

## 'The Mouse and I'

Written by By Rebecca Noel  
Friday, 03 July 2015 10:15

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**Editor's note:** *here's an article about one woman's ordeal with a mouse. In this area, I am sure in this we have all had our experiences with mice – for better or worse.*

“This is a little story about how I rescued a mouse from what could only be described as a cruel, and very slow, death. Living in a brand new home in Rock Springs, Wyoming, where virtually every house has a basement, is where my story begins.”

The half of the basement on the west side of the house is where I've chosen to set up shop, because two of the three basement windows are located on that side, letting in much more natural light than the east half of the space. As of yet, our basement is still unfinished, so it's a bit dark and dismal on a grey day. The two bare light bulbs don't offer much help, in fact they cast shadows around the cement walls and are a bit disconcerting at times.

I have all of my office supplies, craft supplies, treadmill and workout gear set up in a square, with three long work tables arranged in a “U.” One of the windows is to the left of the treadmill so I can have access to fresh air when working out.

I was standing on my treadmill, using it as a makeshift easel, (hey, at least it's not being misused as a clothes rack) while I worked on a beaded wall hanging. I was stringing a bead when I caught a movement to the left in my peripheral vision. A mouse had fallen into the window well. The window well is about four feet deep, lined with corrugated steel, and topped with a mesh metal grate to keep out debris. The mesh is about one inch wide in its diamond pattern.

I stopped what I was doing to gaze at this mouse. it wasn't one of those creepy little white or grey mice with pink tails like a rat. Those things give me the heebie-jeebies. This little guy had a white underbelly and caramel colored fur on his back. His tail was white fur with a black stripe

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running up the underside. He had a fat round bottom, which made him look like he was always sitting on his haunches, almost like a chipmunk. His expressive little black eyes considered me for a few seconds before he set about sniffing his way around the enclosure.

While he was doing this, I was reminded of the dead grey mouse still decomposing in the window well on the other side of the basement. My husband, Greg, had discovered his tiny, feet in the air corpse, when we were moving into the house. There was also a dead potato bug, I think people here in Rock Springs call them Sand Puppies. Ew. Ick.

I was still contemplating the dead things in the other window well when suddenly, Mr. Mouse launched himself onto the window screen and scampered up to the top of the window. There was still a good six inches up to the mesh grate. He crawled back and forth along the top, craning his neck upward, outward, seeking freedom. For a moment, I could feel his panic. He made a desperate leap towards the grate, missed it by inches, and plummeted back down to the scabble rock bottom of his unfortunate prison. He sat, stunned for a second, then scurried to the wall opposite my window, wiggled his butt until he had a cozy, mouse-sized foxhole, then settled in for a nap.

I couldn't take my eyes off him. I knew he would die if I didn't get him out of there, and that was unacceptable to me. I began casting my mind out to all the crafting supplies around me. What did I have that Mr. Mouse could use to escape his prison? My eyes lit on a long length of raffia. Could he climb that? Do mice even climb? Only one way to find out.

I should tell you now that I am a city girl. My husband and I left Las Vegas in search of work after the housing crash that hit our city super fast and especially hard. I am adjusting well to living in a small town; however, I am not overly fond of rodents, bugs, or reptiles. I had no desire to love or keep this mouse as a pet. In fact, I had every reason to believe that as soon as I freed him, it was very likely that he would scurry out to the desert and become prey for a hawk, or some other mouse-eating predator. I just couldn't stand the thought of him dying, slowly, in my window well. I needed to at least give him a fighting chance to survive in this world. I mean, don't we all deserve that?

With a glance at Mr. Mouse, who was still recovering from his daring jump from the top of the window screen, I grabbed the raffia and ran upstairs, out the front door to the side of the house, where I quietly approached the window well. Mr. Mouse was up and about, whiskers whirring as he looked for another way out. It truly hurt my heart when he tried to jump up the corrugated

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steel wall. I'll admit, at this point, I had a bit of a lump in my throat. I fed the raffia through the mesh grate until it rest on the bottom of the well. I tied a knot with it on the mesh. Mr. Mouse was staring at me, probably terrified. I suspected he wouldn't do anything with me standing there, so I went back inside to watch his progress from the window.

He was sniffing around the raffia, eventually grabbing it in his fore-paws, (claws?) and chewing on it a little. "No! Don't eat it!" I thought to myself. He pulled himself up until he was on his tiptoes, then grabbed on with his back feet. Yes! I was elated! I thought he'd start climbing, but he just hung there, swaying back and forth, struggling to hold on. After a few seconds, he fell back down, scampered back to his foxhole, and settled in for another nap. My heart sank. I had a sneaking suspicion that perhaps, mice didn't climb. I observed a few more attempts, with a nap in between each try, and I wondered if the raffia was too slippery for him to get a good grip? Would he climb if he had something easier to hang on to?

The wall piece I was working on was made with hemp rope. A bit more rugged, right? So I took a length of hemp outside and tied it to the grate right next to the raffia, hoping maybe that having two climbing options would be better than one? I hurried back down to the basement to observe. Mr. Mouse was now hanging from the hemp rope, just as he'd done on the raffia.

This wasn't working either. I went back outside, wondering, but having little hope that he'd let me, if I could pull him up while he held on to the hemp rope. He was still hanging there, and I gently, slowly, began pulling up the rope. Our eyes locked onto each other, and I swear, in that moment, we connected and he knew I was trying to help. I prayed he could hold on. He did. I got him up to the grate and he climbed on and just froze there, staring at me. Surprised? Grateful? I had to shoo him off the grate, and at first he seemed reluctant to go, but suddenly he sped under a bush and around the side of the house, never to be seen again.

My heart swelled two sizes too big, I laughed back of sob of joy, and did a little happy dance. The landscapers working next door looked at me like I was a nutcase. I don't care. For this city girl, something miraculous had just occurred.