

ADVENTURE MICE

MOUSEHOLE TO THE
CENTRE OF THE EARTH



MILLIE



JUNIPER



IVY



FLEDERMAUS



BOSUN



PEDRO



SKIPPER

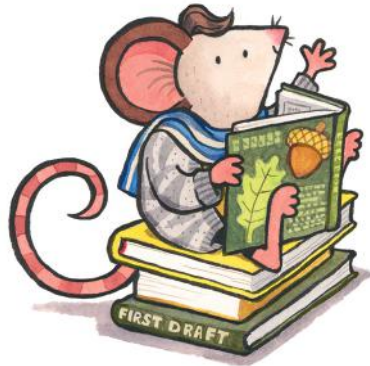


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If you have read it: congratulations!

You have keen eyes and would make an excellent member of the Adventuremice team.

You can find out more about what we get up to on our website: Adventuremice.com



FOR
LESLIE,
OUR LOVELY LOCAL
BOOKSELLER

Adventuremice: Mousehole to the Centre of the Earth!
is a
DAVID FICKLING BOOK

First published in Great Britain in 2025 by David Fickling Books,
31 Beaumont Street, Oxford, OX1 2NP

www.davidficklingbooks.com

EU Rep: Authorised Rep Compliance Ltd., Ground Floor,
71 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin, D02 P593, Ireland.
www.arccompliance.com

Text © Philip Reeve & Sarah McIntyre, 2025
Illustrations © Sarah McIntyre, 2025

978-1-78845-353-0

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

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DAVID FICKLING BOOKS Reg. No. 8340307
A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

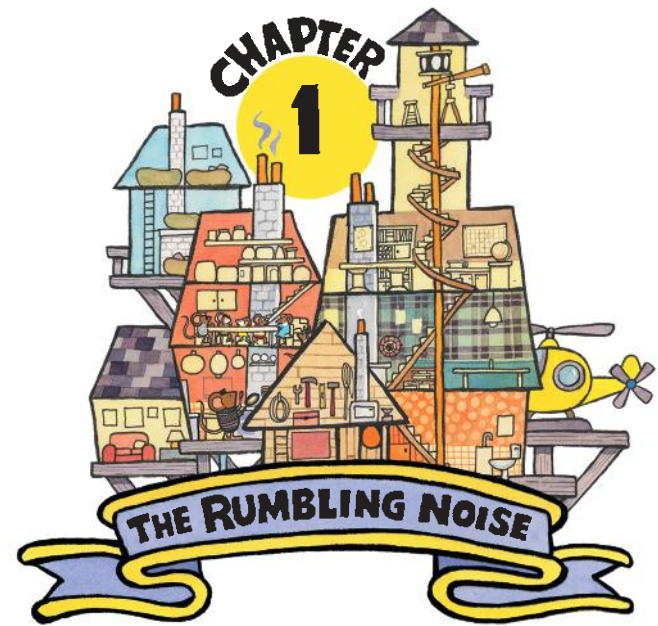
Printed and bound in China by Toppnan Leefung.



BY
**PHILIP
REEVE**

FICKLING
d b
David Fickling Books

AND
**SARAH
MCINTYRE**



One morning at the Mousebase, there was a rumbling noise. Pedro noticed it while he was eating breakfast in the kitchen with the other Adventuremice.

At first he wondered if it was his cereal – but cereal usually went *snap*, *crackle*, *pop* and this noise was definitely

going **rumble rumble rumble**.

‘What’s that rumbling noise?’ he asked.

‘It’s probably my tummy,’ said Fledermaus. ‘Hurry up with those pancakes, Bosun, I’m starving!’

‘Patience, young mouse,’ said Bosun, who was cooking up a stack of his famous blueberry pancakes.

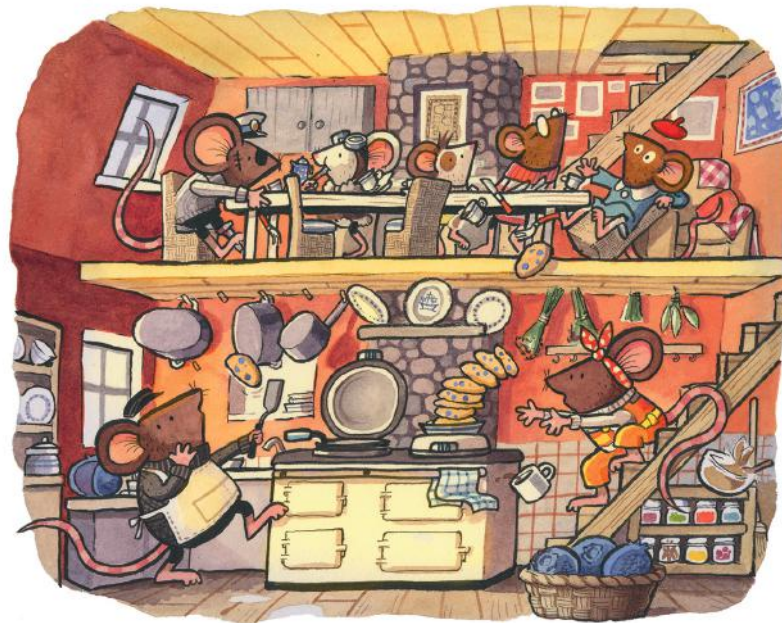
Rumble rumble rumble went the rumbling noise.

‘It’s getting louder,’ said Pedro. ‘I don’t think even your tummy rumbles that much, Fledermaus.’

Rumble rumble rumble went

the noise again.

All the Adventuremice could hear it now. It was starting to make the windows rattle in their frames. It was starting to make the teacups tremble on the saucers. It shook dust down from the ceiling, and Millie fell off her chair.



‘It’s an EARTHQUAKE!’ shouted
Fledermaus.

‘Don’t panic!’ Skipper told
everyone. ‘But let’s all get outside.’

RUMBLE RUMBLE RUMBLE

went the noise.

The Adventuremice all ran
down the stairs and outside
into the sunshine.

The rocks of the little island on which
the Mousebase stood were shuddering.
The rumbling noise filled the air.

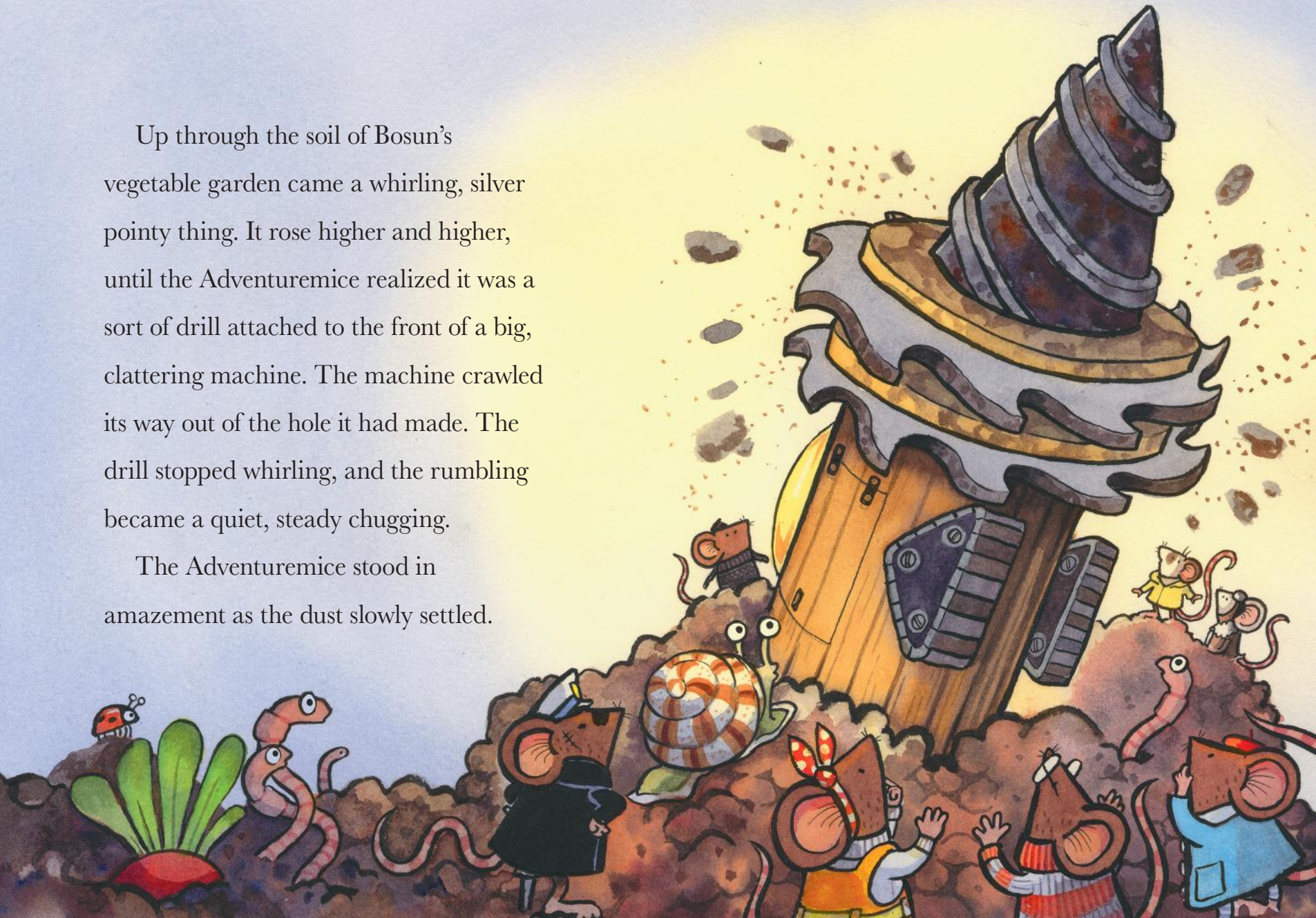
‘What is it?’ asked Ivy.

‘I’m not sure,’ said Skipper, ‘but I don’t
think it’s an earthquake. Look!’

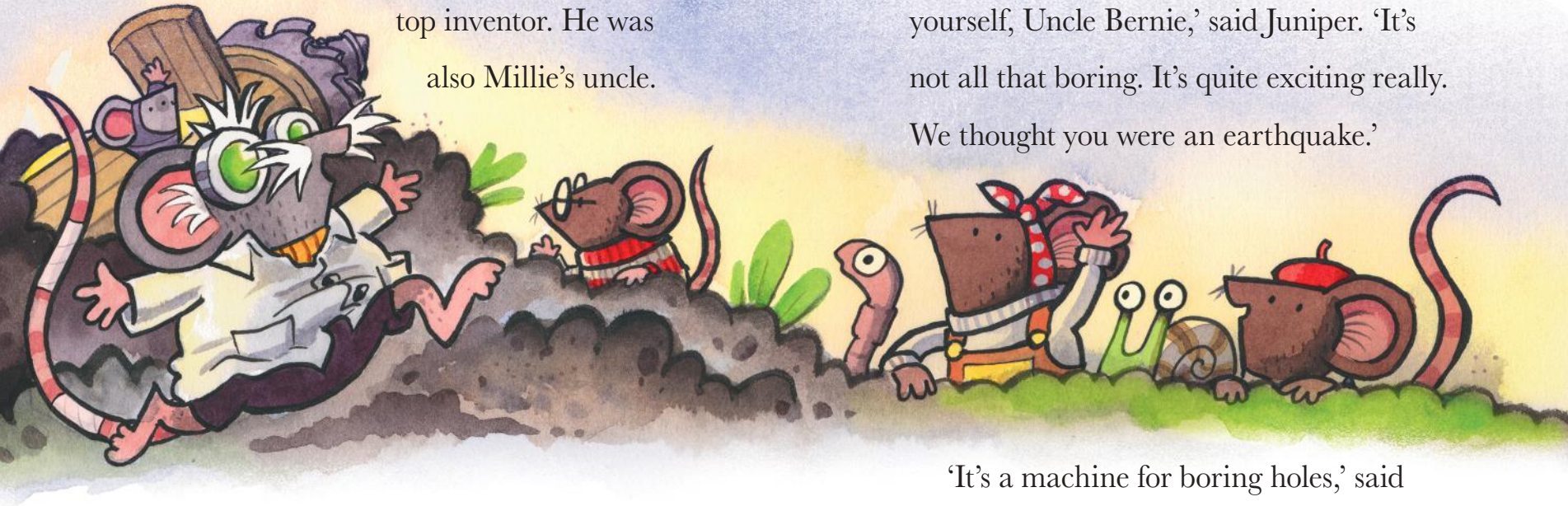


Up through the soil of Bosun's vegetable garden came a whirling, silver pointy thing. It rose higher and higher, until the Adventuremice realized it was a sort of drill attached to the front of a big, clattering machine. The machine crawled its way out of the hole it had made. The drill stopped whirling, and the rumbling became a quiet, steady chugging.

The Adventuremice stood in amazement as the dust slowly settled.



Then a hatch on the top of the machine opened and a mouse jumped out. It was Professor Quatermouse, the Mouse Islands' top inventor. He was also Millie's uncle.



‘Oh, hello Uncle Bernie!’ said Millie.
‘Yes, it is ME!’ said Uncle Bernie proudly.

‘And this is my new invention. I call it the Mechanical Mole. It’s a boring machine.’

‘I think you’re being too hard on yourself, Uncle Bernie,’ said Juniper. ‘It’s not all that boring. It’s quite exciting really. We thought you were an earthquake.’

‘It’s a machine for boring holes,’ said another mouse, scrambling out of the hatch after Uncle Bernie. ‘That’s what

we've just done – we bored a hole all the way from our island to the Mousebase, and now here we are.'

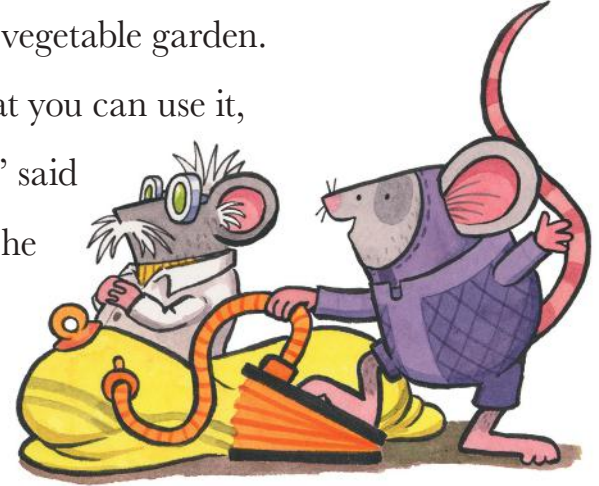
'You remember my assistant Pontiki?' said Uncle Bernie. 'Without her help, I would never have been able to create the Mechanical Mole. Magnificent, isn't it?! Like all my inventions, it's totally brilliant and can't possibly go wrong. With the aid of the Mechanical Mole, we'll be able to travel deep beneath the ground and learn all the secrets that lie at the Earth's core.'



'But why have you brought it here?'

asked Bosun, who was a bit annoyed about his vegetable garden.

'So that you can use it, of course!' said Pontiki. She pulled a folded-up inflatable dinghy out of her backpack and started to pump it up, while Uncle Bernie explained.



'Pontiki and I don't have time to go tunnelling around underground,' he said. 'We're very busy mice. Besides, it might be dangerous. It's more of a job for

brave, daring, expendable types like you Adventuremice. Have fun!’

Pontiki tossed the inflatable dinghy into the sea, and she and Uncle Bernie jumped down into it.

‘Oh, I almost forgot,’ Uncle Bernie started to say, but Pontiki started the outboard motor and the noise drowned out the rest of his words. A moment later, the dinghy was just a dot in the distance, speeding back towards Uncle Bernie’s lab on Scrabble Island.

‘What did he say?’ asked Millie.

‘I think he was saying the Mechanical



Mole has a slow reverse gear,’ said Ivy.

‘Fast or slow, it doesn’t matter,’ said Skipper. ‘We’re not likely to use it. In all my years as an Adventuremouse I’ve never yet needed to go burrowing underground.’

‘Maybe I could turn it into a potting shed,’ said Bosun.



Pedro looked at the big machine. He thought what a pity it would be if it never got to go tunnelling under the ground and

just stayed here in the vegetable garden.

He said, ‘Couldn’t we go exploring in it?’

‘Underground?’ asked Fledermaus.

‘Why? It’s not like the air or the sea down there, Pedro – it’s just a load of mud and rocks and stuff.’

‘You don’t know that,’ said Pedro. ‘We might discover something.’

‘Hmmm,’ said Skipper thoughtfully. ‘You may be right, Pedro. And the Squeakington Prize is about to be awarded – I’d like to get my paws on that.’



Pedro felt dizzy with excitement. The Squeakington Prize was a new prize for the Top Discovery Made By A Mouse. Pedro felt sure the Adventuremice could discover something underground that would make the judges sit up and take notice.

‘All right,’ said Skipper. ‘Let’s take this Mechanical Mole for a test drive and see what discoveries we can discover!’



CHAPTER 2



Bosun and Juniper quickly made snacks and packed lunches for everyone. Then they all climbed inside the Mechanical Mole. Fledermaus looked at the confusing controls.

‘I wouldn’t know how to steer this contraption,’ he said.

‘Let Juniper drive,’ said Ivy. ‘Because it’s more like a submarine than a plane.’

Juniper sat down in the driver’s seat and the others all clustered round behind her. She pulled a lever, turned a knob, flicked a switch, and the Mechanical Mole sprang to life. The big spiky drill on the front started to whirl, and the machine tilted forward and began drilling a fresh hole in the vegetable garden.

‘I was planning to plant Brussels sprouts in this bit,’ said Bosun sadly.

‘Who cares about sprouts?’ said Fledermaus. ‘This is an *adventure*!’

The Mechanical Mole drilled its way down into the ground, and soil and stones rose up to cover the windows and block out the light from above.



‘There’s not much to see, is there?’
said Millie, after they had been travelling
downwards for a few minutes.

‘Boring holes really IS boring,’ agreed
Fledermaus.

‘Let’s go home,’ said Bosun.

But when Juniper turned the steering
wheel, the Mechanical Mole just kept going
forward. And when she tried to put the
Mole into reverse, she found she couldn’t.

‘Uncle Bernie wasn’t telling us it had a
slow reverse gear,’ she said. ‘He must have
been saying, “There’s *no* reverse gear!”’

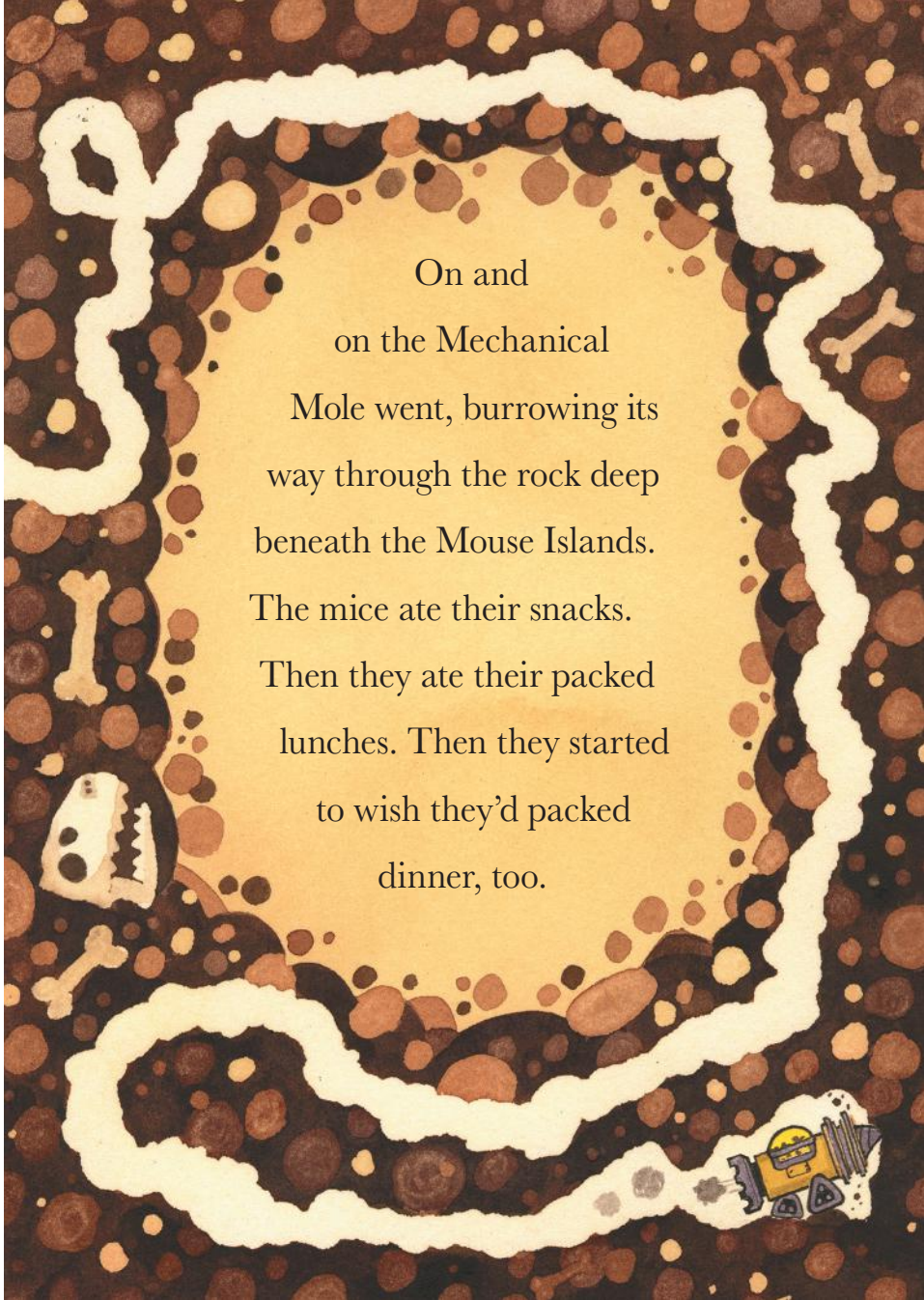
‘Can’t you slow down a bit,
Juniper?’ asked Ivy. ‘We’re
going awfully fast!’



‘I’m trying!’ said Juniper. But however hard she pulled on the brakes, the Mechanical Mole kept going faster and faster.

‘It’s just as badly made as all Uncle Bernie’s other inventions!’ wailed Fledermaus. ‘We’re going to keep boring on for EVER! We are DOOMED!’

‘No, we’re not,’ said Pedro, who was still hoping to discover something exciting underground. ‘We must pop up somewhere, sooner or later. I wonder where it will be? We’ll just have to wait and see . . .’



On and
on the Mechanical
Mole went, burrowing its
way through the rock deep
beneath the Mouse Islands.
The mice ate their snacks.
Then they ate their packed
lunches. Then they started
to wish they’d packed
dinner, too.

But at last, just when the boring was starting to get *really* boring, the machine suddenly burst out into daylight.

Juniper stopped the drill, and the Adventuremice all jumped out, eager to see where their latest adventure had led them.

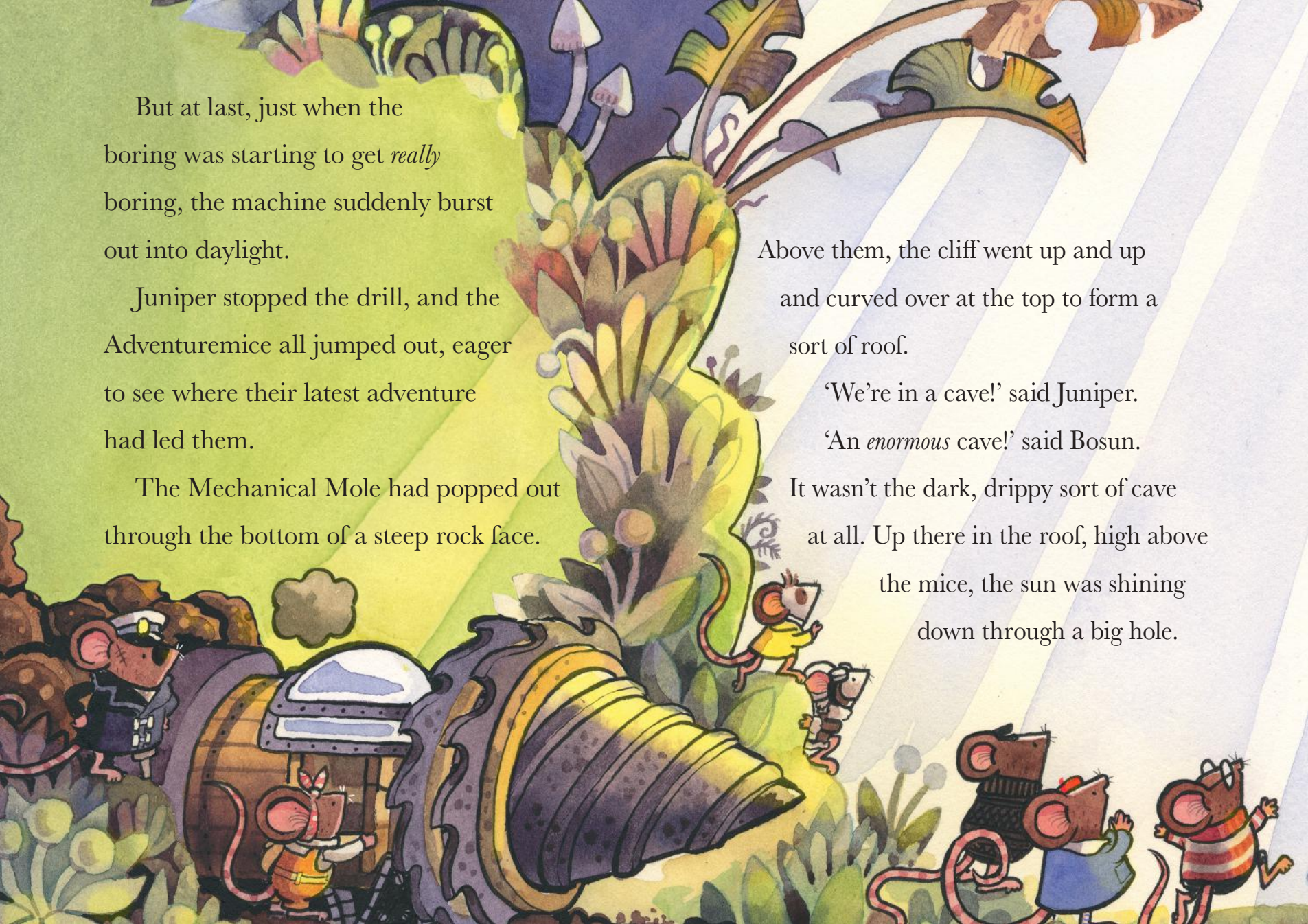
The Mechanical Mole had popped out through the bottom of a steep rock face.

Above them, the cliff went up and up and curved over at the top to form a sort of roof.

‘We’re in a cave!’ said Juniper.

‘An *enormous* cave!’ said Bosun.

It wasn’t the dark, drippy sort of cave at all. Up there in the roof, high above the mice, the sun was shining down through a big hole.





The hole let in so much light that ferns and flowers and tiny, twisty trees were growing all over the cave floor. High above, tiny bat-like things were wheeling around the crags. Nearby, a waterfall splashed merrily into a deep, blue pool.

‘It’s beautiful!’ said Millie.

‘But where are we?’ wondered Fledermaus. ‘I’ve never heard of a cave like this on any of the Mouse Islands.’

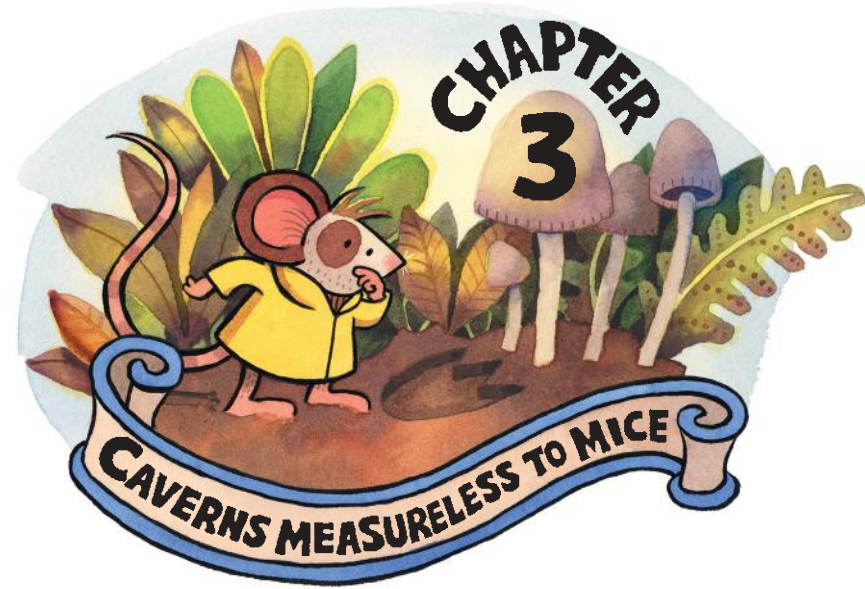
‘We must have burrowed our way right under the Deep Water Channel,’ said Skipper. ‘We’re in a cave beneath one of the Nameless Isles!’

‘It’s fantastic!’ whispered Juniper.

‘It’s a *discovery*!’ said Pedro. He felt sure the Adventuremice would win the Squeakington Prize for this. And since it had been his idea to come on this adventure, perhaps they would name this place after him. How proud he would feel when they wrote it on the map:

PEDRO’S CAVE.

‘Come on,’ said Skipper, ‘let’s have a look around.’



The mice set out to explore. Pedro and Fledermaus went to look at the waterfall and the big pool at the bottom of it. In the soft mud at the pool’s edge, Pedro saw footprints. *Big* footprints.

‘What do you think made these?’ he asked.