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The Little Thief in the Pantry

Unknown writer

“Mother dear,” said a little mouse one day, “I think the people in our house must be very kind; don’t you? They leave such nice things for us in the pantry.”

There was a twinkle in the mother’s eye as she replied,— “Well, my child, no doubt they are very well in their way, but I don’t think they are quite as fond of us as you seem to think. Now remember, Greywhiskers, I have absolutely forbidden you to put your nose above the ground unless I am with you, for kind as the people are, I wouldn’t be at all surprised if they tried to catch you.”

Greywhiskers twitched his tail with scorn; he was quite sure he knew how to take care of himself, and he didn’t want to walk after his mother’s tail all his life. So as soon as she had curled herself up for an afternoon nap he crept away, and scampered across the pantry shelves.



Ah! There was something particularly good today. A large iced cake stood far back on the shelf, and Greywhiskers licked his lips as he sniffed it. Across the top of the cake there were words written in pink sugar; but as Greywhiskers could not read, he did not know that he was nibbling at little Ethel’s birthday cake. But he did feel a little guilty when he heard his mother calling. Off he ran, and was back in the nest again by the time his mother had finished rubbing her eyes after her nap.

She took Greywhiskers up to the pantry then, and when she saw the hole in the cake she seemed a little annoyed.

“Some mouse has evidently been here before us,” she said, but of course she never guessed that it was her own little son.

The next day the naughty little mouse again popped up to the pantry when his mother was asleep; but at first he could find nothing at all to eat, though there was a most delicious smell of toasted cheese.

But then he found a little wooden house, and there hung the cheese, just inside it. Greywhiskers ran in, but oh! “Click” went the little wooden house, and the little mouse was caught fast in a trap.



When the morning came, the cook, who had set the trap, lifted it from the shelf, and then called a little girl to come and see the thief who had eaten her cake.

“What are you going to do with him?” asked Ethel.

“Drown him.”

Tears came into the little girl’s pretty blue eyes.

“You didn’t know it was stealing, did you, mousie dear?” she said.

“No,” squeaked Greywhiskers sadly; “indeed I didn’t.”

Cook’s back was turned for a moment, and in that moment tender-hearted little Ethel lifted the lid of the trap, and out popped the little mouse.

Oh! How quickly he ran home to his mother, and how she comforted and petted him until he began to forget his fright; and then she made him promise never to disobey her again, and you may be sure he never did.



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