

The Rodent Reader

A Magazine of AristocRATS, Artists o'
RATS and Insane RAT Love

Quarterly

A Season of
Simple
Pleasures

2nd – 4th Qtr. 2019

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From the Editor's Nest

Oh! Oh!

Hello, readers! If you're wondering why I can't stop exclaiming "Oh!" it's because I'm so overwhelmed with delight that you're finally going to see all the wonderful tails snuggled into this issue. And, though I know one's supposed to build suspense and wait as long as possible to share the biggest news, that's as hard as waiting until bedtime to eat a favorite treat Mom prepared way back at breakfast.

And, oh boy, do I have some *delicious* treats for you!

Longtime readers will remember an article from 2016 about planetary physicist, film and television consultant, writer — and what some might call "insane" rat lover, Kevin Grazier. If so, you also know that Kevin (or Dr. Kebin, as the successors of Marty Mouse the Rat call him) has long counted many wild rats (of both the *Rattus rattus* and *Rattus norvegicus* species) among his mischief. And, thank goodness for that! Not only does the story he's begun sharing on p. 16 involve an "incredible" wild gal, the twists, turns, challenges and complications that ensue are surely not for amateurs — or the faint of heart. And, just when you think you know what's going to happen next — or where things might end up... think again! Oh!

As much as I'd like to keep talking about that, I'll do my best to smooth my whiskers, calm my swishing tail, and leave it all for you to discover on your own — adding only my thanks to Dr. Kebin for putting this wonderful (and wholly true) story to pen for the readers of *TRRQ*.

Also tail-swish inspiring is the work of this issue's featured artist, Dean Griffiths, who you'll meet on pp.8-10. Not only is he a dizzyingly talented illustrator, he's also a really nice human — one who responded to Mom's initial email with blush-inducing compliments on the magazine. More than that, though, he said, "I have always loved rodents of all kinds and they are possibly my favourite animals to sketch." Now that's definitely someone whose work deserves to be covered in this magazine. (No, he didn't spell "favorite" wrong, by the way. Dean is from Canada, so he uses the English spellings of that country rather than those common to America. Either way, as you'll see from the samples of his work scattered throughout the article, he doesn't need words — of any spelling or any kind — to convey exactly what he means to say.)

Oh my... I'm already running out of space, and I've barely even crept across a fraction of all this issue includes. There's also a new chapter in *The Return of Row and Rifflerat*, more groundhog grumbings in Clara's Corner, a crafty installment of The Rat Lady: Rewind column — which features projects perfect for the holiday season — plus more gorgeous holiday photos courtesy of the immensely talented Kim Zier (with an accompanying poem), and two book reviews... one of which is about a book by Tor Seidler! Talk about exciting! And, to help keep you on schedule for 2020 (like I can't for the life of me seem to help Mom achieve), there's also a mini 2020 calendar.

But, enough from me... except, of course, to wish you a very Merry Christmas — and happy reading!

Keela



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The Rat Fan Club

A Note From The

Managing Editor

Hello, everyone — and wel-
come to the holiday season. Wel-
come, as well, to this brand new edi-
tion of *TRRQ*, which I have to say,
has me as tempted to start exclaim-
ing, “Oh!” as Keela’s already
(repeatedly) done. With that in
mind, I just want to extend sincerest
thanks to those who’ve helped in
making it such an exciting read —
not to mention something of a mini
art gallery in printed form. On that note, Keela and I are both
thrilled to continue what’s become a favorite *TRRQ* tradition by
once more featuring fun and festive captures of photographer
extraordinaire, Kim Zier. And, we both very much want to thank
her for so generously sharing her work with our readers.

Thanks as well to Dean Griffiths, who patiently answered my
many questions about his beautifully detailed illustrations — and
to Nancy Rose for introducing me to the book that in turn intro-
duced me to his inspirational life and amazing art.

While on the subject of amazing art, I also want to thank Tor
Seidler for sending us the wonderful surprise of his latest book
— and for the great service he’s afforded rats (and in this case,
red squirrels, too!) by building on his library of rat classics
through creation of such lovable and relatable new rodent char-
acters.

Thanks likewise once more go to Larry Ducommun, for al-
lowing us to continue sharing the fruits of Debbie the Rat Lady’s
labor, through reprints of her perennially relevant writings. Truly
this is a privilege I don’t take lightly, and one that provides just
one more example of how her legacy of rat love, in all its forms,
lives on.

Speaking of rat love in all its forms, thanks are also in order
to Kevin Grazier, both for sharing the true-life (and wonderfully
entertaining) odyssey of a very special wild rat, and for the rat
advocacy in action it (like the rest of his daily life) represents.

Finally, I want to again thank our readers for supporting the
ongoing labor of “insane rat love” that is this magazine — and to
express deepest appreciation to each and every one of you for
your patience with the rather unorthodox release schedule my
other life commitments tend to enforce upon it. As noted in the
past, I will never simply throw an issue together to meet an arbi-
trary deadline, but instead endeavor to make every one the most
positive possible experience for readers, and the greatest help
to the little friends it was created to champion. I hope you’ll find
what follows on these pages to be in keeping with that pledge.

That said, I’ll wrap this up by echoing Keela in wishing you
the very happiest of holidays, and all the best as you enter a
new year. We look forward to sharing it with you!

In the meantime, I’m thrilled to be sharing all this current is-
sue holds — and don’t want to hold you back from embarking on
it with more chit chat from me.

Enjoy the holidays — and I’ll see you in 2020!

Well, what are you waiting for?

Turn the page!



Mil





Clara's

By Clara Simone
Berrigan Scott

Corner



Yes, I know what season it is. And, if you wonder why I'm pointing that out, it's because, in my house, this time of year isn't quite as distinguishable from all the other seasons as it probably is in yours. Of course, you probably don't have younger siblings who see you as the groundhog in the Santa hat in March... and July... just as if it were December. In saying that, I have to clarify that they realize I'm not Santa — as you know from my prior columns, they're well aware that the real big guy in the red suit has a burrow at the North Pole, not in the bedroom closet. And, while none of us is precisely sure quite where that is, there's no confusion about the fact it's pretty far away — which makes the part of it they do seem to have confusion about, well... confusing.

What's most confusing, if you ask me, is that they know Santa lives far, far away, but can still — well, at least one of them in particular — somehow think I've been palling around with him for years. I'm not sure how they (he) think(s) that might have happened — maybe I'm supposedly just sneaking out of the burrow in the dead of night... in the freezing cold... to go on sleigh rides to some nebulous destination that requires flying reindeer to reach. I don't know. Come to think of it, I've never actually met even the kind of reindeer that doesn't fly — unless you count Moses in a reindeer costume. But that's beside the point. How he thinks I know Santa so well is a mystery. But, with Moses fol-

lowing me around (and constantly asking questions — something he started doing as soon as he could talk — hmm... probably even before that. I just didn't know how to interpret his whistles and twitches and squeaks. All that play wrestling with Dad probably wasn't wrestling at all — at least, not of the kind that Maude and I engage in; it was getting all his frustrations out for not being able to talk. Ah, those were the days....) Anyway, as I was saying before Moses interrupted me (just by thinking about him — aaarrgh!), I don't have much time to ponder such mysteries.

Take, for example, a late March day a couple years back — my birthday, in fact. Of course, I've had quite a few of these by now — which means I've become accustomed to Mom's insistence on dressing me up in all kinds of hats and ribbons for pictures to mark the occasion. Sure, I could do without that part of the festivities. But, I have to admit, I still kind of look forward to all the fuss and treats... although, to tell you the truth, I get quite a bit of fuss (maybe a little more than I want sometimes) and treats (which you can't really get too much of) every day. Still, there's just something extra special and fun about that one 24-hour period each year that particularly revolves around me — well, except those few minutes of it that involve the aforementioned hat and ribbons. Ah well, you've got to take the bad with the good, as the saying goes, and most of the time, I have to admit, my life is pretty good, indeed... other than (yes, you guessed it) those unavoidable interruptions from pesky youngsters.

Be that as it may, the birthday I'm talking about here was followed three days later by the first such event for Moses — one he'd been (for me, blissfully) unaware of to this point.. Not surprisingly, he latched onto the news by taking the entire celebration thing to a whole





member in the form of another squirrel (a grey one). Unfortunately

for him, he had no idea where his friendly efforts to get to know his groundhog brother might lead... such as getting to know him a little bit too well. A few days ago, while I was off trying (operative word) to help Mom with her gift wrapping — “wait, not the bubble wrap, Mom!” — Kevin (the squirrel) was left alone with Moses... and his million questions. When, from the next room, I

heard “Hey Kevin!” I couldn’t resist going to the doorway to have a quick peek. You can see for yourself how Kevin



reacted. I chuckled to his rapidly retreating backside, “Welcome to the family.”

Ah well, as I’ve said a million times, despite his questions, I love Moses — and I’ve gotta say, even though he’s not a groundhog, I really love Kevin, too — though I’m not sure he reciprocates... especially since right about now he’s waiting for his own Christmas miracle. I’ll let you know later how that goes.

For me, though — at last — this really is the season of joy... and peace. A miracle, indeed.

(Sorry, Kevin.)



new level... preceded by about a million questions that started when he saw Mom putting the hat and ribbons on me.

“Why are you wearing a dunce cap, Mommy Clara? Were you bad?”

“It’s not a dunce cap. It’s a birthday hat.

“What’s a birthday?”

“It’s a celebration of the day somebody was born.”

“Do you get presents?”

“Maybe.”

“So today’s your birthday?”

“Yes, it is.”

“When’s mine?”

“Soon.”

“How soon? I want presents.”

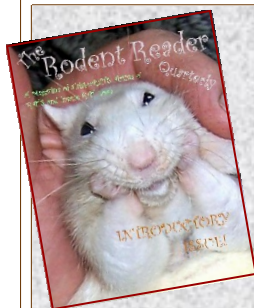
“I think you still have some left from Christmas.”

“I want *new* presents. When are they coming?”

“When Mom puts the dunce cap on you.”

Having hit the rare jackpot of catching him off guard with that, I hastily made my exit, trotting off to find a quiet place I might enjoy my birthday dinner in peace.

Alas, if you’ve guessed this was short-lived, you’re not wrong. But, fast-forward to the Christmas season again, which we all know is a time when truly anything is possible. Well, last year our household got a new



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Lots of cards and gifts for all occasions! Thank you!!!



NO

TRICK





73 1905
ED BY / IMPORT

Trick

or

Treat

Halloween

Artist Profile: Dean Griffiths



by Keela



While there are too many rewarding rat-spects of creating this magazine to herein e-num-uh... eat-num— oh, what's the word... oh yes — enumerATE (I knew it had a food word in it!), one that has particular application to this column is the opportunity it affords me and Mom to learn about (and from) so many wonderfully creative humans — and how discovering one of these often leads to others. The artist profiled on these pages represents just such a trail of artistic crumbs — one which led from the whimsical squirrel photographs of Nancy Rose to the beautifully drawn mice (and rabbits... and hedgehogs...and dogs...) of

Dean Griffiths. Of course, just as most journeys for me involve a little detour (usually for snacks...), so this one did as well. You see, it was after we'd sent Mrs. Rose the issue of the magazine that contained her article (and she'd read it "from cover to cover," she said — adding, "how delightful and so informative"... which made my nose blush to an even pinker shade than it already is), that she sent Mom a message asking, "Have you heard of this author? Her book, *The Stowaways* (a mouse adventure) is marvelous! ...she is a wonderful writer... and is SO creative!" Well, the writer she was referring to was Meghan Merentette, and of course, having been given such a glowing recommendation, Mom and I wasted no time in ordering a copy of *The Stowaways*.



Upon its arrival, we tore open the package, eager to start eating up its words (well, not literally, like my nieces and nephews sometimes do). But, can you believe, we didn't even make it to the first written page before being stopped in our tracks by the adorable creatures who introduced the book... including the whole mouse family shown in this article's heading... and the precious little creature you can see seated at left. While these, of course, heightened curiosity about the story, I have to say they also got us so sidetracked from it that we immediately scamp-ered off to find out more about the artist who'd drawn them. And, when we found a contact form on his website, Mom immediately sent him a message about featuring his work in *TRRQ*.

Also on his website were more samples of his art (including many rodents!), along with a short bio — which told us he didn't have an easy road to success. "Dean struggled in school, it says, "and even failed art in grade ten." That meant, much like a rat, he had to be determined and resourceful to realize his full potential. And, like me and my sisters, he also had a little help from some understand-

ing humans.. One of these was his high school principal, Jerry Brewer, who Dean says, "was always encouraging me with my artwork and treated me as an equal when discussing artwork he was working on. He painted in oils and acrylics and we had many wonderful conversations about art and life." Another was his grandfather, who introduced Dean to the world of comic books during a stay at his (TV and internet free) Saskatchewan farm.

"I've always loved drawing since I was little, but I decided that I wanted to do it for a career when I was 12 years old. I had bought a copy of Iron Man #135 and it was the most remarkable combination of words and pictures that I had ever seen. I remember the exact moment



and panel where Iron Man is fighting with the Titanium Man underneath Rockefeller Center in the subway system of New York city and thinking to myself, "This is what I want to do with my life!" (which was to draw comics, not build a mechanical flying suit and combat Russian supervillains. I do not possess that rare combination of millions of dollars, engineering genius and regular exercise to accomplish that. I still have that comic, though.)

This melding of passions for comics and art proved fortuitous. As recounted in an article by Katherine Gordon (posted on Dean's website), "When an international comic book convention was held in Victoria in 1986, he couldn't resist attending. 'I was too shy to bring a portfolio with me, though,' says Griffiths. 'I just wanted to be there.' Griffiths' father" — a plumber, for whom Dean was working at the time, "had different ideas. Convinced his talented son deserved a chance, Gordon secretly followed him to the convention. He accosted Howard Chakin, a celebrated American comic book creator, and introduced him to the

dumbfounded 18-year-old. Chakin listened to

Griffiths' story ideas and liked them: 'He told me anyone can learn to draw, but expression, feeling and story can't be taught. He said I had all three down pat.'

While one could take that merely as kind encouragement, anyone whose seen Dean's work knows otherwise. In fact, it's his deftness in so beautifully capturing character that immediately impressed us as well, prompting Mom's comment and question to him, "Your animal characters are crafted with awe-inspiring exactitude, but it's how expressive you make each one that really brings them to life. The faces of little Rory Stowaway and Wally during the latter's haircut (pictured at left) are just one example. How do you approach so accurately capturing --and depicting -- the natures and emotions of these individuals?"

"I've always enjoyed drawing animals, especially rodents," he replied, "and I think the most important thing is to simply study the animals. I've spent countless hours poring over photographs from every conceivable angle and watched lots of video of them to see how they move, and drawn hundreds of pages of character studies. Once I have the scene in my head, I may take sev-

eral attempts at portraying the character in the position I want. I like the challenge of finding that balance between realism and giving enough 'human' characteristics to involve the emotions and actions needed."

Having spent his teen years developing his drawing techniques, Dean went on to approach the broader skills required for illustrating children's books with the same level of dedication and perseverance. Of course, as an early twenty-something when his interest in the genre budded, it's probably not surprising its appeal was first sparked by hearing "about the good money professional illustrators could make... I got very excited," he says." But, it was his genuine passion for art — and determination to master a new avenue of it, that quickly turned pursuit of illustration from a mercenary dream to an artistic goal. "I went to the library and started looking at kids' books and got really enthused," Dean says. "They were so beautiful: I loved the idea of doing them."

As a result, he spent the next year learning how to paint with watercolors, and continued further honing his talents. Gradually, he amassed a portfolio, including twelve pictures he "dropped off at Orca Book Publishers... on

cont'd on p.10





a Friday. On the following Monday," Dean recalls, "they phoned me up asking if I'd like to work on a book. I said 'YEAH!'"

Since that time, Dean's gone on to illustrate nearly thirty books, including the *Bad Pirate* series (the canine heroine from which is shown at left), for which he made the "dive into digital coloring... A few years before," Dean says, "I bought a Wacom Cintiq tablet, computer and Photoshop software, and with the aid of a good friend of mine, and my art director, I learned on the job. The process is simple, I still draw on paper, and then I scan those drawings at a high resolution and place them into a 'canvas' in Photoshop," which "has all sorts of brushes so that you can make your painting look like chunky pastel, thick, rich oils, or even light, fluid watercolour. The possibilities are endless!"

While it's clear Dean's referring to the technical possibilities Photoshop affords, it's even clearer that his seemingly limitless imagination and level of enthusiasm are, in fact, the most powerful tools at his command — as further exemplified by his ability to visually

breathe life into even common office supplies for Ann Ingalls' pun-filled *Pencil: A Story With a Point*. In addition, the details he gives the worlds in which his characters live help readers more deeply understand each's feelings and experiences by fully immersing themselves into such varied environments as a junk drawer, a ship on the high seas, and the open nighttime sky surrounding a young rabbit's campfire.



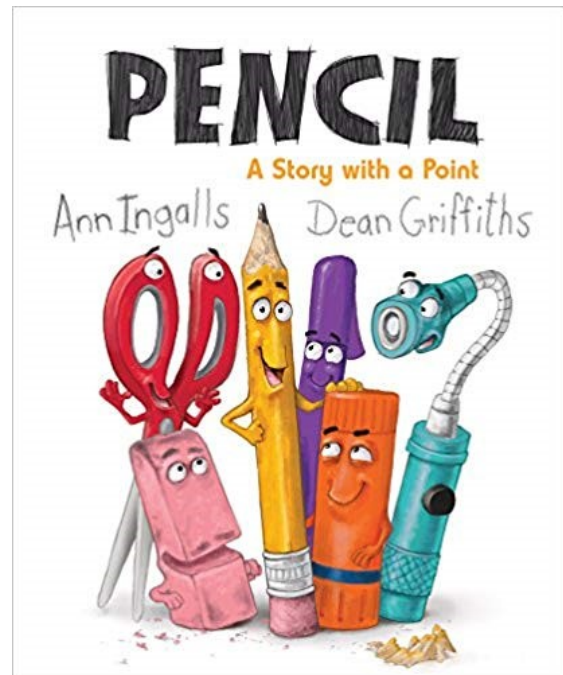
"My problem is that I love absolutely everything," Dean humorously laments, "so I have a difficult time deciding what I love most. I do love doing the landscapes along with the characters... I wish I didn't love everything so much."

As a rat who loves too many kinds of food to know which snack to choose on trips to the kitchen, I can relate! But, that's a separate issue. Another thing Dean says he loves too many of is other artists and art styles. When Mom asked him about influences on his work, he

said, "Sooooooooo many! I think the earliest influence and most lasting has been Albert Uderzo, who is the illustrator of the Asterix series. I like the classic illustrators like Rockwell and Cornwell. I love manga, too, although much of it is stylized beyond recognition... A few years ago I discovered Alex Toth. His drawing, especially his character drawing, is so pure and beautiful. I think that guy's a genius. For landscape scenes, I came across Grant Wood, and you can see the influence he must have had on Disney in the forties... You have to check out the work of Marvin Cone (on the net if not in person). His 'July Clouds' blows away any cloud N.C. Wyeth ever did, and his 'River Bend No.5' is one of the most exquisite landscapes I've ever seen."

Whew! That's definitely someone who loves a *lot* of things!!! But, I have to say, I think in Dean's case, that's a good problem to have — for the sake of everyone who gets to enjoy his work. It's also a good problem for animals of all species, which his wonderfully endearing illustrations make plain are another of Dean's myriad loves. "Yes, I've always been an animal lover!" Dean declares. "I grew up with guinea pigs, rabbits and a big Newfoundland dog" (named Samantha — who largely inspired the "big, slobbery dog" in *Pencil*.) "I have had mice and cats as well."

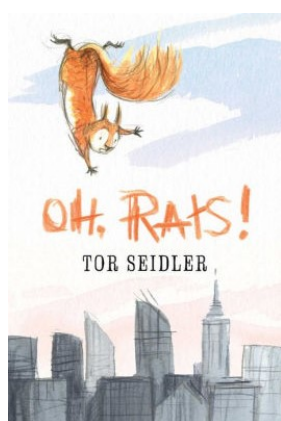
But, Dean has one more "absolute love" — his daughter, Holly, who is the focus of the aforementioned article by Katherine Gordon. I greatly encourage you to read that (on the Press page of his website, www.deans-art.com) to learn more about her, and about Dean. In the meantime, I'm running out of space to tell you any more myself, so will wrap this up here... and just in time. I think I smell a fresh loaf of cranberry bread coming out of the oven. Yum!



Keela's Reviews

A look at books, movies (and most anything else she feels like ranting about) from a rat's viewpoint. Will she give them her stamp of approval -- or stomp them out? Read on and see!

(for more of Keela's Reviews, visit her web page -
<http://artistinsane.com/mils-menagerie/keelas-reviews>)



Oh, Rats!

by Tor Seidler

One day in late August, I was napping in my nest — and in the midst of a beautiful dream about having been accidentally locked in the back room of a New York City bakery. It was the middle of the night, and there were no humans in the building. But, since they would be making all new pastries the next morning, someone had left a whole rack of donuts and cookies, and every other delight one could imagine, right on the back counter. I was happily gnawing the corner from a slice of millefoglie, wondering how I might sneak out a few extra bits to take home to my nest, when I was rudely awakened by a squeal from Mom. I groggily flipped over, and scampered out to learn Dad had just come back from the post office down the street (the one where my predecessor, Molly, was discovered). In checking my mailbox there, he had found a package... and not just any package, but a big yellow envelope containing a brand new book by Tor Seidler. No wonder Mom was squealing!

If you've been a reader of *TRRQ* for a long time, you probably recall that (way before I was even born), Mr. Seidler wrote a book called *A Rat's Tale*...and a sequel to it called *The Revenge of Randal Reese-Rat*. Because these quickly became favo-rats in my library, when Mom and I founded this magazine, she helped me immediately send Mr. Seidler a letter about how much I love his books, and discussing his becoming a featured artist in one of the first year's issues. While most humans might not write back to a rat, Mr. Seidler is a very special human with great respect for my species, and as soon as the message reached him (having been sent to an address for his publisher I discovered on the internet), he wrote back right away.

Needless to say, it's always a good day when I discover a new Tor Seidler book, and to have him not only write one about rats after so many years, but to make the book's protagonist a red squirrel — just like my adopted brother/neighbor, Bluster — well, this was just too much joy to handle in one morning!

Unfortunately, I had a hard time getting the book away from Mom (who I really thought should have to wait to read it second, since I *am* both the magazine's Editor-in-Chef — I mean, *Chief*... as well as its resident book reviewer), but when I finally did, I carefully dragged it (along with a small basket of blueberries) back to my nest, and settled in. And, was I ever in for an adventure!

The book begins in New Jersey (where I live!), in the Pinelands section, which is home to a great number of red squirrels. Rats live there, too, but young Phoenix, who has recently moved into his own tree (not far from that of his parents), has never seen one. And, according to his dad, Rupert, he doesn't want to. When at last he does, he finds it "nasty," and most nasty of all, its "naked worm-tail." Of course, he only *saw* this rat; he didn't meet or speak with him. So, like most humans, he merely drew conclusions. But, no matter. He was a squirrel, as were his siblings and all of his friends. And, in his young squirrel (lack of) wisdom, he assumed that would always be the case.

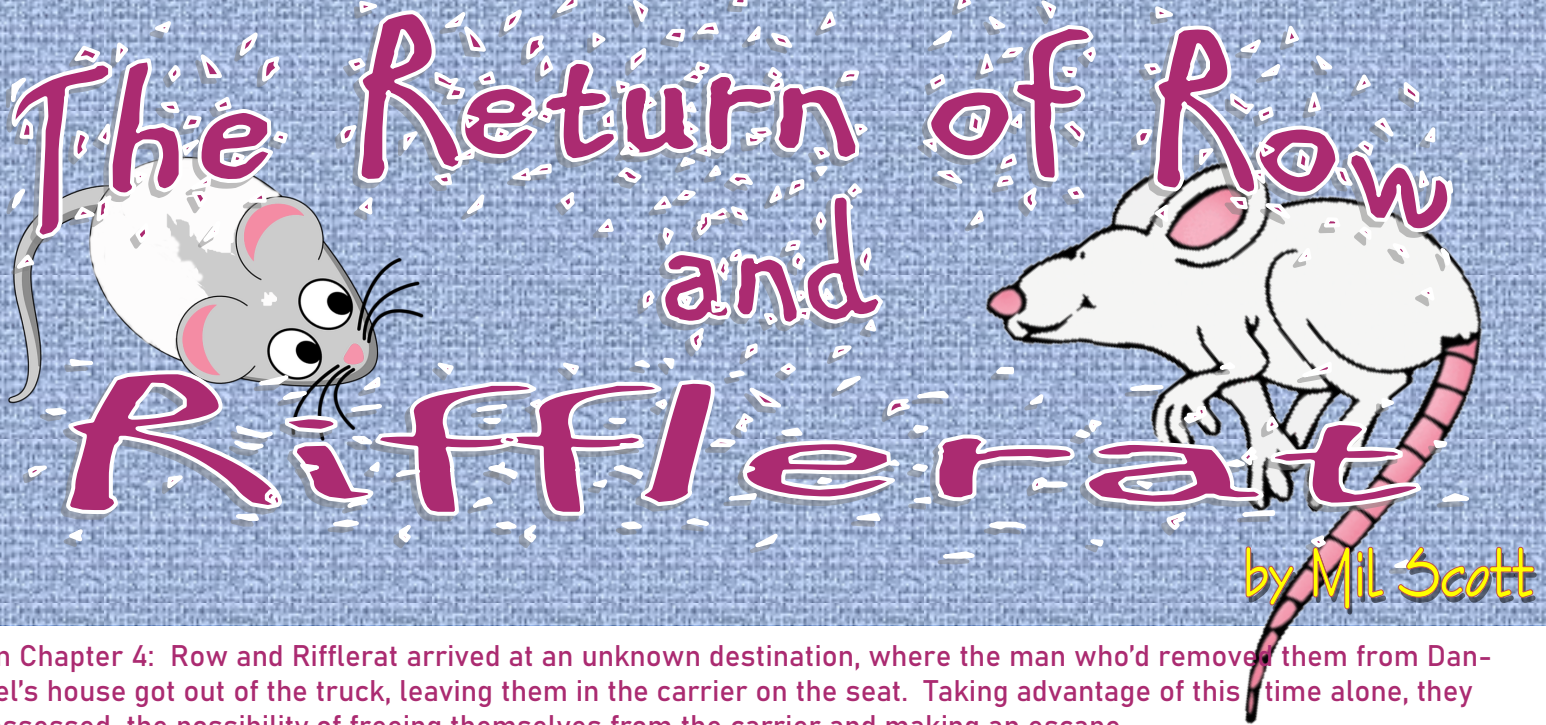
Of course, as a handsome young squirrel — one who has the most magnificent tail in his family, if not the whole forest, Phoenix soon begins to notice a certain young lady squirrel, which leads to behavior that's more careless, and at times even reckless, than he's been warned against by Rupert. And, sure enough, this leads to trouble, in the form a hawk who sweeps Phoenix up to join his family for dinner — and not as a guest. But, when the hawk gets into trouble himself, he drops Phoenix... onto a freshly tarred Manhattan sidewalk. Having escaped death, but more than a little the worse for wear, Phoenix is rescued by Lucy and Beckett, a sibling pair of wharf rats. With all the hair from his once magnificent tail stripped away by the hot tar, they mistake him for a rat as well, and take him to their apartment to recover from his ordeal. At first, he thinks he couldn't possibly have ended up in a less desirable place. But, once he gets to know Lucy, Beckett, and their pals, and becomes aware of a threat that could pluck them all from their happy home, he finds he has more than a naked tail in common with these once dreaded beings.

With wonderfully reminiscent touches from his prior works, plus a host of new friends, Mr. Seidler has again created a charming tale for rat lovers — even those who might not yet know they fit this description. I must confess, however, that I was hoping for a different ending — a hope seemingly dashed early in the story. But, as things begin to wrap up, it becomes clear nothing is inevitable... which leads me to a whole new hope — that a sequel might be in the works! Are you listening, Mr. Seidler???

Keela

The Return of Row and Rifflerat

by Mil Scott



In Chapter 4: Row and Rifflerat arrived at an unknown destination, where the man who'd removed them from Daniel's house got out of the truck, leaving them in the carrier on the seat. Taking advantage of this time alone, they assessed the possibility of freeing themselves from the carrier and making an escape.

Elsewhere, Daniel tried in vain to reach Stef and obtain news from back home, and Stef returned (in a driving rainstorm) to have another look for Row and Riff outside Daniel's house. When she arrived, Daniel's grandmother was struggling to get the garbage can to the curb before all its contents were lost to the wind, which resulted in Stef finding many pieces of trash during her search, but no signs of the boys. About to leave, she stuffed the bits of trash she'd recovered into the garbage can, which led to the discovery of a receipt indicating the boys had been picked up on Grandma's orders by a pet shop several towns away.

Chapter 5

Stef closed the car door tightly, and started a phone search for the pet store on the receipt, impatiently brushing away the droplets that fell steadily onto the screen from her rain soaked hair. Grabbing a towel from the back seat, she dried the phone and dabbed absently at her wet locks while scrolling through entries, and immediately pressed the call icon upon finding the one she sought. Fervently hoping to reach someone who might tell her the boys were safe and sound, she was greeted instead by only a persistent busy signal. Realizing the storm must have knocked out the store's service, she let out a sigh and hung up. Settling in for a long ride, she then tossed the phone onto the passenger seat and backed out of the driveway, headed in what she fervently hoped was the direction that would lead Rowan and Rifflerat back home.

Daniel had his phone out of his pocket before hitting the exit door when his orientation meeting ended, and was surprised to hear Stef answer on the first ring.

"Hey, sorry, I can't talk... I'm driving. I picked up 'cause a stoplight just turned red."

"I've been trying to reach you since last night. Is everything all right?"

"Oh – yeah! Of course! Two people called out of work yesterday, and this crazy storm's been making a mess today. Just stupid stuff. Everything's fine."

"And Row and Riff are okay?"

"Why wouldn't they be? I'm on my way to see them right now. Look, the light's turning. I've gotta go."

"Wait –"

"I'll call you later. Promise."

Stef dropped the phone and swallowed the lump of guilt in her throat at having lied to Daniel. Well, she hadn't exactly lied, but neither had she been exactly truthful. But, if things went as she hoped, it wouldn't matter. The boys would be back safe in their rat manse in an hour or two, and Daniel would never have to know they hadn't been there the whole time. Of course, she'd have to think up an excuse for moving them to her house. She wasn't about to take any chances of Grandma finding some new (and maybe even worse) way of making them disappear again.

The sky had lightened and the sun was beginning to peek through the clouds when Stef's GPS at last intoned,

"In 500 ft., turn right," and moments later, "You have arrived." Rummaging in the back seat for her spare sweatshirt, she peeled off her still sopping wet one and pulled her hair into a knot before emerging from the car. Probably best to not look like an asylum escapee when asking to be believed that Row and Riff's real owner hadn't given them up and was now requesting their return – and explaining that she wasn't their real owner, either, but this was what he wanted (although he didn't know anything about it). Oh yeah, not *looking* like a crazy person was going to be what made this all sound completely sane. No matter. She *had* to be believed. She had to get them back.



Receipt in hand, she headed for the door, uncertain at first if the store might be closed, as only a few dim lights illuminated the displays. A backup generator, she surmised, to keep the heaters working in the fish tanks – and, thankfully, keep the store open. Noting the service counter in back, Stef made her way toward this, peering into the glass-fronted pens along the way, fervently hoping to spot the boys. Seeing only a handful of white mice, three guinea pigs and two hamsters, she at last reached the back of the store, where a girl of about her age was replenishing bags of cat treats on a display next to the register.

"Hi. I'm looking for these two rats." Stef said, holding up her phone to show a photo of Rowan and Rifflerat. Before the girl could speak, Stef handed her the receipt, and launched into the tale of their abduction. Apparently, she sounded more convincing than she'd expected, as the girl seemed genuinely sympathetic to the situation.

"My best friend in middle school had pet rats. They were awesome. But, our teacher always gave her a hard time about them – even though she never met them." She rolled her eyes. "People are bizarre."

Peering again at the rain-splotched paper, she said, "That's really weird. I wasn't working yesterday – I'm only here part-time.... but, there weren't any rats in the back room when I came in this morning."

"They sold that fast?" Stef asked, barely able to hear her voice above her heart's pounding in her ears.

"Oh – no, no!" the girl hastily replied, gesturing toward a door behind her, through which a man in blue coveralls could be seen unloading a pallet of dog food. "Any new animals brought into the store are quarantined in back. There's no way they could have left the building once they were brought in."

"I don't understand. The receipt--"

"I know." The girl shook her head. "It doesn't make sense." Handing the paper back to Stef, she added, "I'm really sorry. The only thing I can tell you is to try calling the manager. She's supposed to be in tomorrow. We don't open until 10, but she's usually here by 9 or so."

Squelching an urge to barge past the girl and start searching the back room, Stef absently stuffed her phone and the receipt into a pocket and looked at the floor, unwilling to give up, but faced with little choice but to leave the store.

"Good luck!" the girl called after her, returning her attention to the cat treat display as Stef made her way toward the front door. Although she headed in the direction of her car, once out of sight from the store's entrance windows, she made a quick detour to the small, tree and brush bordered yard on one side of the building. From here she could see a short driveway behind it, leading to the unloading area where she'd seen the coverall-clad man in the back room. Staying close along the building, she quickly perused the area, not entirely certain what had inspired her to this action – or what clues she hoped to find. Reaching the back, she ventured a quick glance around the corner, noting a couple broken pallets, some rusty shelving and a small pet carrier, its door hanging askew – all items apparently waiting to be transferred to the dumpster at the far edge of the property, partially visible beyond a box truck parked in the driveway. Noticing the man emerge from the building carrying the pallet from the dog food she'd seen inside, Stef ducked once more against the side of the building, and made a beeline back to her car, which she quickly started and drove out of the parking lot, then settled in for a long and far from satisfying ride home.

"Is that Grandma?" Daniel asked, upon returning from his orientation meeting to see his mom standing in the hallway outside his dorm room, phone in hand.

"Yes," she answered. "She said there were terrible storms at home this morning... trees down... power outages..."

"Can you tell her to let Steph know I left new blueberries in the fridge for Row and Riff yesterday. She'll probably be there any minute. I just hung up from talking to her and forgot to mention it."

Daniel's mom made a face of dramatic disapproval, but nodded briefly as Daniel brushed by her and disappeared into the room.

"I'm supposed to tell you to make sure Steph gets the blueberries Daniel left for those creatures he calls pets," she said. "He said she's on her way over."

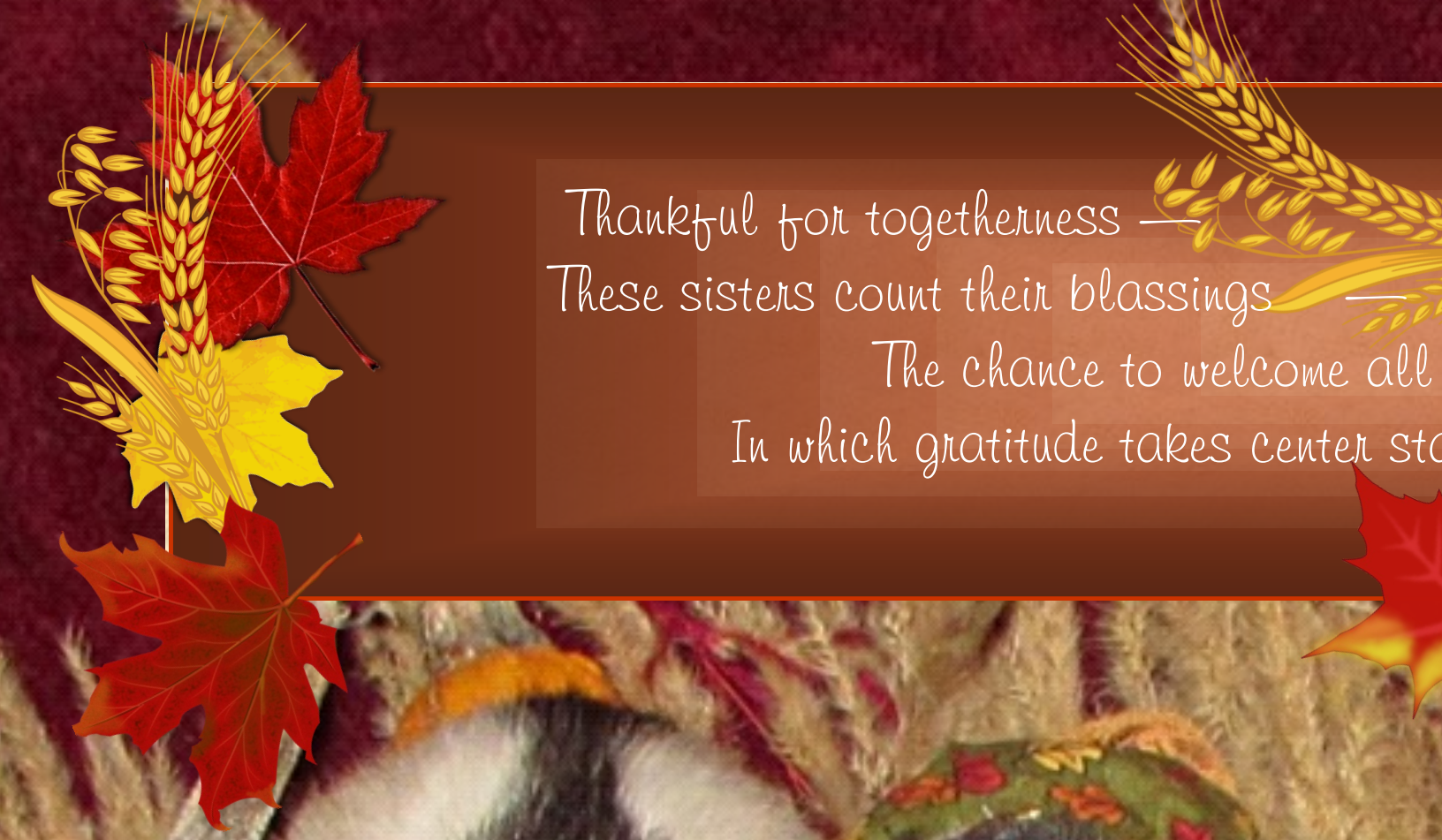
There was a pause as she listened to Grandma's reply. Her brows furrowed.

"Stef just left? I thought she hadn't even got there yet." Another pause.

"Oh good grief... just *please* tell me they're not loose in the house..."



Watch for the story to continue in the next issue!



Thankful for togetherness —
These sisters count their blessings —
The chance to welcome all
In which gratitude takes center stage



and thankful for their feast
including... and not least
to their happy celebration,
age — to a standing ovation!

Happy
Thanksgiving



The Incredible Sadie

Part 1

by Kevin R. Grazier

“She’s gone. I have to accept that.” Several days had passed, and Sadie hadn’t taken the food or water I’d left her in any of her usual spots, nor had she moved the towel that blocked her preferred entry to my basement. Even as I reminded Sadie’s social media admirers that she’s a wild rat, that I live at the edge of a forest with no shortage of hungry predators, and that two years is really very old for a wild rat, I was having a hard time accepting my own words that The Incredible Sadie was gone. I dumped her food and water, used foam gap filler to seal the entry holes she had gnawed to my basement, caved in her tunnel network, and planted a tiny American flag in memoriam. The experience was fun while it lasted, and I felt grateful to the Universe that it happened to me.

Seventeen months earlier...

I lived in the San Fernando Valley town of Sylmar, just north of Los Angeles, and had accepted an exciting 13-month position teaching an introductory computer class at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York. I had wanted to teach at one of the service academies at some point in my life, even before I went back to grad school. What it meant, though, was renting out my home in LA, and packing up clothes and belongings as well as 36 rats (an assortment of both brown and black rats), a parrot, a cockatiel, and four turtles, and setting off on a cross-country trek to Norman Rockwellesque Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York. There, I rented a small house on the flank of Storm King Mountain.

The month following my arrival was extremely demanding, and filled with military paperwork and government bureaucracy, as well as new instructor orientation. After leaving the Point each day, I’d go home to my second full-time job of setting up a new life: unpacking, sorting, and moving the verms out of their travel cages, and into their familiar old cages, all of which were transported to the basement—something that’s a rarity in seismically-active Los Angeles.

I felt fortunate for having the extra space

of a basement, and thought that, being built into a mountain, the thermal inertial of the surrounding rock would help keep my critters cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Being built into a mountain, though, meant the layout was both odd and more than a little creepy. There were two levels, so about half of the basement was more like a five-foot-high paved crawlspace, while the rest had the more standard eight-foot ceiling. There was a two-foot high wall that seemed to serve no purpose—running parallel to the front wall. The foot-wide gap between the front wall

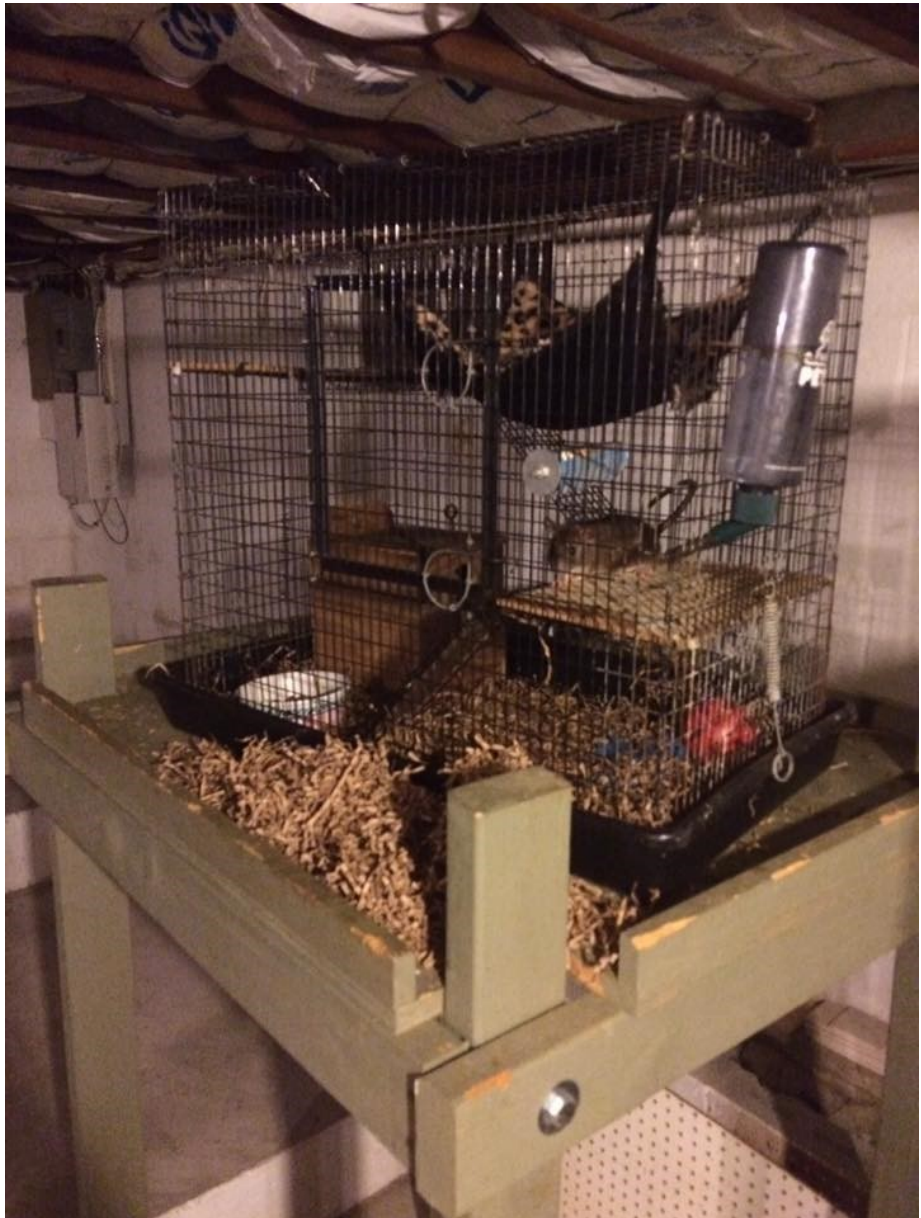


Photo above: Anubis and Sadie’s handiwork

and mini wall, was filled with dirt. The basement had a rear entry to a set of cement stairs, at the top of which was a heavy, inch-thick oak door that laid flat and opened vertically, reminiscent of something out of *Wizard of Oz*. Like most basements, there were hopper windows where the cinder block walls met the floor joists.

The day after I moved in, I discovered that the basement had a stealth bathroom that had gone unrecognized by years of renters and, according to my landlord, had not been opened for a decade. It smelled like it. Although the rest of the outer basement wall was unaltered cinder block grey, the bathroom interior was painted a disconcerting combination of pink and yellow. It had a curtainless shower stall, and the shower itself was a pipe with no showerhead. There was a storage shelf fashioned from an old door, and a toilet whose bolts had long since corroded, leaving it fastened to the concrete floor by the drain-pipe and gravity alone. Undisturbed for so long, the room also had its own ecosystem: with cave crickets, house centipedes, and half-dollar-sized spiders.

July became August became September. I was, more or less, moved into my new home. The plebes—first-year cadets—who overcame the challenges of their first summer training had begun their first term at West Point, and my rodents even got into the act of helping me teach—on occasion, I would bring a couple to evening review sessions, which I called The Rat Patrol.

At home, we had reached the point of stability. In the main part of the basement, the larger rat cages sat atop wooden platforms I had built, while smaller cages were stacked two-high on wooden racks. We had settled into a nice routine of feeding, play, cage cleanings, and a life that was as close as I could make it to the one they were used to back home in SoCal.

One hectic morning, I spilled a small bit of food while topping off bowls, but since I was running late, and you are not late at West Point, I figured I'd clean it up either at lunch or in the evening. By the time I revisited the spill, it was gone. "OK, I must have cleaned it up and forgot," I thought. Other oddities started to crop up in the basement, like towels and fabric strips used for rat beds that were pulled out through the ventilation holes of hampers. Returning from work the afternoon of Sep. 19th, something had pulled a huge pile of shredded paper bedding out of the cage of a small black rat named Anubis (who went on to become a social media star himself) and had fashioned a nest. Anubis was small, even for a black rat, was fairly timid, and was probably the easiest target in the basement. I posted the picture to Facebook with the speculation that I had a visitor.

Confirmation came two days later, when I descended the stairs into the basement, snapped on the lights, and a rodent zoomed across the basement floor. Although I did not get a stationary view of the



animal, I saw enough to know it was a female. She disappeared next to the door that led to the *Wizard of Oz* stairs and, upon inspection, there was an impressive hole that had been gnawed in the door jamb, one that I swear was not there when I moved into the place. She really wanted to hang out with my rats. The clues had been there, but I finally had eyewitness proof, that a rat was in my house, hanging out with my rodents, grabbing snacks from what was spilled, and stealing bedding if she could.

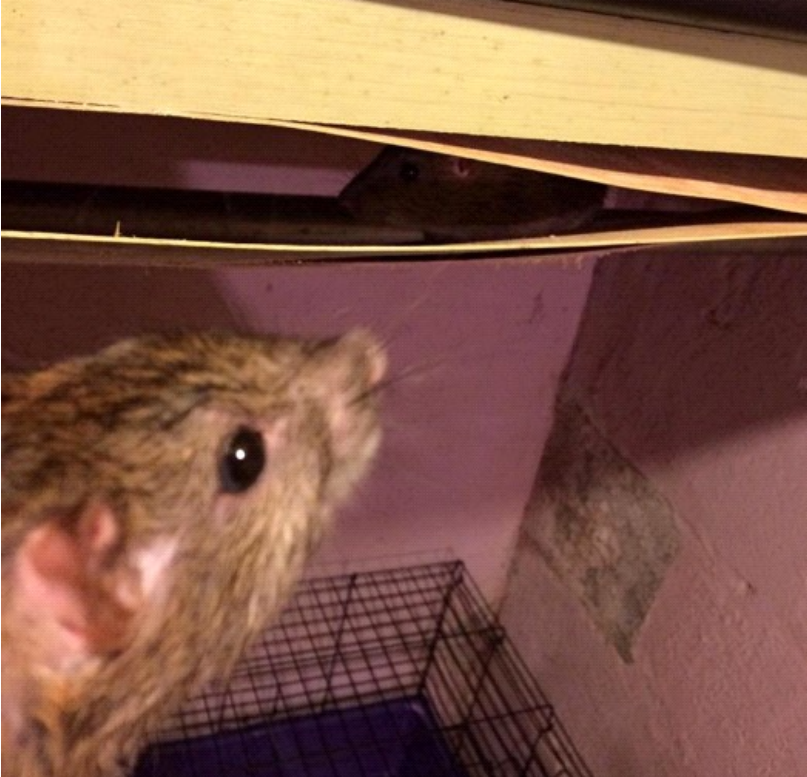
I saw her a few times over the next few days, always hanging out near the boy cages. When I posted this to social media, a friend suggested the name "Sadie" for Sadie Hawkins—assuming, that is, I was seeing just one rat. I started leaving Sadie food, in part to gauge how many rats were in my house, and I came to the realization that Sadie was alone. Since rats typically live in large colonies, I figured that there was a story there, and it was probably a sad one.

Some of the rodent armada that came with me from LA were elderly and had already left me in the two months after we'd moved to New York. Sadie had demonstrated her impressive gnawing ability; since I didn't want to give my landlord any reason to call the exterminator, and since I had spare cages, I decided that I would try to catch her to incorporate her into my rodent army.

I left bricks next to Sadie's bolt hole, in such a way that they could be moved to block the hole quickly. The next time I caught her with my rats, she ducked under the washing machine—giving me time to move the bricks. I was hoping to route her into the creepy bathroom, where she would be trapped. I flushed her, she bolted for her hole, saw that it was blocked, and without breaking stride, ran straight up the cinder block wall, into the floor joists. I would have believed that a black rat could perform the stunt, but not a brown rat.

It was Saturday, October 1st when I saw her again, bricks already in position, and this time when she bolted for the door, I got there first. She saw me, changed course, and ran straight into the bathroom. I ran in, closed the door, and flipped on the lights. I had her!

cont'd on p.18



jumped on my hand, ran down to my shoulder... and stopped.

I slowly lowered myself onto the dynamically unstable toilet. Now, I have no doubt that we were both nervous, but I think Sadie quickly came to the conclusion that I was more nervous than she was. As I sat there thinking, “Pleasedon’tbitemyearohpleasedon’t bitemyearOhgodopleasedon’t bitemyear,” she started grooming herself. “Who would believe this?” I thought, “I’m being trolled by a wild rat.”

I brought my phone up for a selfie. Sadie was having no part of that, and bolted again, straight into an open cage. If she was going to be a pet, this is not the cage I would have chosen—the bar spacing was too wide for a small rat like her—but I would deal with that detail later. The important thing was to get her bedding, an igloo in which to live, and some food. I collected these things as quickly as I could, then tried to slip back into the bathroom. In the intervening time, Sadie had squeezed between the bars of the cage, and was waiting by the door. The instant I cracked it open, she dashed out of the bathroom, and for her bolt hole.

I had, clearly, jostled the bricks blocking her exit earlier when I ran into the bathroom to capture her, because there was now a gap that she fit through easily to her freedom. I had her, and I let her go. Though I had a unique interaction with a wild animal, I kicked myself the rest of the evening, convinced that my opportunity to bring her into my rodent fold was similarly unique, and I had blown it.

Sadie frantically ran around the bathroom which, by this time, was a store room for spare cages. She climbed up the cages, then slipped between the lamination layers of the shelf fashioned from an old door. I left the room for a spell to let her calm down and, when I returned, she was still in the same spot. I spoke to her in a calm, measured voice, telling her that her name was Sadie, that she was going to be OK, and that I would never hurt her. She chattered, but it was the nervous kind of chatter, not a happy chatter.

I brought Gus—an agouti who looked like her—in to visit, hoping that she’d see me interact with one of her kind and figure I was on OK guy. That got no reaction so, after I put Gus back, then chatted with her a bit more, she’d had enough. She dashed from between the layers of the door, again searching the room for an exit.

She was really fast, and I lost her momentarily, discovering her eventually wedged under the sink. I risked getting bit to stroke her tummy. She didn’t run immediately, but she complained. Loudly. “You sure have a pair of lungs on you,” I told her. With her cover blown, and saturated on tummy strokes, Sadie was off again.

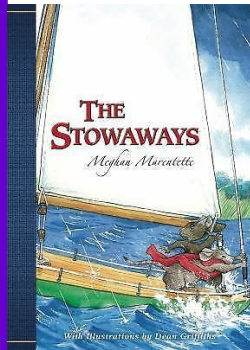
Climbing the new curtain, Sadie seemed to like the view from the shower curtain rail and from the shower pipe, but she also seemed fascinated with the lone light in the room. I didn’t want her to get burned, so I tried to shoo her from the shower bar. One flick of the hand, and she moved only a little. The second flick, and she



Keela's Mini-Review

The Stowaways

by Meghan Merentette
with illustrations
by Dean Griffiths

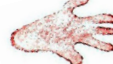


If you read my glowing article about the art of Dean Griffiths on pp. 10-12 of this issue — including (and to me, most notably) his illustrations in *The Stowaways*, you're probably expecting my review of its words to be equally positive. Unfortunately, Dean's stellar illustrations (along with a beautiful and unusual book design) are far and away the book's greatest attributes.

Now, don't get me wrong. I didn't find it horrible from the first page to last, by any means. And, I by no means intend any disrespect to the opinion of Nancy Rose, the wonderful photographer who recommended the author's work (not just this book, but also the little scenes she creates with tiny mouse figures... which are *adorable!*). In fact, when I'd settled into my nest (with a lovely bit of muffin), and started reading, I really enjoyed the early parts of the story. And, I loved, loved, loved the characters — especially Rory, whose natural timidity and thirst for adventure create a roil of conflict within him, setting us up for some exciting events ahead. You see, Rory comes from a family of adventurers — which has led to trouble for some members in the past, including Rory's grandfather, who never made his way home from what's presumed to be his final adventure. Rory's grandmother, however, is less sure of his fate, and the curiosity she and Rory share about the matter leads them on a pretty daring adventure of their own.

Since I don't want to ruin the suspense for those who wish to read the book, I'll just say here that how you feel about where it goes from that point forward may depend upon your own philosophy regarding children's books (and your sensitivity level) — (both of) which can vary as greatly among readers as authors. From my prior reviews and articles in this magazine, I'm pretty sure you can guess what my feelings are on that subject, and you can therefore draw your own conclusions as to why I found this book more than a little disappointing.

Still, as the saying goes, "a picture is worth a thousand words." In this case, the pictures might be worth more like the 40 or 50 thousand words that make up the whole book — including the beautifully detailed maps of the *Stowaways'* fictional world that adorn the inside covers. Mom and I found the pictures worth so much, in fact, that we've given copies of it to several friends and relatives (along with a disclaimer note about the stuff I *don't* like about the story). I highly recommend you do the same. And, if you don't like the words, you can always hang the pictures all around your nest—and shred the other pages up for bedding!



Keela



Nobody told Sadie that, though.

In the basement bathroom, along the front wall of the house, there was a thick sheet of dense foam insulation where, presumably, a window used to be. The porch on the front of the house was an add-on, and once constructed, it blocked the view of one of the hopper windows. The window had been removed, and replaced with the sheet of foam.

The following morning, while feeding and watering my rats, I ventured into the bathroom, and noticed new construction. In the lower corner of the foam was a golf-ball-sized hole that hadn't been there before. Seems like Sadie wanted to keep an eye on me. I realized in that moment that Sadie lived under the porch, but I also realized that she had made the decision that she would continue to share the house with me, but our relationship would be, as much as she could make it, on her terms.

***** *END OF PART 1* *****

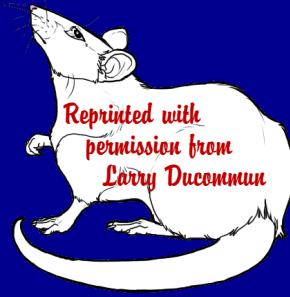


The Rat Lady: Rewind

Past Writings with Present Relevance

by

Debbie Ducommun



As noted in my tribute that appeared in the 1st qtr. 2018 issue, the contributions The Rat Lady made to understanding and respect for rats, plus improvements in the quality of their care, remain incalculable. And, building on this foundation, others are constantly making new discoveries to further advance rat health and happiness. As a means of honoring her legacy — even, perhaps, introducing her to new rat lovers— this ongoing column shares articles by Debbie herself that first appeared in The Rat Report, the Rat-a-Tat Chat or on her websites. I thank her husband, Larry Ducommun, for allowing these pieces to be shared in TRRQ.

With the holiday season in mind, this installment includes monthly projects from three different issues of The Rat Report. As you'll see, one of these is the "snuggle scarf" - an item found in Deb's website's store at www.ratfanclub.org, and an accessory I consider "required equipment" for all human parents of rat kids!

the Rat Report

The Rat Fan Club Monthly Newsletter

ISSN 1069-2045

Project of the Month: Rat Christmas Ornament

(From the December 2005 issue)

This project is based on a craft that appeared in the November 11, 2003 issue of *Woman's World* magazine that was sent in by member Jenny Leyba of Yuba City, CA. It can be a simple ornament, or you can make it into a holder for a gift certificate.

Step 1: Insert the chopstick or skewer into the bottom of the Styrofoam ball as a handle. For a smooth surface, coat the ball with Foam Finish (available at craft stores), following the directions on the package. Let dry and then paint. Or you can just paint the ball. Once it's all dry you can remove the handle. If you want you can fill the hole with hot glue and paint over it.

Step 2: Cut 2 ears from the craft foam and glue on. Glue on the eyes and nose. Cut the broomsticks in half and insert for whiskers.

Step 3: Straighten the paper clip then bend it into a U. Insert into the top of the ball for the hanger and secure with hot glue.

Step 4: Tie the ribbon into a bow and glue to the bottom of the ball. If you want, glue a decoration, such as a tiny poinsettia, a holly leaf or a tiny wreath, on the top of the ball or next to the ear.

Step 5: To make the ornament into a gift certificate holder, cut a 3" slit for the mouth with the knife in which you can insert the envelope.

Materials

4" Styrofoam ball
Foam Finish (optional)
paint
2 wiggle eyes
½" pompom for nose
pink craft foam for ears
3 broomsticks or 6 toothpicks
paper clip
ribbon
Christmas decoration

Tools

Chopstick or skewer
Paint brush
Hot glue gun
Craft knife or serrated
kitchen knife (optional)



Project of the Month: Chocolate Christmas Rats

This recipe is based on one from a magazine that was sent in by member Jenny Leyba of Yuba City, CA. If you want your rats to be gold instead of brown, you can leave out the cocoa. You can also make some of each color by using only 1/8 cup cocoa, and using two bowls, one with cocoa and one without. Mix half the cookie dough in each bowl.

Step 1: Preheat oven to 325 F. In a bowl, combine flour and cocoa. Knead in dough.

Step 2: For each rat, form 1 tablespoon of dough into an oval with one pointed end. Using a toothpick, poke a hole in the rounded end for the tail.

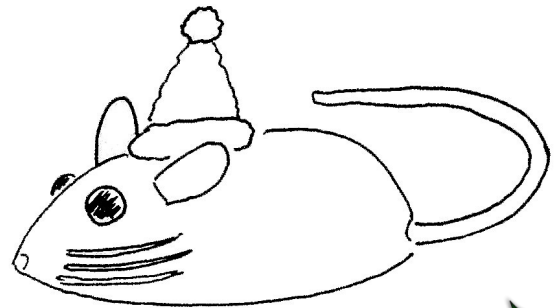
Step 3: Place on ungreased cookie sheets and bake about 20 minutes until baked through. Cool 5 minutes (do not let cool completely). For ears, gently press edge of 2 almond pieces into each warm cookie. For tail, insert licorice into holes. Remove from pans and let cool.

Step 4: Decorate the faces, using the frosting to attach the candy eyes. Draw on whiskers with the frosting and a toothpick. If using pink frosting, add a pink nose. If you want you can also coat each ear with pink frosting.

Step 5: For each cap, pinch off a small piece of white gumdrop and roll into a ball for the pompom. Slightly flatten the remaining gumdrop. Pinch a red gumdrop into a cone shape. Place the bottom of the cone on top of the flattened white gumdrop. Place a pompom on the top of the cone. Place one cap on each rat. Yummy!

Ingredients

½ cup all-purpose flour
¼ cup unsweetened cocoa
1 pkg. (18 oz.) refrigerated sugar cookie dough
32 sliced almond pieces
18 (3"-long) pieces red licorice laces
32 round candies for eyes (eg. brown or red M&Ms)
white or pink frosting
18 red and 18 white gumdrops



Project of the Month: The Snuggle Scarf

(From the January 2005 issue)

I thought of this design when Limpet got too big to fit between my neck and my turtleneck and wanted to climb inside my shirt. When the weather gets warmer I'm going to try making it out of a lightweight stretch material like t-shirt or jersey material.

Step 1: Measure around your neck. Cut one piece of elastic ½" longer than this, and one piece 2-3" longer.

Step 2: Cut a piece of fleece about 14" wide and 30" long.

Step 3: Pin the ends of the fleece together and sew to make a hoop of fabric. (Figure 1.) To make casings for the elastic, fold over each edge about ½" and pin. Sew as shown all the way around except for about ½" at the seam where you will insert the elastic. Double stitch on either side of the casing openings to prevent the thread from coming loose. (Figure 2.)

Step 4: Attach a small safety pin to one end of a piece of elastic. Thread it through one of the casings. Once the elastic is all the way through, remove the safety pin. Overlap the 2 ends of the piece of elastic about ½" and sew together as shown. Repeat with the other piece of elastic and casing. (Figure 3.)

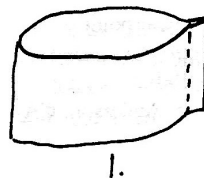
Step 5: Place the snuggle scarf around your neck so the smaller elastic opening goes over your head first. (Figure 4.) This will lie snug around your neck and hopefully keep your rats from climbing under it. Place your rat inside the "donut" where he can run around your neck and poke his head up through the looser elastic opening.

Materials

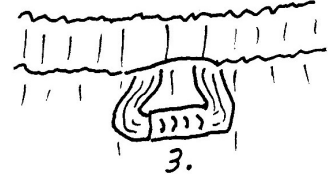
lightweight fleece fabric
¼" elastic

Tools

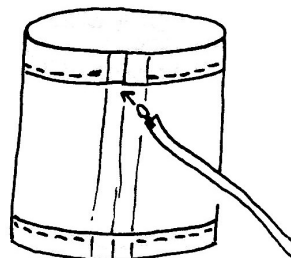
cloth measuring tape
scissors
straight pins
needle and thread
sewing machine (optional)



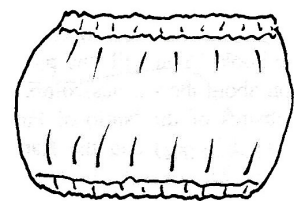
1.



3.



2.



4.



Watch for more writings from The Rat Lady in the next issue!



Santa, Is That You?

by Mil Scott

*Parker and Petunia
have been trying hard to sleep,
But, neither can resist
creeping out to sneak a peek,
With hopes of catching Santa
and a glimpse of what he's brought -
Taking extra special care
to ensure each isn't caught.*

*Suddenly a light
is flicked on in the next room.*

*And Parker, out of bed,
fears this surely spells her doom.*

*She scrambles off to hide,
finally hopping back in bed,
As they hear footsteps approach,
their hearts beating hard, with dread.*

*The door opens at last,
but it's not Santa they see,
Only Mom, come to make sure
all is peaceful as should be.*

*Determined to resume
their vigil once Mom is gone,
Their eyes become heavy;
Parker gives in to a yawn.
When hooves tap on the roof,
just as in the years before,
Lost in dreams, Santa sneaks in,
and eludes them both once more.*

Merry Christmas



*Photos of
Parker & Petunia
by Kim Fier*





Merry Christmas

2020



January 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

March 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

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2020



July 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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Merry
Christmas



Happy
Thanksgiving



*As always, this magazine is dedicated to Molly, her boys
Flannery and Noonan and all the other rats who've touched
anyone, anywhere, in such a positive, meaningful way.*

"You stoop down to make me great."

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Important
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