

The City Mouse and the Country Mouse (part 2).

Oliver gathered acorns and stacked them near his hole. Then he collected seeds from the grass and carried them into the hole. Then he went to the cornfield to find fallen corn. While Oliver was hard at work, Alistair yawned and leaned against the root of the oak tree. Then he wiped the dust from his shoes with his silk handkerchief. When Oliver returned with some corn, he piled it neatly. "Thank goodness you're done." Alistair collapsed into the wheelbarrow. "Now I'd say it's time for a snack and a nap." Oliver giggled. "The work isn't finished. We still have lots to do before we can rest." Alistair sighed. "I'm simply not cut out for the country life," he said. "A mouse could starve to death here. Come home with me for a while. I'll show you the good life."

Alistair packed his silk pajamas into his fine leather suitcase. Oliver packed his long johns into his old carpet bag. The two mice set out for Alistair's home in the city. Oliver followed Alistair over fields and valleys, into dark, noisy subway tunnels, and through crowded streets, until they reached the luxury hotel where Alistair lived. Alistair stopped in front of the door. "Polished marble floors and shiny brass knobs," he said. "Now, this is how mice like us are supposed to live." Oliver stared up at the revolving glass door. "H-h-how do we get inside?" "Wait until the opening comes around, then run through," Alistair replied. The door swung around, and Alistair disappeared inside. It took a few more spins before Oliver gave it a try. Oliver spun around and around in the door until Alistair pulled his carpet bag and got him inside. Oliver followed Alistair across the lobby and through a small crack in the wall hidden by velvet draperies. "My apartment," Alistair said when they were inside. Oliver looked around in amazement. Alistair's home was filled with gold candlesticks, crystal goblets, and linen napkins. "We're under a bandstand." Alistair pointed out of the hole that was his front door. "An orchestra plays, and ladies and gentlemen dance every night until dawn." "How can you sleep with all the noise?" asked Oliver. "Sleep?" said Alistair. "I can sleep during the day. We do things a little differently here. Dinner, for example. At a five-star hotel, dinner begins with hors d'oeuvres."