



The Secret Life of
Juniper Snow's
RABBITS

A Lethbridge Tale,
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Illustrations created by AI

Part 2: Mopsy and the Prairie Pack: A Night of Narrow Escapes

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.

Mopsy felt fear wash over her, and she trembled all over.



“Baron Von Biteyface,” he announced proudly.

“Ahem... we shall conquer this opportunity at once, eh!”

Around her, the pack crept closer. Bitey Boots, the stupidest coyote, stomped in excitement and chewed a stick dangling from his big, dumb mouth.

Snaggle-tooth Steve, a slightly less-stupid coyote, stepped forward, drooling. A snaggletooth appeared out of his big, idiotic jaw, which gleamed with his own drool.

“Is we gonna bite ‘em now, Baron?” rumbled Bitey Boots, again.

“Okay, okay, okay, we sneak in, nibble a bit—oh no, I’m panicking,” muttered Ned. “I’m JUST SO HUNGRY!”

“Hey there, little rabbit...” grinned Steve, his jaw dripping oozy saliva on his paws, “We eatin’ or talkin’, eh?”

“Behold! A feast beneath the moon!” cried Chewbert, who thought himself to be the most prestigious and cultured coyote in the gang.

“Real easy, boys...” murmured Sam, a slightly more level-headed hipped-up coyote with a gotee. “No fuss.”

Mopsy’s eyes darted from side to side. Her little heart hammered, thump-thump-thump-thump!

They were going to eat her.



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, and 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 Barron.

They bolted.

All but one.



Snaggle-tooth Steve lingered.

Watching with that nasty snaggle tooth sticking out of his hideous jaw.



Thinking quickly, Mopsy 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 a nearby 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 Barron.

“I HATE FIELDS!” Yelled Bitey Boots.

There, thought Mopsy.

Mopsy dove beneath a rusted, discarded milk pail and hid.

Silence.

“Come out, come out, wherever you are...”

Oh, no, Mopsy was surrounded,

Now she was in for it... It was all over for little Mopsy. She was never going to prove to herself that she was brave enough. She was never going to see her sisters again, her backyard, or the Snow children.

Poor little Mopsy.

The end was near.

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! Maybe there really was a bigger rabbit, eh? Why chase after a snack when we can have a meal!” directed the greasy Barron, and the gang took off, again, after the sound.

At last, the wheat field quieted. Exhausted, Mopsy quivered from ear to tail. She stayed there, hidden in her rusted milk pail, for a long time.



As time went by, off in the distance—directly opposite Mopsy—was a gang of very annoyed coyotes. Their tummies grumbled, and each member was thoroughly annoyed with their leader. The tension was threatening.

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.



“...No bigger rabbit for Bootsy?” Boots asked foolishly.

“Nope.”

Ned, the youngest and hungriest coyote, panicked.

“I KNEW IT—”

“I was testing her,” the Baron insisted. “I have the rabbit right where I want her.”

“You told us to run,” Steve spat.

“With purpose,” the Barron assured them.

“I lost my boot,” Boots added.

“...Go get it.”

“Which one?” asked the dim-witted Boots

“...The one you’re not wearing, eh!” growled the Barron.

“Okay, but what if that rabbit straight-up rats us out to the whole farm?” Ned, worried.

“They’re goats watching hockey,” Sam said.

Pause.

“Okay, okay, chill—I’m in,”

“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.

They all paused.

“...we should hurry.”



On the opposite side of the wheat field, Mopsy trembled.

“I don’t know where I am...” she whispered to the darkness.

Silence.

Then—a soft sound above.

The owl.



“My name is Ksiistsikomm.” Announced the owl, “I come in peace.”

Somehow, Mopsy believed him, and she remembered the wise owl’s words.

“If I wished to eat you... You would not be standing.”

In that moment, she saw the owl for who he really was, a friend. He wasn’t trying to chase her; he was only trying to save her!

“I’m lost...” responded Mopsy.

“Yes.”

“I didn’t listen...” She looked 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!



Mopsy stopped.

She understood now.

Juniper Snow's fence wasn't there to keep her in...

It was there to keep everything else out.

She turned—

The owl was gone, but his voice lingered on the wind:

“Bravery is not being unafraid... it is learning how to return.”



Suddenly, from a distance, came the howls of some very annoyed coyotes.

“We ran the wrong way!” Snaggle-tooth Steve asserted.

“With purpose.” Replied the Barron.

“...She’s gone,” uttered Sam.

“Brooo... that rabbit was FAST,” burst out Ned.

“Let’s just make some goat-BBQ instead,” returned Sam.

“Best plan yet,” Chewbert declared, licking his chops.

“But me wanted rabbit for supper!” whined Boots.

“Next time,” assured the Baron.



“HE SHOOTS... HE SCORES... BLEEEAAAT!”

“Let’s get started...” whispered the Barron.

Mopsy lifted her head and adjusted her ears. Thankfully, the coyotes didn’t know that Juniper Snow’s rabbits also had excellent hearing, and Mopsy heard what that infamous coyote gang was plotting in the distance. She had wanted to prove she was brave, and now she knew how—bravery meant something different than what she had originally thought. 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 some innocent, hockey-loving goats!

She took courage at the thought. She had overcome many obstacles in just one night. If she could overcome that, then she had the courage to overcome anything!

Somewhere out on the prairie... she knew there was a pack of coyotes already planning their next mistake.

And tonight—

for the very first time—

She wasn't running away from them.

She was running *toward something bigger*.

Behind her, the wheat whispered.

Ahead, the Gregory farm lights flickered on.

And not too far off in the darkness...

Multiple sets of glowing eyes snapped open.

To be continued...