

The Adventures of Commoner Mouse

by Helen Young

Chapter 1

Scene 1

The mouse Princess of Brivilian, Miri Paumster, leans against the banister on her balcony as she stares into the night beyond her mansion walls. She crosses her arms atop the stone banister, resting her head on them as her eyes scan the front yard and starry sky. The young mouse sighs through her nose as she thinks about the next day. Dread fills her since she knows her mother will be hosting her birthday party. Before that is the parade she will be partaking in. She needs to act all happy so her people don't know she's disgruntled.

A quiet knock raps behind her. "Miri?"

The blonde furred mouse turns to her mother. "Yes, Mom?"

Caitlyn smiles and walks quietly over to her. "Are you eager for tomorrow?" She asks.

"Not really," the young mouse answers honestly. She sees her mother frown and smiles. "But I'll have fun. I'll try to, okay?"

"Thank you, sweetie." Caitlyn hugs her daughter close, pecking her cheek. "I know you don't particularly enjoy big events, but it's your

sixteenth birthday. Talia and Bree have had grand parties for theirs. I just want to be fair to you, too.”

Miri chuckles a little as her mother fingers the longer tresses of fur on her head. “Thanks, Mom. Just don’t go overboard. Our mansion can only hold so many mice.” When the dark blonde furred mouse smiles sheepishly, Miri knows her mother has already invited everyone in the city. “Mom,” she whines.

“It’s only for one day, and our people like seeing how their princesses are growing!” Caitlyn defends herself. “Anyway, not every mouse will make it. It’s just common courtesy to invite everyone.”

“I don’t know everyone in our city!” Miri takes a few steps away, turning and leaning against her balcony banister again. “I’m lucky to know the few I do. My sisters are better with remembering our citizens than I am.”

“You have friends, don’t you?”

Miri remains silent, frowning. Being cooped up in the mansion and unable to venture outside has made it hard for her to gain friends like her sisters have. She doesn’t even know if anyone from the other mouse settlements out there would want to be friends with her. Talia, her eldest sister, tells her enough about the other mice out there. Hearing how different other settlements are makes her want to get out into the world even more.

Gazing out over the city, Miri muses to herself, “Most of the people I would like to be friends with are either in other cities because that’s where their family rules, or are so busy working in a family establishment they can’t hang out with me!”

She sighs, slouching, and says under her breath, “I would be lucky if even one of them had enough time for tea.” Then Miri is silent again, near to tears.

At her daughter’s silence, the Queen of Brivilian exhales with a shake of her head. “I’m sorry, dear.”

“No, it’s not your fault. Not really,” Miri says, without turning.

“I know it’s hard not having friends. And I realize that it’s because of the restrictions your father and I have on you. But it’s—”

“Only for my safety, you and Dad say. I know,” Miri interrupts, glancing over her shoulder at her mom. “Mom, I’m not a pup anymore. Neither are Talia and Bree. Why can’t we go out without some guards on our tails?”

“Because the world is a harsh place, darling,” her mother responds. She approaches Miri and rests a hand on her back, rubbing light circles with her paw. “I’ve seen what happens to other mice out there.”

Caitlyn recalls several instances of her own friends no longer coming home after venturing outside. She even remembers Miri disappearing as a pup. Caitlyn's husband, King Nelson, had everyone

searching for their young daughter until she was given back to them by some kind mice that found her picking wildflowers, oblivious to the danger she was in. Caitlyn's heart clenches from the memory. "I don't wish for any of you to experience such hardships," she whispers while reminding herself her daughter is here and safe.

"How are we supposed to prepare for life out there in the 'harsh world' if you won't let us experience those things?" Miri slides away, causing her mother to frown. "I've been cooped up since I can remember. I'd like to get out there and see the world." Miri turns back around and peers longingly out over the glowing city again. "It's so boring here..."

Caitlyn reaches for her daughter again but retracts her paw. "Maybe one day, dear. For now, be excited for the parade. You'll be going down Main Street in that pretty dress we got for you."

The youngest princess stays silent, pondering. It would be better than remaining inside the mansion for another day. If she could think of it as a small adventure, maybe she could get through the parade. "I'm not happy about the float."

"Now you're just being picky." The queen grins.

Miri chuckles, caught red pawed. "Maybe." She pushes away from the banister and goes to embrace her mother. "I'll try to be happy for tomorrow, Mom. I promise. But you know how I can be."

Her mother hugs back. "That I do." Kissing Miri's head, Caitlyn

releases her and smiles fondly. “Get some rest, child. It’ll be a busy day tomorrow.”

The blond mouse nods, swearing she will be in bed after another minute outside. Then, she’s left alone and she gazes at the night sky. The city lights make it hard for her to see the stars but there are a few scattered in the black expanse. She searches for more, noticing one shooting across the dark space. Quickly, she clasps her hands together and closes her eyes.

“Please have something different happen tomorrow. It’d be cool if I could go on a small adventure, more than just running around the top of a float. Anything would be okay as long as I can feel the thrill of leaving Brivilian for a short while.”

She keeps wishing with all her heart, releasing a sigh as she finishes her thoughts. Her brown eyes gaze once more at the bright city before she turns to re-enter her room. Closing her balcony doors, she slowly settles down for the night and prays that her birthday won’t be terribly crazy but hoping that it will be interesting all the same.

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