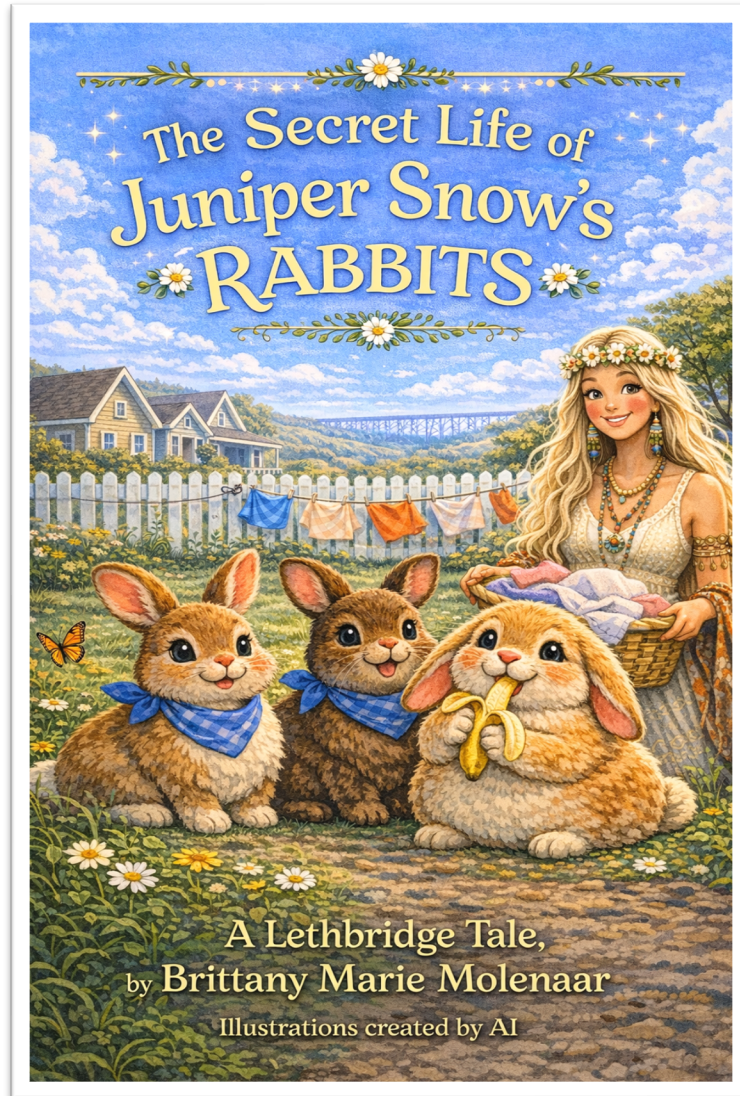


The Secret Life of Juniper Snow's Rabbits

Episode 4, Part 2: Mopsy and the Prairie Pack

A Night of Narrow Escapes



An Easy Reader

Grade 5

Independent Reader

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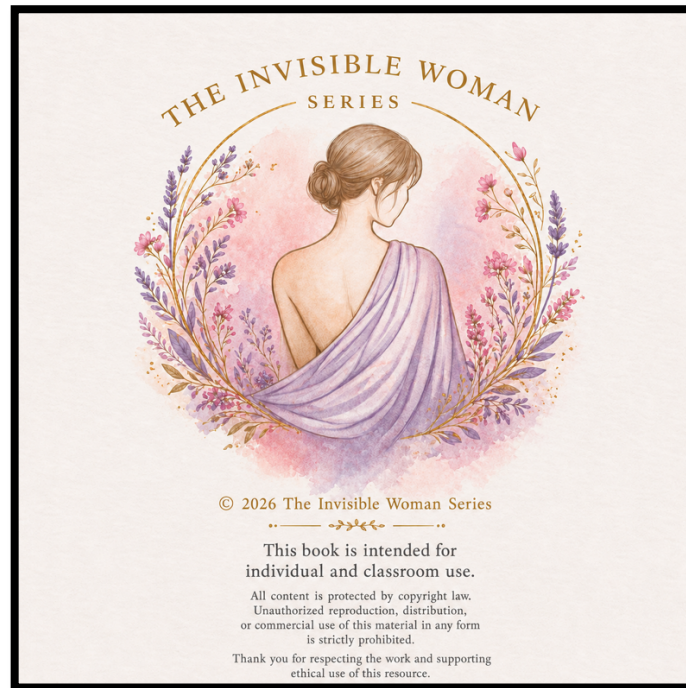
Story and characters by Brittany Marie Molenaar

"A Lethbridge Tale"

Illustrations created with AI

Easy Reader Edition — Grade 5 (Independent Reader)

First Easy Reader edition, 2026



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This Easy Reader is an adaptation of the original story, simplified for the listed grade level and aligned with the Alberta English Language Arts and Literature curriculum (Kindergarten–Grade 6). The storyline and illustrations follow the original work.

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Out of the darkness, shapes emerged — one by one. Glowing eyes. Crooked grins. They circled her. At the center stood a scruffy coyote with a patchy grey-and-silver coat, a crooked eyepatch, and a tattered red scarf. “Baron Von Biteyface,” he announced proudly. “Ahem... we shall conquer this opportunity at once, eh!” Mopsy felt fear wash over her, and she trembled all over.



But Mopsy wasn't just any rabbit. She was Juniper Snow's rabbit, and Juniper Snow's rabbits were clever. She thought quickly under pressure, and something shifted inside of her. She lifted her chin. "Oh dear... you're too late." The coyotes paused. "Too late?" the Baron asked. "There's a much bigger rabbit over that ridge — round as a hay bale!" The pack turned. "Bigger, you say...?" "Forward, my pack!" shouted the gullible, impulsive Baron. They bolted.



All but one. Snaggle-tooth Steve lingered, watching with that nasty snaggletooth sticking out of his hideous jaw. He hadn't fallen for the trick.



“Hey there, little rabbit...” grinned Steve, his jaw dripping oozy saliva onto his paws. “We eatin’ or talkin’, eh?” Mopsy’s eyes darted from side to side. Her little heart hammered, thump-thump-thump-thump. But thinking quickly, she didn’t wait for him to advance upon her.



She simply turned and ran — hopping, zigging, and zagging as fast as she could. Steve — that slobbery, dim-witted monstrosity — couldn't keep up, as much as he tried. He stumbled and tripped after her, and before long, she lost that blithering, mangy beast.



Mopsy was both shocked and relieved: she had done it! She danced in celebration. She WAS brave after all! “Ha! Those carrot-brained coyotes couldn’t get the best of me!” A shadow passed overhead. The owl. Oh, no! “From the oven... back into the fire!” yelled Mopsy.



She darted. The owl swooped. Claws grazed her fur. She shrieked! She picked up her speed and burst into the wheat field. Golden stalks swallowed her. Behind her, paws thundered. The coyotes had figured it out. Now, she had two predators: air and land! What was Mopsy going to do?



“OW — who put all this wheat here?!” Sam demanded. “It’s a field, you fool!” shouted the Baron. There, thought Mopsy. She dove beneath a rusted, discarded milk pail and hid. “Come out, come out, wherever you are...” She clenched her jaw and squeezed her eyes tightly, bracing for what was yet to come — until — BANG! Something made a loud sound in the distance. The coyotes’ heads shot up. “A-HA! Why chase after a snack when we can have a meal!” directed the Baron, and the gang took off after the sound.



At last, the wheat field quieted, and exhausted, Mopsy stayed hidden for a long time. As time went by, the gang came crashing back, each thoroughly annoyed with their leader. Baron Von Biteyface marched forward dramatically. “That was a strategic retreat, eh?” “We ran the wrong way,” said Snaggle-tooth Steve. “With purpose,” the Baron replied. Sam sniffed. “...She played us.” Silence.



“Okay, but what if that rabbit rats us out to the whole farm?” worried Ned. “They’re goats watching hockey,” Sam said. “Hockey, you say?” said the Baron, rubbing his furry chin. The pack leaned in. “We strike during the game.” “...We’re gonna get distracted, dude,” replied Sam. “Me likes hockey!” Boots exclaimed. “...After the game, then,” snarled the Baron. “SHOOT THE PUCK, EH!!” cheered the goats in the distance.



On the opposite side of the wheat field, Mopsy trembled. “I don’t know where I am,” she whispered to the darkness. Then — a soft sound above. Perched on a scarecrow was the owl. “My name is Ksiistsikomm,” he announced. “I come in peace. If I wished to eat you... you would not be standing.” Somehow, Mopsy believed him. In that moment, she saw the owl for who he really was — a friend.



"I'm lost," responded Mopsy. "Yes." "I didn't listen," she said, looking down at her little rabbit paws. "You learned." Ksiistsikomm gave her a wink and glided ahead. Guiding. Not chasing. Mopsy followed. Step... step... step... The wheat thinned. The moon returned. And at last — the Gregory fence! She understood now. Juniper Snow's fence wasn't there to keep her in... it was there to keep everything else out. "Bravery is not being unafraid," lingered the owl's voice on the wind, "...it is learning how to return."



Mopsy had returned home at last. She had overcome many obstacles in just one night — and if she could overcome that, she had the courage to overcome anything. She took courage at the thought, prouder than she had ever been.



But somewhere out on the prairie, by the fence, multiple sets of glowing eyes snapped open. “Let’s just make some goat-BBQ instead,” the coyotes plotted. “Best plan yet,” Chewbert declared, licking his chops. Thankfully, the coyotes didn’t know that Juniper Snow’s rabbits also had excellent hearing, and Mopsy heard exactly what that infamous gang was plotting. Bravery didn’t mean that you didn’t get scared. It meant doing the right thing, even when you were scared, no matter the cost. She needed to save those innocent, hockey-loving goats! And tonight — for the very first time — she wasn’t running away from them. She was running toward something bigger. To be continued...

Teacher & Family Guide

Reading level: Grade 5 — Independent Reader.

Curriculum focus: Advanced word study (Greek/Latin roots, morphology), fluency, and critical comprehension (Alberta ELA & Literature — Grade 5).

Themes: Courage and growing up • Cleverness over strength • Friendship in unexpected places • Home as a place of safety • Doing the right thing even when afraid.

Key Words

Vocabulary from the story, chosen to match what readers at this level are learning to read and understand.

- **conquer** — to defeat or take control of
- **cultured** — refined; having good taste and manners
- **level-headed** — calm and sensible
- **prestigious** — respected and admired
- **obstacle** — something that stands in the way
- **courage** — the ability to do something that frightens you

Let's Talk About It — Questions

Comprehension questions for this grade, using Alberta's before/during/after reading strategies (recall, inferencing, predicting, visualizing, connecting, and analyzing).

1. Is Mopsy's decision to go back and help the goats brave or reckless? Defend your view with evidence. (evaluate)
2. The Baron keeps repeating "With purpose." What does this reveal about him? (characterization)
3. How does the author use humour to balance the story's scary moments? (author's craft)
4. Interpret the owl's words: "Bravery is not being unafraid... it is learning how to return." How does this connect to Mopsy's journey? (theme)
5. The story ends "to be continued." Using clues from the text, predict what happens next and justify your thinking. (predict / infer)

Sound Play — Phonemic Awareness

Short sound activities that build phonological and phonemic awareness with words from the story.

By this grade, Alberta's focus shifts from early phonemic awareness toward word study and morphology — using sounds, roots, and word parts to read and understand longer words.

Roots that build meaning

- “predator” (Latin praedari, to seize), “obstacle” (ob- “against” + stare “to stand”)

Morphology

- Add or change affixes: brave → bravery → bravely; courage → courageous → encourage.

Syllable stress

- Say each word and tap the strongest beat: in-FA-mous, im-PUL-sive, PRES-ti-gious.

Fluency challenge

- Perform the goats-and-coyotes scene aloud as readers' theatre, using each character's distinct voice.