

MOUSE COTTAGE

Mrs. Tuppencemouse lived in an ever-blooming apple tree, cozily situated in a fragrant orchard. Mrs. Tuppencemouse's tree's name was Fox Bramble Hall, well known for its full cellar and ever-expanding library.

On the day our story starts, Mrs. Tuppencemouse betook herself to her rather dusty guest bedroom to prepare for her niece Susan, who would be arriving later that day. Armed with mop, dusters and scrub brushes, she scrubbed, scoured and dusted 'til the room shone. After this, a slightly exhausted Mrs. Tuppencemouse retired to her cheery kitchen for a muffin and a cup of warm tea. After finishing her tea, Mrs. Tuppencemouse began to make scones and small cakes for Susan's and her tea later. At half past ten, Mrs. Tuppencemouse fetched her bonnet and hurried off to the station to meet Susan off the 11:30 train.

"Well, now, it's not much but it's home," said Mrs. Tuppencemouse when they returned home.

"It's a little cramped," said Susan.

"Well, I find it cozy—" began Mrs. Tuppencemouse.

"You would, I'm sure," rudely cut in Susan. "I wonder if you would show me to my room. I've had a long day and this country air is making me dizzy."

Mrs. Tuppencemouse said no more, but thought, *I am sure she will be more cheerful at teatime.*

But Susan wasn't. She declared the scones too dry and the tea too strong.

"Well, dear, would you like to go and look around the orchard while I start supper?" said a slightly irate Mrs. Tuppencemouse.

"I'm afraid I'm too frail to be in the sun for long periods. I think I will take a nap." And with that, Susan marched up to her room. She did not come down until she was called for dinner.

The next morning, Mrs. Tuppencemouse woke up to light streaming through her window. She got up and bustled into the kitchen, where she began to make sausage, pancakes, and fresh fruit for breakfast. When breakfast was almost ready, a sleepy-looking Susan appeared in the kitchen doorway.

"Your annoying birds just woke me up," huffed Susan.

"Well, breakfast is on the table, so help yourself to sausage, pancakes and fruit."

"I don't enjoy sausage or pancakes," began Susan.

"Then I'll make some porridge," hastily replied Mrs. Tuppencemouse before Susan could complain any more. After a slightly subdued remainder of breakfast, Mrs. Tuppencemouse told Susan to go play, while she sat down to making a list for market.

When it was time to go to market, Mrs. Tuppencemouse called Susan, and away they went. When they arrived at the market, they went first to the meat shop, where Mrs. Tuppencemouse bought some lamb. From there they continued to the spice shop, where Mrs. Tuppencemouse was just reaching for the cloves when Susan declared, "I detest cloves."

"Well, dear, I need them for the supper tonight."

"Don't tell me we are having soup," began Susan.

"We are done shopping," said an angry Mrs. Tuppencemouse.

When they arrived home, Mrs. Tuppencemouse said, "Go to your room and think about what an disagreeable mouse you have been."

When Mrs. Tuppencemouse called Susan down for soup, she would not come, so Mrs. Tuppencemouse ate supper all on her own. Poor Mrs. Tuppencemouse.

It was not until Mrs. Tuppencemouse was in bed that she realized that tomorrow was Susan's final day of visiting. It was also Mrs. Tuppencemouse's birthday.

The next morning Susan hardly complained during breakfast and when it was time to leave, Mrs. Tuppencemouse could have sworn she saw a tear on Susan's face.

Just as she was about to board the train, Susan rushed back and through a large hug asked tremulously, "I know I was awfully disagreeable, but I won't be if you let me come back next summer."

“Of course you can come back, dear, of course you can,” said a very happy Mrs. Tuppencemouse.

THE END