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The New Mole Home

Mary Graham Bonner

Mr. Mole was getting married, and he intended to build the finest underground home anyone had ever burrowed.

He chose a meadow near an old fence, dug deep, and began. The first thing he made was a long tunnel — a funny winding underground passage that he called, with great dignity, the Drive-Way. Of course, no one could actually drive along it, but the guests could run and scamper, and "Drive-Way" was such an impressive name.

Behind the Drive-Way came the rooms. One for Mrs. Mole. One for himself. One for the little mole who would do the cooking. Several guest rooms, because Mr. Mole was enormously fond of company. And finally — the crown of the whole house — a picture gallery, built in tiers of pressed earth and mud, with row upon row of family portraits. Mr. Mole had made every portrait himself, also out of earth, and every single one looked exactly like every other one. This didn't bother anyone. The Moles are not very fussy about likenesses; they can't bother to look at pictures much of the time anyway, their eyes being very small and better suited to finding things worth eating — vegetables just starting to grow, corn sending down its first roots, the good dark treasure of a well-worked farm.

The very last thing Mr. Mole built was a beautiful throne in the centre of the gallery, for Mrs. Mole.

On the wedding day, Mrs. Mole arrived with all their friends and cousins the Mole-Crickets, who have strange, shovel-shaped front legs very much like a mole's and so are considered family. They ran along the Drive-Way, blinked their small eyes around the lovely rooms, and at last were led to the picture gallery, where Mrs. Mole took her seat on the throne while the little cook brought out the wedding feast: deliciously stewed vegetables, warm and fragrant.



The guests peered at the portraits.

"Why, there's Mama!" said one.

"That's not your Mama, that's my Papa," said another.

But no one minded at all. In fact they thought it extremely clever of Mr. Mole to have made pictures that looked like everyone's relatives all at once.

"You've all admired my home," said Mrs. Mole, from her throne, "but no one has noticed my dress."

They looked. She was wearing earrings of mud, each set with a red berry. A matching necklace. A gown of dull oak leaves, saved for a whole year against this very day.

"You are the handsomest Mole I've ever seen," said Mr. Mole, "and I am very proud you're going to share the home I've built." And all the other Moles grinned and helped themselves to more stewed vegetables to show what a fine time they were having.

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