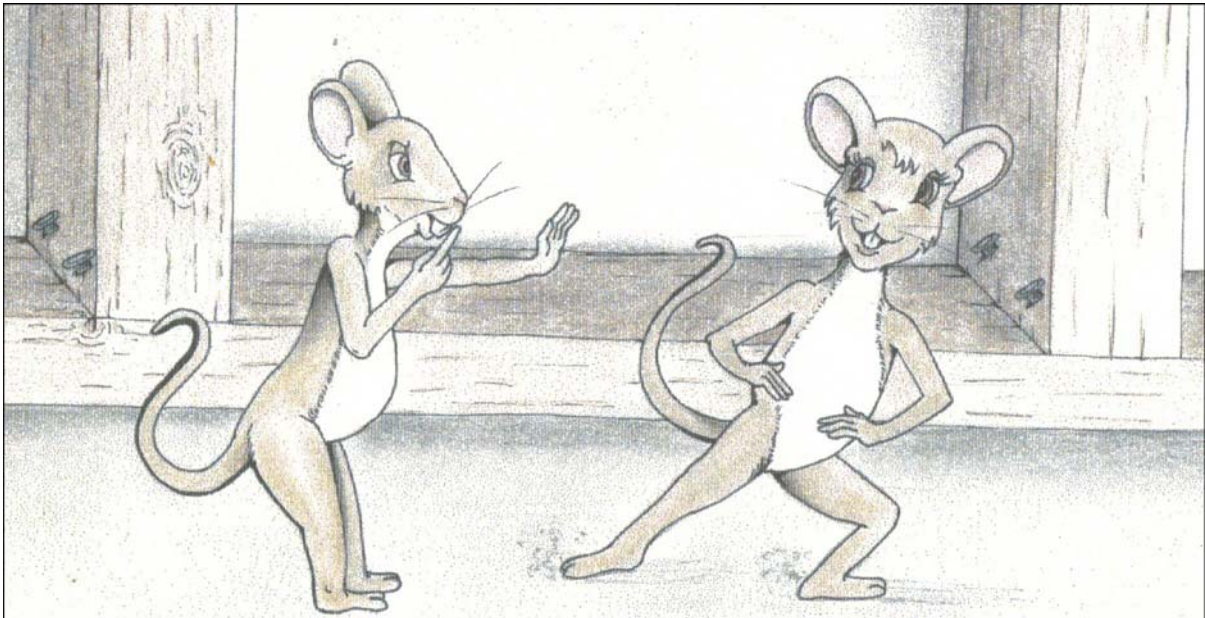
This book is dedicated to all who believe – for all things are possible if you open your heart to the Word.

My special thanks to James Melton, a friend, who graciously donated the illustrations for “A Mouse in the House” before his untimely death.



## A Mouse in the House

"Marvin, Marvin! Guess what?!" squealed Martha Mouse as she scurried through the tiny hole in the kitchen wall and slid to a breathless stop in front of Marvin.



"Martha, please..." shushed Marvin, "How many times will I have to tell you not to shout like that when there are people in the kitchen? If they hear us, they'll bring that awful cat in the house again! Now shhhh..." He motioned for her to be quiet and beckoned for her to follow him as he moved silently along between the walls until they could no longer hear the sounds of Mrs. Harris shuffling about in the kitchen.



"This seems like a safe place," Marvin whispered as he settled into a dusty corner.

"Then why are you whispering?" chided Martha.

"Okay, okay, let's have it... What were you so excited about?" Marvin flicked his long tail and watched the dust rise into the air and drift slowly down again forming new patterns on the floor.

"Ah-ah-choo! Ah-ah-ah-choo! Do you have to play dust designer when I'm around Marvin? You know it makes me sneeze!"

"Sorry."

"Well, you should be. Oh, oh, the news! Mama's going to have babies again! Isn't it wonderful?" Martha danced excitedly around Marvin, unwittingly creating another dust storm all about herself. "Ah-choo, ah-choo, ah-choo, ah-ah-ah-choooooo!"

"Ha, ha, ha, he, he, he, ha, ha, ha!" Marvin couldn't keep from laughing at her predicament.

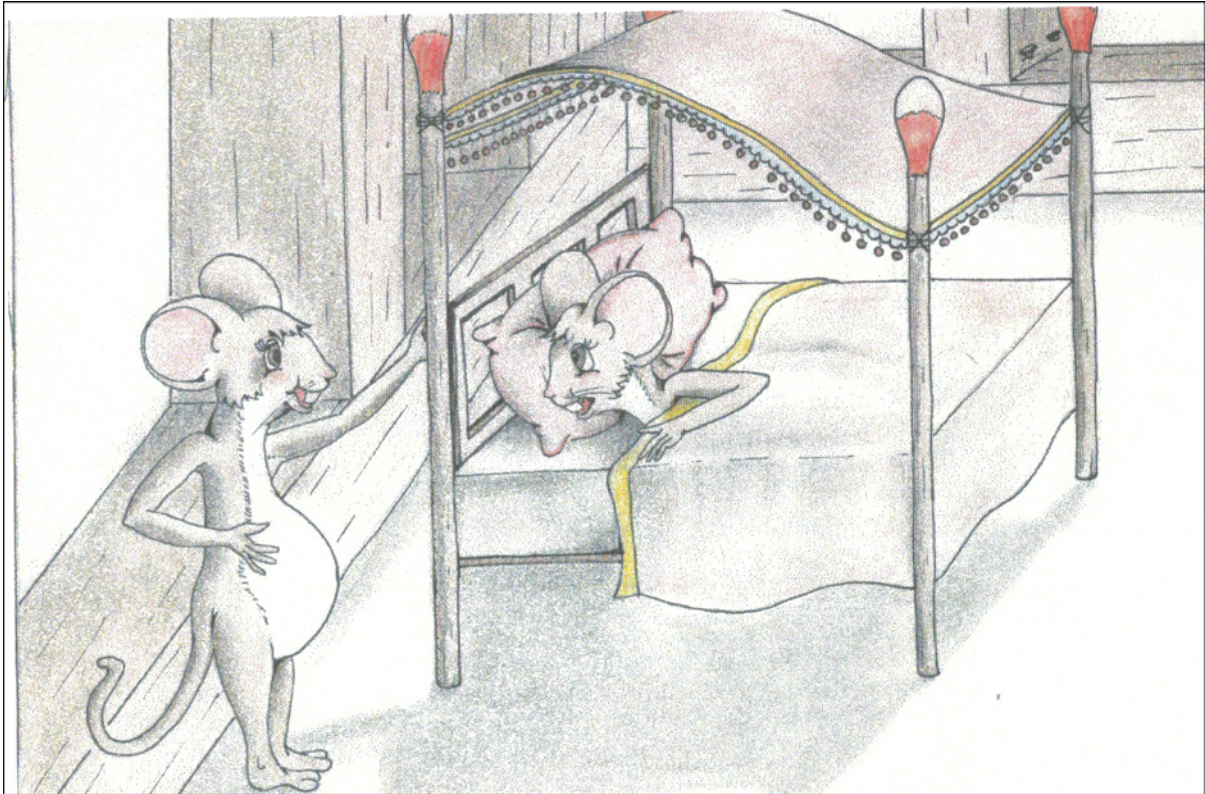
"That does it! See if I ever tell you any more surprises!" and Martha stalked angrily back along the wall and disappeared through the hole into the kitchen the same way she had come.

"Eeeeeeeek!! A mouse in the house!" screamed Mrs. Harris.

"Now you've done it," muttered Marvin from his dusty corner behind the wall.

Later that evening, as Mama Mouse was tucking Martha into bed, Martha asked, "Mama, what's it like to have babies?"

"Oh, Martha," crooned Mama, "It's a wonderful, miraculous experience. One day you'll know."



"But you get fat Mama. How can that be so wonderful?"

"Fat, yes," Mama giggled, "but only for a little while. Surely you aren't worried about your girlish figure? Not my Martha who eats 24 hours a day! If you don't worry about all that food making you fat, surely a few little babies won't bother you."

"Well, don't babies cry a lot? I went to visit with Mary Mouse this afternoon and her babies were crying, crying, crying!" said

Martha, making little wailing noises to show her mother how they sounded.

"I suppose they do, most of them anyway. You did for sure! Say, my little chatterbox, why don't you just lie back and close your eyes and mama will tell you a story about one baby who lived a long, long time ago, a human baby, who cried hardly at all."

"Okay Mama," and little Martha snuggled down among the warm covers, closed her eyes and opened her ears and waited for mama to begin.

"Once upon a time..."

"Oh Mama!" Martha's eyes popped open. "It's a make-believe story isn't it?"

"No, it's true."

"But make-believe stories always start with 'Once upon a time'..."

"Oh," Mama conceded, "how about 'Long, long ago'?"

"Okay," and Martha settled back and closed her eyes once more.

"Long, long ago, and far, far away, in a town called Bethlehem, a very special birth took place. It was almost dark when the human couple, Joseph and Mary were their names..."

"Mary?" piped Martha, "Just like my friend Mary?"

"Close your eyes. Yes, just like your friend Mary. And this Mary was going to have a baby very soon; not a lot of babies like we do, but just one baby as humans usually do.

“Riding a donkey, Mary came to Bethlehem, as Joseph walked slowly beside them. They were weary from the long trip and Mary slumped forward weakly on the donkey's back trying to hold on a little longer until Joseph could find a room for them to stay overnight.

“It was almost dark when they came into Bethlehem that day. Their late arrival was bad luck for these two young humans, for each inn and home they came to was full, no room for two more weary travelers, no beds, not even a corner to sleep in. This was the time of registration and so many people had come, each from his own town of residence, back to the town of his birth, to register for the tax as decreed by Caesar.”

"Caesar?" interrupted Martha.

"Yes, he was the ruler of all those people at that time, and not a very nice man either."

"Oh." Martha wiggled restlessly beneath the covers.





Mama Mouse continued, "When Joseph heard Mary's heavy breathing and little cries, he knew they must have someplace to rest...and now. So, when the last innkeeper mentioned there might be room in his stable, Joseph eagerly agreed and followed the little man to a small musty stable behind the inn where ox and cow, mule and pig, chickens and ducks... and quite a large family of mice resided.

"Joseph thanked the innkeeper and paid him the number of coins he asked, even though it was far too much for such poor accommodations.

“As the innkeeper turned to go, Joseph was already helping Mary down from the donkey. He then spread the donkey's blanket on the straw-covered floor for Mary to lie upon.



“Mary was thankful for a place to rest, even if it was among the animals. The baby would be born very soon and she was in a great deal of pain.”

Little Martha Mouse sat straight up in bed. "Mama, why was she hurting so bad? Does it hurt to have a baby?"

"Lie down little one and listen," Mama replied. "Yes, it hurts to have a baby, and sometimes the pain can go on for many long hours..."

"That does it! No babies for me, no siree!" Martha wailed.

"Oh, don't be silly child," Mama scolded as she once more pushed Martha back down on the bed and pulled the cover up to her chin. "You'll want to have babies when the time comes because this pain is a glorious ending to weeks of waiting, months for humans, and a glorious beginning for new life. When you see those cute little babies squirming and crying and needing you so much, why child, you won't even remember one little bit of what that pain was like, not one little bit!

"But, Mary was probably thinking just like you right about then, thinking things like...Why am I here?...Why did I agree to this?...Was the angel telling me the truth?...Am I really about to give birth to the Son of God?...Why does it hurt so much?!"

Martha wasn't anywhere near asleep. She grabbed her mother's arm and asked excitedly, "Son of God? Angel? Mama, who was this Mary anyway, a goddess?"

"No, Martha, Mary was just a poor country girl. But one day, many months before, an angel had come to her and told her she had been chosen for a most wonderful task. She was to be the mother of the Savior, the Son of God. And, because Mary loved God and always tried to do what was right, she agreed to be the mother of this very special child."

"Oh, wow," breathed Martha in a long sigh. "She was lucky God picked her!"



"Yes, but for a while Mary didn't feel very lucky because Joseph almost didn't marry her when he found out she was going to have a baby. But God's angel talked to Joseph too and made him understand that Mary was to be honored and she had nothing to be ashamed of."

"So they got married, right?" Martha asked.

"Yes."

"And Joseph still loved Mary?"

"Yes child, he loved her even more than ever. But you stop interrupting now and let me get on with the story.

"Joseph covered Mary with another blanket taken from their small pack and sat beside her. He rubbed her back and held her hand.

'Joseph,' whispered Mary, 'I need a woman to help me. I've never had a baby before and I'm frightened. Please, Joseph, go to the innkeeper and ask where there might be a woman who can help.' And she clutched his hand real tight and tears ran slowly down her cheeks as the pain began again.

'But I don't want to leave you,' Joseph pleaded. 'What if something happens while I'm gone? What if I can't find anyone?' He was perhaps more frightened than Mary.

'The Lord will watch over me. Now go, please, and hurry!'

Joseph rose to his knees. 'Are you sure?'

'Yes, hurry!' Mary begged.



“Against his own wishes, Joseph left her there in the corner of the little stable among the noisy animals and went out to find help in the crowded, unfamiliar town.

“As Mary waited, she prayed. ‘My Lord, you have given me this child to bear within my body and you have cared for us these many months. Please Lord, if this child is truly your son, help us now in the time of our suffering. I am young Lord, and I don't know what to do.’

“As Mary spoke, somehow, the sounds of the animals in the stable began to change, and instead of whinnies and moos and cackling and squeals, she heard voices...

‘Oh, oh...’ cried Michael Mule, ‘How can we help her? I'm just a stupid mule. I don't know what to do!’

‘Well, I'm a woman,’ said Catherine Cow, ‘but I've never had a baby yet myself so what can I do?’

“Obadiah Ox stomped the floor with his strong hooves and bellowed so that all could hear, ‘Somebody get Marion Mouse out here right now! Right now you hear! If anyone knows about birthing babies, it's Marion Mouse. Lord knows she must have had a hundred of them!’

‘Marion! Marion!’ cackled Henrietta Hen as she ran from corner to corner of the little stable checking each little mouse hole for her friend the mouse.

‘Marion, we need you right now!’

“It wasn't long before Marion appeared with little Minerva and Minetta, the twins, tagging along at her heels.

‘Such a ruckus! Such a ruckus! How's a family to eat dinner in peace with all this racket going on out here?!’

‘We need you Marion,’ called Obadiah Ox. ‘This poor young girl is having a baby and there's no one to help her. We figured you would know everything about that business!’

‘Oh pooh! There's nothing to it!;’ chuckled Marion. ‘Here girl,’ she cooed as she scampered over the blanket and up to Mary's shoulder. ‘No more tears now. We'll get this baby born!’

‘Mary was so surprised at what she heard and saw that she had almost forgotten the pain... ‘A mouse? How can you help me?’ She signed and then screamed aloud as the pain returned, much stronger than before.

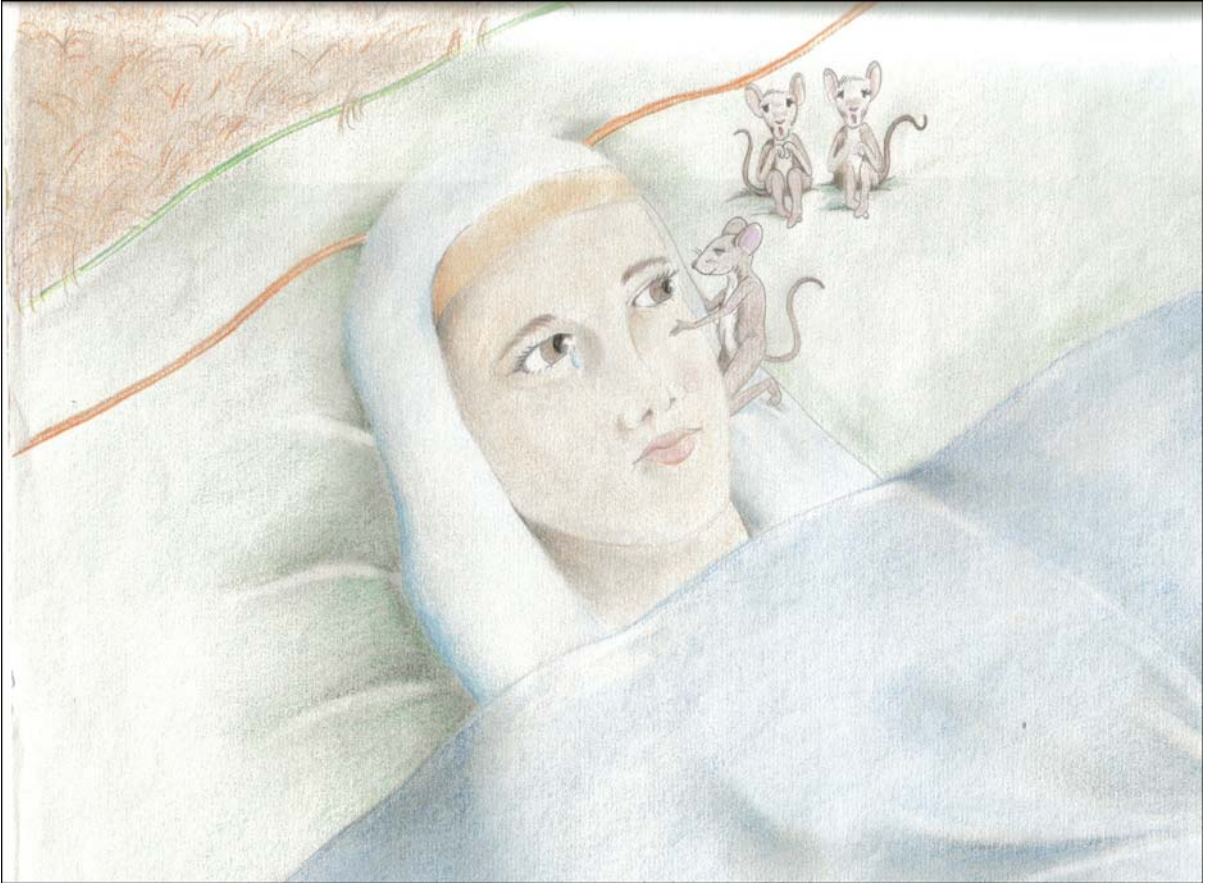
‘There, there girl,’ Marion spoke quietly and calmly. ‘First you have to relax. Just let go and east yourself right out of that pain. Let it wash over you like waves on a beach and it will subside just as quickly as they do.’

Marion then motioned for Minerva and Minetta to join her and, sitting there so close to Mary's ear, she asked them to sing.

‘Sing Mama?!’ they chorused.

‘Yes dears, a nice lullaby like I sing to you at bedtime.’

‘And, as the mouse duet softly crooned the lovely lullaby, Marion moved close to Mary's other ear and whispered, ‘Breathe deeply and slowly now. It's not quite time, not quite time.’ And Mary really did feel comforted. She knew the Lord had sent help, just as she had asked.



“And this is how Joseph found them when he came running back into the stable to tell Mary that he couldn't find anyone to help her.

‘Oh no! Shoo! Shoo!’ he shouted, and he reached for his staff to strike out at the mice on Mary's shoulder.

‘No! Joseph, no! These are our friends!’ cried Mary as Marion, Minerva and Minetta ran to hide beneath the folds of her blanket.

‘Friends? These vermin?!’ Joseph couldn't believe his ears.

‘Joseph, I prayed to God for help and he sent these little friends to help until your return. You must thank them, and do so quickly for my time is near and I still need their help.’

‘Thank a bunch of mice?’

‘Yes, Joseph.’

‘Oh, alright, if it pleases you,’ and he put down the staff and knelt beside her. ‘Thank you mice for whatever help you have given my Mary.’

‘You're very welcome sir,’ squealed Marion, Minerva and Minetta in unison. But Joseph heard only their little mice squeals and not the words that Mary heard, and he could only hold her hand and wipe the sweat from her forehead and wonder at the meaning of all he had seen and heard.

‘You must breathe faster now,’ guided Marion as she spoke knowingly to Mary, ‘and push with your stomach muscles. Again now, push!’ And Mary did as she was told, again and again, until at last blessed relief, and Joseph held the whimpering little boy-child up high so that Mary could see her new son.

‘Jesus, my son and Lord,’ she sighed. ‘Marion, look what a fine son we have. Look what we have done together.’



“As all the animals watched, Mary held her son close in her arms.

‘He smiled at me!’ beamed Coretta Cow.

‘Be quiet!’ chided Marion Mouse ‘Let Mary and the baby get some rest now,’ And she hurried Minerva and Minetta back into the little mouse hole in the corner of the stable. And outside, a heavenly chorus of angels could be heard singing the very same little mouse lullaby to the now sleeping baby that they had sung to Mary just a short time before.’

Mama Mouse finished the story and once more pulled the covers up to Martha's chin. “And that, little one, is why some humans still feel that it's good luck to find a mouse in the house when a new baby is on the way.”

"Will you sing me the mouse lullaby Mama?" Martha mumbled drowsily.

"Yes dear. It goes like this...

*Hush-a-bye, hush-a-bye, close your eyes.*

*Gentle angels whisper sweetly in your ear.*

*Hush-a-bye, hush-a-bye, don't you cry.*

*Let their voices gently soothe away your tears.*

*Hush-a-bye, hush-a-bye, close your eyes.*

*Close your eyes little friend and have no fear.*

*Hush-a-bye, hush-a-bye, don't you cry.*

*We're always here to hold you close, my dear."*

"Good night Mama."

"Good night little one. Pleasant dreams."

To learn more about this author, visit <http://www.ruthnott.com>.