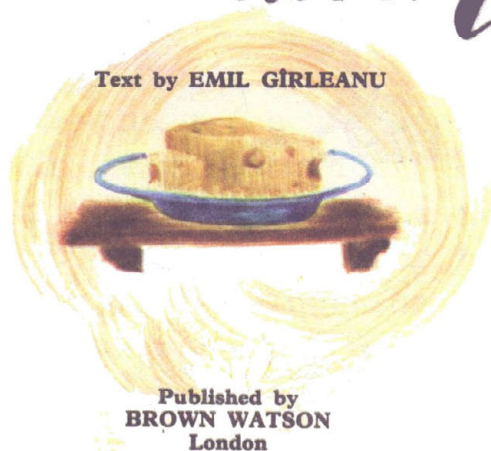


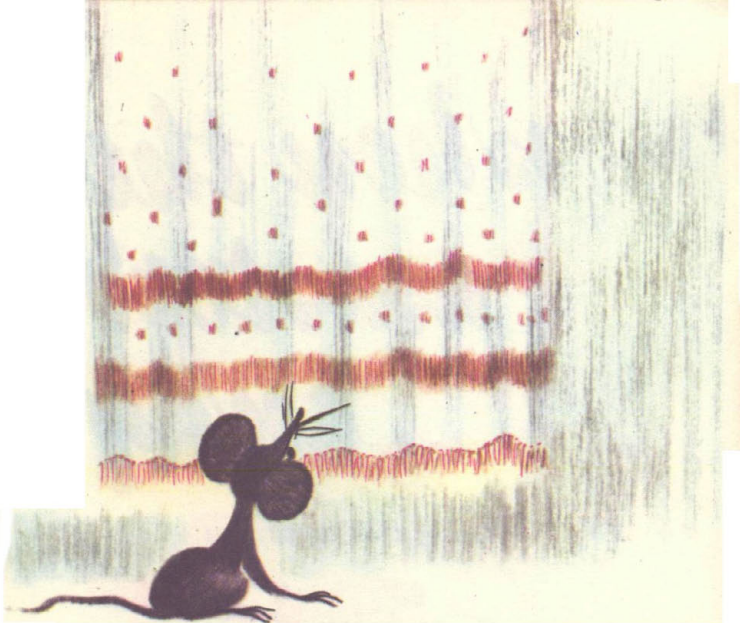
When
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Text by **EMIL GIRLEANU**



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The old house lay still and quiet in the dark night. A delicious smell of fresh cheese floated round the kitchen. The little mouse in his hole could not resist poking his tiny nose out for a moment. He had not smelt such a smell for years. "Um, that's lovely," he said, taking a huge sniff.



The smell of cheese, just the way he liked it, filled his nose, but where was it? He was scared to look too far, but it was such a tantalizing smell, that he could bear it no longer and he tiptoed a few steps across the floor. His little eyes looked this way and that, his whiskers twitched with excitement. There it was! The rich cheese lay



on a blue dish on the shelf. If only he could reach it!

Back in his hole once more, the little mouse sat and thought. He was very hungry. No one was watching that cheese, perhaps no one even wanted it. But he did, so very much. How could he reach it? Oh, it wasn't fair, he thought, that such a prize should just sit there. It was a waste.

He looked out once more. It was still there, waiting for him.

Bravely he came out from his hole, right into the middle of the room. He looked at the cheese just to make sure it was still there. How could he reach it? Along the wall as far as the sofa? Along the top of the cupboard? Should he climb the curtains and drop down on the shelf?

Back he went to his hole once more. It was too risky. He didn't want the cheese anyway. But he did! Out he came, took a few steps into the room and waited. It was still very quiet.





He made up his mind. He would climb up the curtains, run along the picture, and drop on the cheese. In his excitement he forgot all about the old tomcat. He must be out, he thought.

But the old cat was not out, nor asleep. He was hiding behind a cushion on the sofa, watching. He knew the cheese was there, and he knew the mouse would come out of his hole, so he was waiting for him.

As he looked, he could see the mouse's tiny eyes peeping out from his hole.

Inch by inch the little mouse nosed his way out of the hole.



Quickly he ran out across the room, but he did not get far. Puss was ready for him. With one swift leap, he pounced, squeezing the mouse in his paws. "Ha ha!" he said, "got you at last!"

"So you wanted the cheese, did you?" he taunted. "Well, I shall eat it myself, when I've eaten you!"

Then they heard the sound of feet in the passage outside. Bother! thought the cat, it must be that wretched dog, come to chase me. In two jumps the cat hid behind the stove, and the mouse ran for his hole.

Rushing into the room, his tail quivering, the dog stopped, eagerly



smelling the cheese. Then he noticed the cat where he had tried to hide.



The dog barked angrily, and jumped up, trying to reach the cat. But the cat was too high. He jumped again and again, but the cat was safe.

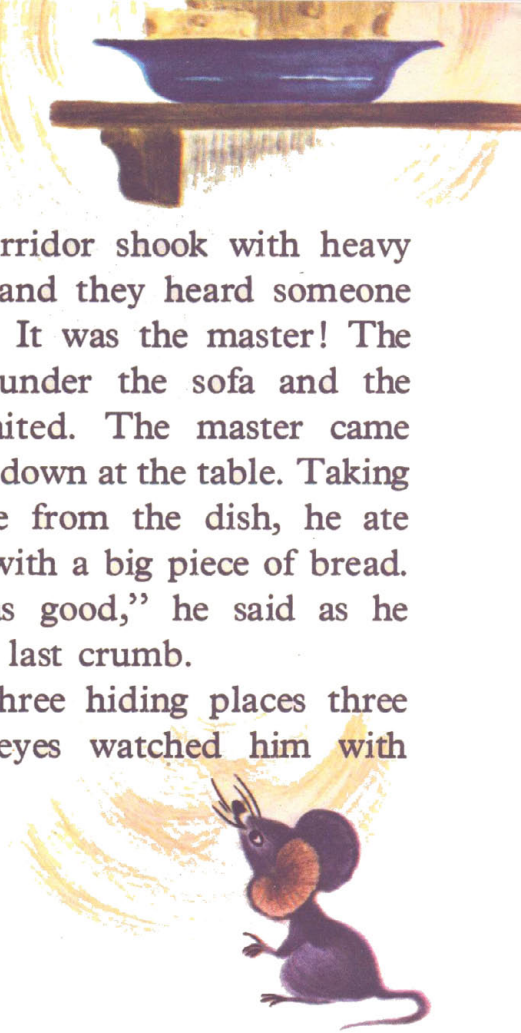
Tired by his jumping, the dog lay on the floor and growled. The cat stayed by the stove and the mouse in his hole. They were all thinking of the same thing. They all wanted that cheese!





The corridor shook with heavy footsteps and they heard someone whistling. It was the master! The dog hid under the sofa and the others waited. The master came in and sat down at the table. Taking the cheese from the dish, he ate it slowly with a big piece of bread. "That was good," he said as he licked the last crumb.

From three hiding places three pairs of eyes watched him with envy.



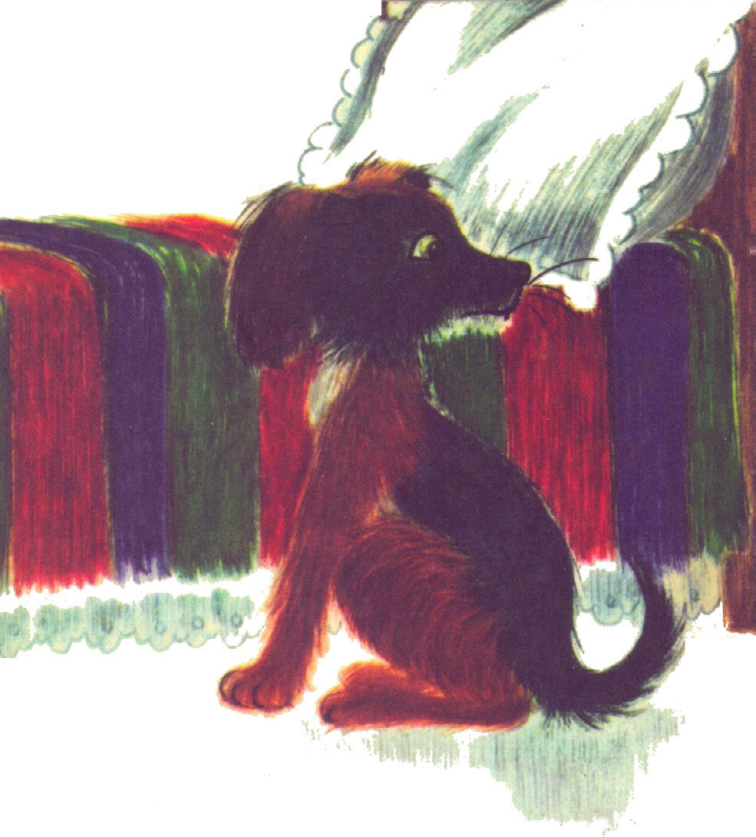


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