

Little Mouse Memoirs

Little Mouse Memoir – Franklin Frederick Fieldmouse, My Black Whisker Uncle



Franklin Frederick Fieldmouse, My Black Whisker Uncle
As told to Kathy Warnes

I have a story about my Black Whisker Uncle. A Black Whisker Uncle is a person in a mouse family that causes a lot of trouble! Franklin Frederick Fieldmouse is my Black Whisker Uncle! Let me tell you what Uncle Frankie did to me. (I call him Uncle Frankie, because it takes me too long to say Franklin Frederick Fieldmouse.)

Uncle Frankie lives in a mouse cave under the roots of a big oak tree behind the mansion of Humphrey Hippo. Uncle Frankie spends most of his days on his deck lying in his lounge chair watching fluffy white clouds sailing like sail boats across the sea blue sky. Uncle Frankie invited me to live with him while I looked for a well paying job. I spend most of my days lying beside him watching the fluffy white clouds sailing like sail boats across the sea blue sky.

We would eat a juicy green grass salad for lunch and then Uncle Frankie would settle down on the feather pillows on his lounge chair to take a nap while the wind whispered in his ear. I would

eat a juicy green grass salad and dream of cheese while the wind whistled past my ears. Sometimes I would sneak up and holler boo in his ear while he was sleeping.

He would jump up and grab a cattail for a weapon. “Who’s there! I’ve got you surrounded whoever you are!”

Then I’d jump up on the deck and on top of his cattail and holler, “Gotcha! Uncle Frankie.”

“Oh, it’s you, Little Mouse,” he said. “Quit sneaking up on me like that.”

I never quit sneaking up on him like that. I did it at least twice on weekdays – Monday through Friday- and at least once on the weekends – Saturday and even Sunday after church.

When Uncle Frankie and I ate supper, we’d sit and watch the sunset. He’d sit at his deck table and chairs, spreading his ears in the evening breeze. Sometimes he ate corn kernels and blackberries for supper and other times he ate dried peas and beans that found in Humphrey Hippo’s garden and carried home in his canvas grocery bag. I ate the corn and blackberries, but I rolled the dried peas and beans around on the table and dreamed about cheese. American cheese, Gouda Cheese, Pepper Jack cheese, Swiss cheese- I loved them all!

After supper, Uncle Frankie always packed his lunch of two sprout sandwiches and an apple in a brown burlap briefcase and set off to work. He worked at the Cheshire Cheese Factory on the end of Burley Street, right on the other side of Humphrey Hippo’s mansion. He told me that Sam Snarky owned the cheese factory and that he only paid his employees with Swiss cheese slices.

Last night after supper Uncle Frankie got ready for work. He yawned. “I’m tired and I’m not even at work yet.”

“Why are you so tired, Uncle Frankie?”

“I have to cut 10,000 holes in solid Swiss Cheese a night.”

“But Swiss Cheese has holes in it, Uncle Frankie,” I said. “It’s not worth very much money. It’s only good for sandwiches. No self respecting mouse will take it in trade.”

Uncle Frankie shook his ears and ran his fingers through his dark hair. He stroked his black whiskers. “I know, Little Mouse.”

“Can’t you do anything about it, Uncle Frankie? Can’t you find a job that pays more money?”

“I’m the best Swiss cheese puncher Sam Snarky has. I can punch 10,000 Swiss cheese holes an hour. Sam Snarky won’t let me go.”

“Why don’t you just quit, Uncle Frankie?”

“He won’t let me go, Little Mouse.”

“Why won’t he let you go, Uncle Frankie?”

“He caught me doing something with his cheese on day, Little Mouse.”

“What were you doing with his cheese, Uncle Frankie?”

“Well, Little Mouse, I was cleaning the cheese hole puncher that I use to punch holes in his Swiss Cheese and suddenly another piece of solid cheese popped up on the cheese belt. Mazie on the other end kept yelling at me for more cheese, but I hadn’t put my cheese puncher back together yet.”

“What did you do, Uncle Frankie?” I asked him. “Did you put solid cheese in your burlap bag to take home and punch full of holes? Did you eat the left over cheese holes?” I asked him.

I smacked my lips. We had the left over cheese holes that Uncle Frankie brought home for supper sometimes. He would stack them like pancakes and put them in a plastic container so they were still nice and fresh for supper. I can eat ten of them at a time and I am working on twenty.

Uncle Frankie stroked his black whiskers. “Little Mouse, stop thinking about cheese holes and listen to me!”

I pulled on my left ear and I pulled on my right ear and listened, but I didn’t stop thinking about the cheese holes. They swayed in front of me stacked like pancakes and I knew they tasted sweeter than doughnut holes, cooler than ice cream, juicier than bubble gum!

“What did you do to the solid Swiss cheese, Uncle Frankie?”

“Well, I told you I had taken my cheese hole puncher apart to clean and I didn’t have a chance to put it back together. I always carry a glass in my lunch briefcase. Mazie was yelling at me, so I wiped the glass with my shirttail and turned it upside down on the solid slice of cheese. I pushed down as hard as I could and I got a hole. I pushed down again, another hole. I cut about eight holes in that solid slice of cheese and they weren’t as good as my cheese puncher could do, but I passed down the slice of cheese of Mazie and she quit yelling at me. It worked, Little Mouse!”

“Then why are you in trouble, Uncle Frankie?”

“Sam Snarky liked the new kind of hole so much that he gave me a new job. He said that I would have to cut 10,000 of the new holes a day. I can’t keep up, Little Mouse. I just can’t keep up!”

I thought about it and suddenly I knew how Uncle Frankie could keep up. “I know how you can keep up with the cheese hole cutting, Uncle Frankie.”

“How, Little Mouse?”

I ran over and threw open the drawer under his sink. I rummaged through the spoons and forks and knives and other thing he had in the drawer and I found them. Two cookie cutters! One was shaped like a cat and the other like a mouse.

“Cut the cheese with these, Uncle Frankie. Sam won’t like the shapes and he’ll let you go!”

Uncle Frankie looked thoughtful. “That might just work,” he said.

The trick worked, but it didn’t out the way I imagined. Sam Snarky liked Uncle Frankie’s new cheese holes and cheese slices so much that he stacked the holes and packed them in plastic cartoons to sell. He liked the cheese slices so much that he put ten slices together in a package and sold them as cheese patterns.

Uncle Frankie was so tired that he brought me to work with him to help him keep up with the cheese. I’ve already worn out six cookie cutters and the seventh set is getting dull.

We sat on Uncle Frankie’s deck and I yawned. “I want to find another job, Uncle Frankie. I’m tired and I’m not even at work yet.”

Uncle Frankie shook his ears and ran his fingers through his dark hair. He stroked his black whiskers. “I know, Little Mouse.”

Little Mouse