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Ch. 5 Of Mouse and Wo-Man

Thu, 2008-01-03 16:17 — Robin Olson

... A few nights ago, on a blamy, but-I-don't-care-because-I-have-air-conditioning-now night, Sam and I were watching a DVD we rented. During the movie, I thought I kept hearing strange sounds that were not coming from the semi-surroundish-sound-system. Every time I hit the pause button on the remote, I didn't hear anything. I heard the sound again, growling. I heard another sound, squealing, frightened chirping. Then, suddenly something caught my eye. I looked to my left and sitting there in the kitchen was Gracie. Hanging neatly from its' tail, squirming in her mouth, was a big mouse. It was NOT, I repeat, NOT a toy. "OH MY GOD! MOUSE!" I shrieked. Sam and I both jumped to our feet and Gracie, wanting to show off her prize, dropped the mouse at our feet. Of course, it used the opportunity to RUN like Hell, but with so many cats, found itself bouncing off one wall and another, trying to avoid being caught again. We managed to scare the mouse into our pantry. It's a small room off the kitchen, but not the ideal location to catch a mouse since it's a pantry that is not surprisingly full of FOOD...AND has lots of little places to hide. Sam started to remove items from the pantry floor while I blocked off the doorway to the room, with a big storm window I hastily grabbed from the basement. I set it up so the mouse would be blocked access to the rest of the house if it tried to escape the room. I'm so smart! Every few minutes, Sam would find the mouse, and then lose the battle with his manhood by gasping like a girl. It wasn't as bad as my screams, but every time he did it, I saw him grimace with embarrassment, followed by a flash of anger. Every time he gasped, I jumped. It could be a new dance, if we could time it to music instead of startling mouse-discoveries. No matter how many times he gasped, got angry and made me jump, he was never able to capture the mouse. If only it knew we were trying to get it out of the house, I'm sure it would have jumped into our hands! But no. No. That would be too easy. Eventually, Sam removed most of the things on the floor and the mouse ran toward the big window blockade and me. I suck. I acted in haste, so I had plenty of leisure time to repent, err, regret my storm window choice. I left a TINY space when I set up my oh-so clever blockade. The mouse found an escape crack and ran under the refrigerator! SHIT! Tired and frustrated, we gave up, reloaded the pantry, shut off the TV and went to bed. The cats would find the mouse, right? That night I didn't sleep. I kept waiting for the sound of a lamp breaking or the poor mouse screaming for its' life. There are many people who would just put poison out and leave it at that, but we can't do that. It's not right. The mouse, unless it was suicidal, didn't deserve to die. We had to free it. Nothing happened. The next morning two of the cats were on either side of the fridge, their tails switching anxiously back and forth. They'd pace a few steps, then sit back down, silently staring into the dark and dusty gloom. I could see a few clumps of dust had been pulled out from beneath the 'fridge. Too bad the cats couldn't reach further. Maybe I could train them to clean under there once in awhile? My computer died that morning, so I had to drive it up to Hartford to get it repaired. While I was gone, I forgot about the mouse. It was a nice break, but I was starting to feel very tired during the drive home. By the time I got through the front door, I was ready for a nap. Once inside the house, I got goose bumps, remembering the mouse was still lurking and could jump out an attack (ok, startle) me at any moment. I patrolled the downstairs, looking for what I feared most. I'd seen it before—the lifeless and maybe headless body of a field mouse. I got to the kitchen and stopped dead in my tracks, pardon the pun. There was a big "dust bunny" (or dust-mousy in this case). Covered with fuzz, was the lifeless form of a mouse. My heart sank. I prepared for the worst. As I got closer, I realized with utter disgust, that it was a TOY mouse. One of those realistic things I insist on buying the cats, in bulk, to make matters worse! I really AM a jerk! I should just quit writing. All this reflection makes me want to kick myself. Ok, so it was a toy. The real deal was nowhere to be seen. That night we watched the pilot episode of "The Prisoner" on DVD. The last time I saw it, I was 6 years old. Little of it made any sense, but the big-ass Bubble Monster scared the crap out of me. Seeing the program through my keen, adult-eyes, I was now able to discern details of the story line, that I never understood before. Yes, it WAS about a guy trying to escape a town that was guarded by a big-ass bubble monster! Instead of running away from the monster, our hero seemed to accidentally (on purpose) run INTO the bubble-thing so he could pretend it was suffocating him. I sort of wished I could call out the big-ass Bubble Monster to seek and destroy that damn mouse. By 9:30pm, on August 27th, 2007, we were so tired from our lousy sleep the night before; we decided to go to bed. Sam read and I watched *Bridezilla* on TV. I hate that program but I can't stop watching it. I can't believe that these Brides really talk like that to their intended (victim) and still end up getting married. I'd really like to see a follow up show that explores the "shocking truth" that many of the couples have split up or are in jail for being abusive. I bet if the big-ass Bubble Monster came after them, it might shut them up. Just as the show was about to end, Sam turned off the light and slid down under the covers. I reached for the remote to turn off the TV. That's when I heard a loud, pitiful squeaking. I looked down and Gracie was back. She had the mouse in her mouth again. I yelled; "MOUSE!" And Sam turned on the light and we both jumped out of bed. This scared Gracie and she dropped the mouse. It ran so fast I only saw the direction it went, not exactly WHERE it went. All I knew is that it was IN THE BEDROOM!!!!!!!!!!!! Eeeek! We took a few minutes to prepare ourselves. I put on flip-flops. I turned on all the lights. Sam got a flashlight. We grabbed towels, thinking we'd be able to toss one over the mouse, carefully pick it up, and then carry it outside. Yeah, right. I lifted some items off the floor—the HEPA air filter, the fan, I asked Sam to tilt a tall, antique plant stand, hoping that if the mouse were under it, it would dash towards me and into the waiting towel. He moved the stand. The mouse appeared from in between the rungs in the MIDDLE of the stand, about a foot off the ground! It jumped towards the wall, then towards Sam! He leapt out of the way and gasped-flashed-anger as I screamed! It ran under the Art Deco, Gentleman's dresser. SHIT! So we regrouped and re-prepared ourselves. Sam took the lead. Within a moment, the mouse had run out from under the dresser and into the corner of the room, behind our TV. Sam slowly moved the TV out of the way. I kept the light of the flashlight on the mouse. Sam had a small Tupperware container with a lid. He approached the mouse...closer...closer...then it squeaked and RAN to Sam's left. Sam jumped! I screamed, then started to belly laugh! We both just stood there laughing. So much for acting cool about a little mouse. Again, I was able to scare the mouse into the

corner, but it wouldn't stay put, this time it ran across the bedroom and out the door. I ran to the hallway and it was GONE; evaporated into the ether, like a ghost. SHIT! I figured it ran under the first door it came to, which would mean it was inside the linen closet. Before we opened the door, we shut all the other doors on that floor and stuffed towels under each opening. I left the door open to the laundry room, knowing we could easily catch the mouse if it ran into that space. Yeah, right. Sam opened the door to the linen closet. He said nothing, at first. I asked him if it was in there and he said sarcastically, "YES! It's on the second SHELF!!!!" As he yelled, out came the mouse, it ran over my toes! I really SCREAMED this time! Not some wussy-scream. This was a full-bodied, blood-curdling, horror-movie quality scream! As I was getting lockjaw from screaming for so long, I saw the mouse leap behind the washing machine! I told Sam that the mouse couldn't exit the room. There was no space under the door for it to escape. If he closed himself up in the room, Sam would be able to catch the mouse. I'm good at giving directions, aren't I? Sam obeyed, even though he was barefoot, half-asleep and exhausted. Is he a good guy or what? Did I or did I not do the right thing? Don't answer that! I did the right thing! I waited outside, while Sam gave me a rundown of what he was doing. He looked around the washer and dryer. Nothing. He looked over the top and behind the washer and dryer. Nothing. He ran the dryer to scare the mouse. Nothing. He was ready to leave the room. I insisted he get down and look under the washer and dryer. That's when I heard another man-gasp/anger-flash. "Is it the mouse?? Do you have it??" "No!" "What's going on?" "It's a SPIDER! I was lying down and a spider walked into my FACE! A BIG SPIDER! Can't a man have some dignity?? What the...?!" Sam flung the door open and gave me a look. The look translated into: "I'm done now. You go in there and play with the wildlife all you want, but I'm going to bed!" "Where do you think it went?" "There's a hole in the wall where the dryer vents out, so I guess it jumped into the hole and is IN THE WALL NOW. By the way, I'm done now. You go in there and play with the wildlife all you want, but I'm going to bed!" I decided to leave the door to the laundry and nearby bathroom open, even though I knew Spencer would jump into the bathtub and pee in it. I figured if the mouse were going to leave the room, the cats would let me know, pee-filled tub or not. We got back into bed. Sam fell asleep and I finished watching *Bridezilla*. I couldn't sleep. I watched *American Princess*—two episodes. It was about 2am on August 28th, 2007. The TV show was train wreck. I gave up and turned it off. I lay in bed, tossed and turned. I could see down the hallway. Petunia and Spencer were sitting in the doorway to the laundry room. Nicky was in the bed with us. I felt safe, but over-tired. I shut my eyes. I heard squeaking! "MOUSE!!!" I turned on the light, put my flip-flops on and grabbed the closest thing—one of the burly-awful Fruit-of-the-Loom undershirts. Petunia had the mouse, but let it go. It ran down the stairs, with other cats close behind it. I got to the bottom of the stairs and it ran under my side table. The cats were perplexed. They didn't see where the mouse went. Angry and frustrated, I grabbed (checked it first) a toy mouse and threw it under the table. The cats followed it under the table. I figured they'd find the real mouse again. Sam, poor thing, was standing on the bottom step, rubbing his eyes. We reluctantly went back to bed. No sooner than I lay down, I heard the hysterical shrieking again. Sam and I both ran down the stairs, with me in the lead. A small circle of cats had surrounded the mouse. I could only imagine what was going on in the mouse's head...probably; "Holy shit, I'm dead meat!!!" Petunia had the mouse in her mouth. I calmly asked her if I could play with it, too. She let it go. I tossed the big t-shirt over the mouse and picked it up; yelled to Sam to open the front door and turn on the outside lights. He quickly ran ahead of me, preparing the way for my arrival. I hustled out the door and walked a few feet away from the doorway. I put the shirt down and opened it up. Nothing. There was NOTHING in the shirt! SHIT! Where was the f-ing MOUSE??? Just to be safe, I turned the shirt over. THE MOUSE WAS HANGING ONTO THE UNDERSIDE OF THE SHIRT!!!!!! I screamed, yet again. I put the shirt down and told the mouse to GO! The mouse looked up at me just then. His little beady, creepy eyes met mine. A moment later, he dashed off into the darkness. He was free. Free at last. My super-sized-cotton-scratchy-t-shirt had saved the day! Sam declared, "This is going in the BOOK!" "What book?" I replied. "YOUR BOOK! The one you're WRITING!!!" he said. "Oh. Oopsie. Hee hee. Yes!"Later that night... ..As Told to the Patrons of the Acorn Pub, conveniently located under a rotting tree stump, just down the lane from Lichen Grove Estates—a family friendly community! "Fellas, I'm lucky to be alive! You shoulda' seen it! Never in all my months have I seen such a sight! Ed reaches for a droplet of hard cider and takes a sip, savoring the moment, as his audience, made up of a few dozen male comrades, gathers around him rapt with silence. "I was mindin' my own business. You know, eatin' sunflower seeds over there, by the rocks." His comrades nod in agreement. They knew the place well. "It was a good day, a bit hot and I probably ate a bit too much, but hey, can't complain." "Who cares what you ate, ya fat bastard! What happened?" "Okay, okay! Sheesh. I'm getting' to that. Gimme a minute, will ya? So where was I?" "You were stuffin' your face, mouse. Now get on with it!" "So I wrapped up my dinner break before I head home to be with the wife and kids. I dunno if you noticed this, but there's been a big increase in cat sightings around here." The group gasped simultaneously. Some hadn't heard the terrible news yet and it was a tough pill to swallow. For countless generations, the clan had never needed to worry about being anyone's meal, other than when a rarely seen Fox started to sniff around, which I'm sure they all shuddered to consider. "Yeah, it's true. These are dangerous times and a mouse just can't scurry around aimlessly. He's gotta be careful, keep alert. Or else he'll end up (Ed makes a slashing motion with his finger across his throat) seein' the inside of some cat's gut. That is not gonna be the way I go. No way. Ed took another sip of his cider while the others where even too scared to draw a breath. I began to head home. I thought it was safe—when out of nowhere this sonofabitch wild cat jumped out at me!!! I ran for all I'm worth. I ran so fast, I didn't know where I was going. I just kept my paws movin'!" "I saw an opening in the wall and I just dove into it. I didn't care where it went, as long as that damn cat couldn't come after me. I entered a chamber. It sure was dark; let me tell you! I couldn't see my paw in front of my face! I just kept going, zigging and zagging, up...down...The cat had long since stopped chasing me. I was safe, but I couldn't stop running." The crowd finally exhaled. A few of the lads wiped their sweaty brows, while others motioned to the barkeep to refill their tiny cups. Before any of them started talking, Ed continued. "It didn't end there, though God knows I wish it had. I saw a light, so I ran for it. I thought it was a shortcut to the Pub, actually;" as a smile tugged at the corners of Ed's mouth. He took another sip and waited a moment, steeling his reserve. "I entered a huge space. It wasn't like any place I've ever seen before. There were no trees, no rocks, just a smooth, hard floor. It was cold, like death. All around me were things. I don't know what they were, but they were in all shapes and sizes. I sniffed the air. It didn't smell right. I looked around, trying to figure out what to do next. Then...all of a sudden, I'm in the air! Another cat got its' fangs clamped onto my ass and all I can see is the floor!" The Pub erupted in laughs, which some older members, realizing the severity of the situation, began to smack a few of the youngsters upside the head. Everyone began chattering and chirping, until the Barkeep whistled loudly and urged them all to quiet down. He refilled Ed's cup with more cider. Ed nodded his thanks. "On the house, Ed. Please, continue." "It was a different cat. Not like the one in the woods. That one wanted to eat me. I could tell by the way it was lickin' its' chops! This one, well I didn't know what it wanted! I felt like a pawn in some sick game! I felt its' teeth pressing into my ass! Oh how it hurt! I squealed. My stomach was churning bad, so I ripped a good fart in her face! I know I could lie and tell you I took it like a mouse, but I didn't. I tried to fight back, but all I could do was fart and scream for my life!" "That's showin' it, Ed! Blast 'em with your one-gun! Har har har!" one of the patrons shouted. The others

snickered, while the barkeep glared at them. Moments later, it was quiet enough for Ed to continue. "It carried me upwards, over these huge wooden steps. As we climbed, I began to smell things. Bad things. I also began to hear stuff. Loud noises, like you've never imagined!! I thought the place was going to blow up! I swear I heard explosions! Then, I saw them...HUMANS!" You could have heard a flower bud open; it was so quiet in the Pub. "Then I saw more cats! They were everywhere you looked! I tell ya I never saw so many cats in one places! They surrounded us! I thought I was done for. I started to think about if I had my Will up to date, or if there'd be enough insurance money for college for the kids. My life flashed before my eyes! Then, two cats followed us with GREAT interest. I thought I was going to be ripped into bits. They'd each take a piece, the Bastards! I was still fighting and squealing, while the cat growled at me to be quiet! Suddenly, we were in another room and I could SEE the humans. One of them pointed at me and SCREAMED! I think it was a female. She called me some name and jumped up. Her mate was right behind her. Maybe the cat was bringing me to them so THEY could EAT ME!!!!" The Pub erupted in screams! "I said my farewells to this world, my friends. I knew it was over for me... Ed tipped back his drink and gulped it all down in one, fluid motion. ...Then, suddenly, the cat DROPPED ME!" Cheers erupted from the Pub! "I ran for it! The humans, the cats, they were ALL after me, but I wasn't gonna blow my chance. I'd go back where I came from-only I'd be darned if I could remember where that was! I was disoriented and scared...so I just RAN!" Sobbing now, Ed grew silent. His friends, reached out to him with reassuring pats on the head and back. One of them handed Ed a hanky, which he accepted gratefully. After giving his nose a strong blow, Ed gathered himself and began again. "I stayed close to the wall. The cats ran away! The humans were after me, but I was too fast for them! HA! I found the darkest, smallest hidey-hole I could find and crammed myself into it, hoping they'd give up looking for me. It got real quiet. They started talking to each other. I have no idea what they said. Their language sounds like grunts and moans to me...maybe a bit whiney, too, like when I don't take out the garbage and the wife gets after me. You know what I mean?" From the shadows someone shouted in a frustrated outburst; "Ed!" "Okay, so I was hiding. The humans were moving things around. The male was very close to me. All of a sudden, I realized he was looking RIGHT AT ME! I stayed real still. I remember what I learned in school, so I waited 'til he came close to me and I suddenly RAN off! I scared him good! Ha ha ha! What a jerk! He's only about 10,000 times bigger than me, but I showed him! I scared his so bad he screamed! Yeah, so I ran here and I ran there and he just could not catch me. I thought I could get away, but the female was blocking my exit. What a mountain she was, all sweaty and screaming, too! I tried to get past her when I suddenly noticed they missed blocking off the exit entirely! I squeezed through the space and ended up under something, in the dark! The humans couldn't reach me. I was safe!" The Pub exploded in cheers! The mice started to clap, whoop, shout, while others broke into song. One of the mice shouted out; "But how did you get back here, Ed?" "Fellas! That's not the end of the story!" The patrons quieted down and took their seats, waiting for Ed to continue. "So I'm under this noisy machine. It makes a loud humming sound every so often. I just stay put. The humans sound angry, but I don't give a shit. They can't get me where I'm hiding, so I'll just wait it out. The one thing I didn't figure on is the damn cats. No sooner than the humans left, more cats showed up. I've never seen so many of them! It was like a plague! They were waiting for me. If I made a move, they'd pounce on me for sure. My ass was still sore from that last Bitch biting me and I was in no mood to go through that again. I waited. I just sat there. Good thing I wasn't hungry cause I sat there all night long. I took a dump, just to get back at them! Actually, I took a few dumps. Hey, why not?" A few of the guys snorted. Others elbowed each other and whispered jokes. "That morning, I noticed there was always at least one cat watching for me. I needed a plan and I needed it quick. The wife wasn't gonna wait for me long. You know what she's like!" as he winked to the crowd. "I had another bad scare, I tell ya. I thought..." Ed's voice caught in his throat. "Well, I'd been looking around, since the light was better and I thought there was another one of US, under there with me...but the guy was DEAD! That's when I realized; he was my ticket out of there. With all my might, I shoved him towards the waiting cats. One of them quickly snatched his body...out...of...my...paws! I had to! I had to do it or I'd die! You know I'd never do something like that to any of YOU guys! I never saw this guy before! He must have been from a different hillside, 'cause he looked foreign to me. He was really weird lookin'. I think he did drugs! His eyes were glazed over and his ears were really tiny. I think one of them was missing...and...you won't believe this, but I swear he didn't have any LEGS or MOUTH!!!!" More shouts and screams from the Patrons of the Pub. Many of them began talking aloud, not knowing what to make of this news. "I decided while they were...playing...with the foreigner, I'd make my break. They didn't see me leave, but I still didn't know how to get out and get back to the woods! I spent a few hours looking for an escape, but didn't find any. The cats didn't seem to care about me. Most of them were sleeping. They're such lazy assholes!" "I continued my exploration. Didn't find any food. Took a few more dumps. Kept trying to get out. It was a total nightmare! Darkness came. I thought I'd have a better shot, but I forgot about the cats. I forgot they could see well in the dark, too. I was screwed. Yeah. You guessed it. Before long, my ass was in the air again!!!! That same bitch cat got me AGAIN! She carried up another mountain of wooden steps. I figured this time I was dead mouse-meat! I heard more noises from another room I'd never been to before. The HUMANS WERE IN THERE! She was taking me to them again!!!! The room was dark. Maybe they wouldn't see me? The Bitch bit down harder and I squealed. That did it. The female human saw me and SCREAMED again! I think her language is all screaming! When she screamed, the Bitch dropped me again! I couldn't believe my luck so I ran for it." "Oh, come on, Ed, you gotta be kiddin' us!" called out one of the patrons. "Look at this if you don't believe me!" Ed turned to reveal his backside, which had a few nasty gouges in it. The crowd was hushed back into silence. A few began to quietly sob. "I didn't know what the Hell to do, other than, stay the course, RUN, then hide and stay still. I kept doing that and those fucking Humans kept finding me! They pointed this blinding light at me! I felt so naked, exposed! The male kept coming after me, but I'd wait each and every time 'til he got real close, then I'd make a quick dash for it, and he'd get scared OFF! I think we could take over the Human's, fellas. I really think we could! I musta gotten away from them 30 or 40 times!" "Yeah, right, Ed! More like once or twice!" "Hey, bite this (Ed grabs at his crotch), asshole! I kid you not. I got away so many times it should be a world-f-ing-record!" Ed paused to drink. The others followed suit. "Then the unthinkable happened. I really thought I was safe, so I continued looking for an exit. The humans had given up and were laying down together in the darkness. It was quiet, too, quiet...well, other than this awful noise one of the humans, the male, I think, was making. He sounded like he was trying to snort a bag of grubs!" "Eww!!!! So what happened, Ed?" the Barkeep asked. ...to be continued ©2007 Robin AF Olson

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