

in a trap, and did you ever hear her struggling in the horrible engine while you were both afraid and powerless to help her?"

"No, I never did," answered Bobby Bunting. "Oh, but zat must be ba-a-d."

"We were little people, even for mice, at that time," resumed Minnie Mouse, as she sniffed and her whiskers moved in pathetic comedy. "We knew nothing of the world. (It is but fair to say that by the world Minnie Mouse meant only the kitchen and the dining-room, for she had seen nothing else.) We were afraid to venture from the nest and we remained there until we nearly perished from hunger and thirst. One night my sister Winnie (for being born at the same time she was named Winnie, while I was called Minnie) thought she could stand it no longer, so she crept into the kitchen. In a few moments we heard the snap of a trap, and the noise of her struggles. She never came back to us.

"Again we lay in our nest, until hunger and thirst forced us to separate and seek relief. I have never seen my two brothers or remaining sister since. Perhaps they are dead, or it may be they have gone somewhere else, for they tell me there are other places where mice might go. Do you know of any such places, Bobby Bunting?"

"There is Drandma's," said Bobby Bunting.

But Minnie Mouse sighed. She could not conceive of what that might be or look like. So she continued:

"I think I must have been very near that place that night I was caught."

"Was oo taught?" asked Bobby Bunting.

"Yes," sighed Minnie Mouse. "I was very hungry and slipped into the other room to see if I couldn't find something to eat. On the table I found some jam and a piece of cake and ate all I desired of those. Still I was hungry and began to seek for something else. Your mamma won't let you make an entire meal of cake and jam, will she, Bobby Bunting?"

"No," gurgled Bobby Bunting; "she won't dive me more than one piece of cake."

"That is why I wanted something else to go with my cake and jam; it is healthier," said Minnie Mouse. "I don't see what harm there is in that. A mouse can't starve, can it? What would you do if you were hungry, Robby Bunting?"

"I would try," said Bobby Bunting. He meant cry, but he couldn't say it.

"But suppose you couldn't cry," remarked Minnie Mouse. "A mouse can't cry, and, besides, I had no mamma to bring me what I wanted to eat."

"Then I dess I would dow and dit it," said Bobby Bunting.

"That's just what I tried to do," resumed Minnie Mouse. "But it seems that grown-up men and women (and, oh, how big they do get!) don't like for us to seek food, no difference how hungry we are. I ran a little way from the cake and climbed down on the floor, and as I got near the hole in the floor in which I ran down when I was scared I saw the nicest piece of cheese lying there in full view. I tell you, it was tempting. Still, I was afraid there was a trap somewhere around, for the cheese was lying on a little platform such as I had never seen before. I had been told about the traps

that if you touch one they fold together and hold you tight. I wanted the cheese, and yet was afraid to poke my head in and grab it, for fear a possible trap would snap on my neck and choke me to death. Then an inspiration came to me. I thought I would touch the cheese with tail first, and if there was no trap, then I could grab and eat it. You see, I thought that if my tail was caught I might escape with my life, while, if it caught me around my neck, I would surely choke to death, as did my poor mother. So I poked my tail back on the platform. Something went snap, and a great lever came crash on my tail. Oh! how it frightened me! My heart seemed to jump into my throat. It must have really done something like that, for ever since then they tell me, because it has been burst, it makes this peculiar noise which you hear."

"Sounds like singing," said Bobby Bunting.

"Yes; they call me a singing mouse," answered Minnie, "but it is really the blood in my heart pouring out at the side that was ruptured that makes the sound. I think the fright was worse than the hurt, though it did pain me dreadfully. You see, my beautiful, long tail was broken and the flesh torn in a horrible manner. I was so frightened, however, that I paid little attention to the pain, but pulled and struggled to escape."

"Did you dit away?" asked Bobby Bunting.

"Yes; the broken, lacerated tail was torn completely off where the trap fell, and I was free. But see how I was deformed in person, as well as internally injured."

And Minnie Mouse whisked her tail around so Bobby Bunting could see. Neither Bobby nor the mouse noticed it, but Bobby Bunting's mamma had come to the door and was gazing on the unusual scene.

"Bless his little heart," she said, referring to Bobby Bunting. "Even a mouse can interest my baby."

Minnie Mouse scampered to her hole in the wall, while Bobby Bunting ran to his mamma, crying:

"Oh, Mamma! A tinging mouse. Please let me feed and pet it."

"Why, darling, mice are nuisances. They are into everything, so."

"But, Mamma, this is a tinging mouse. Please, Mamma; one little mouse won't eat much."

"You say it sings?"

"Yes; it says its heart is broke, and so it tings."

Mamma smiled, and now Minnie Mouse is petted and has become quite tame, and is pointed out to the neighborhood.



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