



THE TOWN MOUSE AND THE COUNTRY MOUSE

Once upon a time, there was a small mouse who lived in a field. She had always lived in the field, and she couldn't imagine ever living somewhere else. She thought it was the most beautiful place anyone could ever live. She spent her days digging in the dirt and running through vast wheat fields. She was very strong and could run so fast that she could move across a field in the blink of an eye. She knew every twist and turn and could, she thought, probably even run the whole path with her eyes closed and not fall down.

Now, this country mouse had a very dear cousin who lived in a nearby town, and one day she invited him for a cup of tea and a stroll in the fields. Her cousin accepted the invitation immediately, packed a bag, and set off to the countryside.

The country mouse loved her town cousin very much, so she prepared a heartfelt and wonderfully delicious welcome. She made tea and set out her best roots and beans and bread. It wasn't a fancy meal, but she made it with love and there was plenty of everything so her cousin could eat his fill.

The next day, the city mouse arrived at the country mouse's humble house. The two friends hadn't seen each other in ages, and they excitedly squeaked with joy as they hugged.

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“Come in, dear cousin! Have something to eat and get some rest after the long journey,” the field mouse said, and took her cousin to the food she had so carefully prepared.

But when the town mouse saw the simple country food, he turned up his nose.

“Oh cousin, how could you serve such disgusting food to anyone? I should have known not to expect anything better in a dump like this.” The snobby mouse looked around disdainfully. “You know what? Why don’t you come over to my place in town? I’ll show you what real life and proper food look like. I’ll show you what it means to have class. You can stay for a whole week if you want! You’ll fall in love with the town the moment you see it and you won’t be able to bear living in this wasteland anymore.”

The country mouse was very upset, but she agreed to go to the city. She loved the countryside, and she wanted to prove that it was better than the big city. And so she packed a bag and the two of them set off together to the big city. Late that night, they arrived.

The country mouse, who had spent her whole life in the fields, didn’t know where to look first. She was surrounded by huge, incredible things. Her eyes couldn’t take it all in. Everything was completely new to her.

“What a long, excruciating journey!” The city mouse said. “Let’s go and have a bite to eat, I’m starving!” He led his country cousin to a massive dining hall at the bottom of a fancy house, filled with foods the country mouse had never even dreamt of. There were puddings and pies and fresh, crusty breads. Everywhere there were mice feasting merrily, filling their bellies with all the delicacies. The cousins joined them, but suddenly they heard a terrible noise – a furious snarl and rabid barking.

“What on earth is that?” asked the frightened country mouse.

“Oh, that’s just the dogs who live in this house,” the city mouse replied, calmly.

“W-what? Just the dogs?” stammered the country mouse. “What do you mean just the dogs? They sound huge! How can you comfortably eat dinner while listening to that awful sound? I don’t like it one bit and if I’m being honest, I’m actually quite scared.”

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As soon as she finished speaking, the door to the dining hall crashed open with a loud bang and two giant, drooling hounds stormed into the room.

“Uh oh. Quick, we need to get out! Run for your life,” the city mouse squeaked. The cousins took to their heels, following the other mice. They squeezed themselves through a tiny hole in the corner of the wall. Packed like sardines, they waited. The country mouse was so scared that she couldn’t move her tail, and her heart was beating so fast she thought she could hear it.

They hid for a long time, and when the dogs finally left, the country mouse looked at the city mouse and said, “Cousin, I’m packing my things first thing in the morning and going home to the country.”

“What? You would leave me so soon? I haven’t even shown you around town yet! You’re really going to go back to that tiny house and old dry food?” The city mouse was shocked.

“Oh yes. This place is too scary and too dangerous. I love you, but I’d rather spend my days in the fields, safely nibbling on beans and bread than eating this fancy food while fearing for my life!”