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The Mice Are Discovered

Mary Graham Bonner

Mr. and Mrs. Mouse had found the most wonderful pantry.

"I really don't think we could have done better," said Mr. Mouse, whiskers twitching with satisfaction. "This is one of the finest homes we've had in years."

"And not a single trap," said Mrs. Mouse with great contentment. "No traps, and — more importantly — not a cat in the house. It's very wrong to keep a cat. Horrid creatures."

They frisked about behind the shelves and squeezed through the drawers that were often left half open.

"It is so inconsiderate," Mr. Mouse declared, "when people close everything up and lock their things in tin boxes. I can't abide tin boxes. They can't be nibbled and they're apt to cut one's paws."

"I prefer little cardboard boxes," said Mrs. Mouse. "The kind we can work through properly."

One Saturday afternoon, the children who lived in the house had been out sledding. They had coasted so hard all afternoon that by the time they came in, they were wonderfully, thoroughly hungry.

"Go and look in the pantry," their mother said. "You'll find biscuits and jam and quite a lot of good things. It's Saturday — you may have a proper feast."

The mice had not been bothered all afternoon. They had seen the cook go out. They had decided, quite on their own, that they deserved a feast too.

They were having a splendid time when the pantry door swung open. The children's footsteps, the voices, the sudden light — it happened all at once. The mice scampered in every direction, squealing and jostling in their hurry to reach the shelves and the walls and their own dark corners. They made, it must be said, rather a lot of noise.

"The pantry is full of mice!" said the children.

In their hiding places, the mice caught their breath.

"They heard us," said Mrs. Mouse. "Now they know we're here. We'll have to move — that's all."

"People are very foolish about mice," Mr. Mouse agreed. "We make excellent company. But they don't see it that way."

"Well," said Mrs. Mouse, after a moment, "we've been very comfortable here. Perhaps we'll be just as lucky in the next place."

And so they followed Mr. Mouse as he set off in search of a new pantry — quite philosophically, and without looking back.



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