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Opening extract from
Aesop's Fables

Written by
Fiona Waters

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To Alessia, Arianna, Giada, Olivia and in loving memory of Sophie W. FT

For John Welch 1926 - 2009. A wise and much missed friend. FMW

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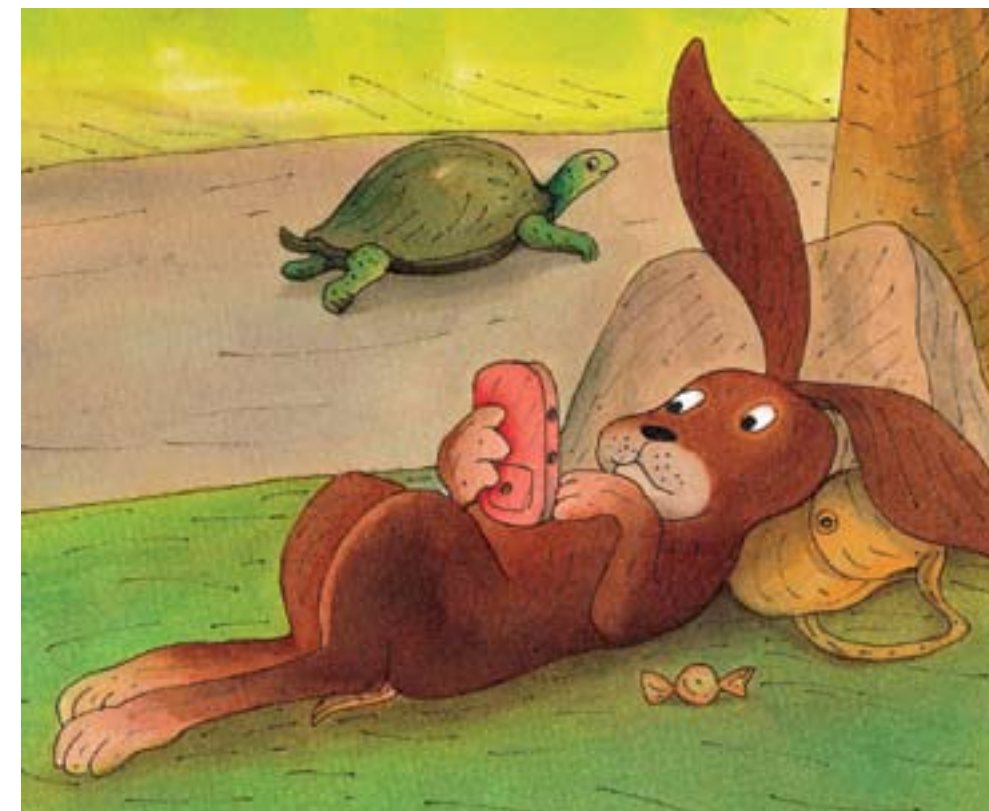
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FULVIO TESTA

Aesop's FABLES

Retold by **FIONA WATERS**



ANDERSEN PRESS

The Goat and the Wolf



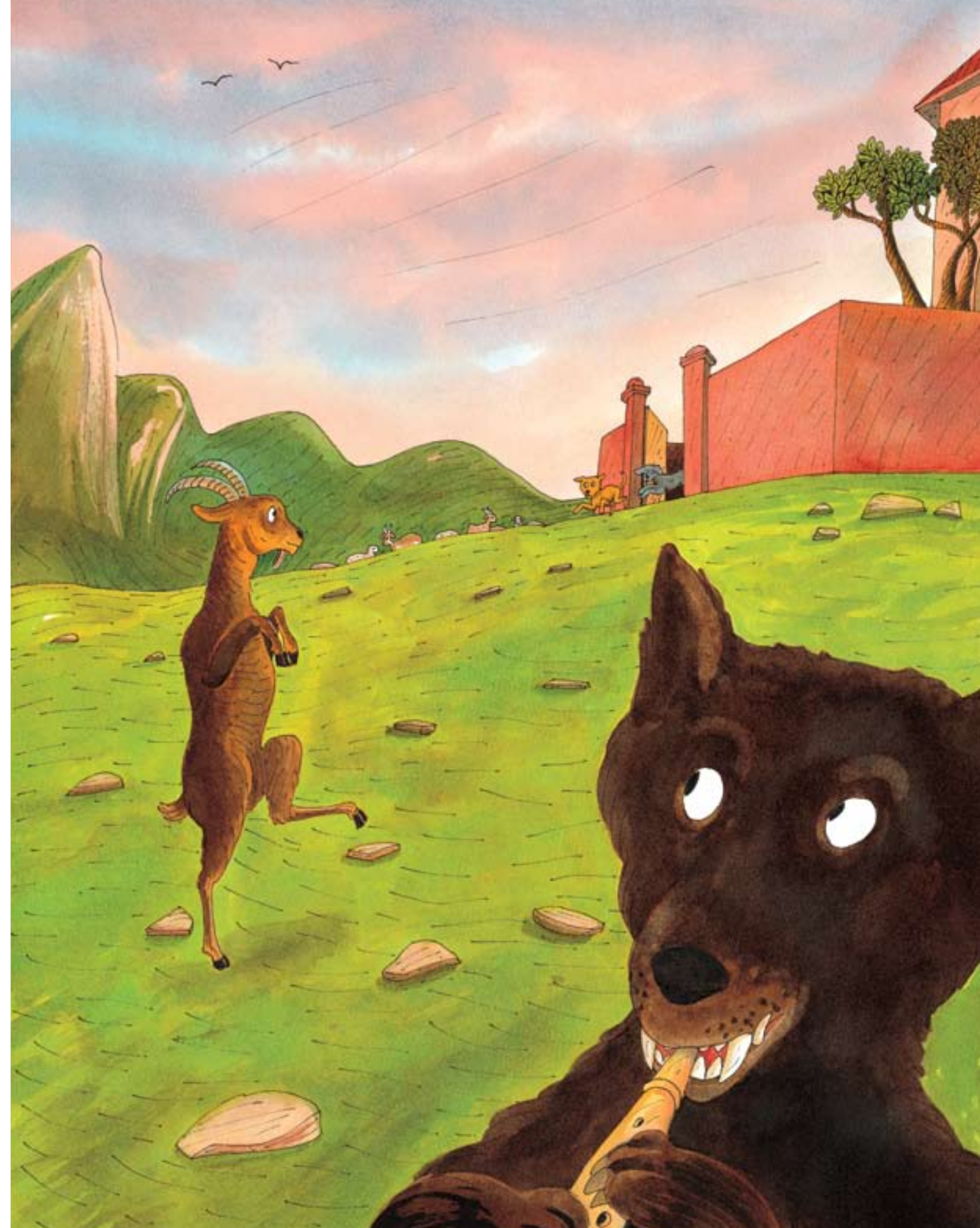
The sun was shining and the little goat was enjoying the warmth on his coat. Everywhere he looked there were tussocks of even more delicious grass just beyond the last, and before he knew it he had strayed quite far from the rest of his flock. Suddenly, he heard a terrible sound that stopped him in his tracks. It was the snarl of a wolf. Slowly

the little goat turned round, his legs trembling, and sure enough, there stood a large and shaggy wolf. He was smiling in a most unpleasant way, revealing lots of very sharp teeth.

But little goats are often a lot smarter than shaggy old wolves so, thinking quickly, the little goat took a couple of steps forward and said, "I know, Wolf, that you are planning to have me for your lunch, but perhaps you would grant me one last wish. Please would you play your flute so I can have one last dance?"

The wolf was quite happy to play a merry tune before his lunch, so he whipped out his flute. The little goat kicked up his heels and danced as if he didn't have a care in the world. Faster and faster, and louder and louder the wolf played, and suddenly the dogs guarding the flock, who had been dozing in the shade, came racing up, barking loudly. The wolf dropped the flute, turned tail and fled back up the path and was out of sight in seconds, muttering as he went, "Serves me right. I should not have allowed myself to be distracted from catching my lunch."

ALWAYS ATTEND TO THE MATTER IN HAND OR YOU MAY LOSE EVERYTHING.



The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse



One day a country mouse invited a town mouse to stay with him in the country. They had a pleasant time sitting by the river bank and talking, and then went to dine at the country mouse's humble home. The fare was simple - nuts and berries and husks of corn, which the country mouse had carefully gathered from the fields about his home. The town mouse was not impressed. "My dear fellow, this is very meagre food. Come to the town with me and

see just what a fantastic spread I have to choose from."

The country mouse was rather upset by the town mouse's ingratitude, but he said nothing, and they made their way to the town. The town mouse suddenly dived through a hole in a wall and the country mouse slipped in quietly behind him. A long dusty passage opened out into a vast room.

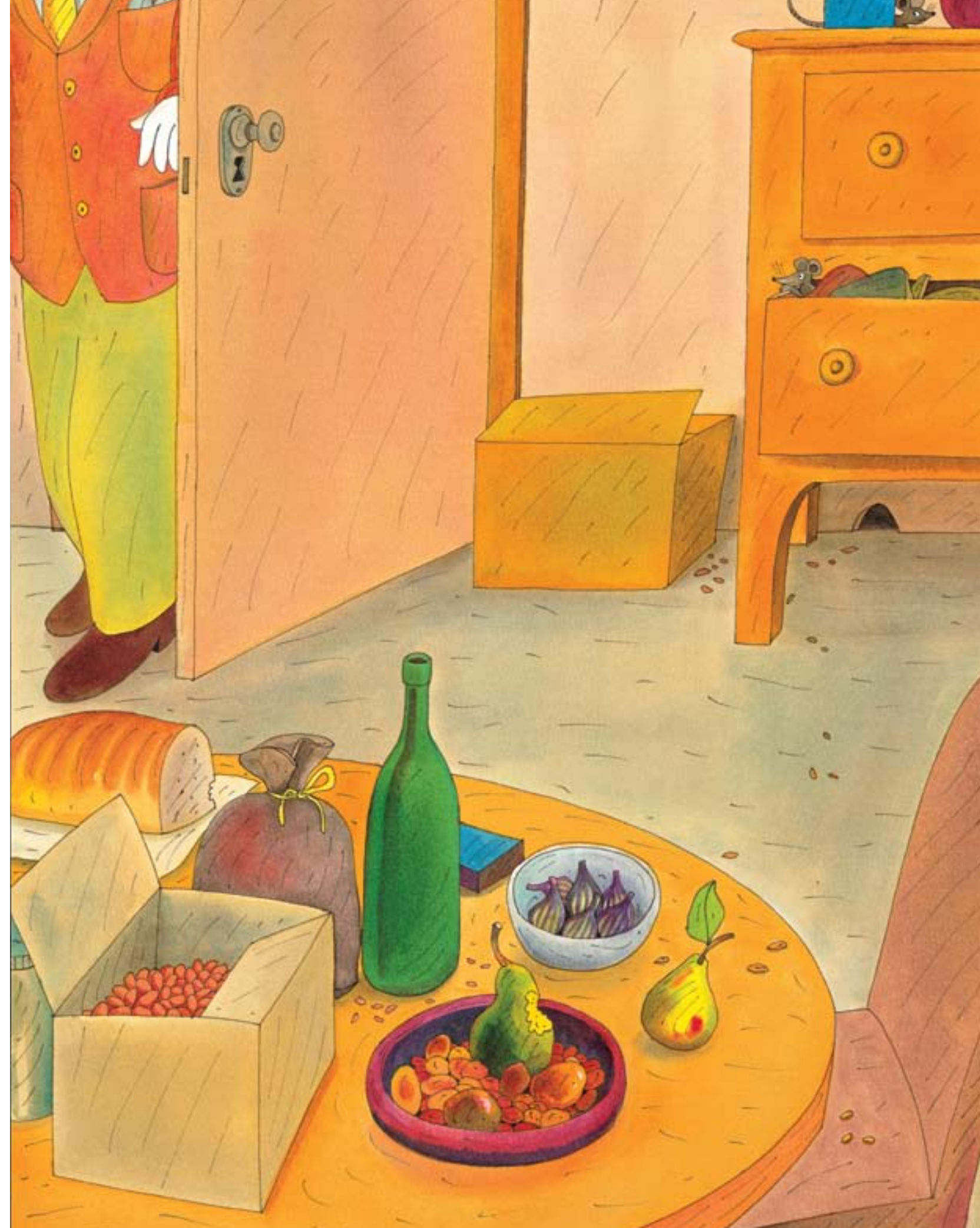
"Now, quickly," said the town mouse, "come and help yourself to some really delicious food," and he darted up the long leg of a very high table. The country mouse scrambled up after him, and his eyes nearly popped out when he saw the feast laid out. There was a huge cheese, a bowl of rare nuts, shiny apples and figs, a fine freshly baked loaf and much, much more besides.

The country mouse didn't know where to start, and had just nibbled a small piece of the cheese, when the door to the room opened with a bang. The town mouse slipped down the table leg in a flash and scuttled into the dusty passage, almost before the country mouse had time to register what had happened.

"Scat, you filthy vermin!" and a huge human hand came looming down over the country mouse. With a squeak of terror, he hurtled down the table leg and flung himself after the town mouse.

His heart pounding, the country mouse said to his friend, "I am sorry, but I think for all the riches available in the town, I would rather have my simple, but very safe, way of life," and, murmuring his thanks, he scuttled back to his simple little home as fast as his legs could take him.

A SIMPLE BUT SAFE LIFE IS BETTER THAN A RICH BUT DANGEROUS ONE.



The Cat and the Mice



A sneaky old cat heard that a certain house was quite overrun with mice, so she hied herself off there as fast as her paws would take her. There were indeed plenty of mice and the cat caught and ate them one by one. But the mice were not so silly and soon realised that they needed to put themselves out of harm's way from the sneaky cat. So all those remaining hid in the holes behind the skirting board and would not come out. The cat thought awhile and decided to play a trick on the mice. She clambered up the wall and hung herself from a peg, and kept very, very still, trying to pretend that she was dead.

But one of the mice peeped out of a hole and said, "We mice are not so silly, Cat. We know you are still alive, so we will just stay where we are for a while longer, until you get tired of hanging off that peg." And the cat did not catch another mouse in that house.

IF YOU ARE WISE, YOU WILL NOT BE FOOLED BY SOMEONE WHO HAS ONCE BEEN DANGEROUS TO YOU.

