Elizabeth Hale, "Entry on: Town Mouse, Country Mouse by Jess Stockham ", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/904. Entry version as of October 31, 2026.

Jess Stockham

Town Mouse, Country Mouse

United Kingdom (2012)

TAGS: Aesop Aesop's Fables Horace





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Town Mouse, Country Mouse
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom, Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2012
First Edition Details	Jess Stockham, *Town Mouse, Country Mouse*. Swindon: Child's Play (International) Ltd, 2012, 24 pp.
ISBN	9781846434792
Genre	Picture books, Toy and movable books
Target Audience	Children
Author of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com

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Creators



Jess Stockham , b. 1957
(Author)

Jess Stockham is a British illustrator and writer of children's books. She was born in Luton, and grew up in Hertfordshire. She trained in Watford, at Watford Art College, then ran a leather-goods business in Yorkshire, with her husband. She began illustrating in the 1990s, and has produced a number of children's books, including several lift-the-flap books. She lives in Wales.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: September 3, 2019).

childs-play.com (accessed: September 3, 2019).

booktrust.org.uk (accessed: September 3, 2019).

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au

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Additional information

Summary

In this lift-the flap picture book for young readers, Jess Stockham tells the story of a mouse who lives in the country and invites her cousin from the town to visit. She promises picnics and swimming in the river. Eager for fresh air, her cousin comes. He arrives on his skateboard, and the cousins greet one another. It is time for lunch. The country mouse shows how to find nuts and berries. But the nuts are too dry, and the berries too bitter for the town mouse, who pulls a face and asks for sugar. The mice go swimming, and the town mouse is shocked by the cold water. They go for a walk, and the town mouse finds the path muddy and uneven, and the day too hot to walk. So they rest in a field. As the town mouse settles back to fall asleep, he is woken by the loud 'Moo' of a cow. At night, they curl up in the nest, but the town mouse finds the straw too itchy. He invites the country mouse to visit him in the town instead.

In the town, the country mouse is frightened by the business of the streets. At the town mouse's home, she sits down for a nap while her cousin goes to find supper, but is frightened by the noises of trains going by. City food is delicious, but too rich for the country mouse. After dinner, she wants to go for a walk. Her cousin teaches her to skateboard instead. They go out into a room full of furniture, and the town mouse starts teasing a large cat, which chases them. At night, the country mouse cannot sleep, seeing visions of a large cat licking its lips and staring meaningfully at her. She thinks of the things she misses about the country. In the morning, she thanks her cousin for the visit, and says that though town is exciting, it is a little too exciting for her, and that she's a country mouse at heart and belongs in the country.

Analysis

This book is a lift-the-flap book, a form of picture book in which lifting a flap reveals a new image beneath. As each mouse explores the town or country, their expectations (food, bedding, travel) appear on the top of the flap, but the reality appears below the flap, in a clever use of the form to show how they deal (or don't deal) with things being different from their norm. *Town Mouse, Country Mouse* is a modern version of the famous Aesop's fable (also retold in Horace's *Satires* 2.6). Its anthropomorphic qualities and focus on appealing small animals make it readily relatable for young readers. The moral of the

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	story – i.e. each to his own – is left intact (and Stockham does not favour country over city, seeing the positives and negatives in both situation).
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aesop Aesop's Fables Horace
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Environment Friendship Humour Morality

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