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Opening extract from

Tumtum and Nutmeg: Trouble at Rose Cottage

Written by

Emily Bearn

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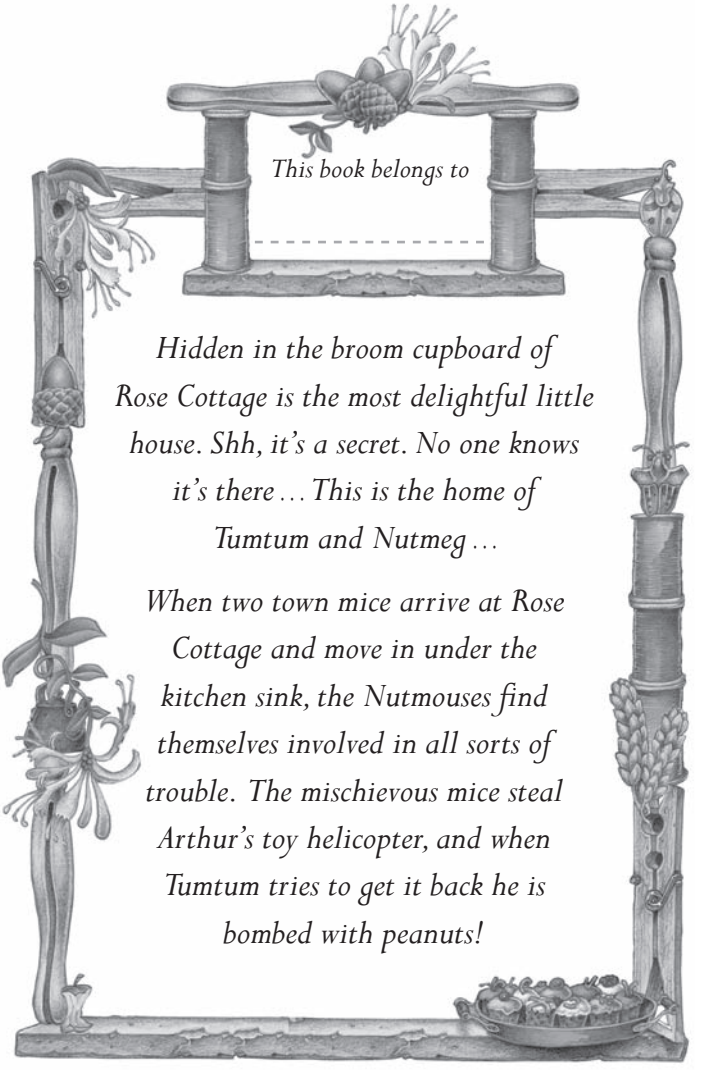

This book belongs to

Hidden in the broom cupboard of Rose Cottage is the most delightful little house. Shh, it's a secret. No one knows it's there … This is the home of Tumtum and Nutmeg …

When two town mice arrive at Rose Cottage and move in under the kitchen sink, the Nutmouses find themselves involved in all sorts of trouble. The mischievous mice steal Arthur's toy helicopter, and when Tumtum tries to get it back he is bombed with peanuts!

Also by Emily Bearn

Book One: Tumtum and Nutmeg
Book Two: The Great Escape
Book Three: The Pirates' Treasure
Book Four: A Seaside Adventure
Book Five: A Circus Adventure
Tumtum & Nutmeg's Christmas Adventure

Tumtum & Nutmeg

TROUBLE AT ROSE COTTAGE

by Emily Bearn

Illustrated by Nick Price

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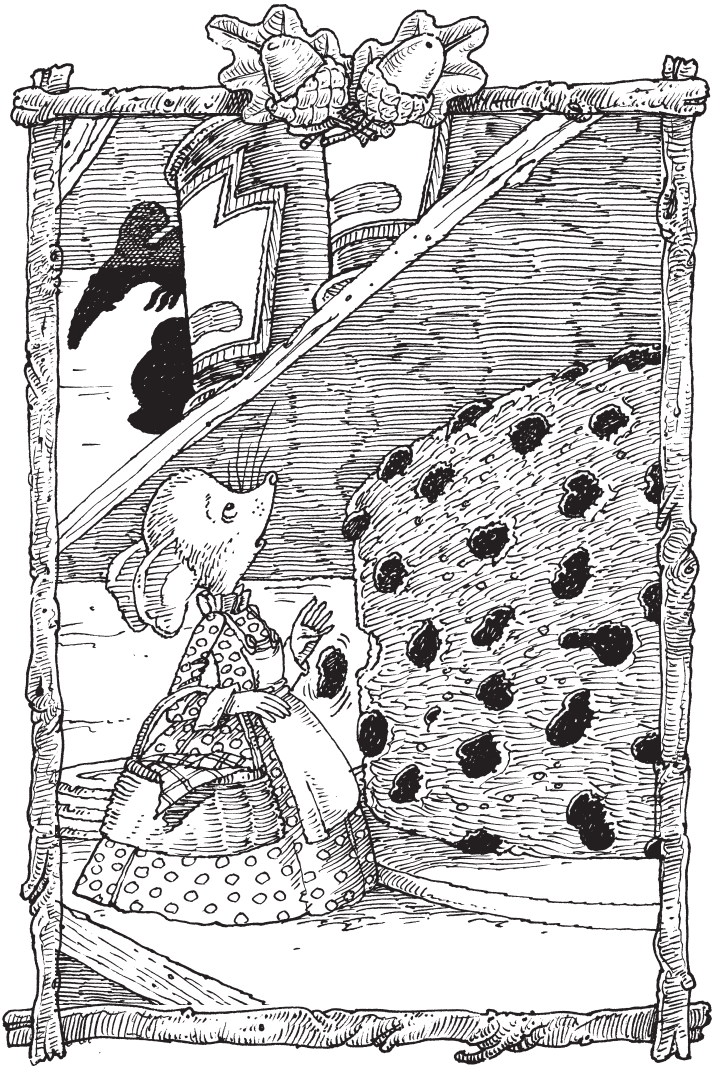
For Brian

Chapter One

It was quite a mystery. There was Nutmeg, rootling around in the Mildews' larder, all alone with her shopping basket swung over her arm – when suddenly she heard a voice speaking to her very sharply.

'Put that back!' it said as she plucked a raisin from the fruitcake. 'Put that back or I shall call the police!'



Nutmeg jumped, dropping her raisin in fright. She knew it wasn't a human voice she had heard – it had been much too small for that. It sounded like a mouse. But who could it be?

She looked up and down the larder shelves, peering along the tins and boxes. But there was no sign of anyone at all.

I must have been imagining things, she thought. *After all, who would want to call the police over a raisin? I've been borrowing raisins from this larder for as long as I can remember, and no one's ever complained about it before*.

She picked the raisin up again, to show that she wasn't really frightened at all. But just as she was lifting it into her basket, the little voice piped up again: 'Thief! Thief! I'll report you to

Chief Constable Watchmouse!'

Nutmeg gulped. She knew she wasn't imagining things now, for the voice was very clear.

'Who are you?' she asked nervously. 'Why don't you come out?'

There was no reply.

'Oh, do let me see you!' she pleaded. But now the little voice had gone quite silent. Nutmeg did not like it at all. 'Now look here,' she said, trying to sound firm. 'You've no right to tell me what to do. My name is Mrs Nutmouse, and I live at Nutmouse Hall, and my husband and I have been borrowing crumbs and raisins and sugar lumps from this larder ever since –'

But then all of a sudden there was a great explosion of giggles, echoing all around the larder.

'Tee! He! Tee! He! Tee! He! *Hisssssssss!*'

Nutmeg could be in no doubt now that it was a mouse, for mice giggle quite unlike any other creatures do. And it sounded as if there were two of them!

'Oh, do stop it!' she said tearfully. 'Please come out, whoever you are!'

But the giggling got louder and louder, until Nutmeg simply couldn't bear it a moment longer. She hurtled for the door, with her paws pressed to her ears; and as she ran out of the larder, another voice, deeper than the first, rang after her: 'Off you go, shoo! And don't come back in our larder!'

By the time Nutmeg got back to Nutmouse Hall, she was in a terrible state.

'Tumtum!' she cried, bursting into the kitchen.

Tumtum looked up in alarm from his crumpet. 'Whatever's happened?' he asked.

'Oh, Tumtum, it was simply awful!' Nutmeg sobbed. 'They were laughing at me, and poking fun at me, and saying they'd call the police and report me for borrowing a raisin from the fruit cake! But it was only a stale old fruit cake, and I know Mr Mildew wouldn't mind and, and . . .'

'*Who* said they would call the police?' Tumtum asked in astonishment. 'Was it Arthur and Lucy? Did they see you?'

'Oh, no, no, not them!' Nutmeg sobbed. 'They're still at school. It was mice – horrid, teasing mice! And they told me it was *their* larder, and that I should never come back!'

'*Their* larder!' Tumtum spluttered. 'I trust

you informed them that my family has been living at Rose Cottage for the last –'

'Yes, yes,' Nutmeg interrupted. 'I tried to explain, but they just kept on laughing at me.'

Tumtum was furious. 'Who were they?' he asked. 'Louts from the village I expect. What did they look like? Did you get their names?'

'Oh, but that's the worst thing about it,' Nutmeg said miserably. 'I didn't even see them. They didn't come out! They must have been watching me from behind a jar or a cake tin – the larder's full of places to hide. And the way they called it *their* larder makes me think they might have moved in!'

'*Moved in!*' Tumtum said fearfully. 'Are you sure?'

‘Well, it’s possible,’ Nutmeg said. ‘You should have heard the way they were talking – they sounded as if they owned the place.’

Tumtum looked very alarmed. He didn’t want any other mice moving into Rose Cottage. It wouldn’t do at all.

He stood up and pulled on his jacket.

‘I’ll go and have a word with them,’ he said. ‘I’ll tell them the Nutmouses are the only mice who’ve ever lived at Rose Cottage since the mouse history books began. They’ll just have to move on somewhere else.’

‘Oh, do be careful, dear!’ Nutmeg pleaded. ‘They sounded horrid!’

‘Don’t you worry,’ Tumtum replied, giving her paw a squeeze. ‘They’re probably just a pair of

silly school mice having a bit of fun.'

Nutmeg waited anxiously in Nutmouse Hall while Tumtum crept out into the Mildews' kitchen.

He tiptoed round the larder door, and peered nervously inside. But there was no sign of anything unusual. Everything was quite still.

'Hello!' he called out awkwardly. 'Is anybody there? It's Mr Nutmouse here, from Nutmouse Hall.'

No reply.

'Hello, there,' Tumtum called again. 'Now listen here. You've no right to talk to my wife like that. Come out, I say! Come out and let me see you!'

But there was not a sound. Tumtum wondered if Nutmeg had been imagining things. She had been

up late last night, potting and pickling her autumn fruits, and her mind might have been playing tricks on her.

She's probably just tired, he thought. And he was about to turn back, when suddenly he heard a strange noise:

Buzzzzzzzz! Grrrrrrrrr!

Tumtum froze. What could it be? It sounded like an engine, or a huge bee. And it seemed to be coming from above him – but when he looked up there was nothing there.

The noise was only faint at first, but then it got louder and louder, until it was throbbing all around him.

There was a blasting wind that battered his clothes, and when Tumtum turned round he saw

the most astonishing sight. It was Arthur's toy helicopter, taking off from the top shelf!

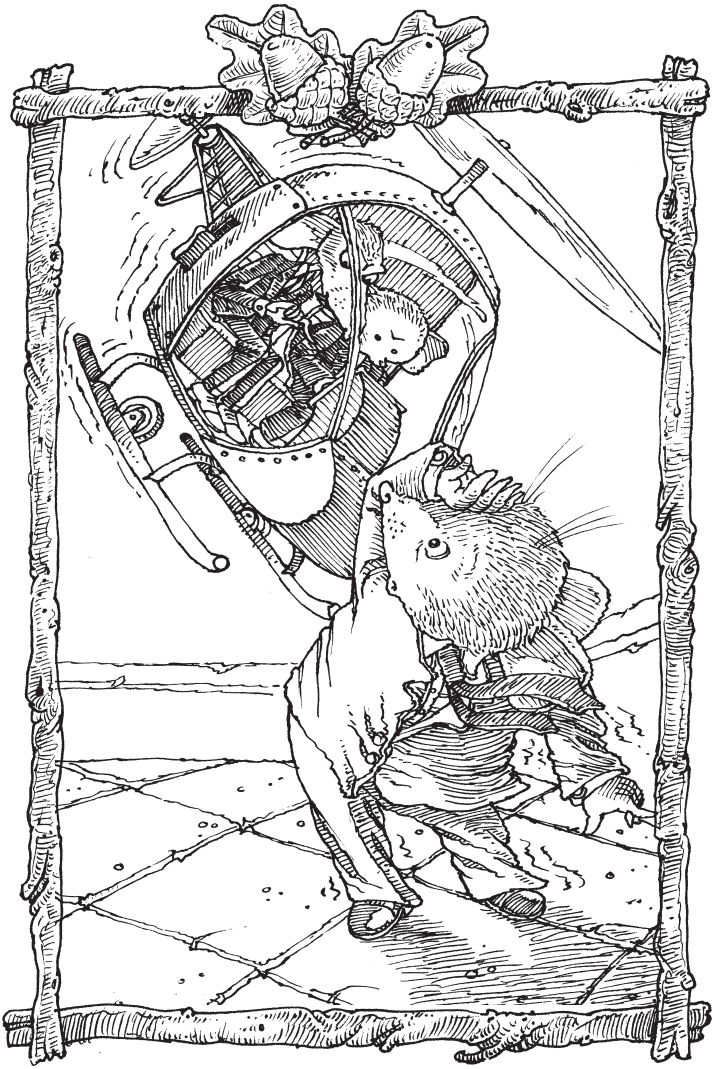
Tumtum watched in amazement as the helicopter crashed over a biscuit tin and roared into the air. He thought it was going to fly out into the kitchen. But then all at once it dipped its nose and dived towards him!

Tumtum gave a yelp of terror. He tried to run, but he was blinded by a sudden cloud of flour, and the roar of the engine was so loud he felt his ears would burst.

'Help!' he cried. '*HELP!*'

He tried to duck behind the flour bin, but the gust from the propellers knocked him flat on his back. He lay helpless on the floor, trembling with fear.

And as the helicopter barrelled over above



him, he saw two mice snarling down at him from the cockpit. They were both snow white – and they had gold fangs.