



Fearless Fergus, King of the Castle

Morna Sullivan

Animals

Fergus lived in an old, cold castle by the sea. Every morning, May opened the squeaky, creaky, drawbridge to welcome visitors.

On special summer days, crowds of people flocked to the castle. May wore a long, green velvet dress. Fergus thought she looked like a princess.

Visitors danced and clapped as the music played. They feasted like princes and kings.

When everyone had gone home Fergus wolfed down hot dogs, chicken sandwiches, hamburgers and ready salted crisps hidden under tables. He munched chunks of chocolate cake, raspberry jelly and apple tart fallen below chairs.

Fergus ate and ate and ate until he could eat no more. He left some food for his special midnight feast guests – the mice.

At night Fergus was king of his castle. He chased mice up the stairs. He chased them down the stairs. He juggled with them. Then he fell asleep and dreamt of mouse cheesecake.

Some days in winter a few tourists visited the castle. They huddled together in cosy fleeces and woolly hats.

May told them stories of Edward Bruce and John de Courcy arriving in the harbour.

Most days in winter there were no visitors – not even mice. Fergus was bored. He knew May was sad with no one coming to visit their castle.

One night Fergus woke from his mouse cheesecake dream with a jump. He unfurled his curly, whirly tail, stretched out his legs and back and jumped out of his basket. His eyes shone like two amber globes in the

darkness.

He listened. "What was that?" He padded down the stairs into the Great Hall. He tiptoed down more steps into the chapel. He stopped, looked round and listened.

He could hear a faint scratching noise in the distance. Fergus looked round the walls, up at the ceiling and all over the floor. There was no sign of a mouse.

"Maybe it's rattling inside a suit of armour," he thought.

Down more steps, through the armoury and into the dungeon he tiptoed. He sniffed the air. Water trickled down the walls. There was no sign of a mouse.

He squeezed behind a pillar. He pressed against the wall. A stone slab slid away. He tiptoed into a damp, slimy tunnel. The gnawing sound was getting louder.

"Maybe it's the ghost of a mouse?" he shuddered and shivered. The tunnel turned and twisted deeper and deeper down. The scratching sound was getting louder.

He tiptoed on. He looked round. He sniffed. He listened.

"What if it's a giant mouse? What if it's bigger than me?"

He padded up a slope, round a corner and stopped. He almost jumped out of his sleek, black skin. Fergus saw the shadow of a giant mouse on the castle wall.

"I must be dreaming!"

Fergus ran as fast as he could. The giant mouse ran after him.

Back down the slimy tunnel he ran. The giant mouse was behind him.

It was getting closer and closer. Fergus could hear its breath. He could smell it behind him.

Fergus ran up the steps. He tiptoed along the parapet. He stopped to catch his breath.

The giant mouse howled "AAARRRGH! AAAARRRGH!"

Fergus could see two big eyes, set in a furry, hairy face staring at him.

Fergus stared back at the giant mouse. He hoped it couldn't hear his knees knocking. The hairy face stared back at him.

"Don't run away. I'm only guarding my hotel."

"What hotel? This is my castle."

"No, it's my hotel, named after me – Dobbin's Inn Hotel."

"It's MY castle, named after me – CarrickFergus Castle. I followed the scratching mousey sound down the tunnel at the back of the dungeon. The noise led me to you."

"I was chewing my bone. The sound echoed in the old tunnel. People hid there and escaped from the castle

many years ago. It runs under the road to MY hotel.”

“I thought you were a giant mouse. I thought you were going to eat me.”

“I don’t eat cats – they’re too chewy and gooey. Their tails stick in my teeth. I’ll not eat you. Can we be friends? I get very lonely in the hotel when everyone has gone out.” Dobbin wagged his hairy tail.

“I get lonely in the castle too. Yes – let’s be friends. We can hunt mice together.”

“Let’s keep the tunnel our secret.”

Not long after, American tourists said they heard footsteps in the castle when they visited. News began to spread that Carrickfergus castle was haunted. Visitors queued to get in every day. May was delighted.

Underneath the castle, below the road, Dobbin and Fergus run up and down the old tunnel, catching mice and playing chaseys all day long, everyday.

Read more fairy tales on Fairytalez.com