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Opening extract from

Pink-Paw's Painting

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Chapter 1
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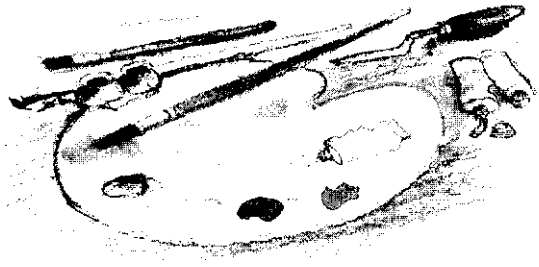
Pink-Paw



Pink-Paw was an artist, and she loved to paint. She wasn't rich or famous, but she didn't care. As long as she had paints, food and friends, she was happy.

Pink-Paw made her living by painting cards for the Nice Mice Gift Shop.

But now and then she sold a picture to a mouse who wanted it to hang on the wall at home.

That made her feel like a real artist. It also gave her extra cheese to spend.

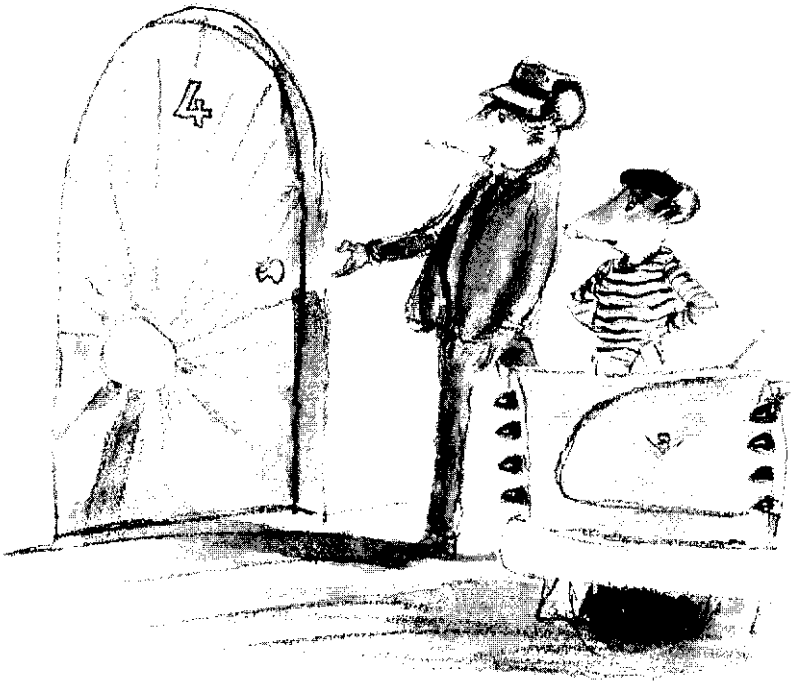
She always spent her extra cheese in the same way. First, she went next door to buy a cake from Clive's shop.

Then she rushed to the art shop to buy new paints.

Late one afternoon, Pink-Paw was outside, staring at her door. She liked the big yellow sun she had painted on it, but she felt like a change.

The trouble was that she hadn't sold a picture for a long time. She hadn't been able to buy any new paints. All she had left was black, white, and a tiny bit of blue.

Just then, a shiny red car drove by. The car stopped suddenly and a tall, thin mouse jumped out.

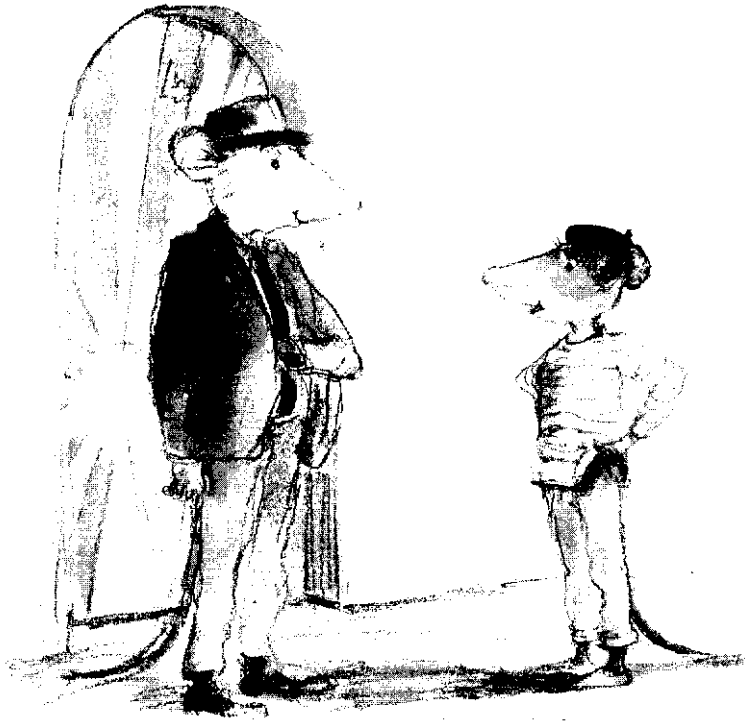


"That door is just what I need!" he said to Pink-Paw. "How much do you want for it?"

"I can't sell you my door!" Pink-Paw exclaimed, very surprised.

"Why not?" said the tall, thin mouse. "You can get another one."

He pulled a cheese bag from his pocket and held it out to Pink-Paw.



Pink-Paw was quite fond of her door. But she needed new paint. And the smells drifting from Clive's cake shop were making her mouth water.

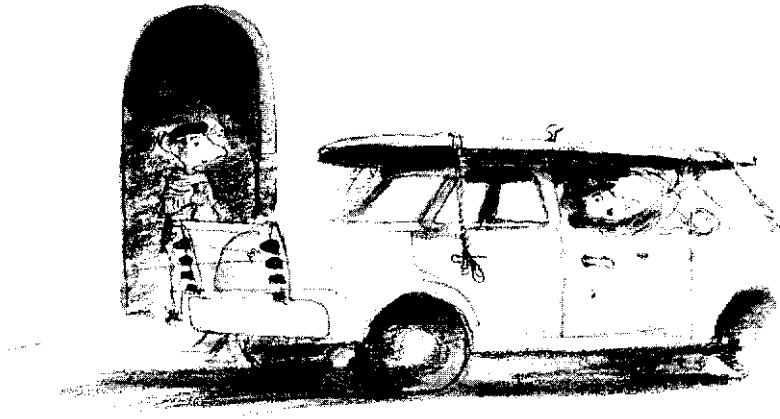
"I wanted a change," she said to herself. "Having no door at all will be a change, for sure."

So she nodded, and took the cheese.

The tall mouse ran back to the car for tools. In a few minutes he had taken off Pink-Paw's door and tied it to the car roof.

"Thank you!" he said. "I'm sure we will meet again."

He winked, got back into the car and drove away, taking Pink-Paw's door with him.



Chapter 2
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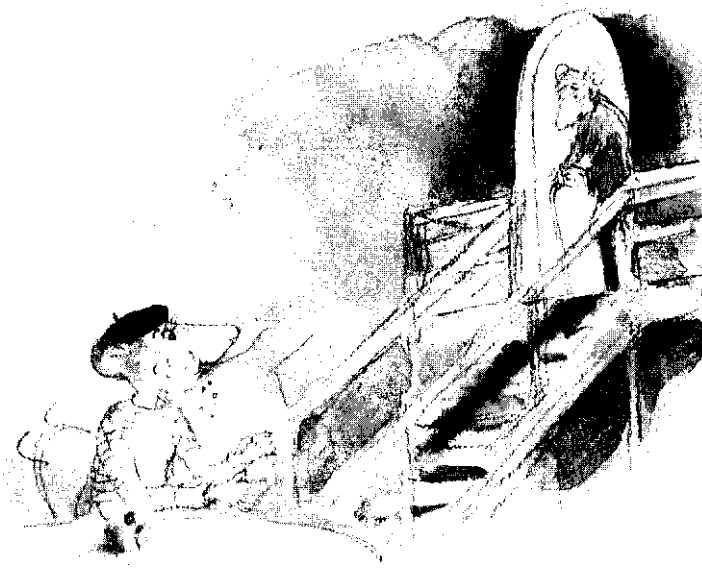
Life Without a Door

Pink-Paw went to buy a cake. Home again, she had just sat down to eat when Old Bun from Number One came by.

"Bless my whiskers!" Old Bun gasped. "Pink-Paw! Your door has been stolen!"



"No," Pink-Paw said, with her mouth full. "I sold it."

Old Bun looked surprised, and went on his way.

Then Tails the Great from Number Eight came along. He was taking his scary pets for a walk.

"Aha!" he said. "Your door has become invisible, Pink-Paw! I will break the spell!"

He took out his magic wand.

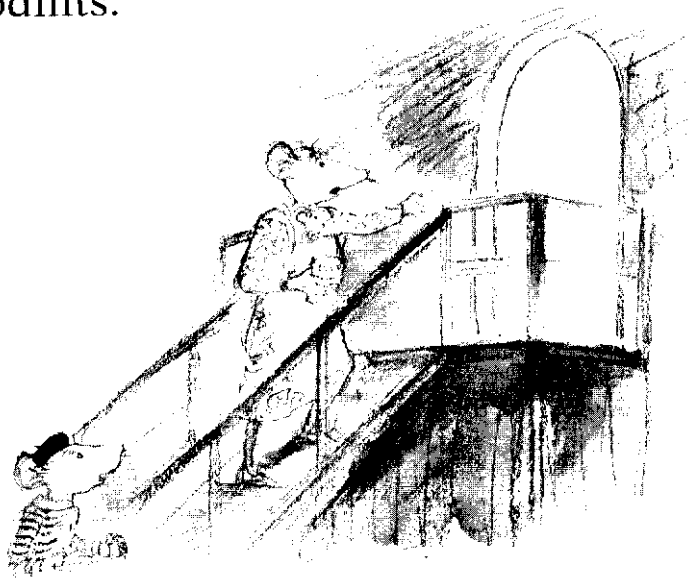
"No, no!" cried Pink-Paw in alarm. "My door's not invisible, Tails the Great! I sold it."

Tails put his wand away rather crossly, and walked on.

Next, Fee-Fee from Number Three came in. She had been making green berry jam, and had a jar for Pink-Paw.

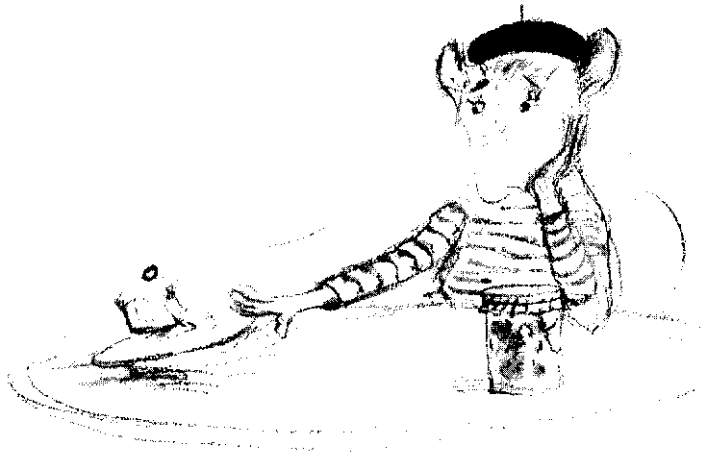
"Pink-Paw!" she squealed. "Who broke down your door?"

"No one," said Pink-Paw. "I sold it. Now I can go and buy new paints."



"But you can't go out and leave your house wide open!" said Fee-Fee. "What if a burglar comes? What if Tails the Great's pets get loose?"

She put the jam on the table, and hurried home.



Pink-Paw pushed the last of her cake away. She had decided that life without a door was rather annoying.

"Adeline in Number Nine can make things," she said. "I'll go and ask her to make me a new door. I'll only be away a few minutes. What can happen?"

But while she was gone, quite a few things happened.

First, Ben the post-mouse came with a letter. He tried to knock on the door of Number Four. But there was no door to knock on.

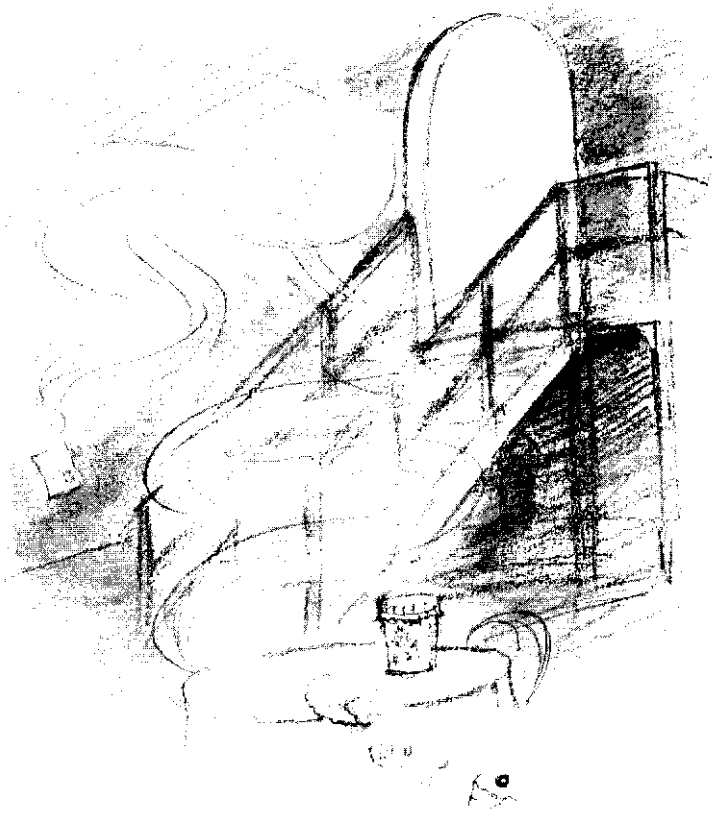
"That's strange," Ben said.

He peered into the house. No one was home. So he put the letter just inside the doorway, and went on.

There was no mail for Number Nine, and Ben didn't stop there. So he didn't see Pink-Paw talking to Adeline.

And he was already at home in Number Ten, resting his feet, when a little breeze blew into Squeak Street.

The breeze found Pink-Paw's open doorway. Just for fun, it picked up her letter and tossed it into a corner. Then it blew the last of the cake onto the floor. Then it got bored, and went away.



Soon after that, some ants came marching along, on their way home from a picnic. As they passed Pink-Paw's house, they smelled the cake.

"Cake! Yum!" they said, all down the line. "Cake-yum-cake-yum-CAKE-YUM!"

They turned and marched into the house.