



Aesop's Fables

16. THE CAT AND THE MICE

By Sharri McGarry

On the kitchen table was a smelly cheese. The smell wafted through the kitchen. The smell spiralled down the hole in the skirting board. The smell drifted into the noses of three little mice.

'I love ch...ch...cheese!' whined Mini-Mouse, hungrily.

'So do I!' squeaked Mildred-Mouse.

Mighty-Mouse narrowed his eyes: 'Mission required to steal cheese!' he said.

In the kitchen lived a cat. 'I'm a Terrible-Tiger-Cat!' said the cat, prowling across the floor. And this Terrible-Tiger-Cat had the important job of guarding the cheese from pesky mice.

Under the skirting boards, the smell of cheese was too much for the mice.

'Right!' said Mighty-Mouse.

'Right,' said Mighty-Mouse, 'Mini-Mouse you go on my right side, Mildred-Mouse goes on my left and we'll rush out, steal the cheese and get back quick. OK?'

'What makes you think this plan will work?' said Mildred-Mouse.

'Trust me!' said Mighty-Mouse confidently. 'We have the element of surprise! Let's GO!'

Under the kitchen table sat the Terrible-Tiger-Cat. He watched as three little mice shot out of the hole in the skirting board.

'Mice? I'll catch 'em! I'll snatch 'em!' The Terrible-Tiger-Cat opened his terrible mouth and showed his terrible teeth.

'Wait for me!' yelled Mighty-Mouse.

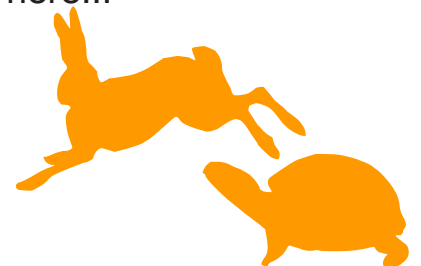
In the hole under the skirting boards, three little mice panted for breath.

'N...n...now what?' asked Mini-Mouse. 'NOW,' said Mildred-Mouse, with grim determination, 'we forget the cheese! We don't need it!'

And she marched off, leaving Mighty-Mouse looking embarrassed.

In the kitchen, the Terrible-Tiger-Cat waited. There was no sign of mice. The Terrible-Tiger-Cat was bored.

'Mice? I'll catch 'em! I'll snatch 'em! if I can thsee 'em! Humm...maybe if I wasn't here, the mice would come out! Maybe, if I pretend to not be here...'





Terrible-Tiger-Cat looked up at a sack that hung from the wall. The sack was grey. Terrible-Tiger-Cat looked at his fur. His fur was grey also.

‘Now,’ he said thoughtfully. ‘If I take this sack down from the wall...and if I climb up and hang myself there instead...I would look like a sack and not like a cat! Clever, eh?’

So Terrible-Tiger-Cat hung himself from the wall and waited.

Down the hole Mini-Mouse groaned.

‘The smell of ch...cheese is killing me! If I could have one taste...’

‘Get back here!’ said Mildred, grabbing Mini-Mouse’s tail and pulling him back. ‘B...b...but NO CAT!’ said Mini-Mouse excitedly.

‘Humm,’ said Mildred. ‘NEVER trust a cat!’ She poked her snout out cautiously. Mildred looked up at the sack hanging on the wall. The sack with the two bright eyes.

‘No cat?’ Mildred smiled wryly. ‘THEN WHAT’S THAT HANGING ON THE WALL?’

And the Terrible-Tiger-Cat replied, ‘Waaow! I’m only an old sack!’

‘C...c...cat!’ stuttered Mini-Mouse.

‘Abandon plan!’ said Mighty-Mouse.’

‘Come on!’ laughed Mildred, ‘Let’s get back to the mousehole.’

And there was silence in the kitchen.

‘Oooph!’ said the Terrible-Tiger-Cat. ‘I wonder what gave me away?’