

MOUSE GUARD™  
BALDWIN THE BRAVE  
AND OTHER TALES



DAVID PETERSEN

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:








MOUSE GUARD™  
**BALDWIN THE BRAVE**  
AND OTHER TALES




Published by  
**ARCHAIA™**



FOR MY WIFE JULIA  
AND EVERYONE WHO LOVES TO BE READ TO


SPECIAL THANKS TO:  
MY PARENTS, JESSE GLENN, MIKE DAVIS, EMERSON JONES,  
SEYTH MIERSMA, JEREMY BASTIAN, NATE PRIDE,  
KATIE COOK, JAY FOSGITT, REBECCA TAYLOR,  
AND MARK SMYLIE





MOUSE GUARD™  
**BALDWIN** THE **BRAVE**  
AND OTHER TALES

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## FOREWORD

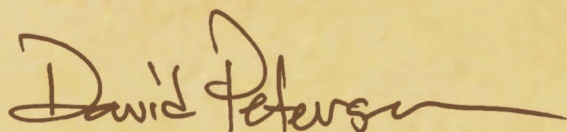
“BEHIND EVERY BRAVE MOUSE...THERE'S A TALE.” - *MOUSE GUARD* EDITOR REBECCA TAYLOR

CREATING A STORY TO WELCOME NEW READERS WHILE STILL HAVING SUBSTANCE AND REWARD FOR EXISTING FANS IS A TOUGH TIGHTROPE TO WALK.

MY PLAN TO BALANCE THE TWO GROUPS FEATURED A MOUSE CHARACTER FROM THE *MOUSE GUARD* SERIES AS A YOUNG MOUSE BEING TOLD A MORALITY STORY THAT SHAPED THE ADULT PERSONALITIES EXISTING FANS ALREADY KNEW. NEW READERS COULD ENJOY THE LITTLE STORY WHICH GAVE THE FLAVOR OF *MOUSE GUARD*, AND THE LONGTIME FANS COULD HUNT FOR EASTER EGGS AND FURTHER MOTIVATIONS FOR THEIR FAVORITE CHARACTERS.

THESE STORIES WERE FUN EXERCISES IN SHORT STORY & FOLKLORE-CRAFT (THOUGH TO BE HONEST THE FIRST STORY'S STRUCTURE BORROWS A LOT OF INSPIRATION FROM CHAUCER'S *PARDONER'S TALE* AND J.K. ROWLING'S *TALE OF THE THREE BROTHERS*) WHILE GIVING ME A LITTLE VISITATION TIME WITH MY CHARACTERS' PARENTS AND CHILDHOODS.

HERE COLLECTED FOR THE FIRST TIME ARE MY FREE COMIC BOOK DAY STORIES FROM 2011-2014 AND TWO NEW STORIES CREATED JUST FOR THIS VOLUME. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO READ THESE STORIES ALOUD TO LOVED ONES AND I HOPE YOU ENJOY THE BOOK.



DAVID PETERSEN  
MICHIGAN, 2014







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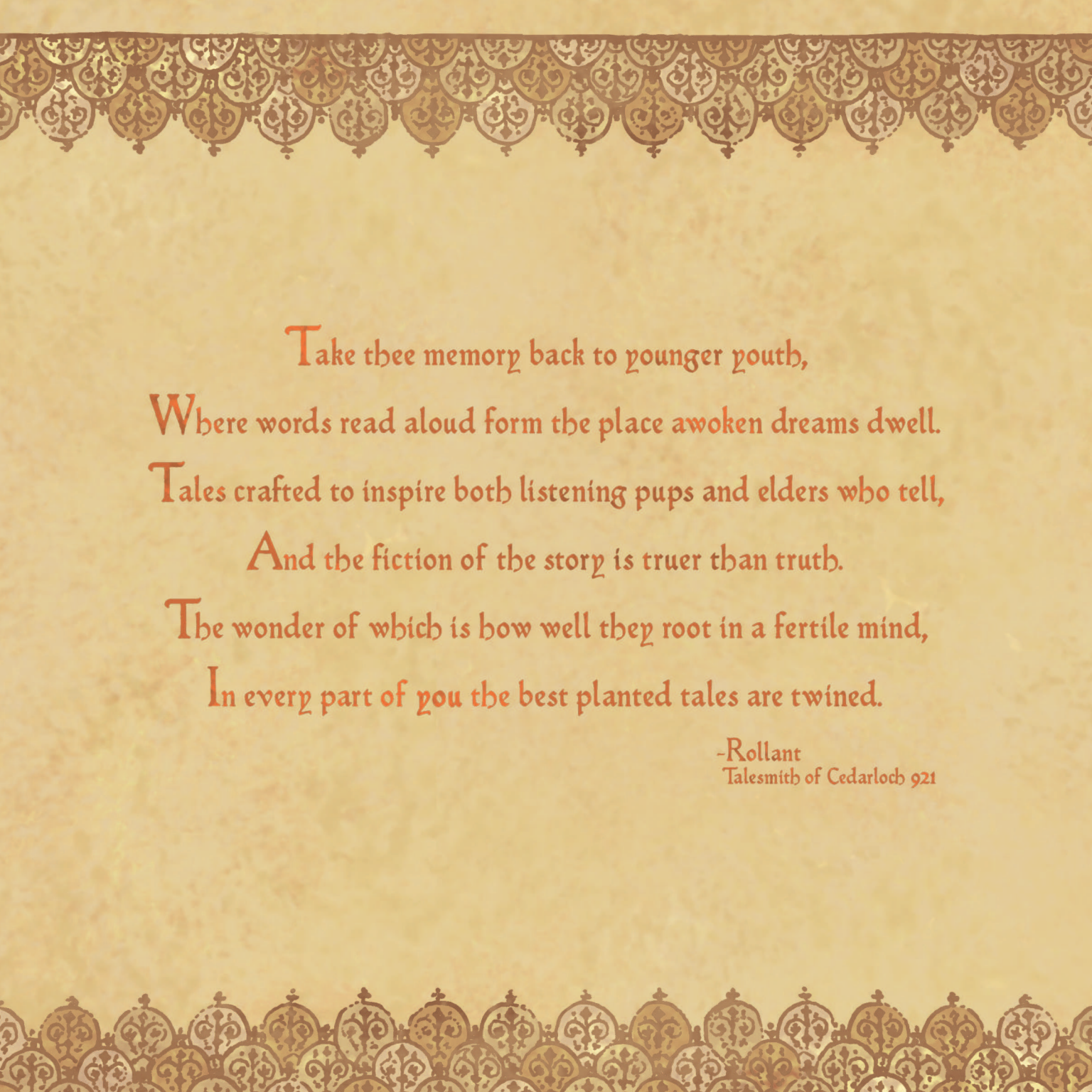
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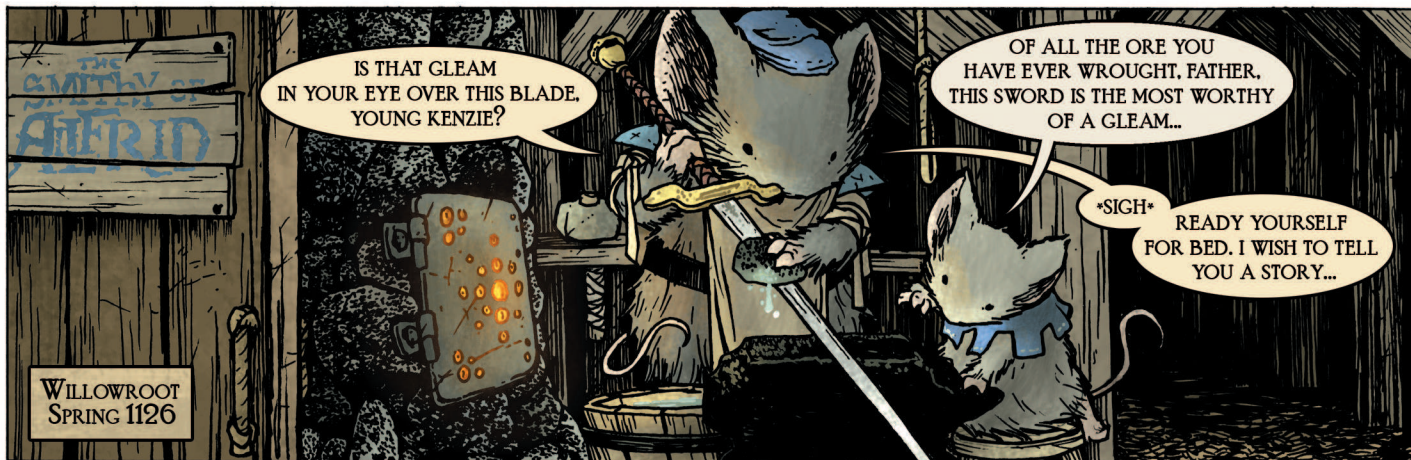


Take thee memory back to younger youth,  
Where words read aloud form the place awoken dreams dwell.  
Tales crafted to inspire both listening pups and elders who tell,  
And the fiction of the story is truer than truth.  
The wonder of which is how well they root in a fertile mind,  
In every part of you the best planted tales are twined.

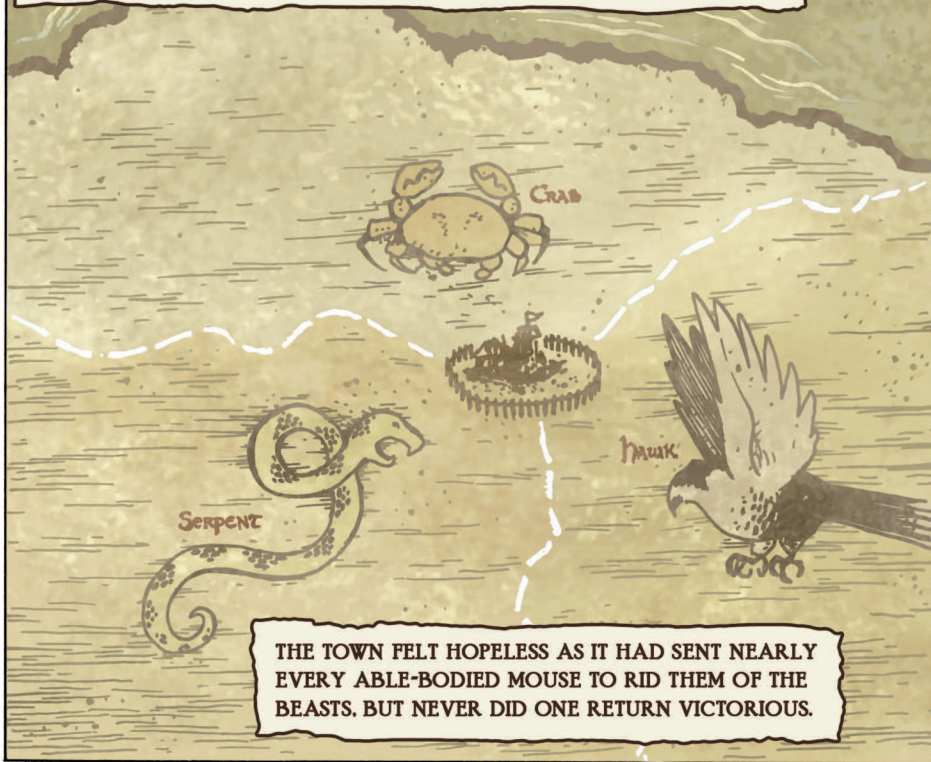
-Rollant  
Talesmith of Cedarloch 921








IT WAS ONCE A MOUSE TOWN WHICH LAY IN PERIL. THREE PREDATORS  
HAD CLAIMED THE TERRITORY OUTSIDE ITS WALLS: A HAWK, A SNAKE,  
AND A CRAB. NOT EVEN A RIBBON OF LAND BETWEEN THEIR HUNTING  
GROUNDS EXISTED FOR A MOUSE TO ESCAPE THE SETTLEMENT.




UNTIL, A WEAVER MOUSE,  
KNOWN FOR BEING CLEVER,  
CAME FORWARD SAYING:

I'LL REMOVE  
THE THREATS!






HE WALKED OUT OF THE GATES AND INTO THE HAWK'S HUNTING GROUNDS. WHEN HE FOUND THE FEATHERED KILLER HE BOWED AND OFFERED HUMBLY:

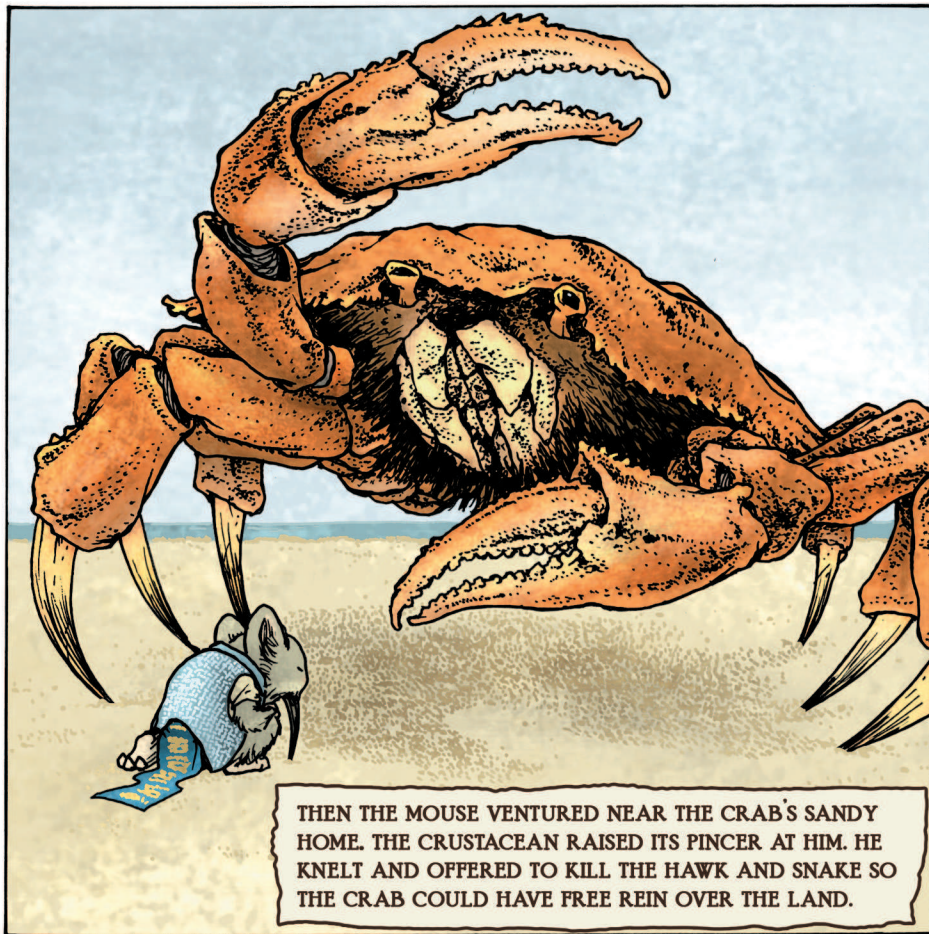


BEFORE YOU WOULD THINK TO SWALLOW ME, HAWK, I OFFER MY SERVICES IN RIDDING US BOTH OF THE SNAKE AND THE CRAB OF OUR NEARBY LANDS.

WITH TWO-THIRDS OF OUR FOES REMOVED, WE WILL BOTH SURVIVE EXTINCTION, WHICH WILL OFFER YOU HEARTY MEALS WITH NO COMPETITION.



THE HAWK RELISHED THE IDEA OF DESTROYING THE OTHER MOUSE-EATERS, AND WITH GREAT PAIN REMOVED ONE OF HIS OWN TALONS FOR THE MOUSE TO USE AS A BLADE IN THE QUEST.

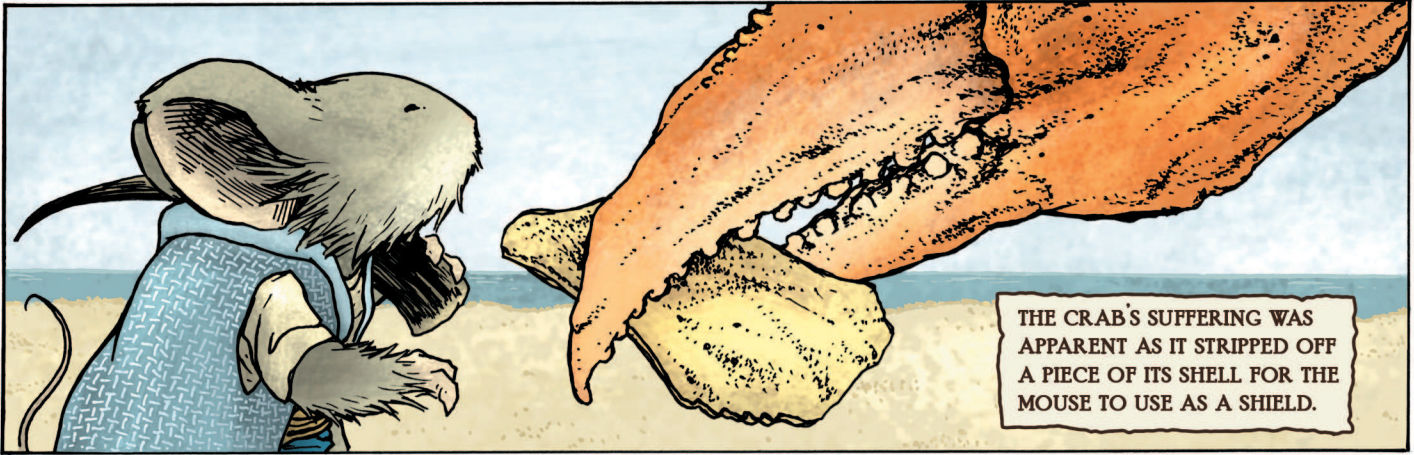


THEN THE MOUSE VENTURED NEAR THE CRAB'S SANDY HOME. THE CRUSTACEAN RAISED ITS PINCER AT HIM. HE KNELT AND OFFERED TO KILL THE HAWK AND SNAKE SO THE CRAB COULD HAVE FREE REIN OVER THE LAND.

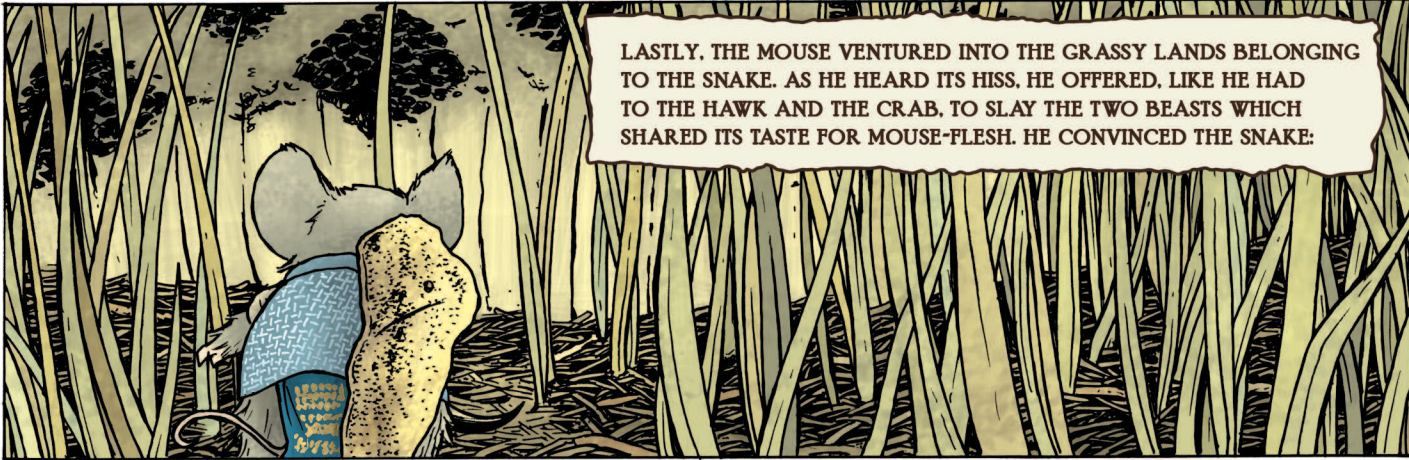


THE MOUSE ADMITTED THOUGH:

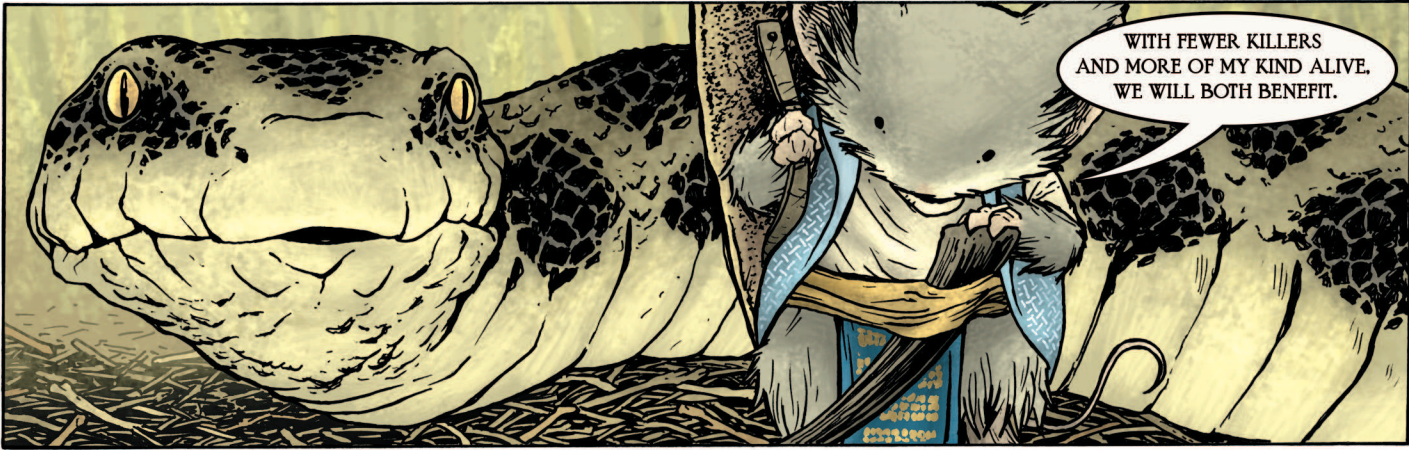
I OFFER TO DO IT ALONE, BUT A SMALL CREATURE LIKE ME WILL NEED TO BE BETTER EQUIPPED TO SURVIVE THE TASK.



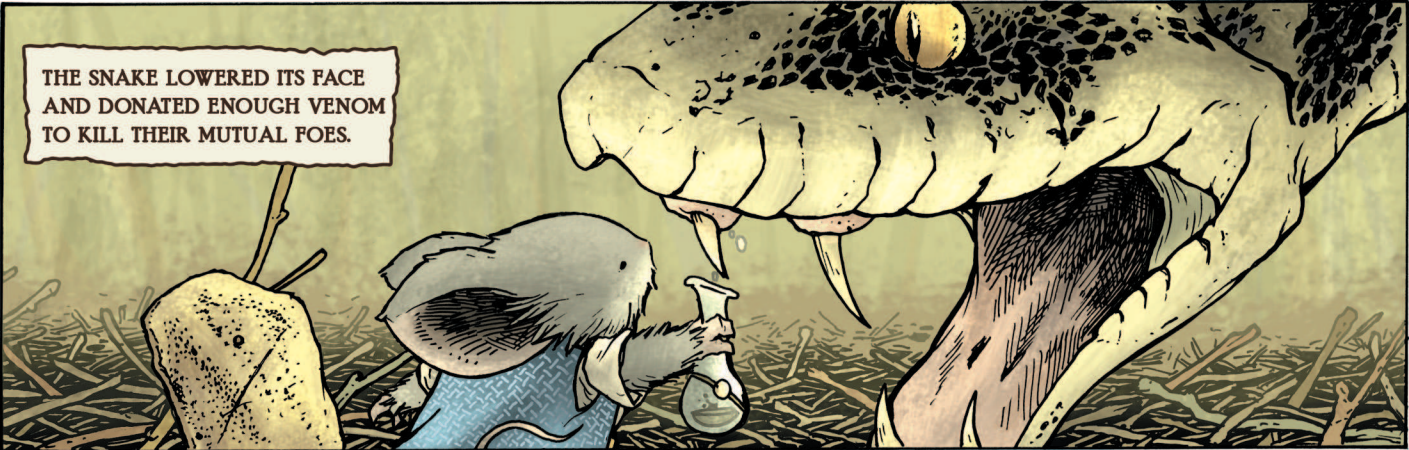
THE CRAB'S SUFFERING WAS APPARENT AS IT STRIPPED OFF A PIECE OF ITS SHELL FOR THE MOUSE TO USE AS A SHIELD.



LASTLY, THE MOUSE VENTURED INTO THE GRASSY LANDS BELONGING TO THE SNAKE. AS HE HEARD ITS HISS, HE OFFERED, LIKE HE HAD TO THE HAWK AND THE CRAB, TO SLAY THE TWO BEASTS WHICH SHARED ITS TASTE FOR MOUSE-FLESH. HE CONVINCED THE SNAKE:

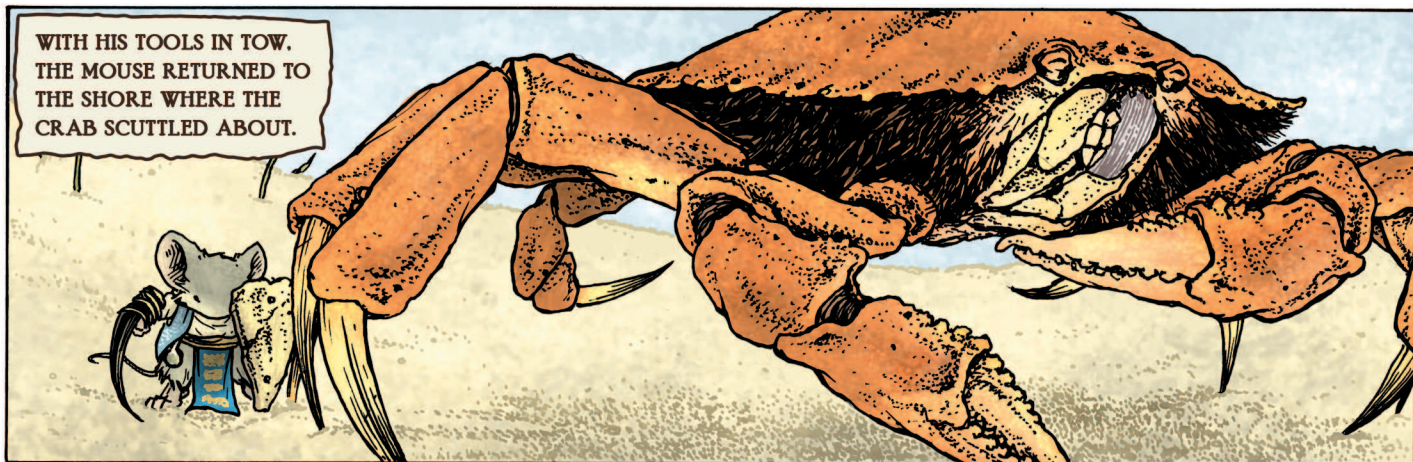


WITH FEWER KILLERS AND MORE OF MY KIND ALIVE, WE WILL BOTH BENEFIT.

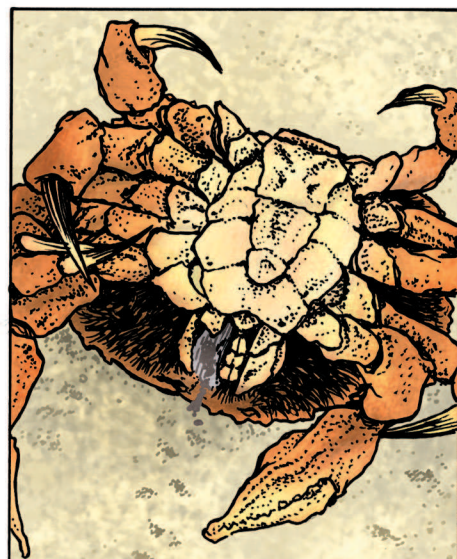
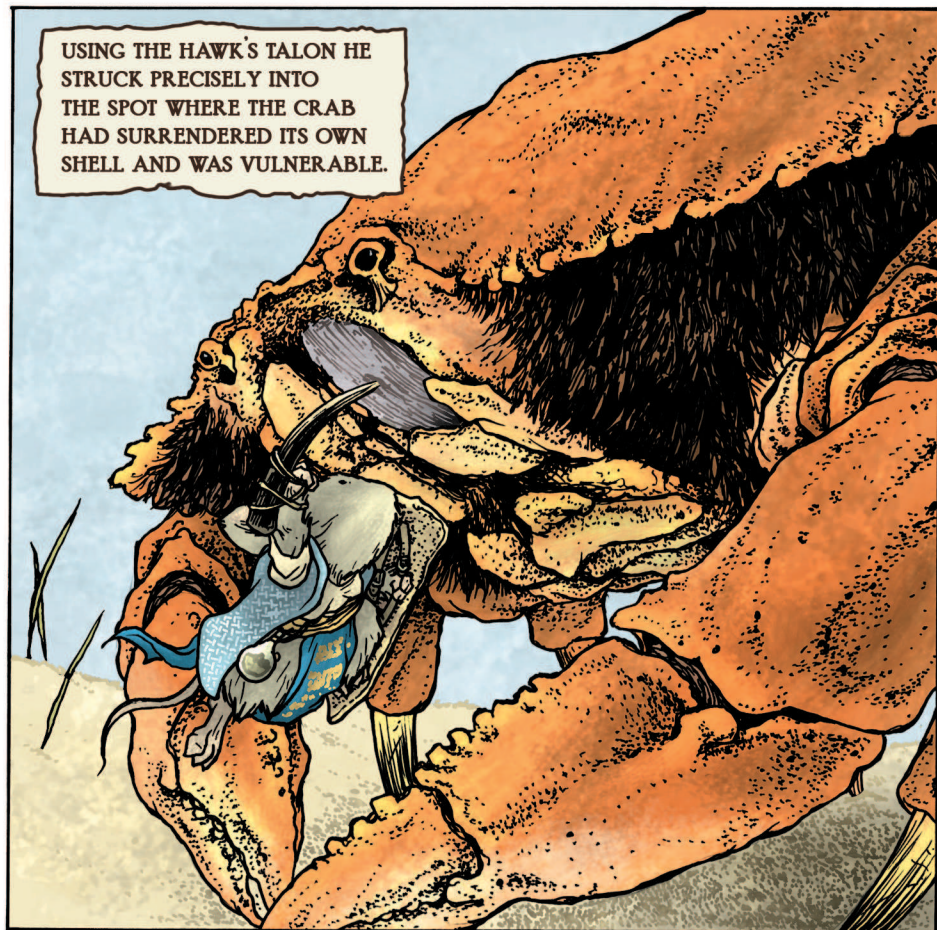


THE SNAKE LOWERED ITS FACE AND DONATED ENOUGH VENOM TO KILL THEIR MUTUAL FOES.

WITH HIS TOOLS IN TOW,  
THE MOUSE RETURNED TO  
THE SHORE WHERE THE  
CRAB SCUTTLED ABOUT.



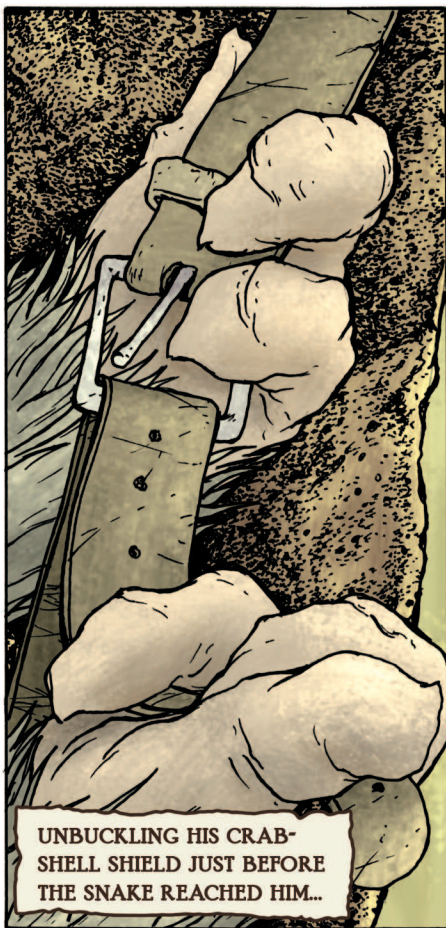
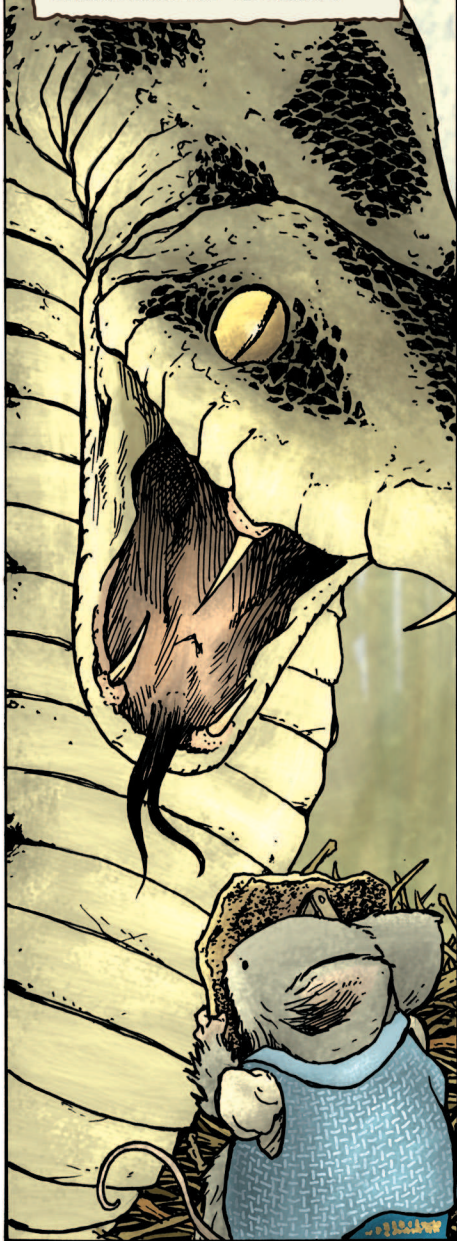
USING THE HAWK'S TALON HE  
STRUCK PRECISELY INTO  
THE SPOT WHERE THE CRAB  
HAD SURRENDERED ITS OWN  
SHELL AND WAS VULNERABLE.



THE CRAB PERISHED AND  
THE MOUSE TRAVELED ON.



WHEN HE RETURNED TO THE SNAKE, IT LOOKED SURPRISED TO SEE HIM BACK SO SOON. SUSPECTING TREACHERY, THE SNAKE ROSE UP TO STRIKE.



UNBUCKLING HIS CRAB-SHELL SHIELD JUST BEFORE THE SNAKE REACHED HIM...



THE MOUSE LODGED IT IN THE THROAT OF THE LONG SERPENT.



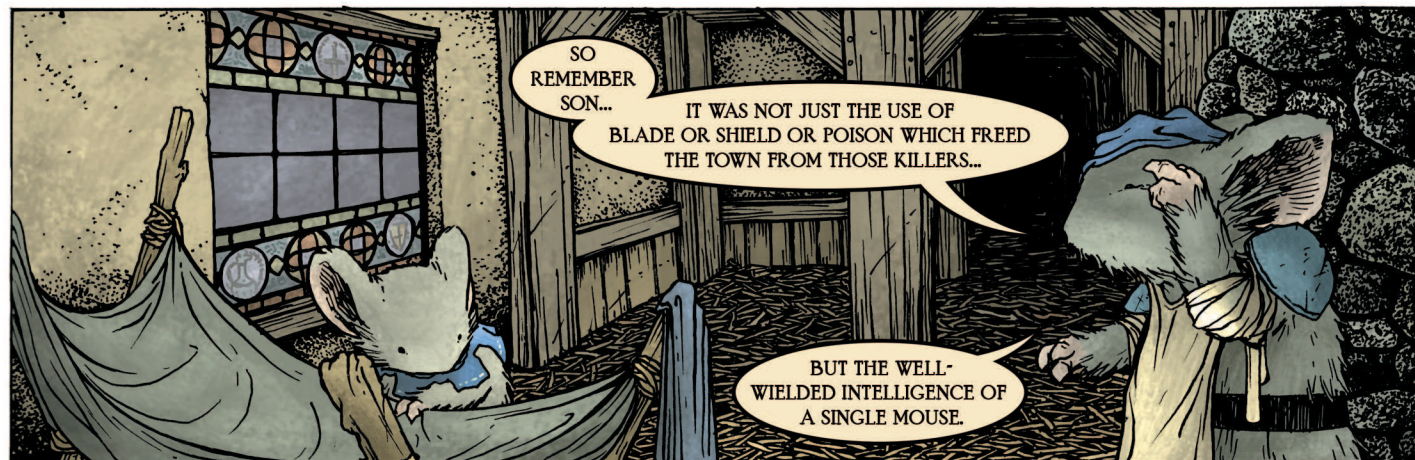
HARD AND SPIKY, THE PIECE OF SHELL CUT THE SNAKE INSIDE, RESULTANTLY KILLING THE BEAST.

WITH TWO OF THE PREDATORS SLAIN, THE MOUSE TRAVELED BACK TO THE HAWK WITH HIS CLEVEREST PLAN YET. TAKING THE SNAKE'S VENOM HE OFFERED IT TO THE HAWK SAYING:

I HAVE DONE WHAT WE AGREED UPON, AND I OFFER THIS WINE AS A SYMBOL OF OUR NEW COVENANT.

THE HAWK SWALLOWED THE OFFERING IN A SINGLE GULP.

...AND EXPIRED QUICKLY AS A RESULT.



SO  
REMEMBER  
SON...

IT WAS NOT JUST THE USE OF  
BLADE OR SHIELD OR POISON WHICH FREED  
THE TOWN FROM THOSE KILLERS...

BUT THE WELL-  
WIELDED INTELLIGENCE OF  
A SINGLE MOUSE.

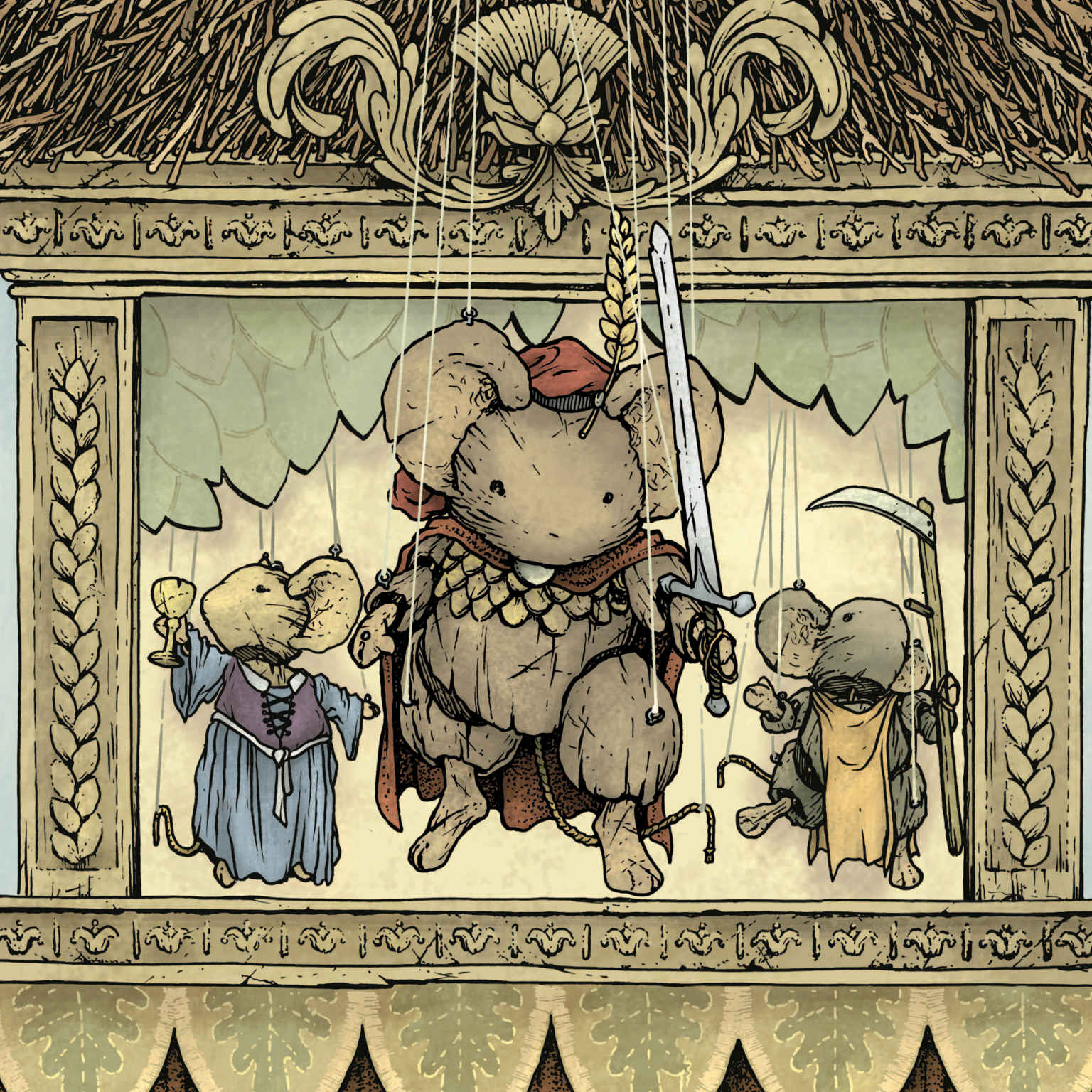


DREAM OF  
GREATER THINGS FOR  
OUR KIND THAN MAKING  
BEASTS BLEED FOR  
OUR SURVIVAL.

IDEAS CAN  
CAUSE MORE DAMAGE THAN  
A BLADE?



GOOD NIGHT, KENZIE.





THE  
TALE  
OF

BALDWIN  
THE BRAVE



OAKGROVE  
SUMMER 1131

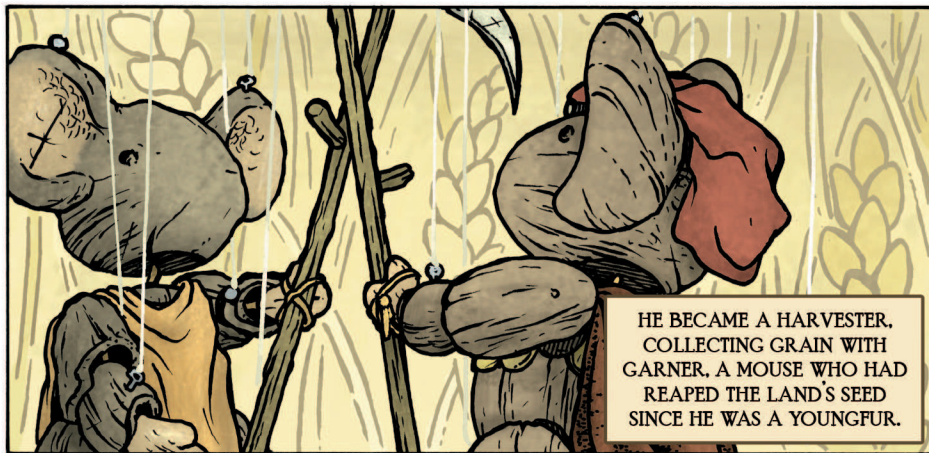
OUR TALE BEGINS SEASONS AGO,  
AS BALDWIN, A YOUNG MOUSE,  
ARRIVED AT A TOWN SAID TO BE  
CURSED. CARVED NEAR THE GATES  
WERE THE WORDS "EVIL PREVAILS".



AND SO THE MICE THERE BELIEVED THIS  
TO BE TRUE. ANY SAD EVENT OR TRAGEDY  
GAVE THE SAYING FURTHER CREDENCE.

SUCH THINGS DID NOT SWAY  
BALDWIN THOUGH, AND HE  
THOUGHT THIS TOWN TO BE  
A PERFECT PLACE TO SETTLE  
AND START HIS LIFE.





HE BECAME A HARVESTER,  
COLLECTING GRAIN WITH  
GARNER, A MOUSE WHO HAD  
REAPED THE LAND'S SEED  
SINCE HE WAS A YOUNGFUR.

MIDWAY THROUGH THAT FALL'S HARVEST, GARNER SHIVERED IN FRIGHT,  
FOR A GOOSE WAS GOBBLING THE WHEAT NEEDED TO KEEP THE TOWN  
ALIVE OVER THE WINTER WHILE THE GRAIN WAS STILL ON THE SHAFT.

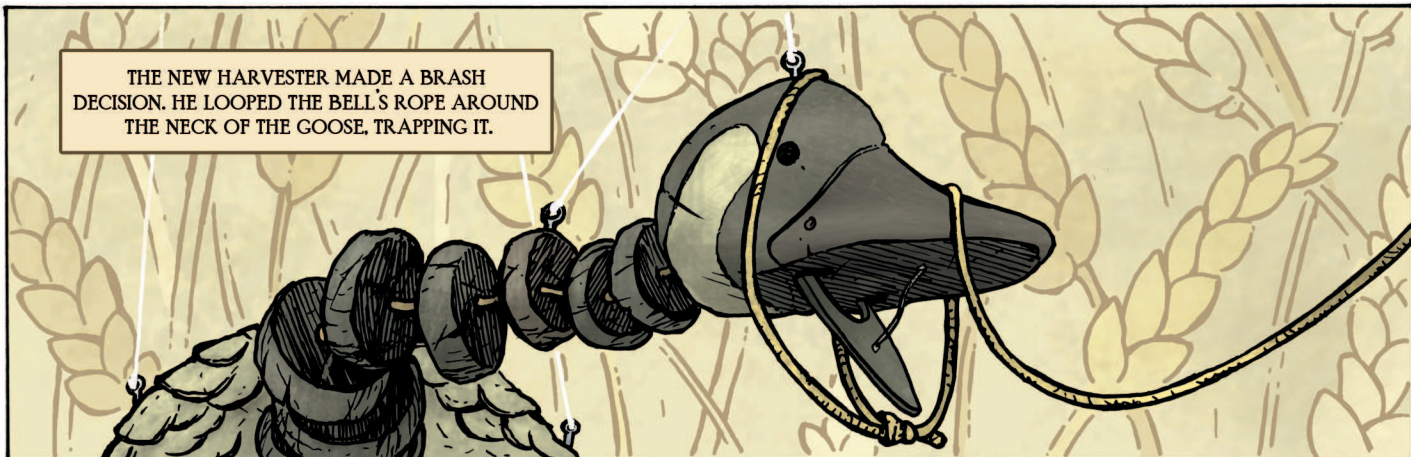


BALDWIN SUGGESTED RINGING THE LARGE TOWN BELL  
IN HOPES OF FRIGHTENING THE HUNGRY FOWL AWAY.



BUT GARNER ADVISED IT WAS  
BEST TO DO NOTHING, AS THE  
SOUND OF THAT BELL LURED  
LARGER PREDATORS WHO WOULD  
EITHER EAT MORE GRAIN THAN  
THE GOOSE, OR EAT THEM.

THE NEW HARVESTER MADE A BRASH  
DECISION. HE LOOPEd THE BELL'S ROPE  
AROUND  
THE NECK OF THE GOOSE, TRAPPING IT.



THE CLANGING IT MADE  
DREW A WOLF TO THE BIRD...

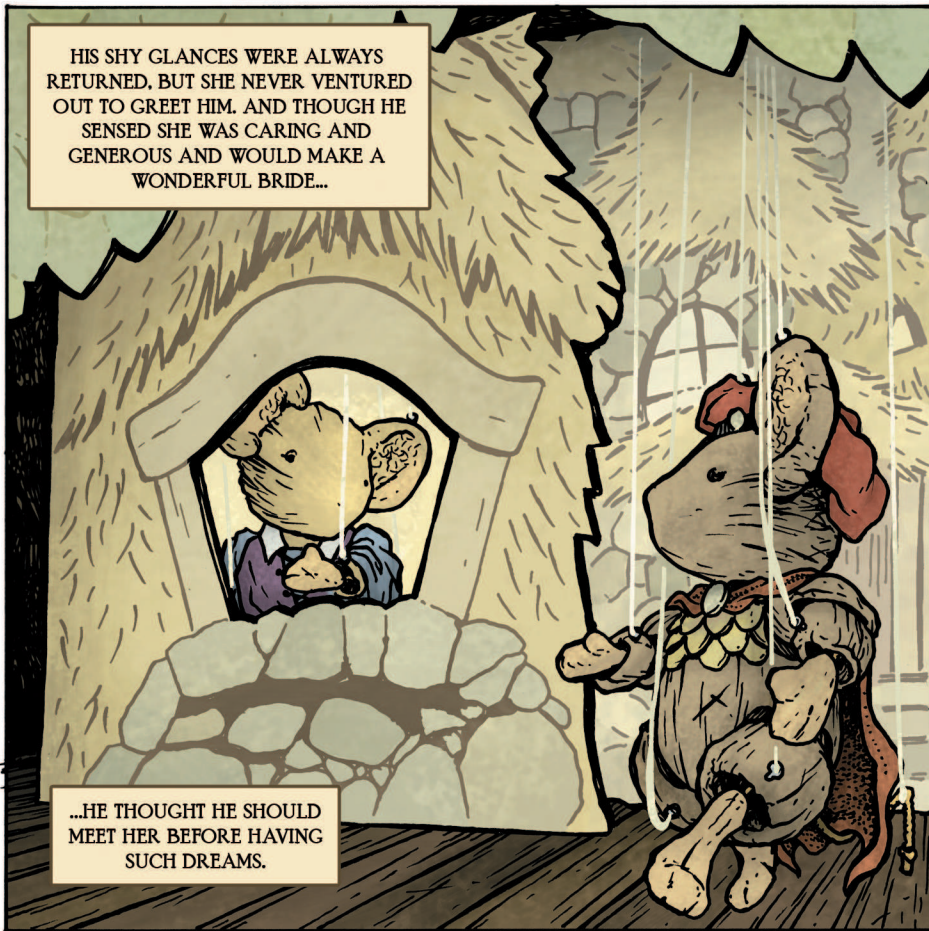


WHO ATE IT WHOLE AND WANDERED AWAY WITH  
A FULL BELLY. LEAVING THE HARVEST SAFE FOR  
BALDWIN AND GARNER TO REAP FOR THE TOWN.





EACH NIGHT WHEN BALDWIN RETURNED FROM THE HARVEST, HE SPOTTED A LOVELY MOUSE WHO LIVED NEAR THE GATES.



HIS SHY GLANCES WERE ALWAYS RETURNED, BUT SHE NEVER VENTURED OUT TO GREET HIM. AND THOUGH HE SENSED SHE WAS CARING AND GENEROUS AND WOULD MAKE A WONDERFUL BRIDE...

...HE THOUGHT HE SHOULD MEET HER BEFORE HAVING SUCH DREAMS.



THE OTHER TOWN LABORERS TOLD HIM HOW THEY WISHED TO MARRY CARWYN TOO, FOR THAT WAS HER NAME, BUT THEY ALL KNEW SHE WAS FAR TOO BEAUTIFUL TO WANT TO EVER SPEAK TO ANY OF THEM.



BALDWIN THOUGHT IT FOOLISH TO GIVE UP BEFORE EVEN TRYING. HE WENT TO CARWYN'S WINDOW AND GREETED HER, APOLOGIZED FOR BEING SO FORWARD, BUT TOLD HER HIS WISH TO COURT HER.



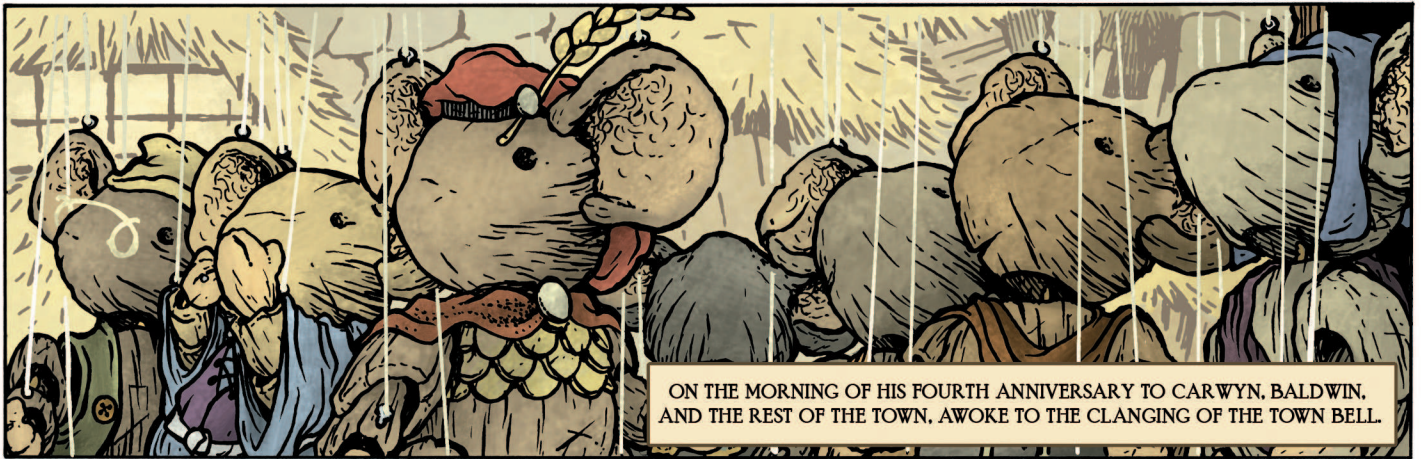
SPILLING HER GOBLET, SHE EMBRACED HIM. SHE CONFESSED HER CUP WAS TAINTED WITH BELLADONNA.

FEAR OF HER REJECTION HAD DRIVEN OFF ALL SUITORS, AND NO MOUSE HAD SPOKEN A WORD TO HER SINCE SHE WAS VERY YOUNG.

IN LONELY DESPAIR THAT SHE WOULD NEVER FEEL LOVE FROM ANOTHER, CARWYN HAD BEEN MOMENTS AWAY FROM ENDING HER LIFE...

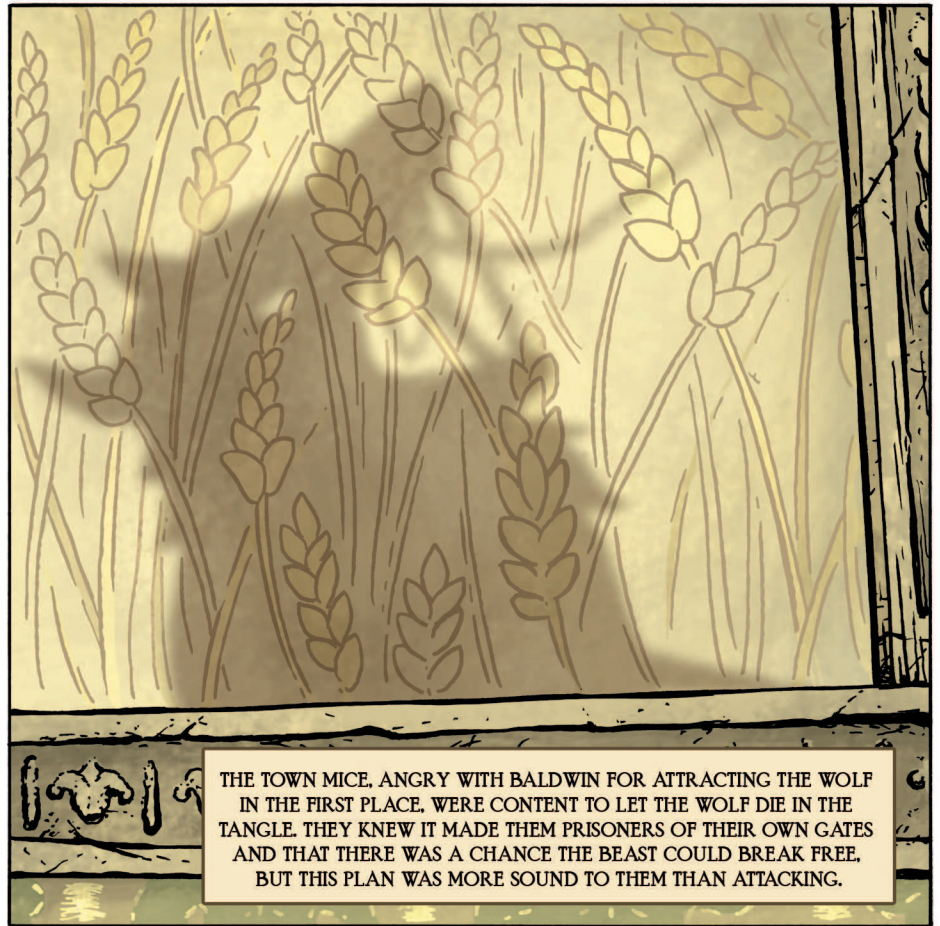


BUT BALDWIN'S COURAGE IN LOVE PREVENTED THAT.



ON THE MORNING OF HIS FOURTH ANNIVERSARY TO CARWYN, BALDWIN, AND THE REST OF THE TOWN, AWOKE TO THE CLANGING OF THE TOWN BELL.

A LOOKOUT BELLOUED THAT A WOLF, PERHAPS THE SAME WOLF WHO HAD EATEN THE GOOSE SO LONG AGO, WAS BACK AND TANGLED IN THE BELL'S ROPE.

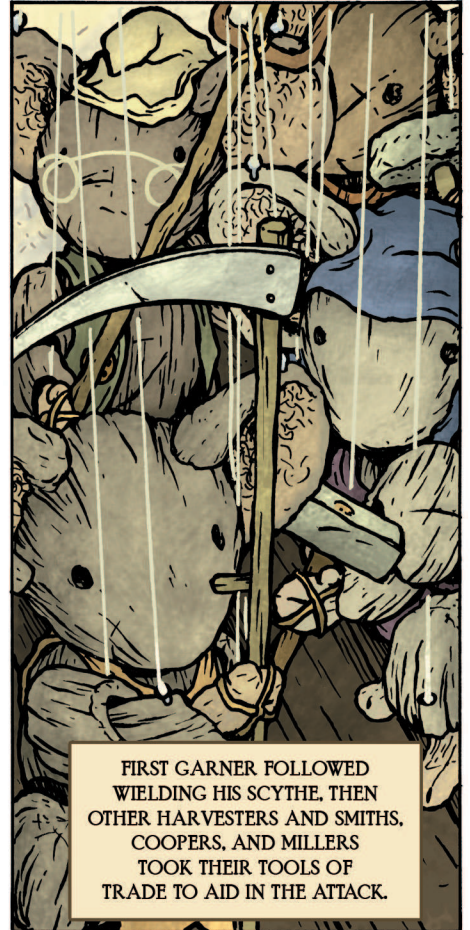


THE TOWN MICE, ANGRY WITH BALDWIN FOR ATTRACTING THE WOLF IN THE FIRST PLACE, WERE CONTENT TO LET THE WOLF DIE IN THE TANGLE. THEY KNEW IT MADE THEM PRISONERS OF THEIR OWN GATES AND THAT THERE WAS A CHANCE THE BEAST COULD BREAK FREE, BUT THIS PLAN WAS MORE SOUND TO THEM THAN ATTACKING.

WITH BORROWED SWORD IN HAND, BALDWIN WENT TO FACE THE BEAST HEAD ON. THE TOWN MICE WERE IN AWE OF THE BOLD COURSE OF ACTION BALDWIN WAS TAKING.



FIRST GARNER FOLLOWED WIELDING HIS SCYTHE, THEN OTHER HARVESTERS AND SMITHS, COOPERS, AND MILLERS TOOK THEIR TOOLS OF TRADE TO AID IN THE ATTACK.



WITH THE FULL TOWN RALLIED, BALDWIN LED THEM TO A VICTORY OVER THE WOLF AND KEPT THE TOWN FREE AND SAFE.



BALDWIN WAS GIVEN THE ROLE OF  
MAYOR FOR HIS BRAVERY AND ACTION.

AND THE SAYING ABOVE THE  
TOWN ENTRANCE WAS AMENDED.

EVIL PREVAILS  
IF GOOD MICE  
DO NOTHING

THE  
END

COME  
ALONG, SAXON,  
TIME  
TO GO HOME.





The Tale of  
Thane & Ilsa



I DON'T LIKE YOU KEEPING THE COMPANY OF THE KIND OF MOUSE THAT PATRONS HERE IN YOUR MOTHER'S TAVERN, SADIE.

UPPER PORT SUMAC  
SPRING 1140: DAWN



THEY LIKE ME, AND I LIKE THEIR STORIES. YOU WORRY AFTER ME TOO MUCH, PAPA.

DO YOU THINK I'LL SAIL AWAY AND MARRY ONE OF THEM?

I SHOULD HOPE NOT!

HA HA HA!  
WHY, PERHAPS I'LL FIND ONE TO LOVE THIS VERY DAY...



YOU LAUGH, DAUGHTER, BUT AS YOU ARE NAUGHT BUT FOURTEEN YEARS...

...LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT LOVE M'DEAR AND THE WEIGHT OF THAT WORD BEFORE YOU GO TOSSING IT ABOUT IN JEST...

She was the most beautiful of mice. Her fur was the color of spun copper and glistened and shone in a way that made all around her the richer just for looking. However, beauty was only a sliver of her sum. She was as talented with a hammer as she was with a ladle, and no mouse could match her ability with either or at any trade in between. As any beast could attest, if they had lived to tell you, she was three times again as skilled with a bow or a blade.

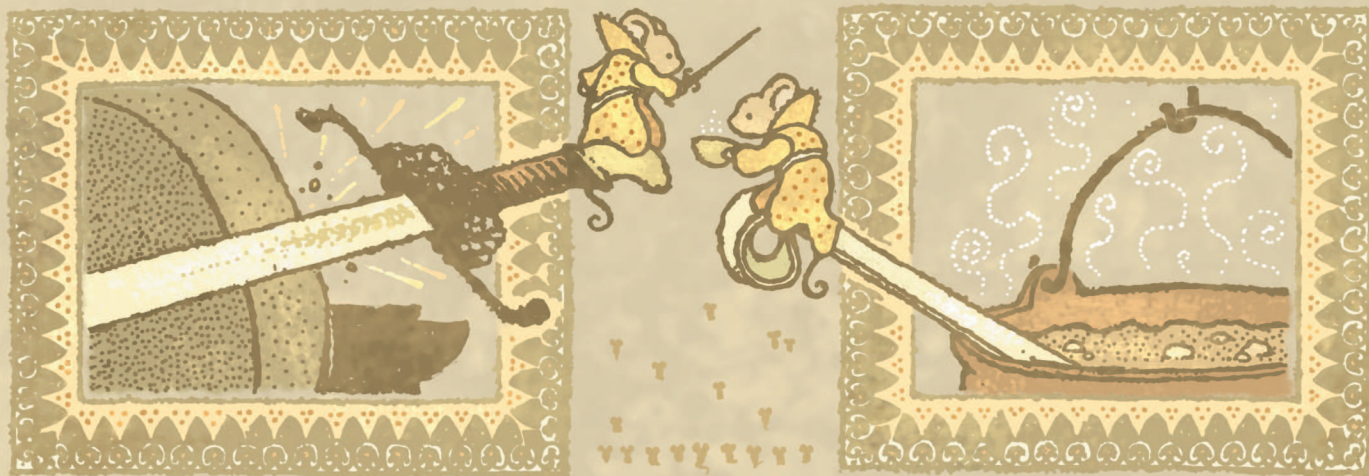


At  
all things  
she was good.

She was not short on suitors, for no mouse was more desired than she. So, cleverly she devised a test for finding a mouse worthy of her love, which surely, was greater than the love that could be given by any other mouse. When her challenge began, the field of hopefuls occupied an entire meadow. And she asked them to match her in many many tasks.



At smithing swords, no weapon was finer than hers. And more than half of the participants walked away early, knowing their blades to be inferior. When cooking stew, none proved to be tastier than hers, and ashamed of their waste of ingredients and time, the herd of mice was greatly thinned again.



At  
any skill named, the  
beauty would best the others. However, with  
her manners, she never boasted of her own good  
work nor spoke badly of their failures. She would quickly  
announce the next event and move on to it.



Even if a mouse had done extraordinarily well in one test, they'd become discouraged enough at the next and walk away with a half-broken heart, for they knew no mouse would be as good at so many things as she.

When the group of suitors was down to the size of a Guard patrol or two, the lovely mouse declared the next task to be the final assessment. It involved climbing the tallest of rock faces, running through the upper limbs of dead elms before they broke away, daring to catch the antlers of an elk running into the wild country, navigating back into the Territories, and swimming out to the Isle of Venn where she would be waiting to give her heart to a single mouse.

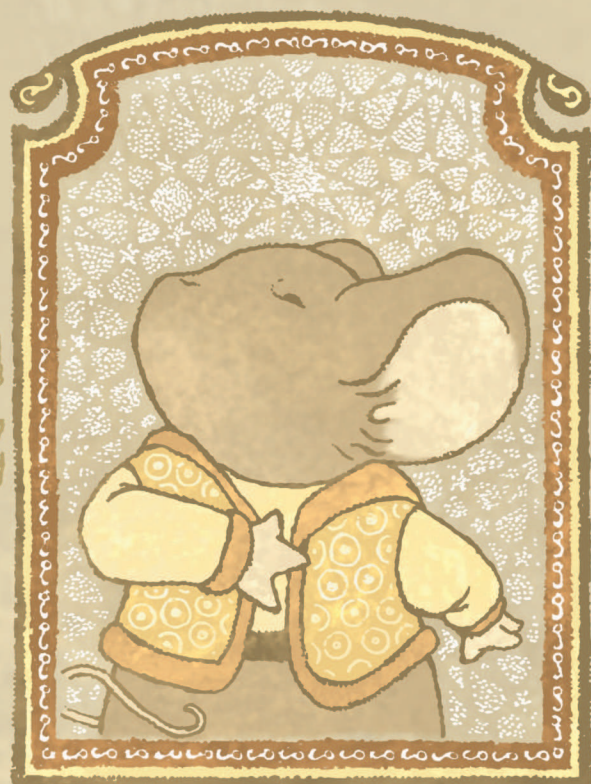


And while she climbed, and ran, and rode giant beasts, and swam and waited, the mice became disenchanted and found her no longer a worthy prize for the trouble, effort, and danger involved... that is all but two mice.

One was humble and stout and skilled only in the building of boats. His sword was a tangle of iron, his stew was as foul as gull droppings. At all other of her tasks he was equally poor, but if he did anything better than boatcraft, it was loving the beautiful mouse from afar.



The other that remained was boastful and greedy with a habit of cheating to get what he felt he already deserved. While his performance thus far was better than that of the boat mouse, he spoke of his deeds as if they had almost matched, and at times bested, those of the beautiful mouse.



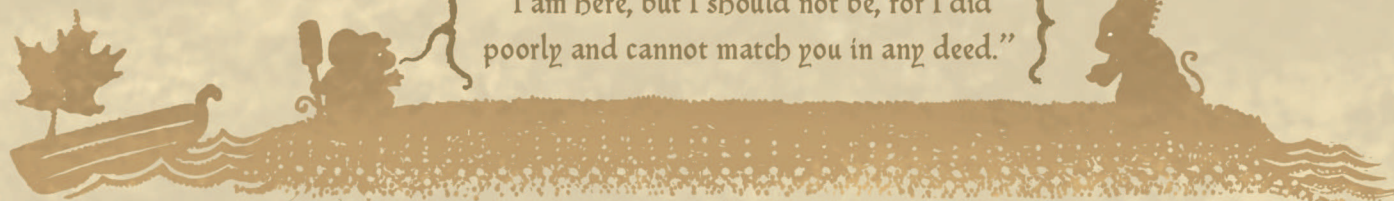
He schemed to skip the planned route and head straight to the Isle of Venn and be waiting for her when she arrived. But when he found himself on the shores of the lake surrounding the isle, his heart soured at the swim alone. He too decided she was not worth the cost of a chance drowning, and left for home.

The boat mouse did not do well at the remaining tasks, but he found ways to complete each leg of the route suggested. He'd tumbled off several elk, crashed through canopies of branches, and got lost on more than one occasion. After several days of hard work, he arrived at the very shore where the other mouse had quit. This mouse knew he had not the breath or strength to swim the distance, and he set to craft a boat to carry him across.



On the Isle of Venn, he found her waiting, and she nodded at him lovingly. He cried and exclaimed,

“I am here, but I should not be, for I did poorly and cannot match you in any deed.”



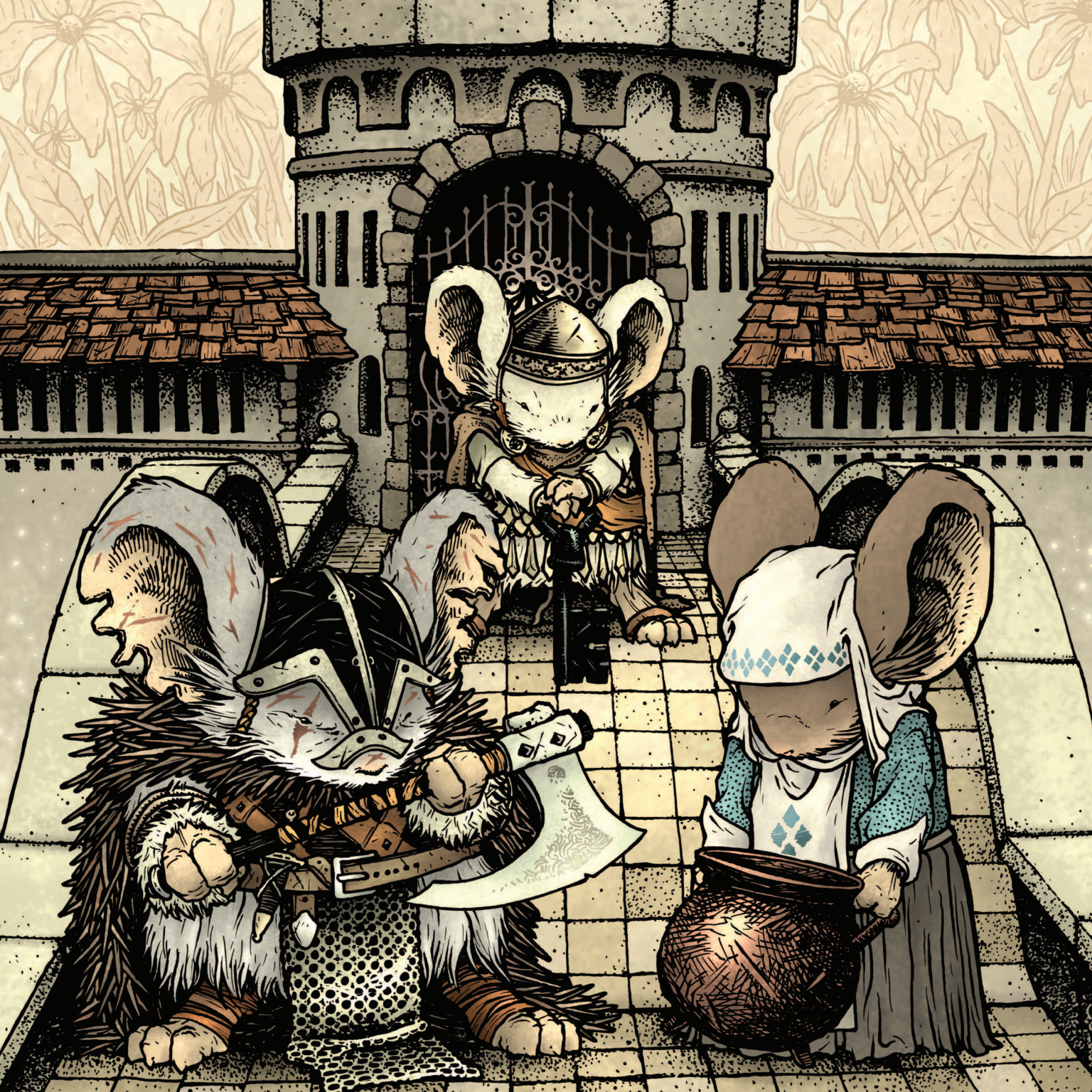
“Then why are you here?”  
she asked.

“Because I love you,”  
he said.

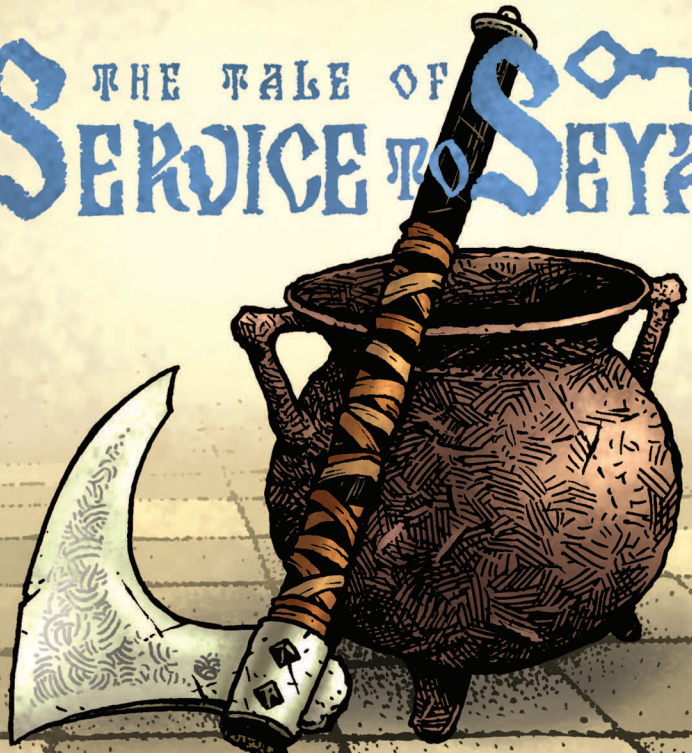


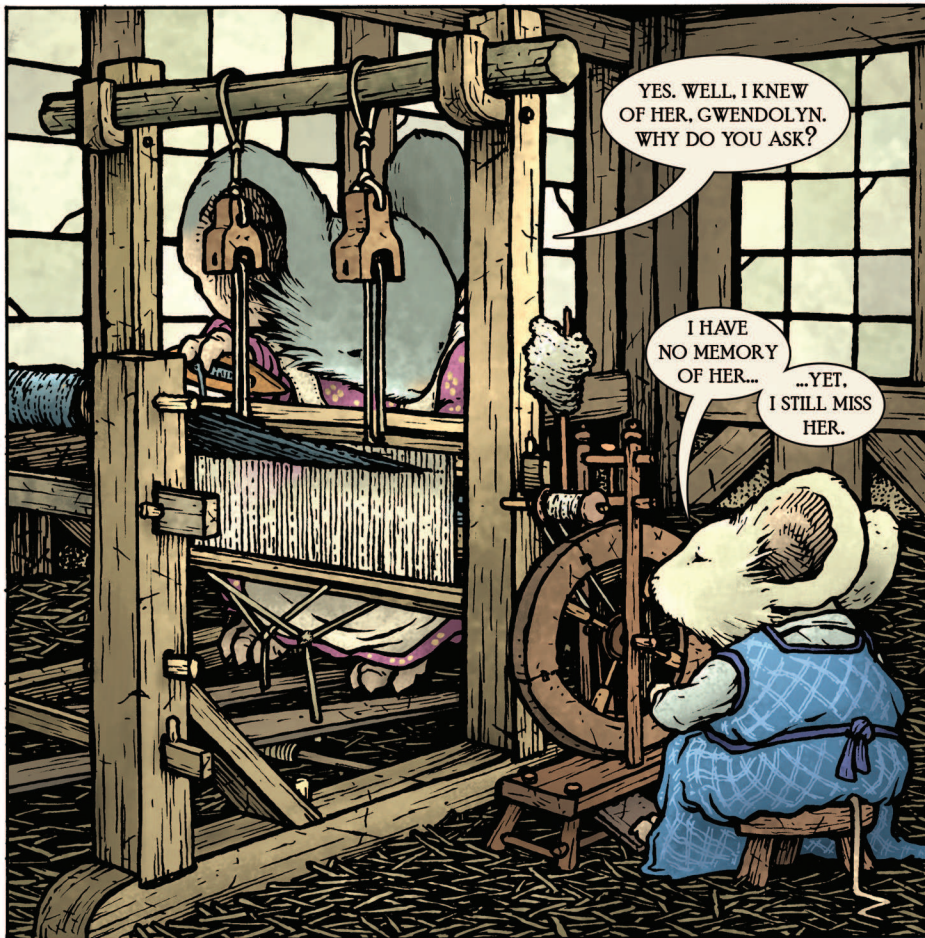
And she replied, “Then your love is bigger than all of the tasks. I can cook, and smith, and swim, and climb, and fight enough for the both of us, but it would be a poor union if I also had to do the loving for us both.”

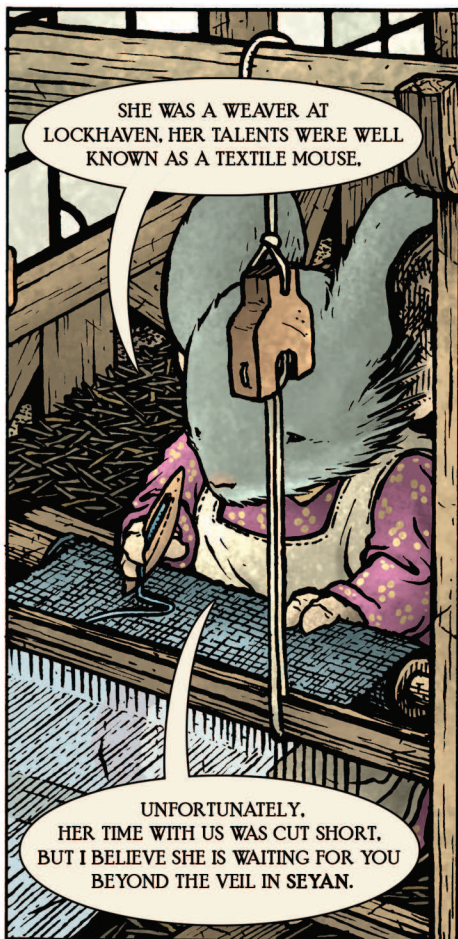




THE TALE OF  
SERVICE TO SEYAH







SHE WAS A WEAVER AT  
LOCKHAVEN, HER TALENTS WERE WELL  
KNOWN AS A TEXTILE MOUSE.

UNFORTUNATELY,  
HER TIME WITH US WAS CUT SHORT.  
BUT I BELIEVE SHE IS WAITING FOR YOU  
BEYOND THE VEIL IN SEYAN.



...I DO NOT  
KNOW OF THAT  
PLACE...



BEYOND THE WALK OF MORTAL MICE IS THE GREAT LAND OF  
SEYAN, A CITADEL LARGER AND MORE GRAND THAN SHORESTONE,  
AND GROUNDS AS LARGE AS THE TERRITORIES THEMSELVES.

THIS IS THE DWELLING PLACE OF OUR FALLEN HEROES.  
WHERE WARRIORS OF RENOWN GO TO REST.

AT THE OUTER GATE, A MOUSE TITLED SEFATUS STANDS SENTINEL SO THAT ONLY THE GREAT MAY ENTER, FOR UNWORTHY SOULS WOULD SPOIL THE WONDER AND MAJESTY OF SEYAN.



*Faulknir*

*Silvano*

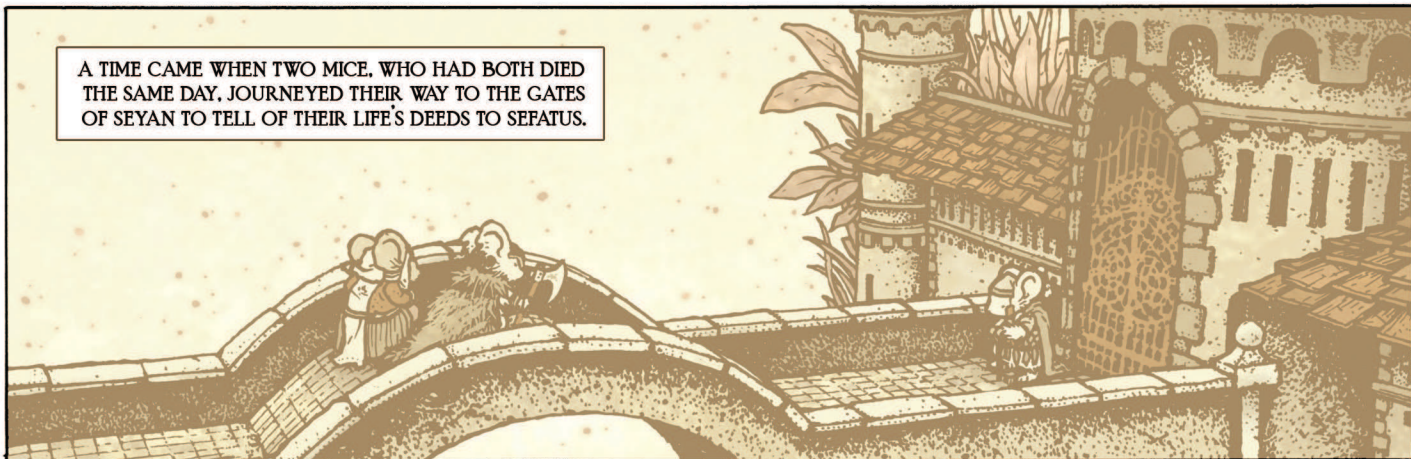


IT IS A KINGDOM FOUNDED BY HIS FATHER AND THE FATHER'S CLOSEST FRIEND WHEN THEY HAD BOTH SHED THEIR MORTAL FORMS.



SEFATUS HAD NO DESIRE TO EVER DISAPPOINT EITHER OF THEM.

A TIME CAME WHEN TWO MICE, WHO HAD BOTH DIED THE SAME DAY, JOURNEYED THEIR WAY TO THE GATES OF SEYAN TO TELL OF THEIR LIFE'S DEEDS TO SEFATUS.

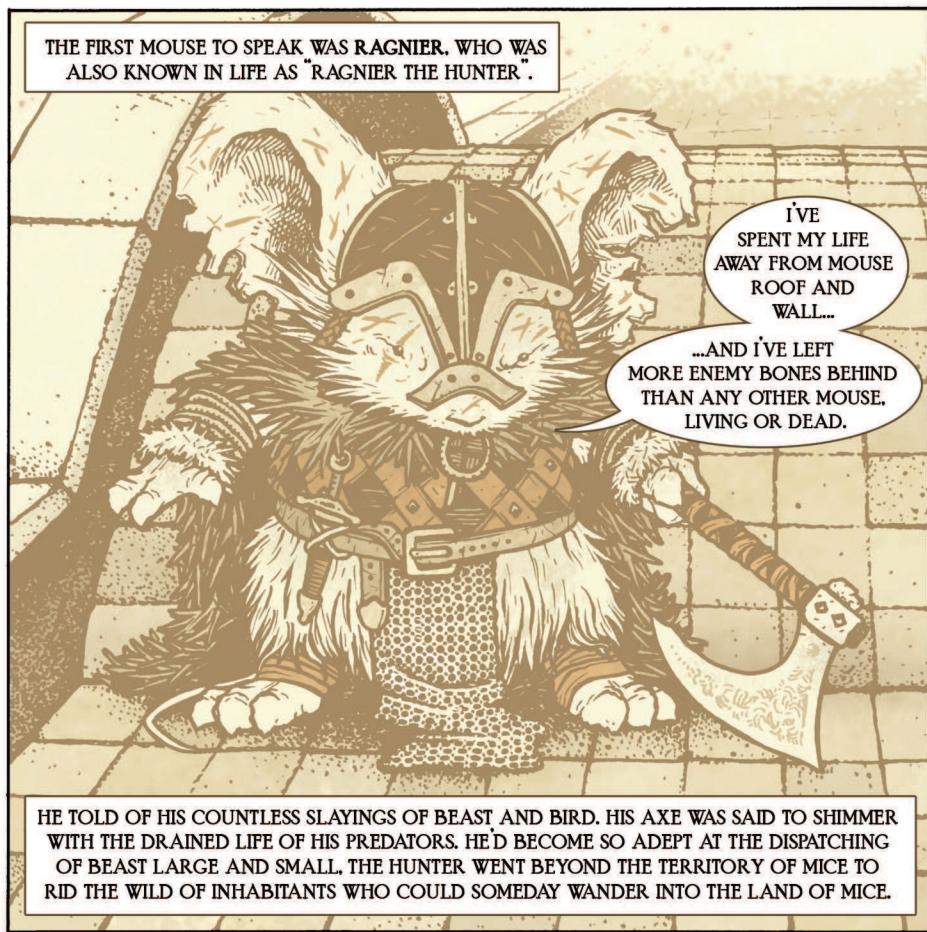


AS HE HAD SAID COUNTLESS TIMES BEFORE AND AFTER, SEFATUS QUERIED:



TELL ME OF YOUR VICTORIES AND OF YOUR SACRIFICES.

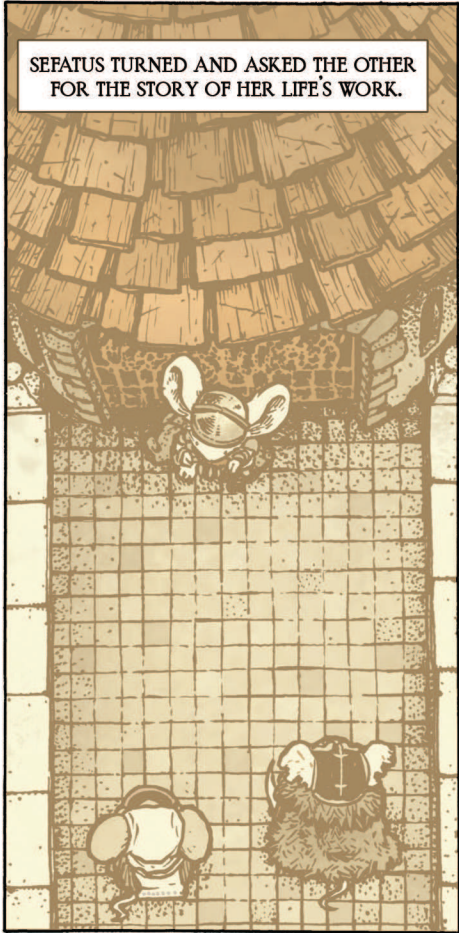
THE FIRST MOUSE TO SPEAK WAS RAGNIER, WHO WAS ALSO KNOWN IN LIFE AS "RAGNIER THE HUNTER".



I'VE SPENT MY LIFE AWAY FROM MOUSE ROOF AND WALL...

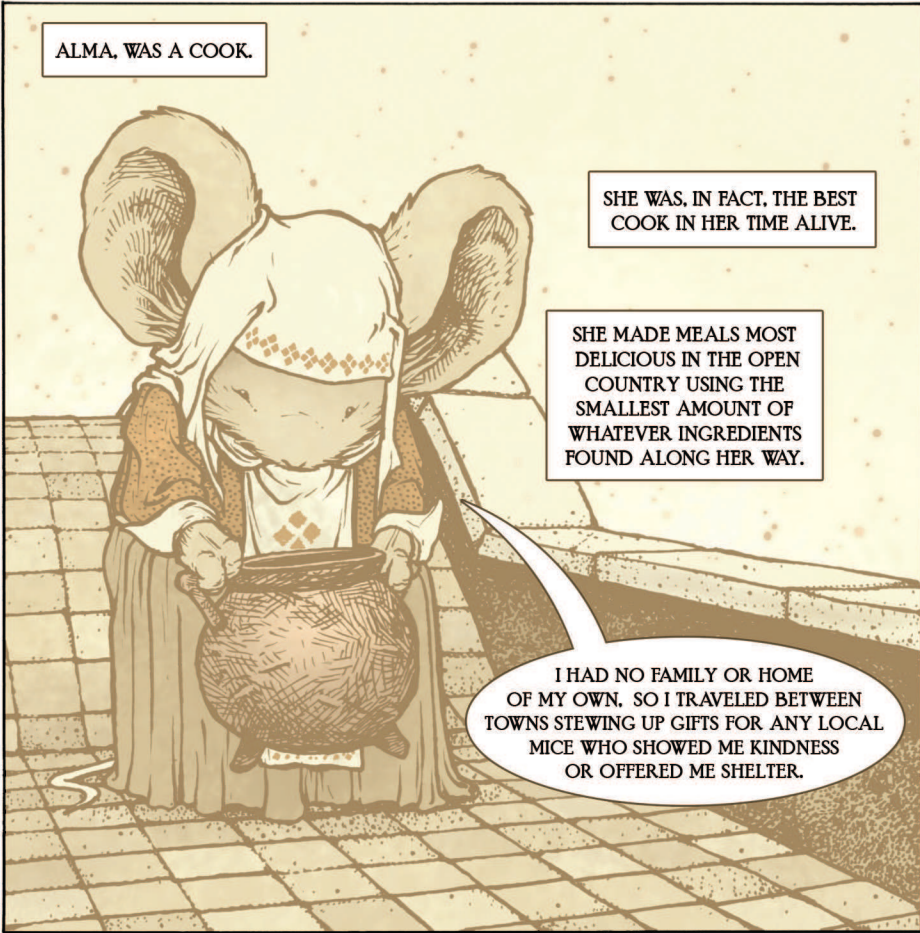
...AND I'VE LEFT MORE ENEMY BONES BEHIND THAN ANY OTHER MOUSE, LIVING OR DEAD.

HE TOLD OF HIS COUNTLESS SLAYINGS OF BEAST AND BIRD. HIS AXE WAS SAID TO SHIMMER WITH THE DRAINED LIFE OF HIS PREDATORS. HE'D BECOME SO ADEPT AT THE DISPATCHING OF BEAST LARGE AND SMALL, THE HUNTER WENT BEYOND THE TERRITORY OF MICE TO RID THE WILD OF INHABITANTS WHO COULD SOMEDAY WANDER INTO THE LAND OF MICE.



SEFATUS TURNED AND ASKED THE OTHER FOR THE STORY OF HER LIFE'S WORK.


ALMA WAS A COOK.



SHE WAS, IN FACT, THE BEST COOK IN HER TIME ALIVE.

SHE MADE MEALS MOST DELICIOUS IN THE OPEN COUNTRY USING THE SMALLEST AMOUNT OF WHATEVER INGREDIENTS FOUND ALONG HER WAY.

I HAD NO FAMILY OR HOME OF MY OWN, SO I TRAVELED BETWEEN TOWNS STEWING UP GIFTS FOR ANY LOCAL MICE WHO SHOWED ME KINDNESS OR OFFERED ME SHELTER.



SHE'D BECOME THE TRAVELING COOK FOR RAGNIER HIMSELF, MAKING HIM MEALS IN EXCHANGE FOR PROTECTION. SHE HAD LITTLE HOPE OF ENTERING THE GREAT LAND OF SEYAN, BUT HAD STILL VOWED TO WALK WITH RAGNIER IN CASE HE GREW HUNGRY.

SEFATUS NODDED AND RAGNIER TOOK IT AS A SIGN TO PROCEED THROUGH THE GATE.

BUT HE WAS STOPPED.

TALES OF YOUR DEEDS HAVE REACHED ALL THE WAY TO OUR EARS HERE IN SEYAN.

YOU DID PLACE YOURSELF IN MORTAL PERIL WITH EVERY BEAST YOU ENCOUNTERED...

...YOUR BODY MARKED AND SCARRED IN THE PROCESS.

YOU PAID FOR YOUR TASKS WITH A GREAT DEAL OF YOURSELF.

HOWEVER, YOU DID NOT STOP AT THE PROTECTION OF OTHER MICE. YOU WENT ON A MURDEROUS RAMPAGE OF ANY BEAST UNLIKE YOU.

YOU TOOK THEM IN THEIR SLEEP, YOU DID NOT SPARE THEIR YOUNG...

...AND YOU JOURNEYED INTO THEIR DENS AND LAIRS WITHOUT HONORED INTENT...

...BUT ONLY TO RAISE THE REPUTATION OF YOUR NAME.

SEFATUS THEN WELCOMED ALMA INSIDE, DECLARING:

THE GREATEST DEEDS OF ANY MOUSE ARE TO SACRIFICE THEIR OWN FORTUNES FOR A GIFT OF SERVICE TO ALL MICE. YOU FED EVERYONE YOU MET WITH FOOD AND KINDNESS.



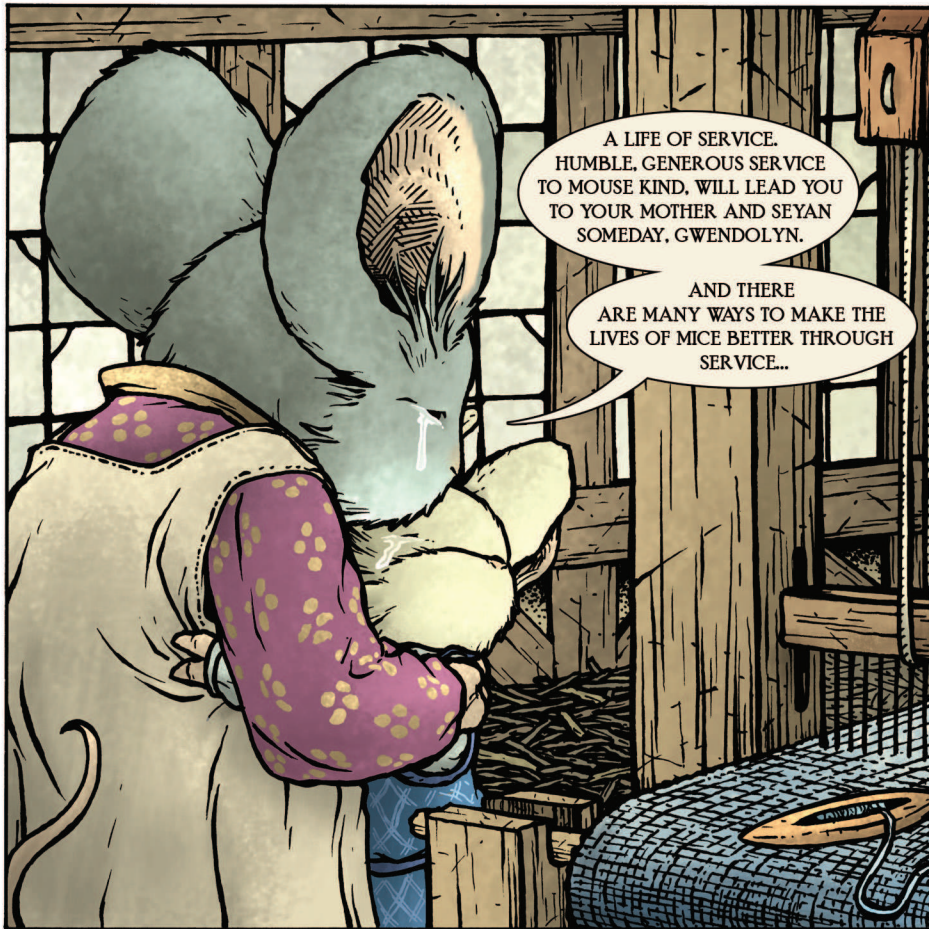
IT IS EVEN WHISPERED THAT YOU FED THE ORPHANS OF PREDATORS UNFOUND BY RAGNIER'S BLADE.



FROM THAT TIME FORTH, OUTSIDE SEYAN, RAGNIER'S SPIRIT HAS HAUNTED THE DEAD WOODS TO OUR SOUTHEAST, LOOKING FOR BEASTS TO SLAY.



WHILE IN SEYAN, THE FEASTS WERE SAID TO HAVE NEVER BEEN BETTER.



A LIFE OF SERVICE. HUMBLE, GENEROUS SERVICE TO MOUSE KIND, WILL LEAD YOU TO YOUR MOTHER AND SEYAN SOMEDAY, GWENDOLYN.

AND THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO MAKE THE LIVES OF MICE BETTER THROUGH SERVICE...



...YOU NEED ONLY CHOOSE YOUR METHOD.

Celandine

Omaira

Lynca



# THE TALE OF THE AXE TRIO



SHORESTONE  
SPRING 1132



RAND, I CAN ONLY  
USE MY GUILD INFLUENCE TO  
KEEP A TRADE APPRENTICESHIP  
OPEN FOR SO LONG.

YOU'LL HAVE TO  
DECIDE BY THE SUN-UP OF THE  
EQUINOX WHAT DISCIPLINE YOU'RE  
INCLINED TO PURSUE.

BUT FATHER...  
I DON'T KNOW.

I FEAR PLACING  
MYSELF WHERE I DON'T FIT...  
WHERE I DON'T BELONG...





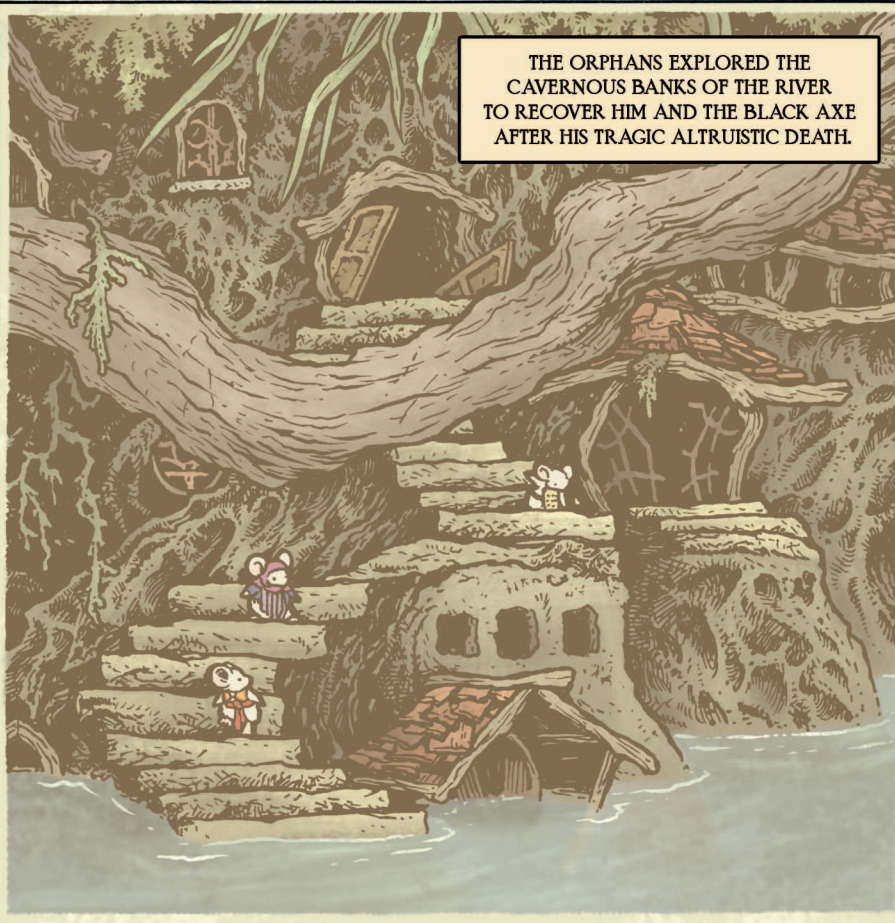
ORREN WAS THE FOURTH WIELDER OF THE AXE. BUT HIS TIME WITH IT WAS CUT SHORT. HE DROWNED WHILE TRYING TO EVACUATE THE LAST RESIDENTS IN THE SECOND FLOOD OF NETTLEDOWN.



IT IS UNUSUAL FOR THE AXE WIELDER TO HAVE A FAMILY AT ALL, LET ALONE THREE IDENTICAL DAUGHTERS.

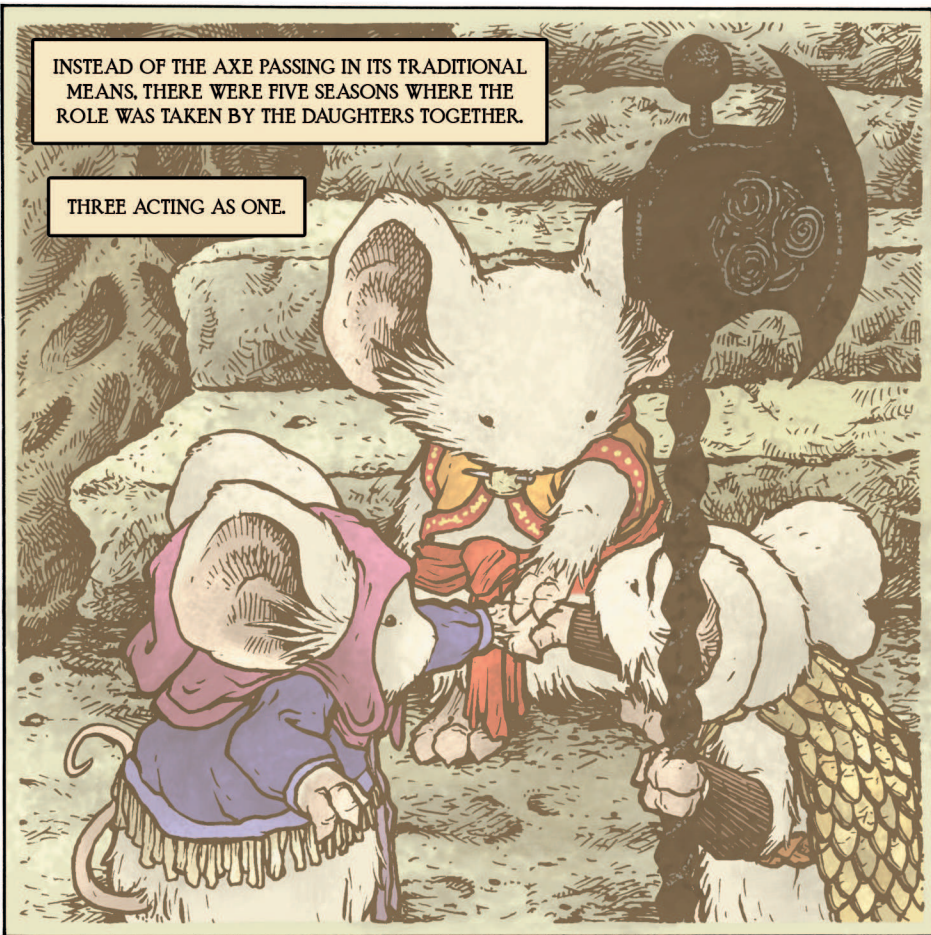


THE ORPHANS EXPLORED THE CAVERNOUS BANKS OF THE RIVER TO RECOVER HIM AND THE BLACK AXE AFTER HIS TRAGIC ALTRUISTIC DEATH.



INSTEAD OF THE AXE PASSING IN ITS TRADITIONAL MEANS, THERE WERE FIVE SEASONS WHERE THE ROLE WAS TAKEN BY THE DAUGHTERS TOGETHER.

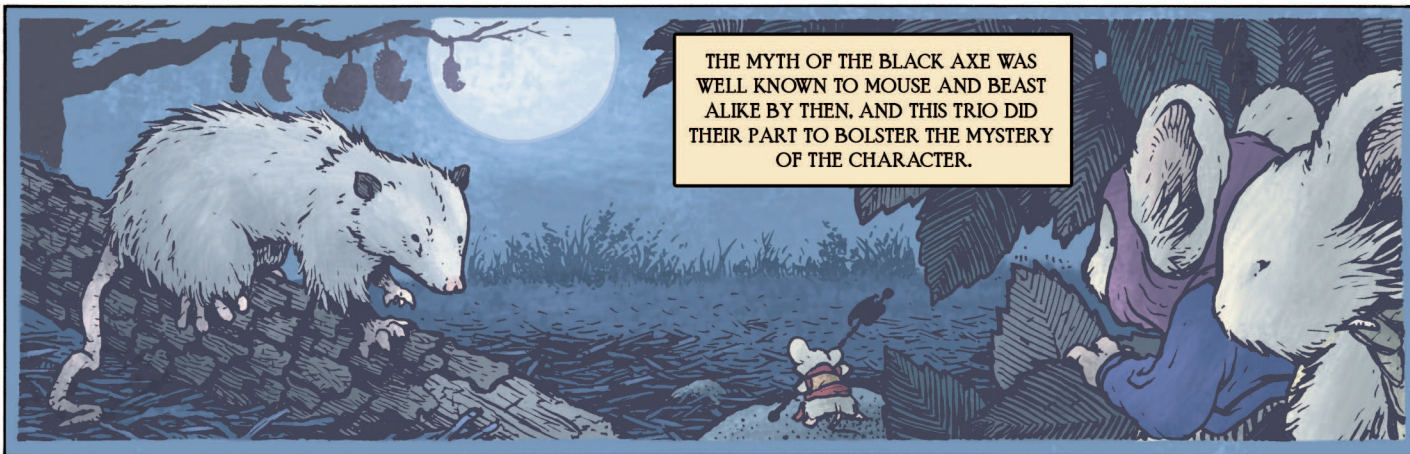
THREE ACTING AS ONE.



THEY CRAFTED TWO FORGED AXES, ONE OF HARDWOOD AND THE OTHER OF A LESSER ORE.



THE MYTH OF THE BLACK AXE WAS WELL KNOWN TO MOUSE AND BEAST ALIKE BY THEN, AND THIS TRIO DID THEIR PART TO BOLSTER THE MYSTERY OF THE CHARACTER.





THE SISTERS WOULD OUTFLANK A SINGLE BEAST AND CONFUSE IT INTO THINKING THE BLACK AXE WAS IN SEVERAL PLACES AT ONCE.



INSTEAD OF STRIKING THREE BLOWS TOGETHER...

...EACH OF THE THREE SISTERS HAD THEIR OWN ROLE.



THE CLEVEREST DAUGHTER, LYNEA, WAS A PLANNER AND TACTICIAN WHO COULD OUTSMART ANY BEAST AND GIVE PERFECT DIRECTION TO HER SISTERS.



THE FIERCEST DAUGHTER, OMAIRA, WAS AN INEXHAUSTIBLE FORCE, WHO WOULD CHARGE INTO THE JAWS OF ANY PREDATOR JUST TO SLAY IT.



CELANDINE, THE THIRD DAUGHTER, WAS THE MOST CAUTIOUS AND HAD FEARED HERSELF TO BE LESS OF AN ASSET THAN HER TALENTED SISTERS.



SHE WISHED TO BECOME SMARTER OR FIERCER, BUT WAS COMPLETELY CONSUMED WITH THE SAFETY OF HER SISTERS AFTER HAVING ALREADY LOST THEIR FATHER TO HEROICS.

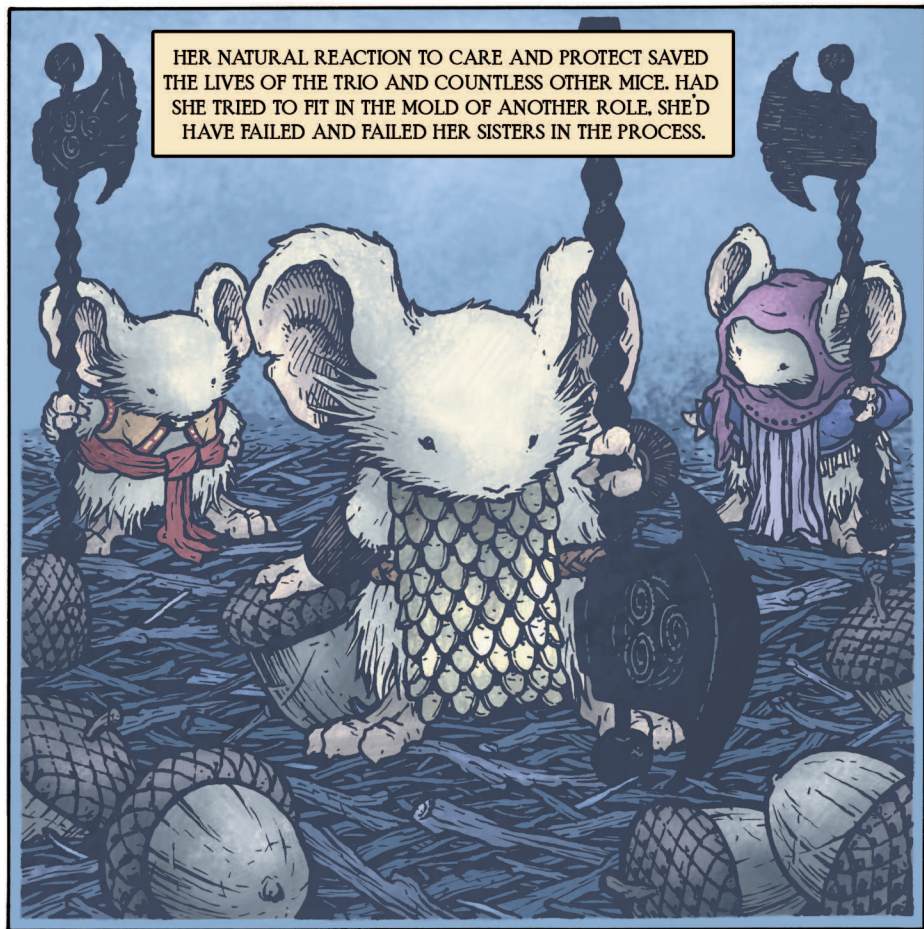


CELANDINE HAD A DIFFERENT  
SORT OF BRAVERY THOUGH.

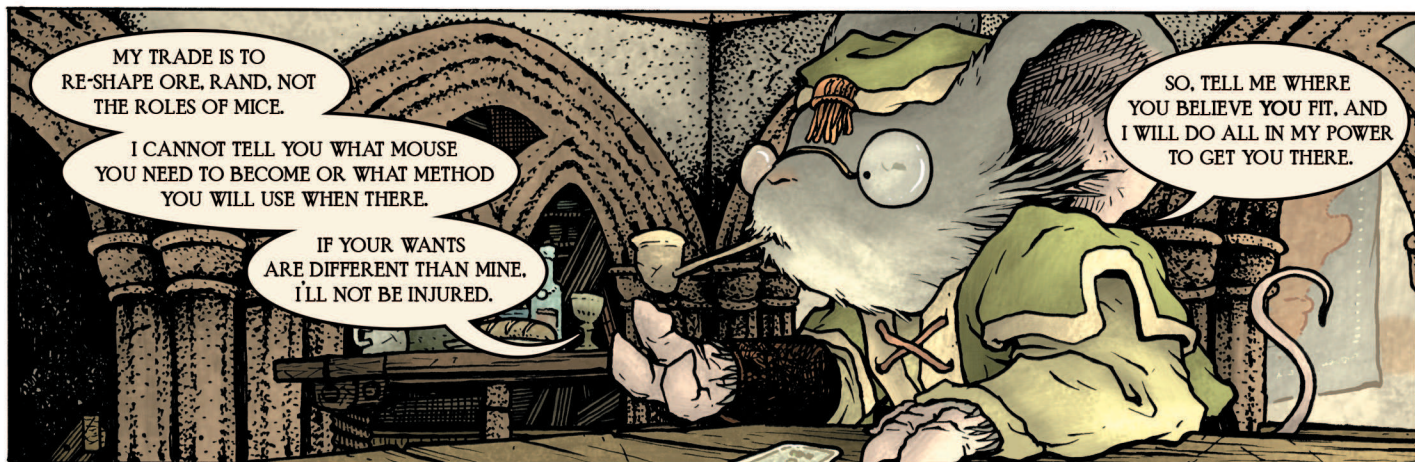
INSTEAD OF FOCUSING  
ON STRIKES AGAINST  
BEASTS, SHE WOULD  
DEFLECT THEIR BLOWS  
WITH THE TRUE AXE.



THE DEFLECTED FOES THEN BECAME  
EASIER WORK FOR THE PROTECTED  
LYNEA AND OMAIRA.



HER NATURAL REACTION TO CARE AND PROTECT  
SAVED THE LIVES OF THE TRIO AND COUNTLESS OTHER MICE. HAD  
SHE TRIED TO FIT IN THE MOLD OF ANOTHER ROLE, SHE'D  
HAVE FAILED AND FAILED HER SISTERS IN THE PROCESS.

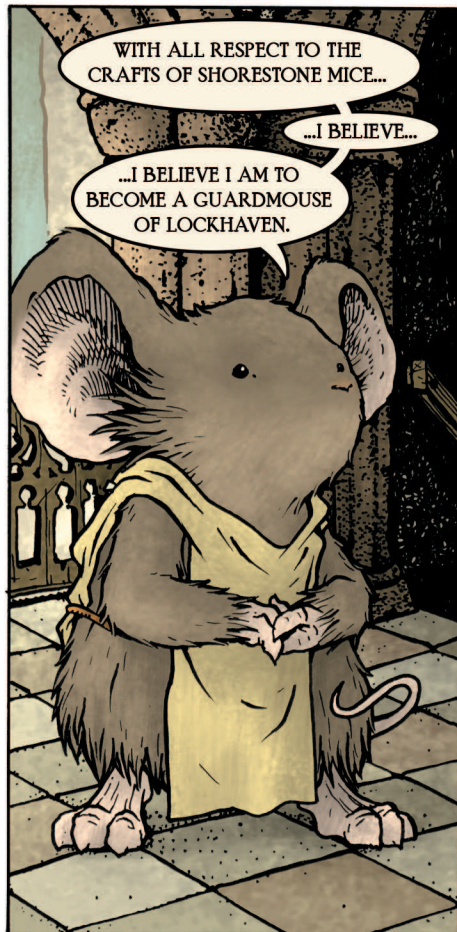


MY TRADE IS TO  
RE-SHAPE ORE, RAND, NOT  
THE ROLES OF MICE.

I CANNOT TELL YOU WHAT MOUSE  
YOU NEED TO BECOME OR WHAT METHOD  
YOU WILL USE WHEN THERE.

IF YOUR WANTS  
ARE DIFFERENT THAN MINE,  
I'LL NOT BE INJURED.

SO, TELL ME WHERE  
YOU BELIEVE YOU FIT, AND  
I WILL DO ALL IN MY POWER  
TO GET YOU THERE.



WITH ALL RESPECT TO THE  
CRAFTS OF SHORESTONE MICE...

...I BELIEVE...

...I BELIEVE I AM TO  
BECOME A GUARDMOUSE  
OF LOCKHAVEN.



VERY  
WELL, M'BOY.  
VERY WELL.







oh day away the night became a canvas for our dreams  
and day away the wee do play crawling out from hidden seams.



oh wee oh wee the time of fey beetle cricket and flea  
sweet music play these crawly things on our stretched  
leg and wing



beetle



cricket



flea



mouse, oh mouse, you had to dare to answer to their song,  
and down below into their lair, where mouse does not belong.





fest and fest and fellowship did this party share  
under soul and root and darkheather, where time is unaware.



oh down in dark the twinkle sparked a greed in mousey gaze  
of how to take a wee treasure from deep below this maze

from under cap the mouse cast out a loaf of tasty bread  
to make some room for glittering things to hide upon his head

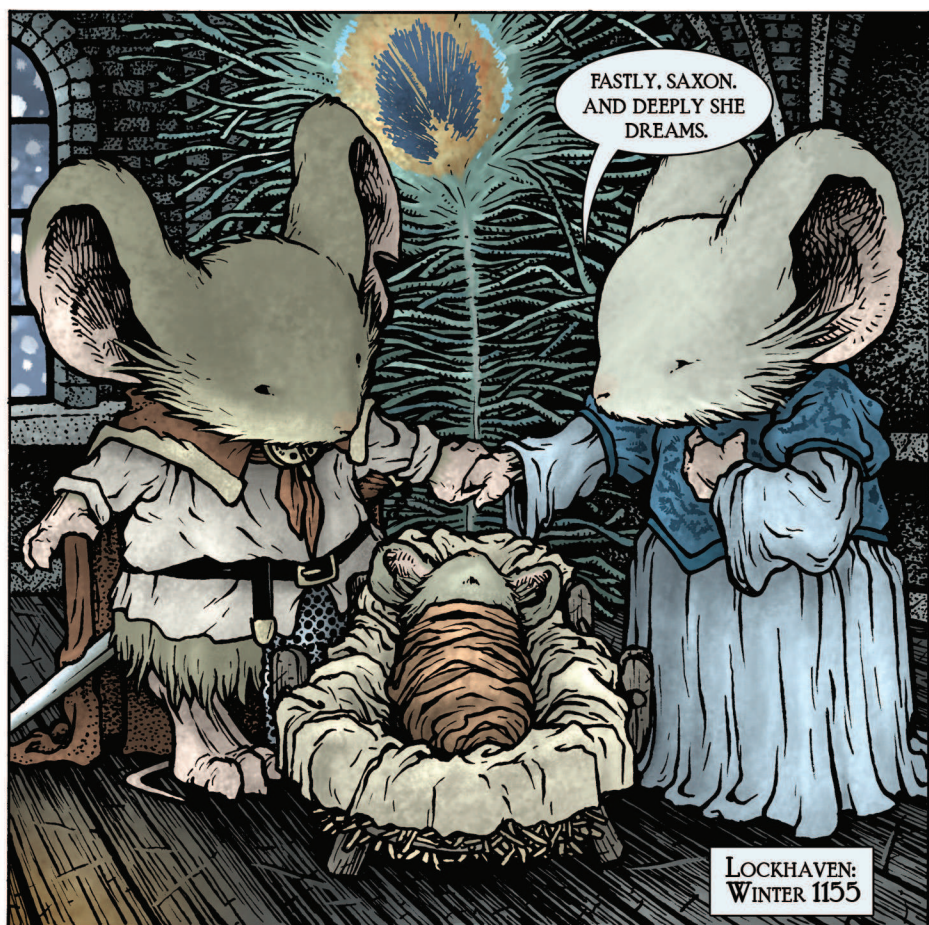


oh day you play and stay away yet come again so soon  
with dawn at hand the party broke at the setting of the moon



tears and woe, despair and fear, for in that hat of treasure  
nothing good, or good as bread, but scat to the brim with displeasure.







# The Northern Sea



Calogero

Daunrock

Whitepine

Elmwood

Thistle-down

Wildseed

Dark

Ironwood

Lockhaven

Shaleburrow

Barkstone

Wydale

Blackrock

Woodruff's Grove

Elmoss

Rootmallow

Copperwood

Shore's

Spruce-tuck

Ferndale

Appleloft

Walnutpeck

Dorigitt

Darkheather

Gilpledge

# Wild Country



Frostic

Rüstléaf

Port  
Súmác

Scenic Border

Wolfpointé

Lonépiné

Grássláke

Sándmáson

Búrl

ápléharbor

Séyán

Vénn

Lillygrové

Oåhgrové

Flíntrúst

Birchflou

Willowroot

The  
**MOUSE**  
TERRITORIES


As claimed by  
the mice within

1124



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**DAVID PETERSEN** was born in 1977. His artistic career soon followed. A steady diet of cartoons, comics and tree climbing fed his imagination and is what still inspires his work today. He is a three time Eisner Award winner for his work on his *Mouse Guard* series. David received his BFA in Printmaking from Eastern Michigan University where he met his wife, Julia. They continue to reside in Michigan with their dogs, Autumn and Bronwyn.









Every hero was once a child, listening to stories of the heroes who came before them. It is the same with the Mouse Guard. Eisner Award-winning creator David Petersen spins six mouse fables, as told to a few familiar youngfurs, in this beautiful collection. Four *Mouse Guard* Free Comic Book Day stories are brought together for the first time, as well as two brand new tales, reminding us all to be brave, stay true to ourselves, and follow our hearts.



“Petersen's art is always the draw for *Mouse Guard* adventures and this tale is no exception. It certainly doesn't hurt that his writing is every bit as good.”

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