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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Moonlight Sail

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Mr. and Mrs. Mouse lived in a field, and their children were taught to look out for all the dangers that surround the life of a field mouse. But now that they were growing older, Mrs. Mouse told her husband that she thought they should go into a house for the summer.

"We ought to give the children all the advantages that we can, and living in a house would teach them many things," she said. "They have never seen a trap, and they would not know a cat if they met one."

And so it was decided that the family should move the first time there was an opportunity. The little mice were very much excited and could hardly wait for the time to come. A heavy rain delayed them, but one night the moon came out and cleared away the clouds, and Mr. Mouse said, "My dear, this is the time for us to change our abode."

Mr. and Mrs. Mouse ran along through the field with the little ones beside them. It was quite a distance to the nearest house, and they had to take great care not to be seen by a cat, for the children were quite small.

They had not thought of the pools of water made by the heavy rain, and just as they came to a house, they found a pool in front of it which looked like a pond to them. "If we had a boat," said Mrs. Mouse, "we could go for a moonlight sail. It would be delightful, and then the children would have an experience which they would never forget."

"I think I can arrange it," said Mr. Mouse. "Wait here a minute."

In a few minutes, Mr. Mouse returned with a flat piece of wood which he put into the water. "Jump on here," he said to the little ones. He held it until Mrs. Mouse was aboard, and then he jumped on beside her.

"This is much pleasanter than walking around the pond," he said, as they glided along, but suddenly they stopped.

"What is the matter?" asked Mrs. Mouse.

"We are becalmed," replied her husband. "We will have to wait for a breeze."

The moon was shining brightly, and Mrs. Mouse looked about. "Suppose a cat should see us," she said.



"Oh, what is that?" asked one of the little mice, pointing to something walking by the side of the water.

"It is a cat," said Mrs. Mouse. "We are lost. Oh, my poor children! We will all be killed!"

"Be quiet," said her husband. "Cat will not wet her feet if she can help it, even to get us, and we must use our wits."

Cat saw them, but, as Mr. Mouse had said, she did not intend to wet her feet.

"What are you doing out there?" she asked. "Suppose your boat should tip over?"

"I have been told that drowning is a very pleasant way to die," said Mr. Mouse.

"But think of your dear children," said Cat.

"I am," replied Mr. Mouse, "and I think they are much safer here at present than on land."

Cat walked around, but the water was quite deep, even for her, and she did not venture near the mouse family, but she seated herself by the water and watched.

"I suppose the children should be in bed," said Mr. Mouse, after a while, but his wife did not answer; she was too frightened.

"You can help us to land, Mistress Cat," said Mr. Mouse, "if you will, for no telling when a breeze will spring up, and we might have to stay here all night."

"I shall be very glad to assist you to land," said Cat. "What can I do?"

"If you would roll a stone or two into the water," said Mr. Mouse, "it would stir it, and the motion would send our boat to the other side."

"I can get to the other side before they can get away," thought Cat, "and I can catch one and perhaps two." So she answered, "Yes, indeed, I am always glad to

lend a helping hand."

Mrs. Mouse gathered her little ones around her, trembling as she did so, but she knew that her husband was a wise fellow, and she trusted him.

"When we get to the land," he said, "we must run faster than we ever have. Here she comes with the stones; now be ready."

Cat rolled one stone into the water, and the boat moved along. Then she rolled the second, and this time the boat glided to the edge of the water.

Cat flew around the pool, but Mr. and Mrs. Mouse ran, and so did the little mice, and when Cat reached the other side, she saw their tails disappearing under the steps of the house, and as there was not a hole large enough for her to enter, she knew that she had lost them.

Mr. Mouse was very polite, and he knew that it would be very rude not to thank Cat for helping them, so he went where he could see her and not be seen and said, "Thank you so much, Mistress Cat, for helping us. If ever I can repay you, I will, and I shall never forget your kindness."

"It was a pleasure, I assure you," replied Cat, "and I shall certainly never forget you or your family."

As she walked away, Cat said to herself, "I'll keep my eye open for that family. They will be sure to run about the house."

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