

The Adventures of **Phillip Mouse**



Greg Campbell



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*For my children,
Who are the reason this Story
Came to Life.*

I love you.

A NOTE TO THE READER

You are about to embark on a journey.

That's what a book is: a journey to another world. It is play between your imagination and the words on the page. Our minds (being intellect, creativity) and our hearts (emotions, all of them) are sparked and carried along by the little markings we call letters on these pages.

I love stories. I hope you do, too. Stories draw us in by the surprise and joy of the adventure; and also, as we get to know the characters of the story, we intertwine ourselves with their story, and they with ours.

If you have read classics by writers like Tolkien and Lewis, Dickens and Verne, Twain and even E. B. White, you likely realize there is more demanded of the reader by those works. The depth of the human experience they communicate through story is inspiring.

I hope this story challenges you as well as those authors can. That was partly my intention. If you are a younger reader, you may want to have a dictionary handy to look up—and learn—some new vocabulary as you go along.

(If you're reading an electronic version of this book, hold your finger on a word you'd like defined and you'll see an option to do so pop up above it.)

My family has enjoyed the tale of Phillip Mouse, and all his friends, and their adventures together. I hope you will, too.

—Greg Campbell

INTRODUCTION

Phillip was a happy little mouse. Why wouldn't he be? He lived in a beautiful meadow, with a lovely big tree, a wonderful little brook, and the big, blue sky stretching over his head everywhere he looked.

He had a great Mom mouse and Dad mouse, and twenty-three brother and sister mice. There were two brothers and twenty-one sisters. (Yes, that's a lot of sisters! And Phillip loves every one of them.)

Life was pretty good for Phillip Mouse.

The only trouble Phillip ever had—ever!—was a direct result of his curiosity. He was so incredibly curious. Everything was exciting and new and wonderful to Phillip Mouse. Each day, each night, each *moment* held some great possibility.

This is the story of one day when Phillip's curiosity got him in the *most* trouble of his *life*!

It also happened to be the greatest adventure, probably of anyone who ever lived in the meadow!

1 - *That Van*

The day was going along quite nicely for Phillip. He'd had fun scampering through the meadow with both of his brother mice, and enjoyed a game with one of his sisters—and he very much enjoyed scaring another of his sisters when he startled her as she came out of their home, not knowing he had been waiting there to surprise her, as little brothers are so good at doing.

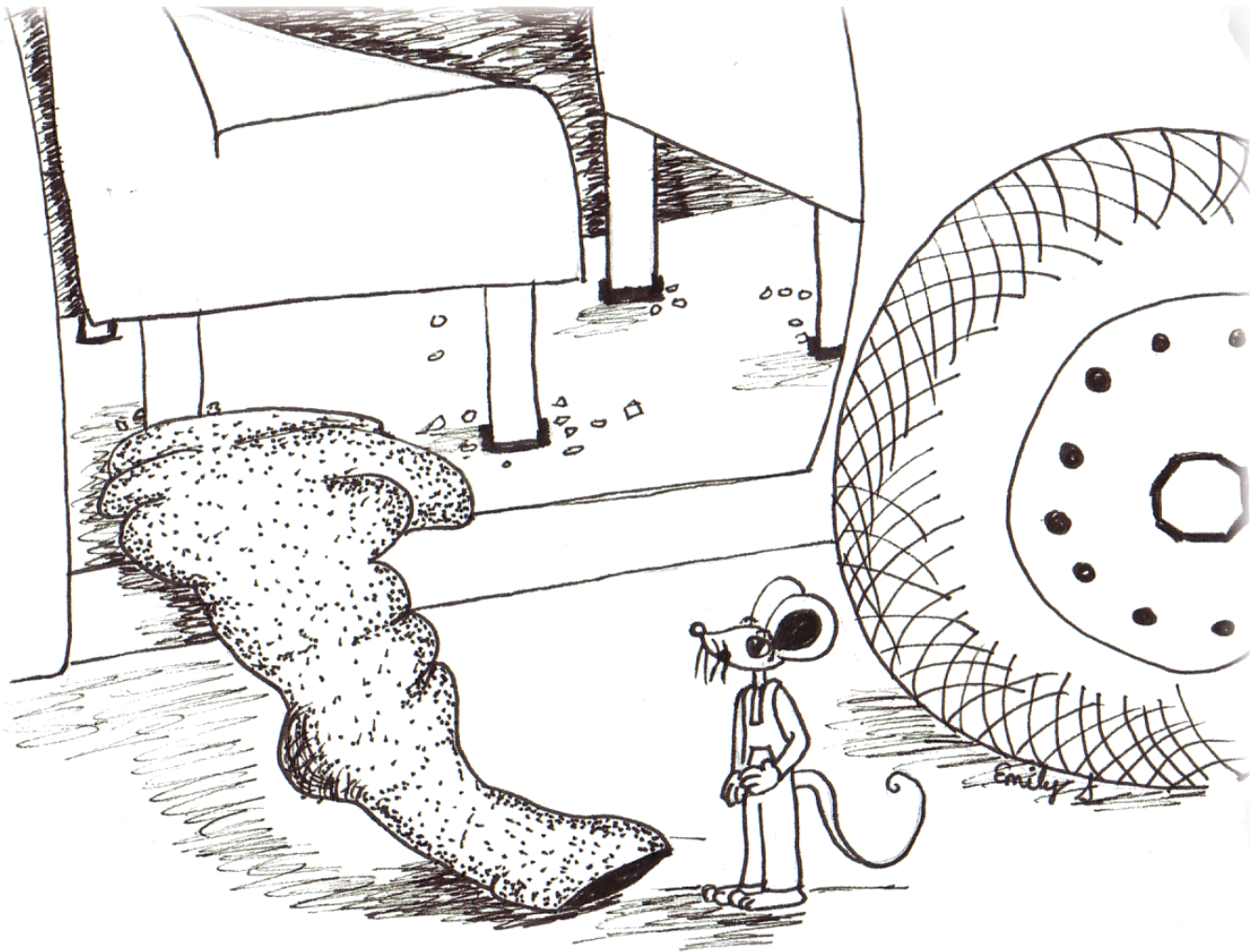
In general, it was a very normal, ordinary day.

Until he spotted that van.

Where Phillip lived, it was not unusual to see any number of vehicles, nor all shapes and sizes of People at any time of the day or night, all year round. Their home was beautiful; apparently even the People thought so. Visitors and vehicles were a regular sight.

But this time, he had left the door open.

A young visitor to the Meadow was packing up his van as he prepared to depart, and—much to Phillip's surprise—he left the side door *wide* open! As you can well imagine, this was far too great an opportunity to pass up for Curious Phillip Mouse!



Phillip dashed off toward the vehicle, wary of crossing the path of any of the other People on his way to the open van door. His little mouse nose twitched from side to side as he scurried toward the treasure, sniffing for any potential hazards he might encounter, and exhilarated by the incredible fortune this visitor had just bestowed upon him!

As he approached the vehicle, he began wondering to himself how he might get up into this van, far too tall for a tiny mouse, whose legs are far too short. Thankfully, Phillip Mouse was not only curious, he was also very intelligent, and resourceful.

But in this case, he didn't need to be any of those things.

The visitor who left his door open was also apparently quite sloppy. When Phillip reached the van, a jacket arm was hanging down from the open door!

"That looks strong enough to hold me," Phillip thought, and without much further thought—up he went!

He clambered up the denim ramp and what opened up before his eyes was more glorious than he could ever have imagined! Under the enormous seats of the People van, covering the great, carpeted expanse surrounding Phillip were thousands of bits of food!

"Probably *millions* of them!" thought Phillip.

His little mouse feet couldn't move fast enough! He ran straight for the closest, largest chunk—cheese! Never had a mouse had better fortune than had Phillip that day, in that van, in that Meadow!

He enjoyed several chunks of cheese, a few bits of pretzels—even some pretzels with cheese filling inside them! Oh the joy!—and crackers, and some raisins, and a few bits of vegetables, too. (But those were much more rare.)

It looked like Phillip's curiosity had actually served him well this time, rather than get him into trouble. Phillip was enjoying this lovely thought when his nose began twitching, and his eyes caught movement up above...

THE PERSON WAS BACK!

For a moment, they both stared at each other without moving. The Person, towering high above Phillip, with an expression of surprise, and—Phillip was quite certain, knowing it so well himself—*curiosity*. Phillip's face showed a bit of terror, but there was a distinct note of pleasure and satisfaction remaining from the deep joy his wonderful discovery had stirred in him. One might have enjoyed this moment for some time had not both creatures begun to process all the information as quickly as they are so endowed to do. Once processed, both brains sent limbs into action!

The Person moved with surprising alacrity as he stretched his long arm limberly under the seats that partially blocked his access to Phillip. At the same time, Phillip quickly bolted farther under the seat, seeking further shelter. Unsuccessfully the large arm swung back and forth,

throwing those delicious crumbs of food here and there—one caromed right off Phillip's scared little nose!

Phillip darted toward a hole he spotted at the base of the legs of one of the seats. Down inside he went, hoping that he'd found enough shelter. The Person was inside the van now, on his enormous hands and knees, trying desperately to reach this small, furry intruder. Phillip held his breath, waiting for, *hoping* the Person would just give up and he could make a break for the still-open door, and run as fast as he could, straight home.

It seemed like forever, but the Person finally gave up. He backed out of the van, swept the food crumbs off his palms and knees, and to Phillip's great surprise, he shut the door!

"Oh no!" squeaked Phillip, aloud, "What am I going to do now?!"

He cautiously left his secure hiding space, hoping to find some other means of exit. There had to be some other way! Perhaps his curiosity would serve him well again?

Aware of all noises, sights, smells, and even those uncanny "sixth sense" sensations that a mouse can sometimes have, he frantically scanned his surroundings for any crack, crevice, or opening big enough for a mouse. He was completely unsuccessful! Everywhere he looked, he was shut in!

Then the other door at the front of the van opened. Phillip's muscles tightened for an instant, ready to spring to his release, but before he even saw any opening, he heard the door close, and the large Person was sitting down in the seat.

Afraid of being discovered, Phillip quickly retreated to his hiding spot under the seat, feeling scared, very sad, and already thinking of how much he missed his Mom and Dad, and twenty-three brothers and sisters.

"Will I ever see them again?" Phillip wondered, as he felt the van begin to move, taking him somewhere—he had no idea where—away from the Meadow.