

Mouse, Far-Traveling, Ray Bradbury

Mouse, Far Traveling

As there was one spider in the House, there had to be

A singular mouse.

Escaped from life into mortality and a First Dynasty Egyptian tomb, this small ghost rodent at last fled free when some curious Bonaparte soldiers broke the seal and let out great gusts of bacterial air which killed the troops and confused Paris long after Napoleon departed and the Sphinx prevailed, with French gun-pocks in her face, and Fate splayed her paws.

The ghost mouse, so dislodged from darkness, excursed to a seaport and shipped out with but not among the cats for Marseilles and London and Massachusetts and a century later, arrived just as the child Timothy cried on the Family's doorstep. This mouse rattle-tapped under the doorsill to be greeted by an alert eight-legged thing, its multiple knees riddling above its poisonous head.

Stunned, Mouse froze in place and wisely did not move for hours. Then, when the arachnid papal ring presence tired of surveillance and departed for breakfast flies, Mouse vanished into the woodwork, rattle-scratched through secret panellings to the nursery. There, Timothy the babe, in need of more fellows no matter how small or strange, welcomed him beneath the blanket to nurse and befriend him for life.

So it was that Timothy, no saint, grew and became a young manchild, with ten candles lit on his anniversary cake.

And the House and the tree and the Family, and Great Grandmere and Cecy in her attic sands, and Timothy with his attendant Arach in one ear and Mouse on his shoulder and Anuba on his lap, waited for the greatest arrival of all ...

The End