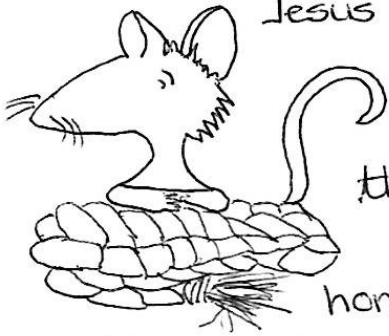


## The mouse's tale Jesus and the storm



Hello, I'm a mouse, a ship's mouse. And this is my house. It's a fishing boat.

In the evenings, when the fishermen have gone home, that's when I wake up. I come out and sniff and nibble the fishing nets.

Well, the other evening, a strange thing happened. I'm nosing about on deck as usual when suddenly, there's a noise. Quick as a flash I hide behind some old ropes. Listen, there are footsteps! The fishermen have come back. Twitch my whiskers and sniff the air. There's someone with them.

I can hear the fishermen untying the boat. Splish splash. I can feel them pushing it out into the waves. The wind catches the sail, the mast creaks, the boat rocks gently and we're heading out to sea. 'It's been a long day,' says a voice I don't know. 'I think I'll get some sleep.'

Where are we going? We're not going fishing. It's too late for fishing. Where are we going? We're taking the man with the voice I don't know for a ride in our boat.

The man sits down right next to me and leans his head on my ropes. His hair smells warm. He's not a fisherman. Everything is quiet except for the waves slapping under the boat.

Soon the man is asleep. I want a better look at him. I creep out from under the ropes. All clear. The man looks very tired. He has a kind face. His breath tickles my whiskers. He can ride in our boat if he likes. I wonder what his name is.

Now the great black clouds close in. The sky grows dark. Big drops of rain begin to splatter on the deck. The sail flaps and bangs and gulps the wind. The storm whips spray across the deck and giant waves slam the boat.

The boat begins to roll and slide. One moment up, next moment down. Up and down, up and down with water crashing on the deck and pouring on my head.

*(Continues on the next page!)*

And all the while - Flash! Bang! Lightening and thunder. And  
all the while - Slap! Crack! The wind tatters our sail. And  
all the while the man sleeps on --- and snores.

"Wake up! Wake up! We're going to sink! Wake up! Wake up! We'll  
all be drowned! Wake up! Wake up! Jesus, Wake up!"

So that's his name.

Slowly, the man opens his eyes. He blinks and rubs his face and  
looks around.

And holding the mast, he stands up straight.  
Then stretching out his hand he shouts into the wind.  
His voice is firm and strong and very, very loud.  
'peace!' he shouts. 'Be still!'

And straight away the storm does what he tells it to!  
The wind dies down, the thunder stops, the sea is calm and all  
is still.

Can you believe it? The wind, the lightening, thunder, waves,  
and rain all stop! What kind of man is that?

The setting sun peeps out behind a cloud. The men get  
out the oars to row us home. I shake the water from my  
paws and ears and settle down to sleep.

So pull the oars, we'll soon be home to tell the tale.  
And that man Jesus can sail with us again.

Nick Butterworth