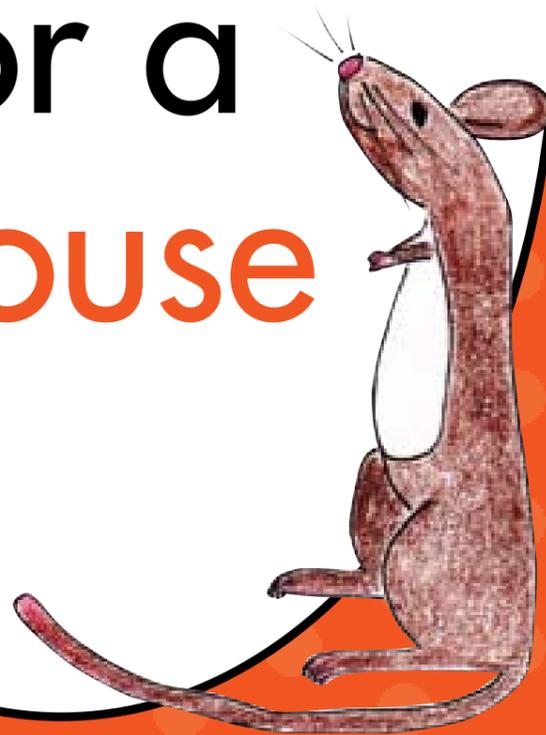


A
House
for a
Mouse



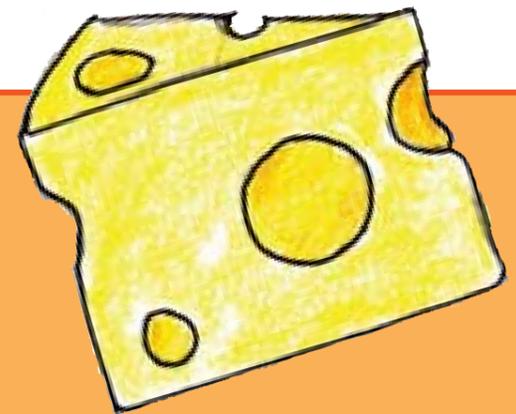
written and illustrated by
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ISBN: 1450511422
ISBN-13: 9781450511421

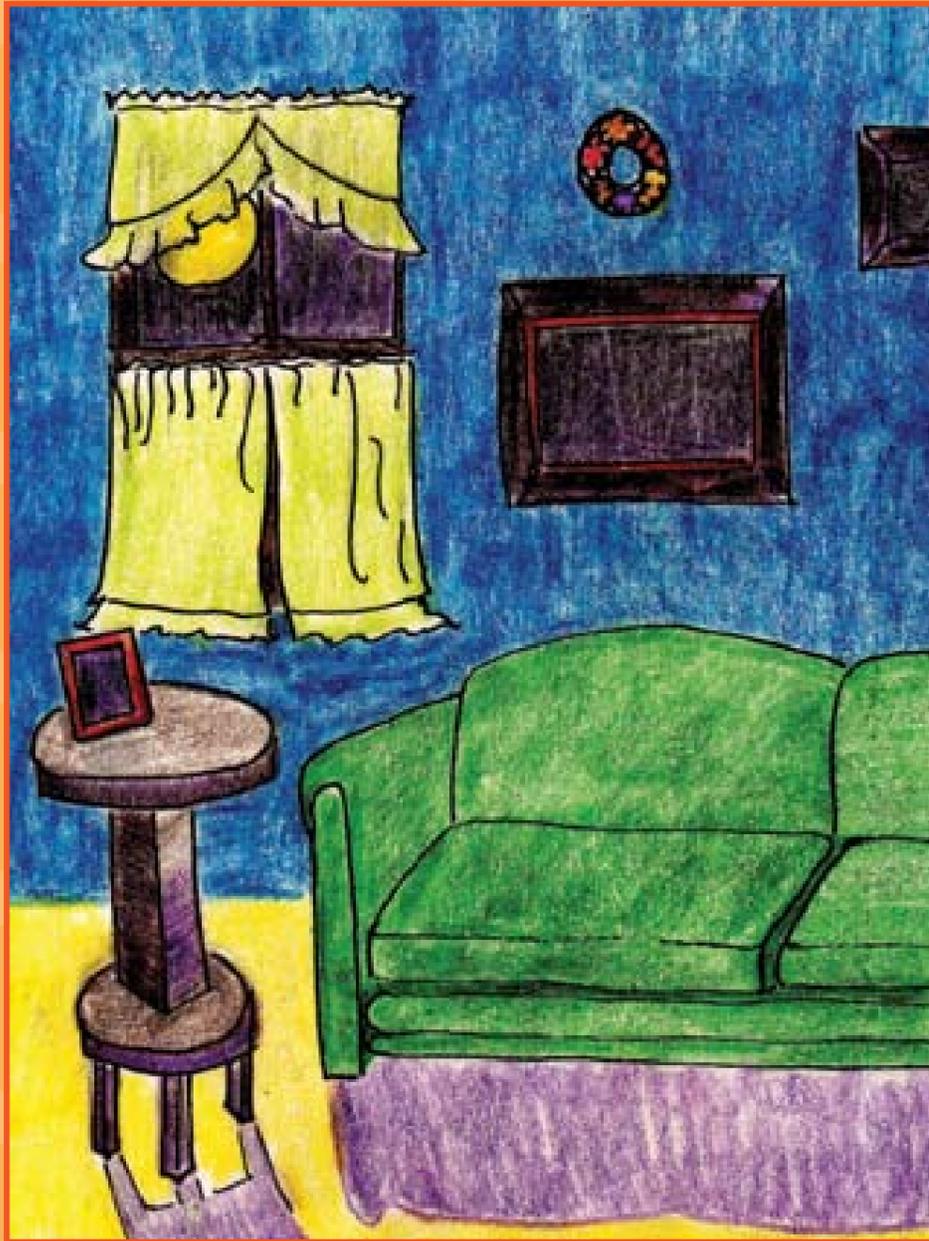
Library of Congress Control Number: 2010900563

To Carrick, Ersson and John
who might remember a night
in our home a long time ago.





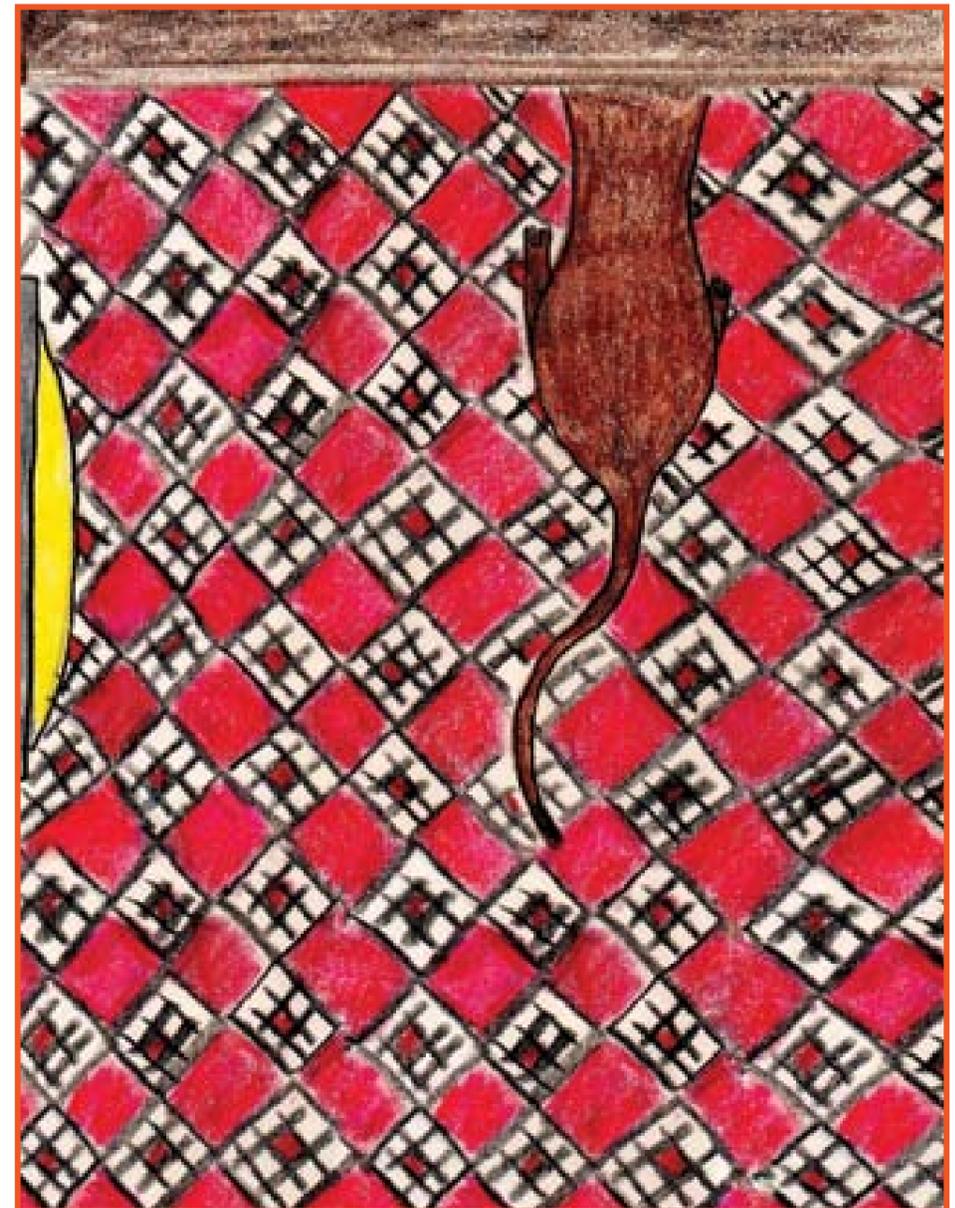
Deep in the dark of the house,
nighttime silence woke Whiskers.
He yawned.



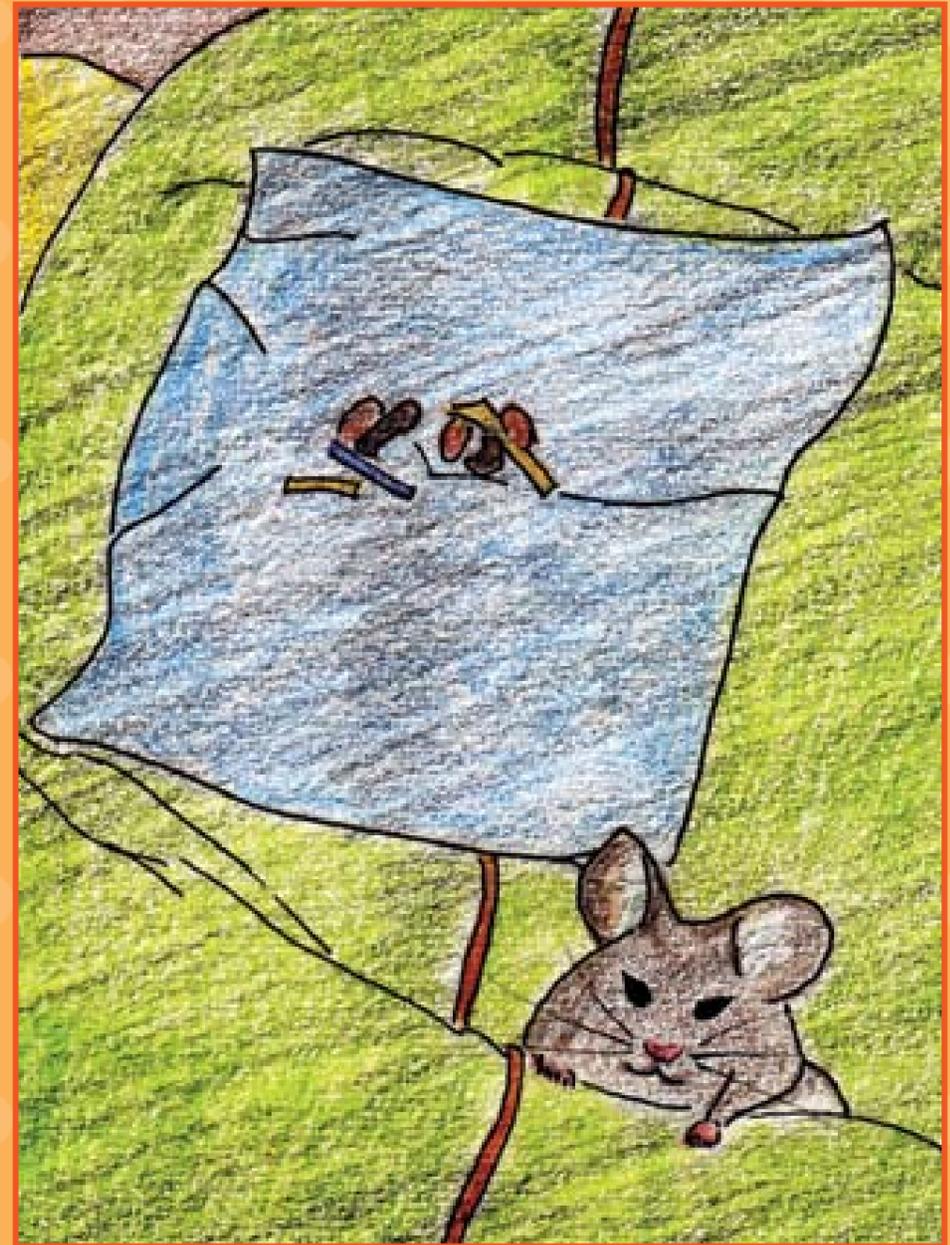
Whiskers jumped up to explore. Pale yellow light made purple shadows on the floor. The house was quiet.

He ran down a long, lighted hallway. This house was fine for a hungry mouse. **This was a house for a mouse.**

With his pink nose to the carpet, Whiskers smelled something wonderful. He squeezed under a dark door at the end of the long hall.

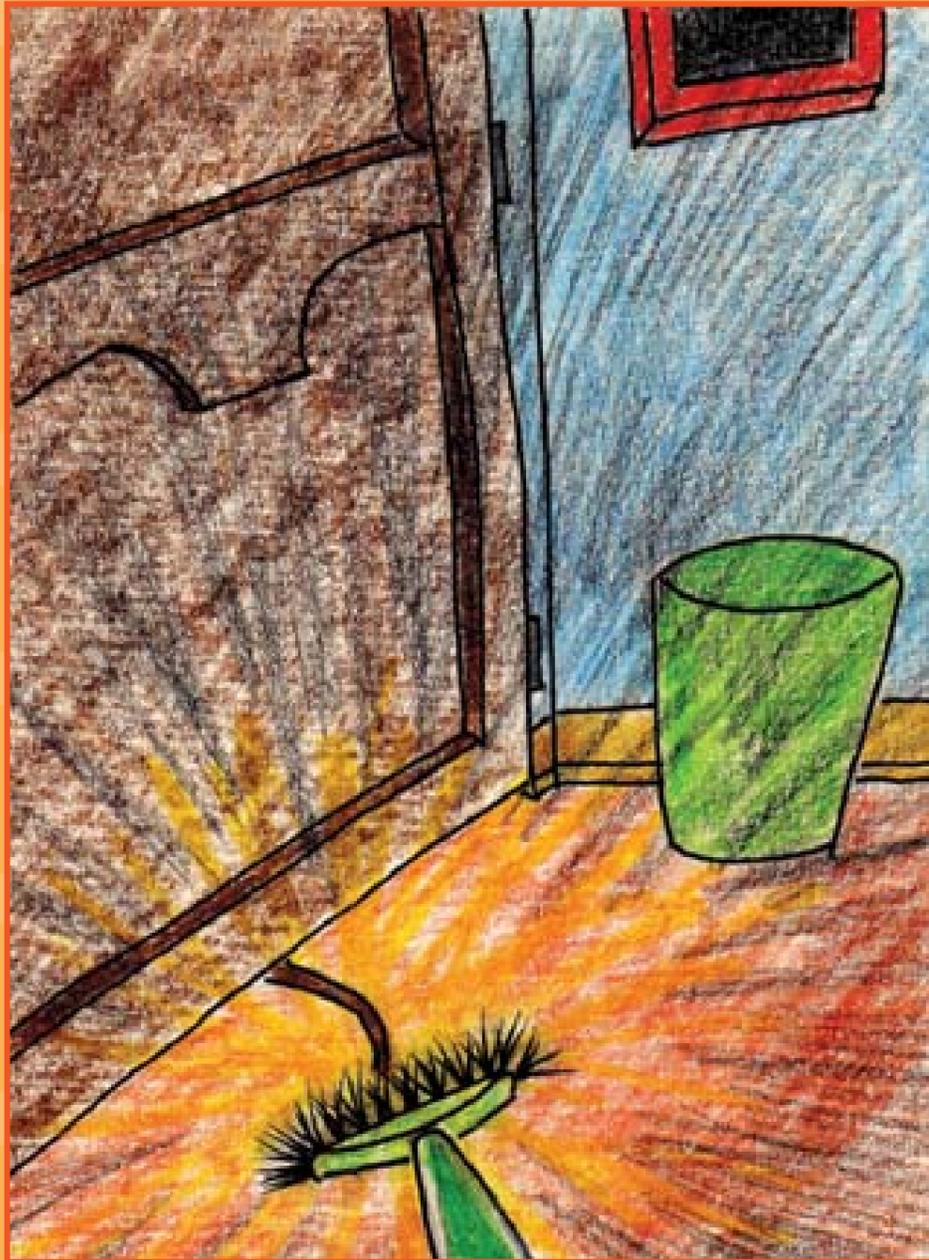


Whiskers quickly climbed up a thick, heavy blanket. He hustled across lumpy terrain and slid down a steep, slick hill.



He rolled into peanut bits, cookie crumbs and tortilla chips. Just as he was about to snack, the ground moved beneath his paws. Screams filled the room, terrifying Whiskers.

Up he flew. Up into the air with chips and blanket. A bright light blinded his eyes. He jumped to the floor and ran for the door. As he escaped, a swat stung his tail.



Whiskers raced back to his warm bed and hid under his sister. "What is all the racket?" cried Cheese puff, a little white furry ball.

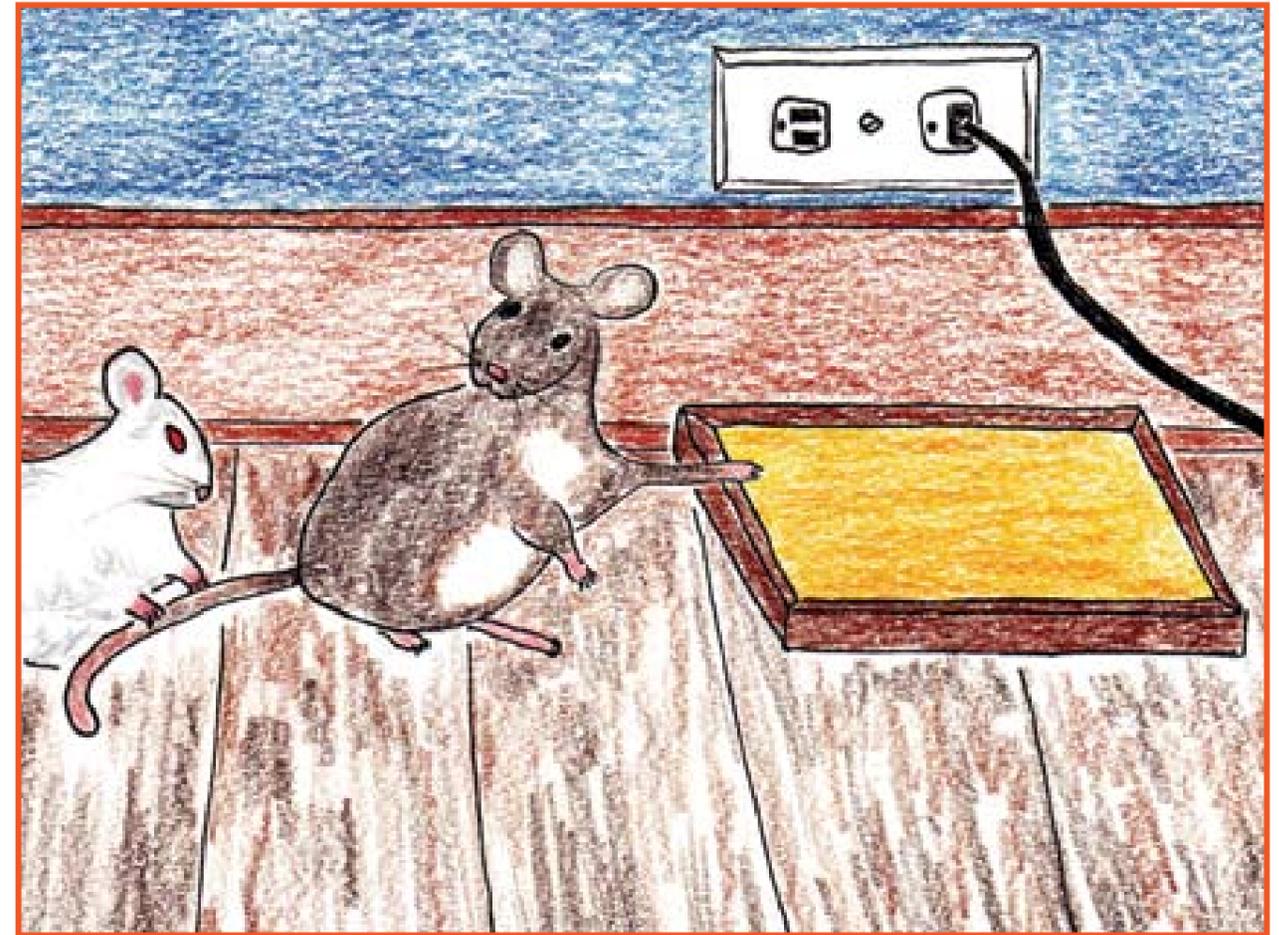


"A huge monster in the house," gulped Whiskers, "as big as a mountain with a bright, shiny eye and a terrible tail-whacker."

Cheesepuff sniffed the air and shuddered, "It is a human. I told you this house would be trouble. We will have to move. We need a house for a mouse."
"But," said Whiskers, "this is our home."
"Then they will have to leave," Cheesepuff declared.
"No," said Whiskers, "we have to live together."



In the morning an orange van parked in front of the house. Men in white suits put sticky traps all around the house next to Whisker and Cheese puff's favorite hunting sites.



That night, Whiskers sniffled a delicious tray and cautiously dipped his paw into tasty goop. His paw stuck in the muck and he cried out for his sister. Cheese puff tugged and pulled until his paw popped out of the sticky glop.

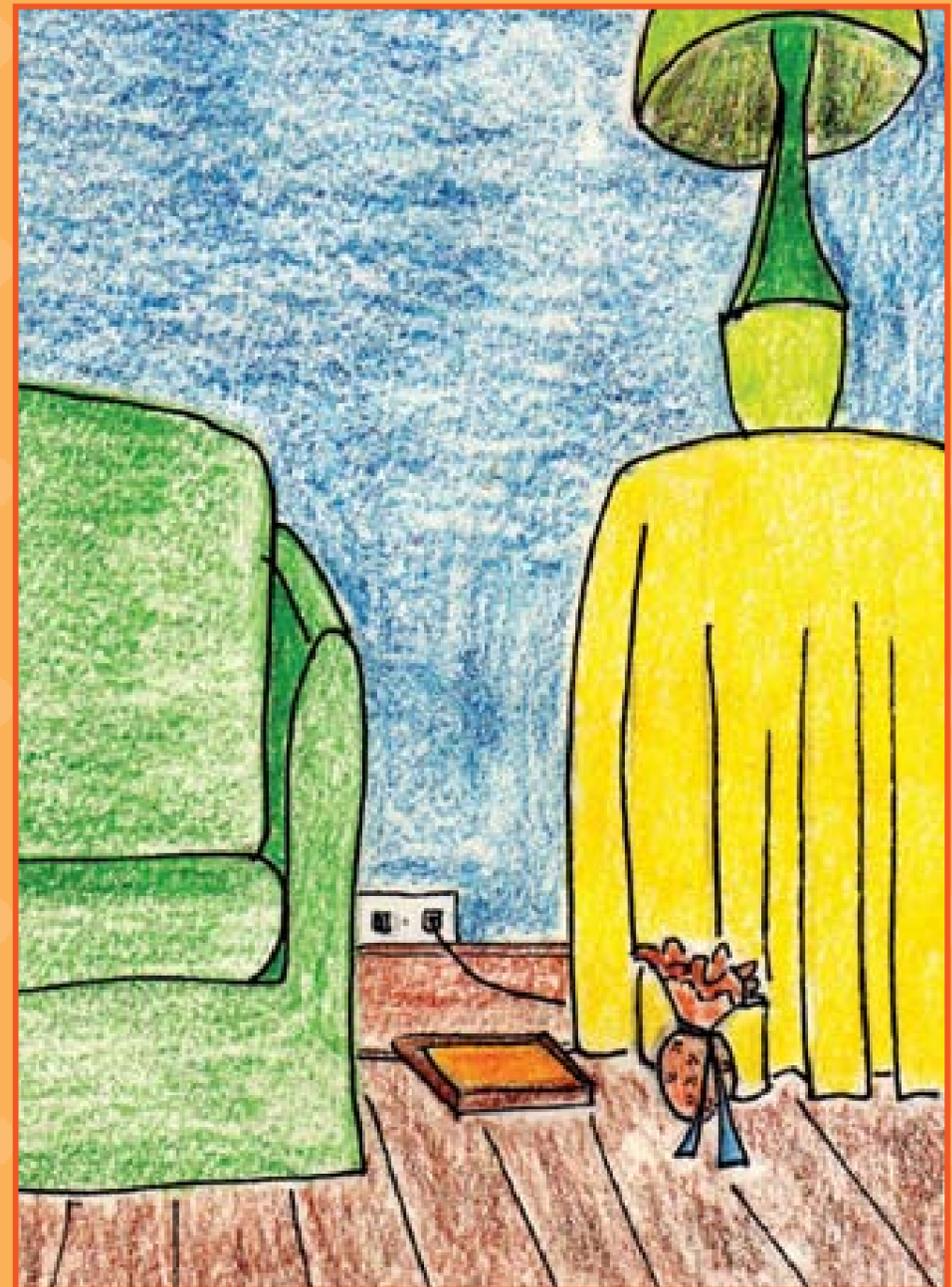


The mice waited many days for the traps to disappear. They were

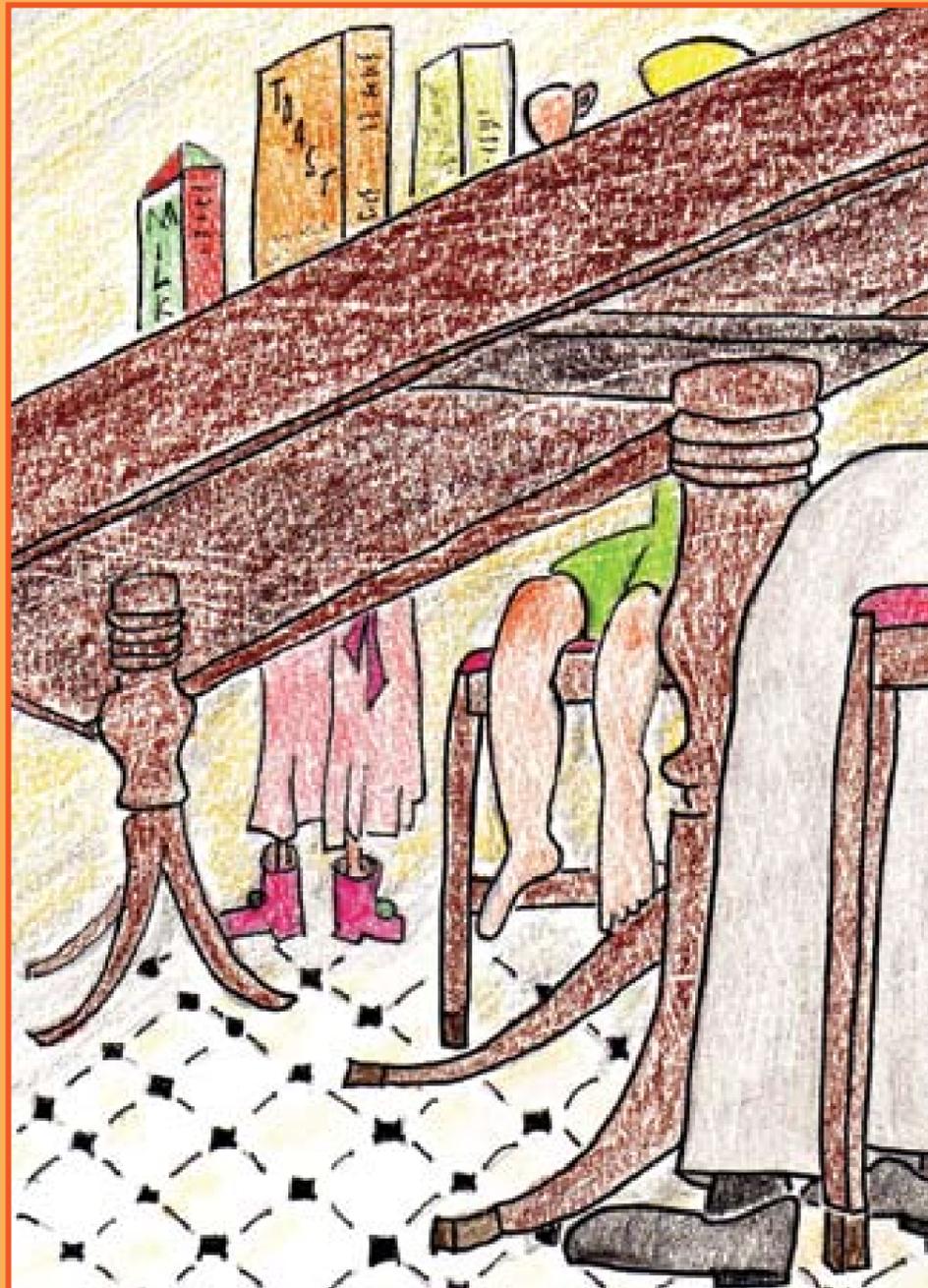
getting very hungry. Then Whiskers had an idea. "Let's leave the humans a present and maybe they will let us stay."

Cheesepuff did not think it was a good idea, and she hid in her bed while Whiskers carefully picked fresh herbs and petals. He pulled out a small bag from their treasure box and filled it full of fragrant lavender and pretty pink petals.

Cheesepuff watched when Whiskers left their gift by the dreadful tray in the living room. His paw prints were stamped all over the bag.



In the morning, the mice heard shouts, voices and crying. Soon, all the traps were gone.

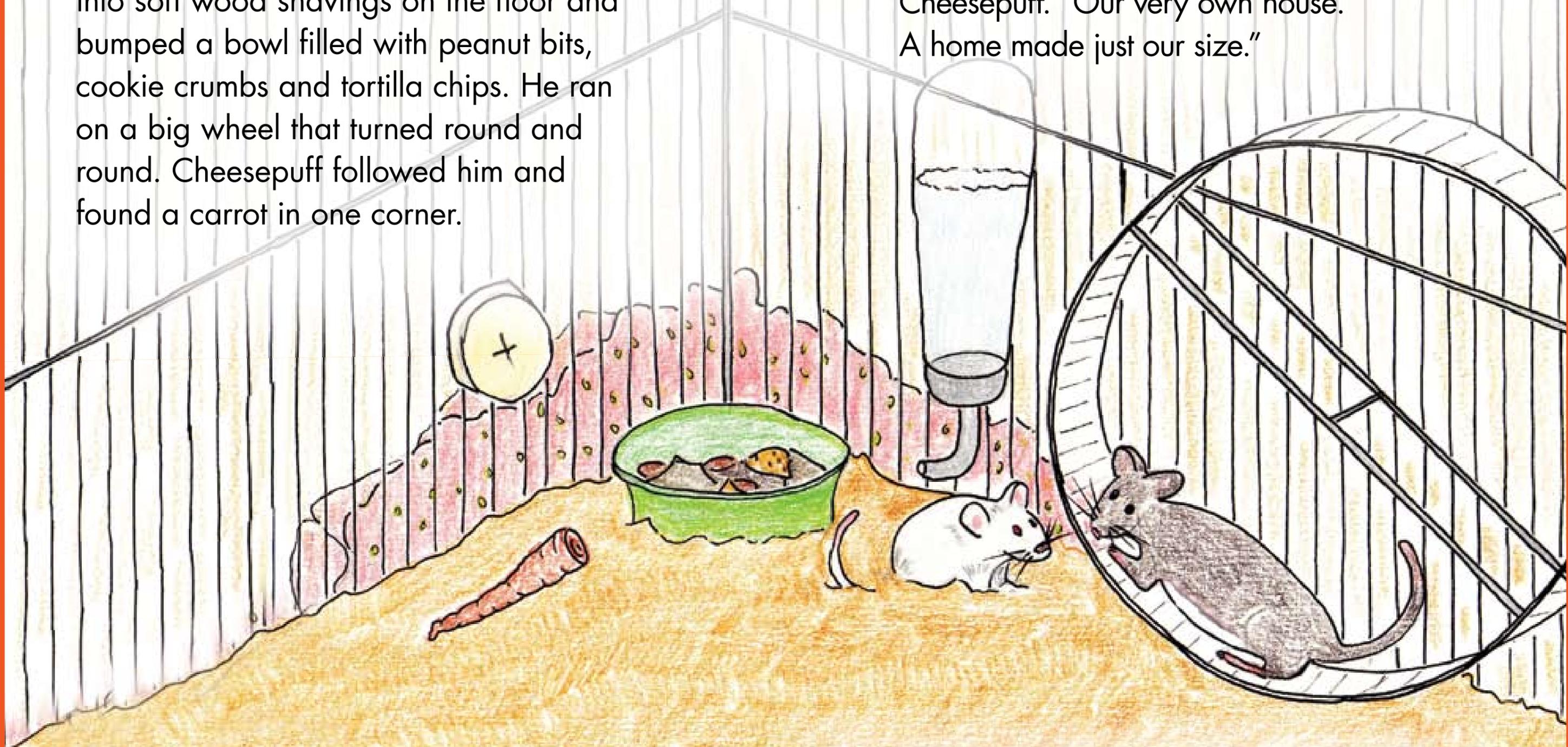


When the sister and brother peeked into the kitchen that night, there was a big package where a trap had been sitting. Whiskers was suspicious. "Don't get too close," he whispered as he stared at the odd sight.

"But they have left us a pretty present," said Cheese puff as she snuffled the pink, polka dot wrapping paper with her nose.

The two mice tore the paper and found a very curious construction. Whiskers rolled into soft wood shavings on the floor and bumped a bowl filled with peanut bits, cookie crumbs and tortilla chips. He ran on a big wheel that turned round and round. Cheese puff followed him and found a carrot in one corner.

"I'm all wet," she cried when she leaned on the water bottle. "It's a house!" said Cheese puff. "Our very own house. A home made just our size."



"Our very own house," Whiskers repeated.
"Now, this is a house for a mouse!"