

The Mopsy Rescue

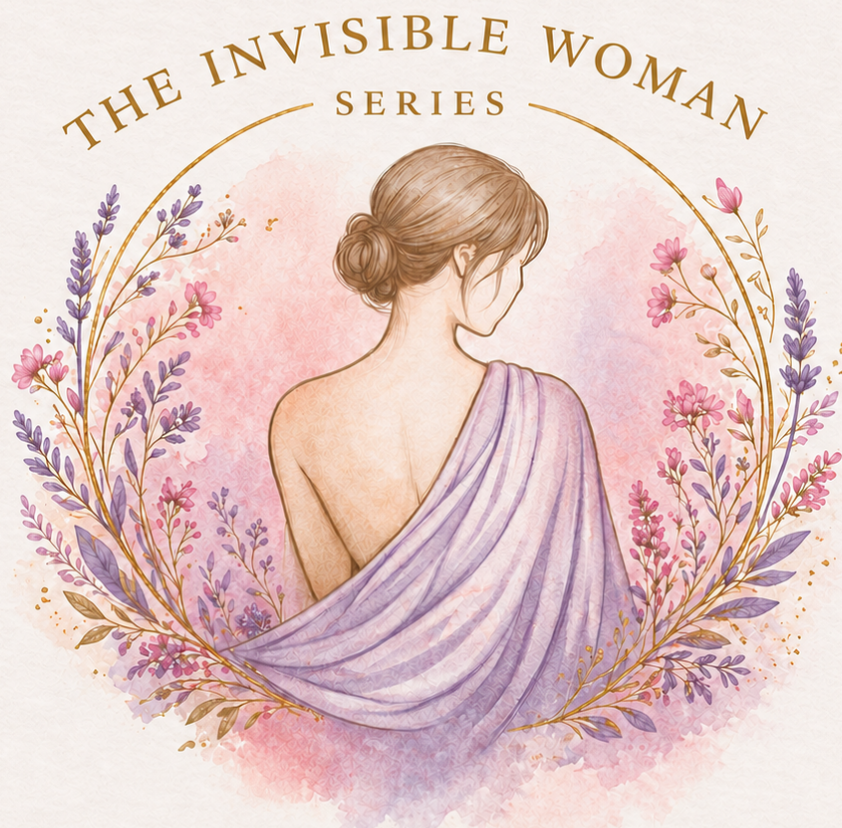
and the Prairie Showdown at Gregory Farm

A Levelled Reader for Grade 4



A story about being brave — even when you feel scared.

Reading level: Fluent Reader



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The prairie wind whispered through the tall, golden wheat as Flopsy, Big Bertha, Cheeto Puff, and Fluff Butt marched forward on a very important mission: they were going to rescue Mopsy! Together, the two teams — the Midnight Munchers and Crunch & Thunder — stepped out from the safety of home and into the wide, unknown world. The sun was already climbing higher. It was almost lunchtime, and that was a problem.



Cheeto Puff's tummy rumbled. Not a small rumble. A long, dramatic, life-altering rumble. He clutched his round, burrito-shaped belly. "I've never missed a meal in my life," he whispered, his heart sinking right along with his tummy. The day was moving faster now, and somewhere out there, Mopsy was waiting.



But as they made their way toward Gregory Farm, none of them noticed the distant shapes shifting in the wheat — or the eyes watching from afar. They had escaped Stinky Pete ... but they hadn't rescued Mopsy. Not yet. And at this rate, they might not make it home by suppertime.



Big Bertha led the way like a fearless ninja general. Cheeto Puff was distracted; staring down at his rumbling belly, he tripped over nearly everything. “We should call you the Marshmallow Ninja — you are far too soft for a real adventure!” said Fluff Butt. “You are such a hypocrite,” whined the hangry Cheeto Puff. “I know that you are hungry too!” “No,” Fluff Butt lied, turning pink in the cheeks — because she too had stopped often, mostly looking for snacks. She couldn’t find any. Not one.



Flopsy stayed close behind, her little heart beating just a little faster with every step. Mopsy ... my poor sister, she thought. Then — the wheat shifted. Just a little. Eyes gleamed in the tall grass. And then — “DINNER, eh-hh!?” howled Baron Von Biteyface as the coyote crew burst forward. Flopsy froze. Big Bertha gasped. Cheeto Puff fell over. “Not again! I want to eat dinner — not BE dinner!”



The coyotes circled closer. And closer. And closer. Now, remember, Juniper Snow's rabbits were not quite like other rabbits. They were smart, they were tough (even if they didn't yet know it), and they could hear everything. They knew how to move swiftly when they wanted to, and to think like the prairie wind — quick, quiet, and just a little bit wild. And right now ... they were going to need every bit of that.



But far across the prairie, Mopsy was not waiting to be rescued. Not even a little. She stood beside her new friends ... or rather, rode one of them. Perched proudly, bareback, she sat astride her new, stalwart steed — Murph: the hockey-loving, Canadian talking, rodeo-goat-stallion. He was brave. He was bold. He was hilariously wild. And no one — no one — dared to cross the Murph-myster, as he called himself.



Murph the Billy Goat stomped the ground with unmistakable confidence. Once. Twice. Dust kicked up beneath his hooves. And beside him — SKRRRT — WHOOSH! — something fast was about to roll into view.



SKRRRT — WHOOSH! Millie rolled forward. On two legs. Like a real hockey-loving hero. Her cobbled-together rollerblades (rescued from the dump) rattled slightly beneath her hooves, but she didn't care. Her hockey helmet — one of Mr. Gregory's from his youth — sat a little crooked, with two carefully cut holes so her horns could poke through. Her hockey stick, taped and re-taped and definitely loved, rested firmly in her grip. Ready. Always ready.



Millie tilted her head toward the prairie. “Looks like your friends are in trouble ... eh?” Mopsy didn’t hesitate. Not for a second. She leaned forward slightly, steady and sure. “Then
let’s go.”



Back in the wheat, the coyotes crept closer. Closer ... Closer ...

Until —



THUNDERING HOOVES. "MOVE!" shouted a familiar voice. Flopsy blinked. "MOPSY?!" Mopsy charged in on Murph's back, with Millie racing beside them like a blur. Millie didn't slow down. CRASH! She body-checked a coyote into a rock.



WHACK! Another coyote spun into a hay pile. Millie skidded to a stop, pointing her stick. "You wanna go?!" she shouted.



"I can drop the gloves — eh?!" she shouted. The coyotes watched her closely. Millie was fearless, and she wanted them to know it.



She lifted her helmet slightly. Her horns poked out. The coyotes hesitated — but only for a moment.



Then they spotted something new: LUNCH! The group of cats and rabbits huddled together near some trees. The coyotes grinned. “New plan,” growled Baron Von Biteyface. “Leave these goats, we will eat them instead.” They turned and charged.



But by this point, the cats and rabbits were ready. And remember — Juniper Snow’s rabbits were not like ordinary rabbits. Not even close. “AWE MAN!” moaned Flopsy. “How many times are we going to get eaten in one day?!” “TEAM Crunch & Thunder, LET’S GO,” the cats chanted together. “Ready, Midnight Muncher?” Big Bertha asked Flopsy. “Yeah ... okay! Let’s save ourselves, and then we’ll save Mopsy!” she replied, a little braver this time.



In a flash, the rabbits leapt onto the backs of Cheeto Puff and
Fluff Butt — and up they went. Climbing. Scrambling.
Scratching their way into the trees — quick as two shakes of
a rabbit's tail.



High above the ground, Cheeto Puff and Fluff Butt balanced on thick branches, their bunny friends riding along. Across from them, the cats positioned themselves kitty-corner in neighbouring trees, tails flicking, eyes locked on the target.

The rabbits hopped down onto the branches. Then — they turned around. Backsides out. Bent over. What were they up to now? Cheeto Puff locked eyes with Fluff Butt. A serious nod passed between them. “READY!” shouted Cheeto Puff. Carrots went in.



And then — POP! POP! POP! Rabbit beans BLASTED through the air in bright, colourful bursts — like a rabbity, jellybean-shooting machine gun. Cheeto Puff and Fluff Butt aimed straight at the dim-witted coyote gang — and fired. Again. And again. And again. PING! PLOP! POP! Rabbit beans smacked into snouts, ears, and eyeballs.



One zipped straight into Snaggle-Tooth Steve's ear. "Ow! Ow! OW!" he howled, spinning in circles. "TAKE COVER!" yowled the Baron, just as he too was pelted again and again by bouncing bunny beans. Bitey Boots opened his big, foolish mouth to yell — "OOOOO-WOW-WOW-WOW!" — and POP! A rabbit bean flew straight in. Gulp. He froze.



He froze. Smacked his lips. Licked his chops. “Uh ... guys?” he said slowly. “... that bunny bullet was tasty.” The coyotes paused. Sniffed. Tasted another. And then —



"THESE ARE DELICIOUS!" yelled Bitey Boots. Suddenly, they weren't dodging. They were SNACKING. Gobbling beans mid-air. Scrambling for more. Fighting each other over the tastiest ones. And just like that ... the plan had completely backfired.



Flopsy watched everything. Mopsy was brave. Millie was fearless. Murph was strong. And her friends were trying — even if it was messy. Something inside her shifted. Bravery wasn't about being the biggest. It wasn't about being the loudest. It was about stepping forward ... even when you were scared. Flopsy took a deep breath. Then she ran and JUMPED right out of the tree. Hit a few branches on the way down. OWW! BLAM! OOOOF! She stood, shook her little rabbity ears, dusted herself off, then — not so gracefully — climbed up behind Mopsy on Murph's back.



“Let’s do this ...” Mopsy gave the word. Murph charged.

“AAAAAHHH!” THUMP! He donkey-kicked a coyote backward.

STOMP! Another tripped and tumbled. Millie skated circles around them. “LAST CHANCE, EH?!” she shouted. “YOU WANNA FIGHT OR WHAT?!” She tapped her stick on the ground. The coyotes looked around — at the goats, at the flying rabbit beans, at the chaos, at Flopsy, no longer afraid.

They panicked. Slipping on jellybeans, crashing into each other, yelping and tumbling — the coyotes ran.



“We’ll be back!” they howled from a distance ... but not very convincingly. The prairie grew quiet again. Millie rolled to a stop. Murph snorted proudly. Cheeto Puff and Fluff Butt were SO HUNGRY that they were eating the leftover carrots.

“Where did all these carrots come from, anyhow?” asked Cheeto Puff, munching away. “Jellybeans just shot out of our rabbits ... You don’t want to know,” replied Fluff Butt. Cheeto

looked at his carrot with some concern, then shook his fluffy head and kept eating. He was too hungry to care.



Big Bertha puffed up. “We had that handled,” she said smugly. “Um, guys, can someone get me down, please?”

Everyone stared at her. Then laughed. Flopsy looked at Mopsy. Mopsy smiled. No words were needed. Flopsy had changed. She hadn’t hidden. She hadn’t waited. She had stepped forward. She had been brave. Far beyond Gregory Farm, hidden deep in the wheat, the coyotes gathered again. “Next time ...” growled Baron Von Biteyface, “... we bring

something bigger.” And this time ... they weren’t coming for
jellybeans.

Sound Play: Phonemic Awareness

Word and sound study. Say the longer words aloud, then break them into parts.

1. Segment multisyllabic words: ad·ven·ture, hi·lar·i·ous·ly, un·mis·tak·a·ble. Say each syllable, then blend it smoothly.
2. Find the stress: which syllable is stressed — CON·fi·dence, re·TREAT, de·LI·cious?
3. Sounds vs letters: how many sounds do you hear in thunder? in charged? Where do letters and sounds not match?
4. Build with chunks: fear + less = fearless; courage + ous = courageous. Read each new word aloud.
5. Manipulate: say stalwart without the /t/; swap the /b/ in backfired for /m/. How does it change?

Words to Know

whispered — spoke in a very soft, quiet voice

dramatic — exciting, with strong feeling

stalwart — loyal, strong, and dependable

confidence — a strong belief in yourself

hesitate — to pause because you feel unsure

hypocrite — someone who says one thing but does another

courageous — brave; willing to face fear

backfired — had the opposite result from what was planned

Let's Talk About It

Questions to check understanding and spark discussion.

1. Explain the friends' mission and what gets in their way.

Use details from the story.

2. Compare Mopsy at the start (waiting to be rescued) with Mopsy in the middle. What does this tell you about her?

3. The plan to fight the coyotes backfires. Why does this happen, and why is it funny?

4. Find a sentence that shows Flopsy's feelings changing. How do you know she has grown braver?

5. The story ends with the coyotes planning to "bring something bigger." What do you predict happens next? Give reasons.

For Teachers & Families: Alberta Curriculum Tie-In

This levelled reader aligns with the new Alberta Grade 4 English Language Arts and Literature curriculum. It supports fluent Reading and deeper Comprehension (inferring, comparing, and predicting with evidence), rich Vocabulary, and the analysis of Literature (character development, theme, and author's craft such as word choice and sentence variety). The response questions develop creative and critical thinking, as well as written communication, across the reading, writing, and representing strands.

Reference: Alberta Education, English Language Arts and Literature (K–6), new LearnAlberta curriculum (curriculum.learnalberta.ca).