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Opening extract from

Mouse Noses on Toast

Written by

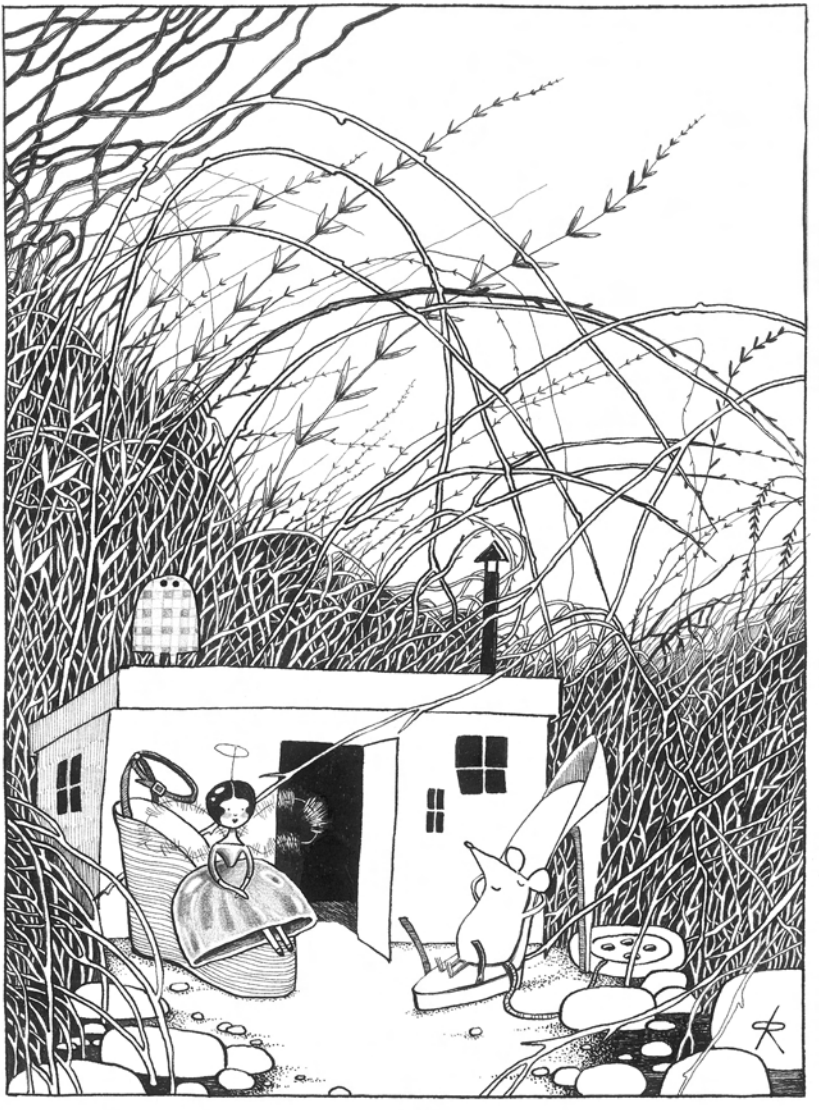
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PAUL MOUSE



IN A BUSY TOURIST TOWN LIVED A MOUSE NAMED PAUL.

Most mouses are friends with other mouses. Paul was an unusual mouse, not just because he was in a story, but because his friends were a variety of animals, creatures and objects.

One of his friends was a Tinby, which is a sort of monster, though smaller than a monster and a lot more fun to be around. Like all Tinbys, it was curved at the top and flat at the bottom, with little square legs, tiny black eyes, and nothing else. It was yellow and patterned with lime-green checks.

If you are wondering why a Tinby is called a Tinby, you will find out later in the story, when the Tinby falls out of a window and makes a funny sound.

Another of Paul's friends was a Christmas-tree decoration, a plastic angel named Sandra who had been brought to life by a magician in another story.

Paul, Sandra and the Tinby lived in a cardboard shoebox at the bottom of an overgrown garden. They didn't know who owned the garden, but whoever it was

had a dog named Rowley Barker Hobbs, who would run out into the garden every day and say hello.

Rowley Barker Hobbs was a shaggy sheepdog, with a hairy head at one end and a busy tail at the other. If the head was happy the tail was happier, and wagged all day long to prove it.

THE ANTI-CHEESE SUIT



PAUL DID HAVE SOME MOUSE FRIENDS, BUT HE DIDN'T SEE them often because he was allergic to cheese, and the mouses ate cheese all day long.

Whenever Paul wanted to visit his mouse friends he had to wear a special suit called an anti-cheese suit. If he stood too close to some cheese without the suit, his bottom would turn blue, the fur would fall out and his tail would curl up like a question mark.

Paul had made the suit himself out of clingfilm. You and I know that clingfilm is a type of clear plastic for wrapping sandwiches. Paul knew this too, but the other mouses didn't. Whenever they saw him in the suit they thought he was wearing the height of mouse fashion.

'Nice suit, Paul,' the mouses would say when he arrived.

'Thanks,' he would reply, brushing himself down. The mouses lived under the floorboards in the storeroom of a restaurant, and the storeroom was always dusty.

Paul Mouse would look around at all the happy

mouses, sat in cheesy chairs, eating cheese and watching Cheddar Television, and wish that he was not allergic to cheese.

On Paul's most recent visit, one morning in high summer, Graham Mouse asked Paul Mouse why he always sat on the floor.

'There aren't enough chairs,' Paul said. He didn't want to tell the mouses about his allergy. They might laugh. Who ever heard of a mouse allergic to cheese?

'You can have my chair,' Graham Mouse said, standing up. 'I'm off to the mouse pub for a pint of Old Stilton beer.'

Paul frowned. If he sat in the cheesy chair, his bottom would turn blue, the fur would fall out and his tail would curl up like a question mark.

'You'd better sit in the chair,' one of the mouses said, 'or Graham will be offended.'

Paul had always been afraid of Graham Mouse. He was a big, burly mouse with the words LIKE and HATE tattooed across his paws.

Graham Mouse put on his denim jacket, the one he wore when he felt like punching someone on the whiskers, and said, 'Paul, do you want my chair or not?'

Paul looked at the cheesy chair, then up at Graham's mean face, then back at the cheesy chair. How bad could it be? After all, he was wearing the anti-cheese suit.

So Paul Mouse sat on the cheesy chair.

Later, when none of the other mouses were looking, Paul stood up and peered at his bottom in a mirror. It was blue, and completely bald.