

The Princess Mouse

Told by Aaron Shepard

Adapted by LHU Language Center

Characters:

Narrators 1–4, Mikko, Princess Mouse, Farmer, Brother

NARRATOR 1: Once there was a farmer with two sons.
One morning he said to them,

FARMER: Boys, you're old enough now to marry. But in
our family, we have our own way to choose a bride.

NARRATOR 4: The younger son nodded and listened
respectfully, but the older one said,

BROTHER: (*rudely*) You've told us, Father. We must each
cut down a tree and see where it points.

FARMER: That's right. Then walk that way till you find a
sweetheart.

NARRATOR 2: Now, the older son already knew who he
wanted to marry.

NARRATOR 3: The younger son, whose name was Mikko,
didn't have a sweetheart.

NARRATOR 1: The two young men went their ways.
Mikko walked through the forest for hours without seeing
a soul.

NARRATOR 4: But when he went inside, he saw no one.

MIKKO: (*sadly*) All this way for nothing.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Maybe not!

NARRATOR 2: Mikko looked around, but the only living
thing in sight was a little mouse on a table.

MIKKO: Did you say something?

PRINCESS MOUSE: Of course I did! Now, why don't you tell me your name and what you came for?

NARRATOR 3: Mikko had never talked with a mouse, but he felt it only polite to reply.

MIKKO: My name is Mikko, and I've come looking for a sweetheart.

PRINCESS MOUSE: (*squeals in delight*) Why, Mikko, I'll gladly be your sweetheart!

MIKKO: (*confused*) But you're only a mouse.

PRINCESS MOUSE: That may be true, but I can still love you faithfully.

MIKKO: (*kindly*) All right, little mouse, you can be my sweetheart.

PRINCESS MOUSE: (*happily*) Oh, Mikko! I promise you won't be sorry.

NARRATOR 1: When Mikko got home, his brother was already there boasting to their father.

BROTHER: My sweetheart has rosy red cheeks and long golden hair.

FARMER: Sounds very nice. And what about yours, Mikko?

MIKKO: Mine wears a velvet gown!

NARRATOR 2: His brother stopped laughing.

FARMER: Now I must test both your sweethearts. Tomorrow you'll ask them to weave you some cloth, then you'll bring it home to me.

NARRATOR 1: When Mikko reached the cottage in the woods, there was the little mouse on the table, jumping up and down in happiness.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Oh, Mikko, I'm so glad you're here! Is this the day of our wedding?

NARRATOR 4: Mikko sighed and gently stroked her fur.

MIKKO: (*glumly*) Not yet, little mouse.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Why, Mikko, you look so sad! What's wrong?

MIKKO: My father wants you to weave some cloth. But how can you do that? You're only a mouse!

PRINCESS MOUSE: That may be true. Mikko's sweetheart can weave! Now, why don't you rest while I work?

NARRATOR 3: When the little mouse was sure that Mikko was asleep, she picked up a sleigh bell on a cord and rang it.

NARRATOR 1: Out of mouse holes all around the room poured hundreds of mice.

NARRATOR 4: They all stood before the table, gazing up at her.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Hurry! Each of you, fetch a strand of the finest flax.

NARRATOR 2: The mice rushed from the cottage.

NARRATOR 3: Then one, two, three, and each with a strand of flax.

NARRATOR 1: First they spun it into yarn on the spinning wheel.

NARRATORS 2-4 (or OTHER MICE): *Whirr. Whirr. Whirr.*

NARRATOR 1: Then they strung the yarn on the loom and wove it into cloth.

PRINCESS MOUSE: (*calling*) Mikko, wake up! It's time to go home! And here is something for your father.

MIKKO: Thank you, little mouse.

FARMER: Where is yours, Mikko?

NARRATOR 4: Mikko blushed and handed him the nutshell.

BROTHER: (*scornfully*) Look at that! Mikko asked for cloth, and his sweetheart gave him a nut!

NARRATOR 2: The farmer opened the nutshell and peered inside. Then he pinched at something and started to pull. It *kept* coming too, yard after yard after yard.

FARMER: There can be no better weaver than Mikko's sweetheart! But both your sweethearts will do just fine. Tomorrow you'll bring them home for the wedding.

NARRATOR 1: When Mikko arrived at the cottage next morning, the little mouse again jumped up and down.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Oh, Mikko, is this the day of our wedding?

MIKKO: (*glumly*) It is, little mouse.

NARRATOR 4: But he sounded more glum than ever.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Why, Mikko, what's wrong?

NARRATOR 2: Mikko looked at the little mouse, gazing at him so seriously with her large, bright eyes.

MIKKO: (*decisively*) I think you're as sweet as any sweetheart could be. Today you'll be my bride.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Oh, Mikko, you've made me the happiest mouse in the world!

NARRATOR 1: She rang her sleigh bell, and to Mikko's astonishment, a little carriage raced into the room.

NARRATOR 4: It was made from a nutshell and pulled by four black rats.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Mikko, aren't you going to help me down?

NARRATOR 2: Mikko lifted her from the table and set her in the carriage.

NARRATOR 1: At last they reached the farm and then the spot for the wedding, on the bank of a flowing stream.

NARRATOR 4: The guests were already there enjoying themselves.

BROTHER: (*loudly*) That's the stupidest thing I ever saw.

NARRATOR 3: And with one quick kick, he sent the carriage, the rats, and the mice, all into the stream.

MIKKO: (*beside himself*) What have you done! You've killed my sweetheart!

BROTHER: Are you crazy? That was only a mouse!

MIKKO: (*defiantly but near tears*) She may have been a mouse, but she was also my sweetheart, and I really did love her!

FARMER: Mikko, look!

NARRATOR 4: All the guests were staring downstream and pointing and crying out in wonder.

NARRATOR 2: Mikko turned and to his amazement saw four black horses pulling a carriage out of the stream.

NARRATOR 3: A coachman sat in front and a footman behind, and inside was a soaked but lovely princess.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Mikko, aren't you going to help me down?

MIKKO: Are you the little mouse?

PRINCESS MOUSE: (*laughing*) I surely was, but no longer. A witch enchanted me, and the spell could be broken only by one brother who wanted to marry me and another who wanted to kill me.

NARRATOR 1: The next day, the princess brought Mikko back to her cottage—

NARRATOR 4: but it was a cottage no longer!

NARRATOR 2: It was a castle with hundreds of servants,

NARRATOR 3: and there they made their home happily.

NARRATOR 1: And if Mikko and the princess had any sons,

ALL: you know just how they chose their brides.