

White Knight



How the Famous American
Mouse Came to London

Hufnagel & Hufnagel

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**How the Famous American
Mouse Came to London**

by

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and

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Chapter 1

The Zipper Trap

It was a hot August day and White Guy was poking around looking for something to munch on. White Guy's ears were smaller than a polar bear's but just as white. His tail was shorter than a cow's but the color of milk. His feet were creamy white and just the right size for a smallish mouse - which was a good thing since White Guy was a smallish white mouse.

White Guy lived with his family, his friends and his relations in the garage at the back of the lot. This was far away from the Big House where bad things had happened to many mice. White Guy wasn't just any mouse, however. He was smaller and a different color than the other mice, and he was also smarter. The day he was born his mother exclaimed, "My, and who is this little white guy?" And that is just what she and all of the other animals called him ever after.

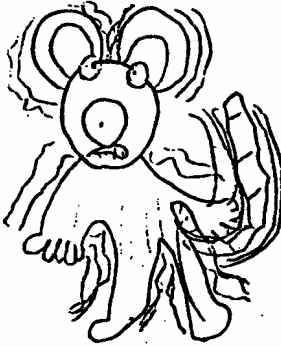
White Guy grew up just as most mice do, but being smallish, he could never run quite as fast as his friends. Being whitish, he never could manage to hide quite so well as the others either. This is a bad thing for a mouse when a cat is prowling the yard.

White Guy had some narrow escapes before he learned to be a smart mouse, but eventually he began looking for the best places to hide and the best places to run to when danger threatened. Once, at a very bad moment on a very good day, a cat chased him into the Big House. From the stories he had heard he expected to fall into a trap right away, but this didn't happen. The Big House was exciting and dangerous and just packed full of food for a little white mouse. Best of all there were no cats!

He soon went regularly to the Big House to eat. He had cookie crumbs in the living room and drops of milk in the kitchen. He

nibbled at apple cores in the wastebaskets and candy bits in the kid's room. There were dangers as well as food. The Big House was full of traps --- closing doors and large mammals such as people and the occasional doggy visitor, but there were no cats!

It was lonely at the Big House, as the other mice would not go near the place, even though they all liked the tasty things that White Guy brought home. His mother would say, "Thank you for the tasty



treat, my little one, but do be careful at the Big House. You used to have many cousins and other kin who disappeared up there. Watch out for cats, watch out for people, look for traps, be careful of dragons, beware of poison, stay away from children, don't talk to strangers, wipe your feet when you go into the house."

White Guy listened (except for the part about wiping his feet) and was very careful. He learned as much as a mouse could about the people of the house and the ways they tried to catch mice. He got very, very good at figuring things out. Traps? Ha! He laughed at them. People? Baa! He hid from them.

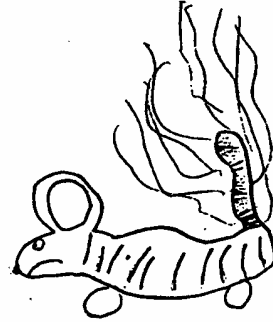
On this particular day in early August White Guy had gone up to the Big House nice and early. The three people who lived in the house slept much later than most mice. White Guy had made up names for each of them. The "Mom" made things in the kitchen and sometimes left a scrap of cheese or apple around. The "Dad" usually sat in the living room and watched TV when he wasn't setting traps for mice. He left cookie crumbs behind, which made for a nice snack. The "Kid" ran all over the house and left chunks of candy wherever he went.

On this particular morning White Guy was searching for food in the kitchen. He stayed away from the cold trap, which the Mom called the refrigerator. This was where White Guy's cousin Shivers had gotten chilled to the bone. He also avoided the hot trap called a stove where Frizzle Tail had come to grief. He was just nibbling on a very tasty apple core in the sink when he heard footsteps coming down from the upstairs. He knew that at this hour it must be the Mom coming to make breakfast. Quickly he scurried down off the

counter, out of the kitchen, across the living room, and hid under the Kid's toy chest.

Down the stairs came the Mom, but instead of going into the kitchen she opened a big blue box that White Guy now noticed was sitting in the middle of the living room floor. She seemed to be putting clothes into this box. White Guy had never seen a suitcase before and had no idea what it was. He was thinking that this must be a place where they kept clothes. Then the awful thing happened. The Mom took one of the Kid's jackets, shoved a package of peanuts into the pocket and put it into the box.

I have said that White Guy was smart for a mouse, but he wasn't really, really smart. He thought, "Aha, this is a place she stores clothes and nuts! I'll just pop in there and have a little snack --- of peanuts!" White Guy was nuts about peanuts!

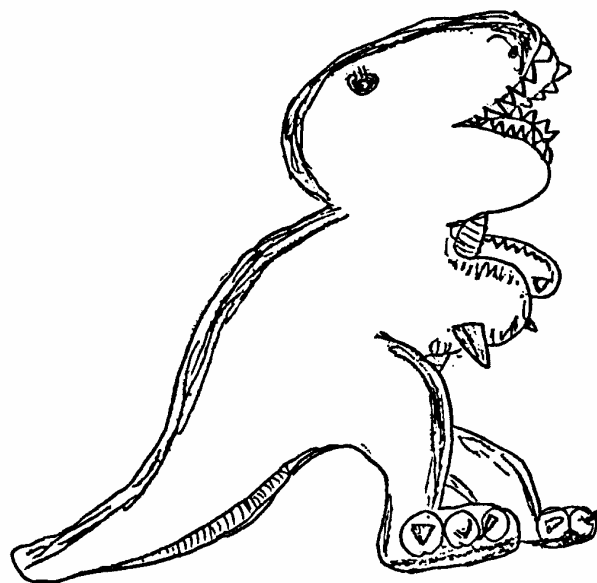


The next time the Mom went upstairs, White Guy bounced across the floor and hopped into the suitcase. He quickly wormed into the jacket pocket and reached the nuts. He had just started to nibble through the bag when he heard sounds of the Mom returning. Making himself as small as he could and sitting very still, he felt and heard the Mom put something else into the suitcase, and then he heard - Zzzz. He looked up. It was getting dark very quickly! From the other end of the case he heard *Zzzz, Zzzzip!* White Guy was caught in a Zipper Trap. There he was, squeezed tight inside a suitcase.

Now things got a little confusing for White Guy. The Mom picked up the suitcase by its handle, and White Guy found himself nose down and feet up with his snout against the package of peanuts. It was dark as night. The Mom carried the suitcase out to the car and put it into the trunk. The family drove away and the suitcase started bouncing up and down. White Guy didn't know what was happening. He was very worried. What would happen when they opened the box and found him with the peanuts? Worried or not, the up and down motion rocked him so gently inside the Zipper Trap that he gradually fell sound asleep.

As the little white mouse slept, the family drove their car down to the airport. There was the Mom, the Dad and the Kid. Also the Kid had brought his favorite Teddy Bear along, except it wasn't a Teddy Bear at all but a furry green Tyrannosaurus Rex named Greeny Weenie. Greeny did not have much to say, and neither the Dad nor the Mom had ever seen Greeny move, nor breathe, nor do anything the least bit clever. The Kid did Greeny's talking for him and the toy dinosaur was very much a part of the family. The Kid and his Granny had even gone so far as to make a passport for the furry green creature.

After a couple of hours of driving, the family arrived at the airport and boarded their plane. At the same time fifty other families, who had also gotten up very early and driven to the airport also got on the plane. None of these other families, however, had brought a white mouse along on their English vacation.



Chapter 2

Amy Rouse Sees a Mouse

Zizz, Zip. White Guy woke with a jump and saw giant "Mom fingers" reaching toward him in the pocket. He pressed himself into a corner and made himself as small and still as he could. The fingers touched him. Just as he expected to hear a scream, the fingers grabbed the peanuts and left. He heard the Mom say, "Pete, did you bring a toy mouse along for Greeny to play with?"



"Oh oh," thought White Guy, "I am getting out of here right now." He jumped out of the pocket and skidded under a chair before the kid could answer.

There were feet everywhere - big feet, little feet, feet on the floor, dangling feet. There were even smelly feet. As White Guy crept away from the Zipper Trap, he heard the Kid say he hadn't brought a mouse, and where was this mouse anyway?

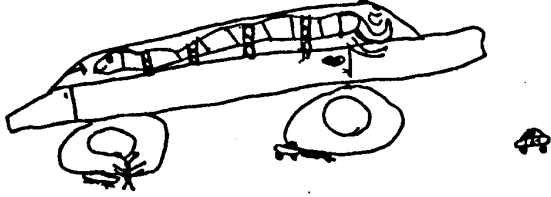


In the forward section of the plane, up in First Class where the classy people fly, sat Amy Rouse. Amy was from Rouseville and she knew she was special because why else was the town she lived in named for her. Amy was not a very nice child. She told stories that were not true, and every once in a while she even told a lie. Her mom and dad were taking her to England, and she just knew she was going to be made the Queen when she got there.

As Amy bounced around in her seat she chanced to look down. She noticed a small white mouse creeping along toward the front of the plane. "Mom, there is a mouse!" she yelled.

Her Mom looked where she pointed and saw nothing. "Amy, behave yourself," she said.

At the little girl's shout White Guy had ducked back under the seat and then climbed up its back to avoid being seen. As he climbed higher and higher, he came to a window and chanced to look out. There he saw teeny tiny cars going down teeny tiny roads, stopping at teeny tiny stoplights. He even saw a teeny tiny accident.



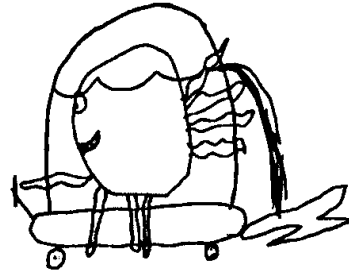
"Wow!" he thought. "The ants around here have cars!"

He forgot about the people and climbed higher on the seat so as to get a better view out of the window. "If the ants have cars

then the mice must have cars too! But wait, if the mice have cars then the cats probably have cars as well. If the cats have cars then dogs and chickens, snakes and even cows must have cars!"

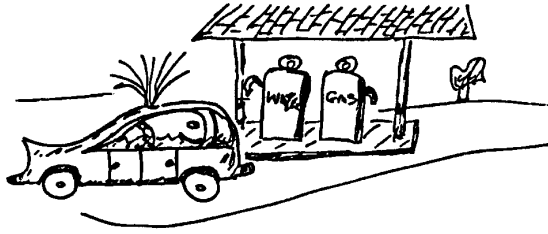
White Guy climbed higher and higher, thinking furiously, trying to decide if octopuses and whales had cars. He climbed too high. The little girl saw him just behind her mother's head and shouted, "Mommy there is a mouse on your head!"

At the sound, White Guy jumped back to the floor. Amy's mom jumped up and saw nothing. She said, "Amy Jane, this story telling has got to stop! We are going to England to see many amazing things, but nothing so amazing as a mouse on an airplane. I know you are bored with having to sit for 5 hours, but there is no help for it. Just be patient and we will get there soon enough. Don't make up stories to pass the time. Just sit still and play quietly!"



Now Amy knew she had seen a mouse, and White Guy knew that Amy knew. What Amy didn't know was that White Guy knew that Amy knew. And so, when Amy looked under the seat, White Guy was hiding between the seats. And when Amy looked between the seats, White Guy was under the seat. "Hmm," thought Amy as she gave up the search. Then Amy began playing quietly and dreaming about what it would be like when she was the Queen of England.

With the search over, White Guy again climbed up on the seat --- just far enough to see out the bottom of the window. Things had



changed. Now instead of ant cars he saw little balls of cotton floating about below. He looked back and saw that he was in a giant, tube-shaped room with

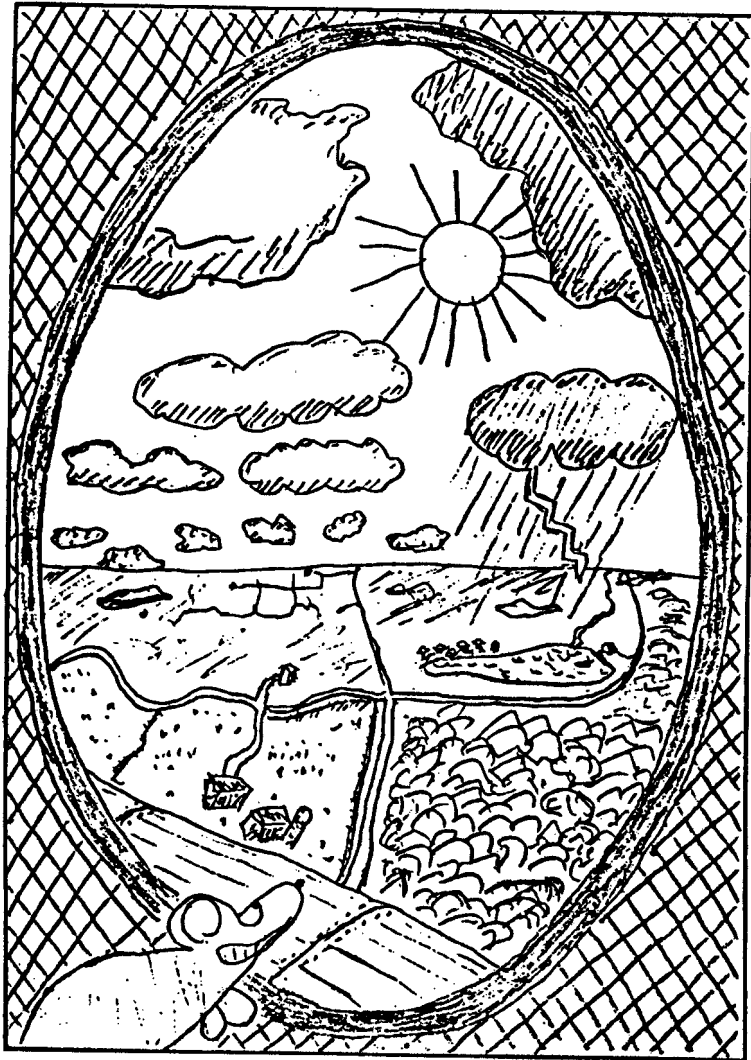
many, many windows and many, many people in it. Then just outside the window, he noticed a long shiny piece sticking out from the side of the room. "I have seen one of those before," he thought.

He climbed a little higher. The plane went through a cloud. "Wait," thought White Guy, "that isn't cotton. That's a cloud!" Then he remembered where he had seen an animal like this before. This was one of those silver birds that flew over the backyard and never flapped their wings! His Mom had told him that the silver birds ate little mice that did not behave. Had he been eaten? White Guy felt dizzy and scared and excited all at once. He had again climbed too high, and this time he lost his balance and fell right into Amy's mom's hair!

Such a scream you never did hear. Amy's mom was up in a moment, brushing at her hair with her hand and shouting, "A mouse! A mouse!"

Amy gleefully started saying, over and over and over again, like some very happy broken record, "See. I told you there was a mouse. I saw it twice but you did not believe me. See. I told the truth!" Amy quickly decided that when she got to England they would make her the Queen and the King both because she was so special and she was always right.

Amy's Mom was shouting, "What are mice doing in First Class. For the money we paid we should not have to worry about rats in our hair. Are there cockroaches in the kitchen? I suppose there are squirrels back with our luggage, and wild dogs that will attack us while we sleep." (Not true, but there was one very tame dog named Barker whose feelings were hurt.)



As Amy's Mom raved on, and Amy sat feeling pleased with herself, White Guy ran quickly around the inside of the plane. He decided that this place was not an animal at all, but some sort of machine the humans had built --- they loved to build machines. He also decided that there was no way off the plane that didn't include a very long fall, and that it was not good for a little white mouse to be running around under so many big brown, black and white feet. He crept back into the Zipper Trap and climbed back into the Kid's jacket pocket. His plan was to stick with the Kid and the Mom until the silver bird landed. Then he would scramble out of the pocket and find his way back to the backyard as quickly as he could. There was nothing to eat so White Guy spent most of the flight chewing a hole in the back of the jacket pocket. He wanted another way out if those big "Mom fingers" showed up again.

After a while the plane tilted forward a little and he heard the sound again. Zzz. Zzip! The Mom had closed the suitcase. As White Guy settled down for a little nap, after all of the excitement and pocket chewing, he thought to himself what a good story he had to tell the other mice. It would be especially fun to tell his Mom of his adventure. How could he know that he was now 5000 miles from the backyard, or that his adventure on the plane would be only one of many he would have before he got home again.



Name GREENY - WENIE	
Sex M	Birthplace CLARION PA. USA
Birthdate APRIL 14 1987	Issued JULY 2, 1990
Wife/husband X XX	Expires on JULY 1, 1993
LEAVE TO OTHERS ON VISITS EMPLOYED IS PROHIBITED	
Passport Officer 27 JUL 1990 HEATHROW (1)	
Signature <i>Greeny Wenie</i>	
Remarks <i>Parents</i>	

Chapter 3

The Giant Badger

As White Guy slept, the plane droned on through the night. Perhaps he slept too soundly because the next thing he knew the pocket that he was sleeping in jumped up into the air. He poked his nose out and saw that the Mom had picked up the jacket and was telling the Kid to put it on because England was often chill and damp in the morning. As the kid put on the jacket and stuffed his hands into the pocket, White Guy jumped through the hole he had made and fell into the lining. He had to be sure that the Kid would not feel him moving around and so he lay still and listened.

The family walked and walked and stood around waiting for their luggage and then went to customs. White Guy didn't know what was going on of course, but the word England seemed to be in every third sentence. White Guy wondered, "England? What's this England they keep taking about? I've never heard of such a place. I think it must be across town where I have never been. No, it couldn't be. We wouldn't need an airplane to get there. What's England?"

Then he heard the Kid say, "Dad, why do they call it England?"

"Good question!" said the Dad with a chuckle. "I'll tell you what we are going to do here and then you will know. Mostly we are going to be *traveling*. We're going to be *driving* a rented car, *staying* at a lot of different people's houses, and we're going to be *having* a lot of fun."

The kid gave a snort, "Is that really why they call it *Inglad*, because of all of those 'ing' things?"

"Well, maybe not. Really it might be because a lot of English people live here, but to us it will be both England and *Inglad*. I think you will agree in two weeks time that there is an awful lot of *walking* to be done here."

At customs White Guy overheard much talk about getting Greeny Weenie into England. There seemed to be a lot of trouble because his passport was homemade. The customs man at first said that the dinosaur was traveling on a fake passport. Then the same

man seemed to think, since Greeny was an animal (even though a stuffed one), that he should be placed in quarantine for six months just like any other animal that comes to England. They needed to do this to see if Greeny was sick, since he might make all of the English dinosaurs sick as well. The Mom didn't think much of this argument, claiming that Greeny was just as alive and well as he had ever been. White Guy was very, very quiet. He didn't know what a quarantine was and knew he didn't want to get into one.

The Kid piped up and said that Greeny was not an animal at all, but part of the family. "Well, very well then," muttered the customs man, and he then put a very official looking stamp on Greeny's passport.

Now the family started walking again. White Guy crept timidly back into the pocket from the jacket lining and got ready for his escape. All he needed to do was spot some grass or weeds to hide in and he would be off in a flash. It was just too dangerous riding on humans! He could see that the Dad was leading the way. Everyone in the family was carrying or pulling suitcases and grumbling about how heavy they were ---- everyone except Greeny Weenie that is. That lazy dinosaur cuddled in the crook of the Kid's arm with a foolish grin on its face. (Greeny was always just that happy.)

White Guy looked about, examining the vast airport building and searched in vain for some grass or a small bush to hide in. Nothing! It even got worse! The family went down into a large hole in the ground and into a very large box. They kept calling it "The Underground", and that seemed a good name to White Guy. Maybe this was some kind of suitcase for people?

Soon the box started to shake and rattle and move, which was most startling. He was sitting there poking his nose out, trying to imagine the worms that must have dug the tunnel that he was moving through. Suddenly the box burst out into the open air. Now White Guy knew! The box wasn't a box any more! It was part of a train --- an underground train!

White Guy could see grass all over the place, and he saw bushes galore. The problem now was how to get to them. He was in a train with the family and many other people, and he could not figure out how to get off. He didn't know what to do. He wasn't really scared

anymore --- just a little excited. This was going to be a bigger adventure than he first thought. After a while he heard the Dad say, "We get off at the next stop and walk to the Badger House."

"What?" thought White Guy. "Badger House? Are these people going to live in some sort of animal's house?"

Occasionally, White Guy had heard stories about badgers that used to live in the woods back behind of the backyard. Though White Guy had never seen one, he had heard that they were vicious and cunning, and he was not at all sure he wanted to go into a badger's house.



The family scooted out of the train, over the platform, stumbled down some stairs and out of the Underground station. "Ah," thought White Guy. "Now this looks more like it. This must be the main street of this town, and the family is going to walk through the town and out into the woods and live with a bunch of badgers. As soon as we get to the woods, I am getting off and heading for home."

The family walked down the streets of Chiswick, which is the name for one small part of the city of London. London is one of the largest cities in the world, and the family was a very, very long way from the kind of woods that White Guy was expecting. Down the Chiswick High Street they trudged with suitcases in tow. Turning into Airdale Avenue they came to Badger House, a beautiful tourist home with a badger on its sign. They rang the bell and Mr. and Mrs. J. Busby, along with their very large and very shaggy dog, named Thunder, came to the door to greet them.

White Guy screamed (it came out as a squeek), "Oh, no! The badger is after me!" and jumped into the lining of the Kid's jacket. Thunder had indeed smelled a rat, or at least a mouse, and had stuck

his nose into White Guy's personal jacket pocket. White Guy scrambled deep into his hiding place, but the badger tried to follow him. The Kid was knocked down. Thunder began nuzzling him and barking as he searched for the mouse. The Kid rolled on White Guy and the poor little mouse had the wind squeezed out of him. What with all of this rumpus, he also became well and truly lost in there. Then the badger was pulled away.

The Kid said that Thunder must be trying to make friends with Greeny, but the adults were not amused by this, and Thunder was led inside by Mr. Busby in disgrace. Mrs. Busby led the family upstairs to their room at Badger House. Their room was a sunny one at the front of the building and had three beds, a small refrigerator and a telly --- English for television. The bathroom was down the hall and was shared with the other visitors who were staying on the second floor. The shower was on the third floor and was shared by all of the guests in the house.

The travelers were very pleased with these arrangements. Mrs. Busby had kindly supplied them with some cheese and crackers, and when she left they made a small snack of these and discussed their plans. They decided to go to a toy museum and to leave Greeny Weenie behind to guard the room from Thunder. They neatened up the room a bit and stowed some of their clothing into drawers. The Mom ironed the worst wrinkles out of a skirt and then the family left, talking about how easy it would be to get to the Toy Museum. The Kid left his jacket behind and so White Guy found himself alone in the badger's house, in a room guarded by a dinosaur.

It took White Guy quite some time to find his way back to daylight through the lining of the jacket. When he did he thought, "Enough is enough. I am getting out of this badger's house right now!" He saw the green dinosaur standing high up on a table right next to the now cooling iron, but luckily Greeny Weenie was looking the other way. By creeping slowly and quietly White Guy made it to the door without being noticed. The door was shut but White Guy, being so small, crept right under it. He chuckled to himself and breathed a sigh of relief and said, "I have escaped at last! I am free. I'm off to see this England place and to find my mom." White Guy went scampering down the hall looking for the

way out, and he had just come to some stairs going down when suddenly the evil badger came bounding up them. White Guy went tearing down the hall to the Kid's room with the hairy monster chasing along behind him and catching up very fast. Quick as a scared mouse he slipped back under the door and there was a thump and a groan as the badger hit the door. White Guy stood in the center of the room panting and looking first at Greeny Weenie and then at the door where he could hear the badger scratching. After five minutes of tense waiting the white mouse began to think he was safe. The dinosaur wasn't moving and the scratching had been replaced by barking. "Now that is strange," thought White Guy. "Do badgers bark?"

Then he heard Mrs. Busby's voice. "What are you on about, Thunder? Is there something in the room we should know about?" A knock, and then the door started to open slowly.

"Hello? Is anyone there?" Then the badger slipped around the edge of the door and came bounding toward White Guy. White Guy shouted "Save me Mr. Weenie" and scrambled up onto the table and onto Greeny's back. The weight of the mouse toppled the dinosaur which fell onto the iron, knocking this still warm object off the table to land with a clunk on the badger's tail. With a yow-ow-ow the beast ran out of the room. Mrs. Busby missed it all and didn't have a clue about what had happened. After a quick glance around, she shut the door and followed the sound that her retreating monster was making.



White Guy jumped off Green Weenie and said, "Thank you very much Mr. Weenie. You saved my life and I will not forget it." Greeny didn't say a thing to this, but White Guy already knew that Greeny was the strong, silent type of dinosaur.

Then White Guy looked for another way to escape. The door was out because of the monster on the other side of it. He checked all of the windows. These were all closed or had secure screens. There was just no way out! Grumpily White Guy chewed on some cheese and cracker crumbs, and then, taking a hint from Greeny, he crept back into the Kid's jacket pocket and lay down to await the return of the family. They had carried him into Badger House, and they would just have to carry him out again.

White Guy was mad at himself and disgusted with the family. If he wasn't inside some strange machine or stuck in a suitcase, then badgers were trying to catch him. The family was just plain bad luck for him, and he wanted very much to escape. What new, strange thing might not happen next!

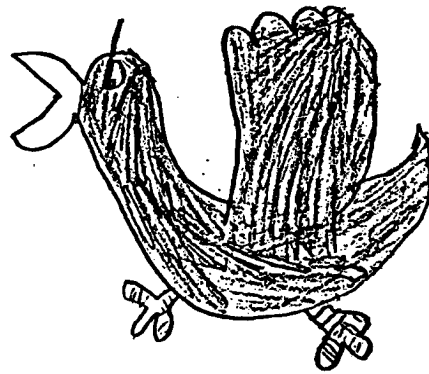


Chapter 4

Ravens in the Jewel Room

In the center of London there is a very old castle called the Tower of London. It's not really a castle but it does have a drawbridge and high stone walls all around it. People in London just call it the Tower, though it doesn't have any very high towers. The Tower belongs to the King of England. Dukes and earls and other people whom the King was angry with were often held prisoner here in the old days. Today there are no prisoners. Now the Tower is where the Queen stores her crowns, orbs and scepters when she is not using them.

Each day many, many people line up to see the Crown Jewels and visit the museum at the Tower. Beefeaters, men dressed up in very old-fashioned uniforms, make sure that the visitors behave themselves. There are also guards in tall, black, furry hats. These men have guns and guard the jewels and all of the other treasures that are kept in the Tower.

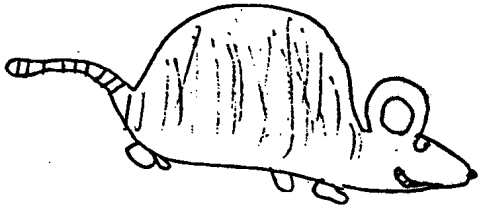


There are also animals that live in the Tower of London. Most people who visit the place see the pigeons. There are also other birds that look like very large and black crows. These are the ravens. Ravens are mean and evil looking and will bite you if they get a chance.

White Guy came to the Tower of London in the Kid's jacket pocket. During the whole journey from the Badger House he had looked for a place to escape, but White Guy was very much a country mouse and so nowhere in the city had looked like a good hiding place to him. Determined as he was to escape, he wasn't going to run into any more giant badgers if he could help it.

Although the grounds of the Tower of London looked very inviting, White Guy couldn't just jump out of the Kid's pocket at any old time. If he did he knew he might be stepped on before he could get away. So, while he waited for the right moment, White Guy rode along with the Kid as he stood in line to see the Crown Jewels. He saw the large vault that contained the jewels and heard the Beefeaters ordering the visitors about. He listened to the Kid and his parents talk about the jewels and the armor and the giant soup bowls that they saw, but mostly he just waited for the right moment to escape.

Finally, after hours of waiting, the family sat down outside to eat their lunch. They sat on a park bench with a bustling crowd on one side and a broad green lawn dotted with rocks and ravens on the other.



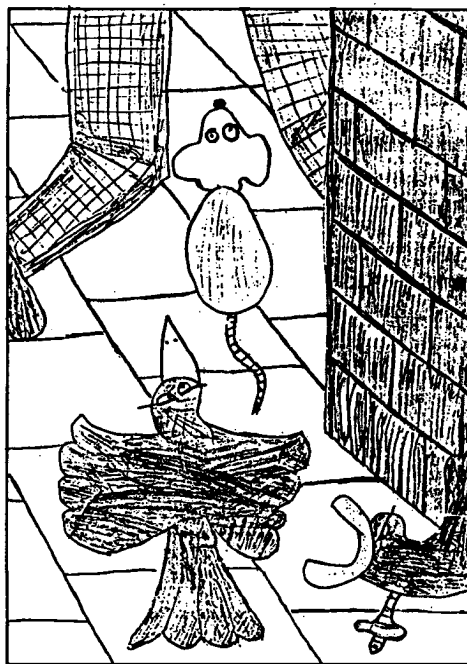
After looking carefully all round, White Guy scampered out of the pocket and across the lawn toward a pile of rocks near the museum. He

was sure he could hide safely there, and then he could come back later to eat the crumbs that the Kid always left behind.

At first everything went well. The family and the other people didn't even notice as he made his dash for freedom. He had just about reached safety when a large black raven stepped from behind a gray rock and grabbed White Guy by the tip of his tail.

"Ouch!" screamed White Guy. He struggled to get loose. He scratched at the raven and the bird was so surprised that he dropped the little white mouse. White Guy was off in a flash with the raven just behind him. More and more ravens joined in the chase and soon there were seven of them, all in a line, chasing after the mouse. They looked a little like a line of baby ducks chasing after their mother, except the ravens were not nearly as cute as baby ducks, and White Guy looked nothing like their mother. The ravens would have liked nothing better than to have a little nibble of mouse. They thought that mice must be very tasty.

White Guy hopped the fence which separated the lawn from the people. The ravens fluttered up and fluttered down and they too were over the fence and among the people. There was a long, long line of tourists still waiting to see the crown jewels, and White Guy went galloping right in amongst their legs. The ravens came right behind him. They went "ukk-ukk" and the people scattered like so many blown leaves. The air was full of screams of protest and dismay. The ravens didn't care. They were sure they could catch this little white mouse. The mouse was running and running.

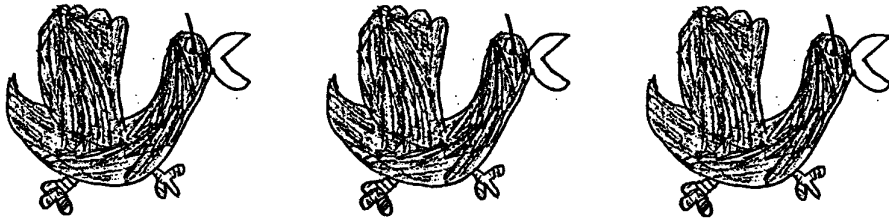


White Guy ran into the jewel building. The ravens followed. He ran down the stairs, the ravens just behind him. He scampered right into the jewel room, which is a very big vault with doors a foot and a half thick made with steel so no one can steal the Crown Jewels. Inside the jewel room stood a Beefeater. This Beefeater's job was to keep the people moving along in the Crown Jewel Room so that everybody would get a chance to see the gems. "Move along, madam. Don't hesitate, madam. Step forward, madam. Don't halt, do not halt, madam. Keep moving, madam." He seemed to pick on the ladies the most, but when a white mouse came roaring in followed by seven ravens, he paused not a second but immediately said, "Move along, Mr. Mouse. Move along, you ravens."

White Guy started running around wildly, trying to get away from both the ravens and the feet of the people. Then, in a flash, he saw how he could get away from the ravens, the Beefeater and the visitors. Not only would he escape but also the ravens would get into a lot of trouble.

White Guy was a smart mouse as mice go. During his ride through the Jewel Room earlier in the day he had listened to the Dad

say how if the glass of the Jewel case were touched the vault doors would close automatically. This was one of many ways that the Crown Jewels are guarded from robbers. White Guy remembered this, and with a triumphant squeak he scrambled up the leg of Miss Amy Rouse of Rouseville, Pennsylvania, who was just then peering at the Queen's crown very closely. Scampering up this girl's coat and onto the top of her head, White Guy jumped straight at the glass case. Thunk! He hit the case and fell to the floor. A loud alarm started to ring. The people started to shout. The ravens still followed after him, and just as the door to the vault closed White Guy scampered out. Ha! They were all trapped in there - the people, the ravens and the Beefeater saying, "Move along Madam." White Guy was sure that the Beefeaters and the Tower guards would round up the ravens and kick them out of the Tower of London. What a victory!



Moving quickly to avoid the crowd that was coming down the stairs to see why the alarm had gone off, White Guy ran up the opposite stairway and out of the building. Now he just needed a place to hide and rest after his run from the ravens. He saw some suits of armor through a door of a building across the way. He raced into that building and up into the helmet of the first suit of armor he came to. They would never look for him here!

"'ello, 'ello. Who is this then, coming into my bedroom while I'm snoozing?" said the voice. White Guy stopped in his tracks, surprised and amazed. There, up inside the helmet of the suit of armor, a scruffy brown mouse was getting up from the nest of fuzz in which he had been sleeping!

Chapter 5

The Gunpowder Mouse

Treasures collected by twenty kings and queens of England are kept at the Tower of London. The priceless gems and the dishes of state are kept with the Crown Jewels. Other, less valuable treasures are kept in the Tower Museum. Inside the museum there is room after room of muskets, crossbows, swords and spears. There are also dummies dressed in the uniforms of the soldiers of the British Empire in times past. Pictures, displays and exhibits give a wonderful view of England's past. There is also armor in the museum --- armor for men, for horses and for elephants.

At the end of the day, when the people leave and the great doors to the museum are closed, the mice come out. Most of these live on the second floor in a room full of armor. Their homes are high up inside the armor, usually right in the helmets. They are very quiet in the daytime when people are running about, because they know that if they make a



noise the Beefeaters may hear them and take the armor apart and discover their homes. This happened once when one of the mice had a cold and sneezed. He was taken away by the scruff of his neck and was never seen or heard from again.

The suit of elephant armor on the second floor of the museum is a sort of a mouse castle. Here is where the oldest and wisest and most important mice live, and it is here that the mice hold council to exchange information and to discuss problems. It was to this council that Bert brought the little white mouse that had burst into his bedroom. The little fellow claimed to have arrived in an airplane, to have escaped from a giant badger, and to have trapped a flock of

ravens in the Jewel Room! Bert didn't know what to make of this mouse who called himself White Guy. He did know that the little fellow talked funny and that the best place to take him was to the Elephant Castle.

When the doors of the museum closed, Bert and White Guy made their way to the second floor, up the trunk of the elephant armor, and inside to the council chamber of the Mice of London. As they entered, a roly-poly brown mouse was talking excitedly.

"I tell you I saw it with my own eyes. All of a sudden all of the ravens on the front lawn took it into their heads to see the Crown Jewels and went clattering off in a long line right into the vault. The Beefeaters have caught them and will likely have them for dinner!"

"That seems unlikely," said a very old and fuzzy looking lady mouse. "The Beefeaters surely must eat beef and beef is from cows and ravens are not cows. Besides, there is the legend."

"I can only say what I saw, and I saw the Beefeaters haul the ravens away. Now we can picnic and play on the front lawn without any danger of interruption from those blasted birds. I know that we have slides and swings and games and even a small swimming pool here in Elephant Castle, but it would be nice to get outside once in a while. "

"Maybe it is as you say, but do not forget about the legend," said the old furry mouse. "Many hundreds of years ago there was a zoo here at the Tower. There were lions and giraffes and deer and ravens. One day all of the other animals were led out or carted away and only the ravens were left behind. The legend is that if the ravens ever leave the Tower of London, the kingdom will fall. Because of this, any raven that dies is replaced with a new one, even though ravens are now so rare in England that they must be brought from other countries. "

Now Bert spoke up. "Here is a mouse named White Guy who came running into my room in the middle of the day and woke me up with a story about having trapped the ravens in the Jewel Room!"

All of the mice fell silent and turned to look at the new arrival. "Tell us how you did it," said Rolly, the roly-poly mouse.

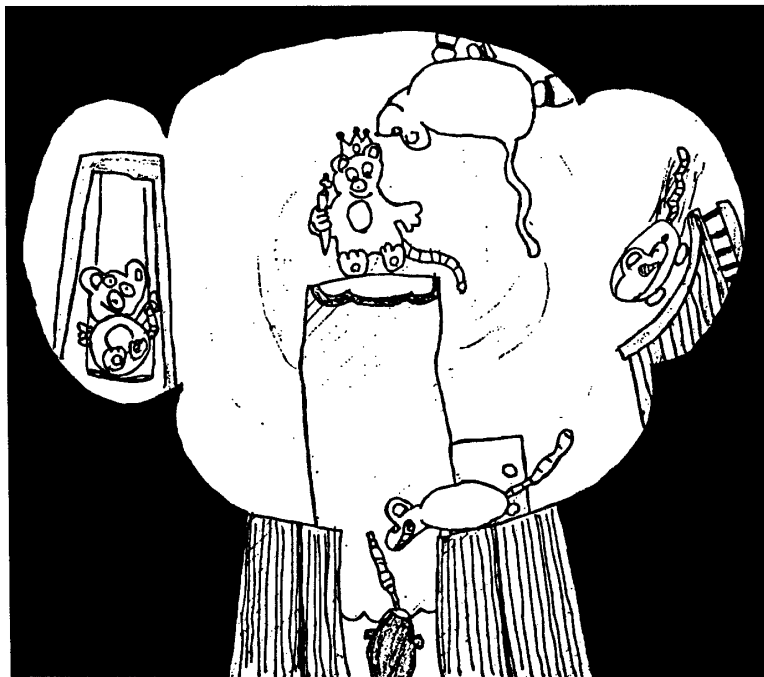
"Yes, do," chimed in the other mice.

A very important looking mouse seated apart from the others spoke next. "I am called Rex and I am the King of the Mice of London. Are you one of us? Do you live within the city?"

"No sir," said White Guy. "I have by accident come on an airplane to this place. I was nearly eaten by a giant badger, I trapped the ravens who were chasing me, and now I am here."

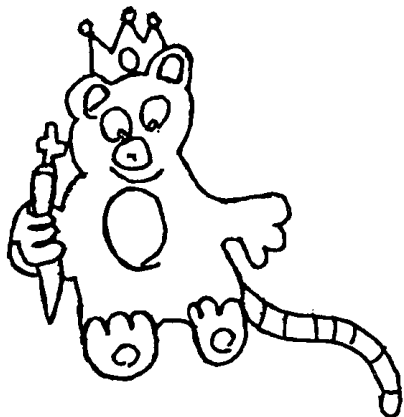
White Guy then went on to explain just what he had done with the ravens. Some of the mice, Rolly for one, seemed amazed at his daring, while others thought that nothing but bad would come of angering the ravens. The old furry mouse, mother of Rex and called Amelia, kept repeating that the ravens would return and would seek revenge for being trapped. Finally Rolly proposed an expedition out onto the front lawn to see what they could see.

Rex, Rolly, Bert and White Guy made their way downstairs. They peeked under the front door. It was a dark, dark night. They could see no ravens and Rolly said, "I was right, the ravens have been eaten."



"Nothing is decided yet," said Rex. "Go slow and be careful."

They were ten short mouse steps out from the door when a raven stepped out from behind a nearby stack of cannon balls. The large bird started toward the mice and they all scampered back under the door and up to Elephant Castle.



"The ravens are still on the front lawn," said Rex to a crowd of mice with baskets and badminton racquets. "We saw one just now and he tried to eat us. No one will be having a picnic on the front lawn tonight." The mice groaned and then started spreading sheets and preparing to have their picnic indoors.

Rex turned to White Guy and said, "Well, my white friend, you may have escaped the ravens, but you may also have made some trouble for us. In the best of times the ravens are bothersome to us mice, and it seems you may have made matters worse."

"So it seems, Sir," said White Guy. "I am very sorry that I have caused you to be in danger. I will stay here until I can think of a plan to defeat the ravens."

"He can stay in my helmet," said Bert.

"I will help you in the battle," said Rolly.

Rex looked at Amelia and saw that she was not happy with this. Turning to the three mice he said, "You may make a plan but you must not put it into action until this council has approved it. If we cannot be sure of beating the ravens, then it would be far better to do nothing than to anger them further."

As White Guy left the castle with Bert and Rolly, he heard Amelia once again saying that the ravens would always be on the front lawn and that they would always try to eat mice, just as they had for over 400 years.

* * * * *

That night Bert and Rolly showed White Guy the museum. He saw where the Beefeaters ate their dinners and where they mended

their socks. He was shown the many ways into and out of the museum and he examined many of the displays. Rolly became excited at one of the displays which contained strange and unusual weapons. One of these was a crossbow that was also a shotgun. A small sack of gunpowder lay next to the weapon, and Rolly was all in favor of hauling the "gun bow" downstairs and shooting at the ravens. White Guy knew that this plan would not work and also knew that the council would never approve of such an action. Anyway, how could they get something that heavy downstairs? What would happen if they shot and missed?

As morning approached Rolly headed home, and Bert and White Guy walked slowly back to Bert's helmet. It was then that White Guy began to think harder than he had ever thought in his life.

For days none of the other mice saw White Guy. He just sat at the foot of Bert's bed and thought and thought. On the third day he decided that he couldn't get rid of the ravens. On the fourth day he decided that he couldn't make friends with the ravens and that what he needed was some way



to get the ravens to leave all the mice alone. More days passed and then, early in the morning after another late night, the plan came to him.

Bert was just getting ready for bed when White Guy said to him, "Bert, I have a plan that may work, but we need to collect some things. Will you help me?"

"Of course," said Bert. "But we had better move quickly. The museum opens in just a half an hour."

They did move quickly. Scampering and hopping up to the Crossbow Gun exhibit, the two mice grabbed hold of the sack of gunpowder resting there and commenced hauling this back to Bert's house. Once that was done, the two mousy friends crept to the basement and made off with a needle and a spool of thread that the Beefeaters kept there as part of their sewing kit. Returning to the helmet, Bert went to sleep and White Guy went to work.

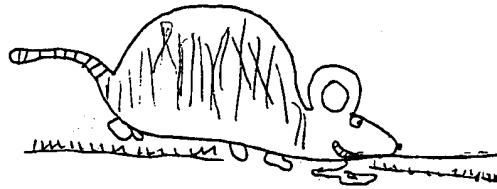
If you were a tourist that day and listened very carefully you might have heard little scraping, biting and stuffing sounds coming

from inside one of the helmets. If that made you wonder and you then looked into one of the eyeholes of that particular helmet, you might have seen White Guy hard at work. By the time the museum closed for the day White Guy was done. When Bert woke from his sleep and saw what White Guy had made, he laughed and laughed.

Together they pulled the thing before the council. There were smiles and not a few snickers, but the chamber got quiet when White Guy started to speak. Addressing Rex he said, "Sir, you told me that I could try to undo the problem I caused with the ravens if I came up with a good plan. I think I have one."

"I had heard that you were thinking hard on the problem," said Rex. "I see that you have built yourself a mouse. Is this part of your plan?"

"Yes, Sir. The mouse is really a bag full of gunpowder. I have tried to make it look as much as possible like one of us. My plan is to use a long piece of thread to pull this gunpowder mouse across the front lawn. I think that this will solve the problem of the ravens forever."



Amelia spoke up loudly, "This plan will not work. Blowing up the ravens will just make our problem worse. We will have the Beefeaters looking everywhere for us, and the ravens will just be replaced. Remember the legend, White Guy!"

White Guy replied, "I don't plan to blow up the ravens at all. I don't want to kill them, I just want to kill their appetite for mice."

White Guy then explained his plan to the crowded council of mice. After much discussion, Rolly and Bert were much in favor of the idea, Rex thought it would be a good adventure, and even Amelia thought that little harm would be done even if the plan failed.

Rolly and some of the stronger mice took the contraption to the front door and White Guy tied the thread to its nose. Then White Guy, Rex and Bert snuck out across the lawn unreeling the thread as they went. As it was just dark the ravens did not notice this

happening. After a tense half hour waiting for the moon to rise, the three mice began to reel in and jerk on the thread.

Out from the front door of the museum came an odd looking white mouse hopping and creeping along. Suddenly three ravens appeared from behind their rocks and stepped towards the mouse, expecting no doubt that this creature would run back into the museum. This the brave little mouse did not do. Instead he took a bound and then a leap and then started racing across the front lawn. The ravens were convinced that this was the same white mouse they had almost caught before. This time they would catch it and nibble on its ears.

The mouse went "sss sss sss" on the dry grass. The ravens went "urk urk urk" as they tried to catch it. Halfway across the lawn the mouse slowed down. The ravens caught up with it and started poking at it with their beaks, eager to see what a mouse tasted like. Arg! They started spitting out what they had eaten because what they had eaten was gunpowder and not mouse at all. Now ravens are not



smart birds. They would gladly eat a mouse if they could catch one but they had never been able to catch one before. They did not know what a mouse should taste like, so when they ate the gunpowder mouse they did not know that all mice don't taste quite the way this one did. They hated the taste of the mouse and they hated the smell of it. They hated it so much that they decided they never wanted to see or be near a mouse again!

From that day to this, any time a raven sees a mouse at the Tower of London it turns it's back and walks the other way. The mice can now get out of the museum at night and have little picnics on the lawn in the moonlight. They can bring their young ones down to play, and the ravens look the other way because they figure that all the mice taste just as bad as the Gunpowder Mouse.

White Guy was a hero. The mice were free to leave the museum at night and life had never been better. The Council of the Mice of London met and decided that something must be done to show their appreciation. They decided that White Guy ought to be made a

Knight of Mousedom in honor of his having fooled the ravens. And so, in a solemn ceremony, Rex dubbed White Guy a knight, and presented him with a shield that had pictures on it of all of his adventures, and even a drawing of a made-up creature called a Ravenmouse.

From that night our hero was called Sir White Guy, the Gunpowder Mouse. All the Tower mice told their friends, and all the mother mice told their little mice the story of Sir White Guy and the ravens, and Sir White Guy became famous throughout the country of England.

White Guy was happy and proud, but still he missed his home. It would be quite some time, and he would have quite a few more adventures before ever he saw his mom again.

