

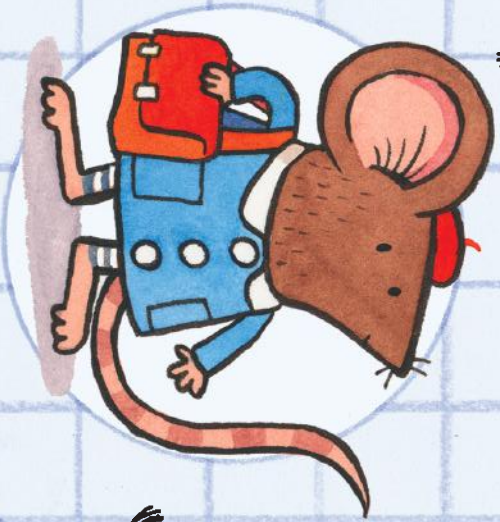


ADVENTURE MICE

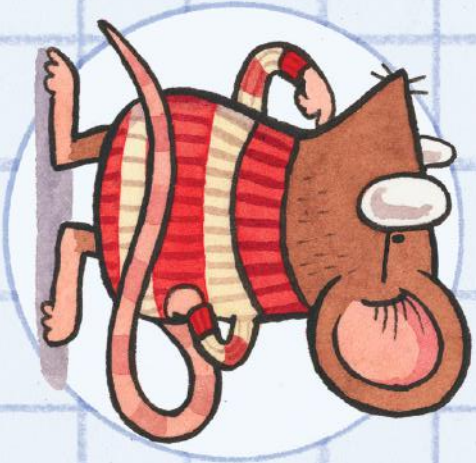
MERMOUSE MYSTERY



MILLIE



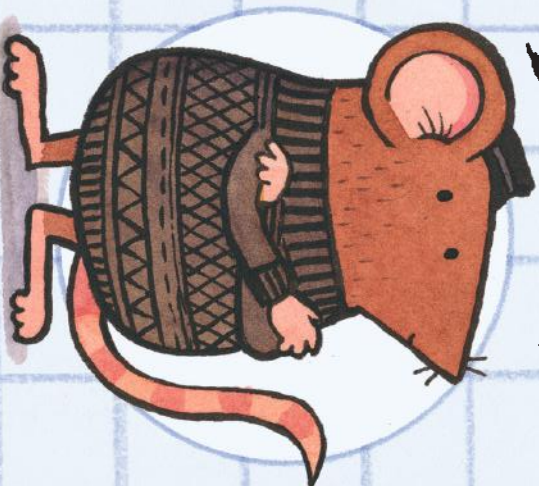
JUNIPER



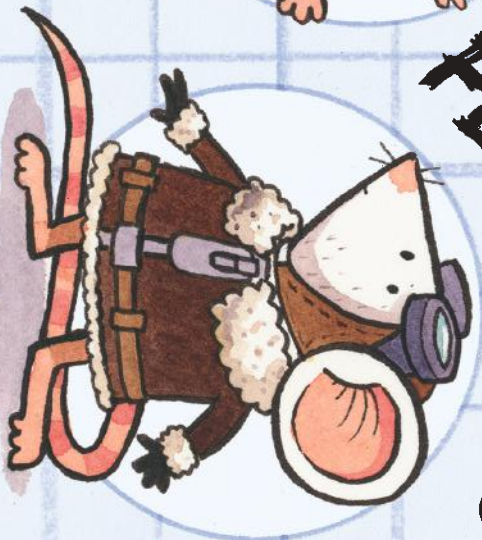
IVY



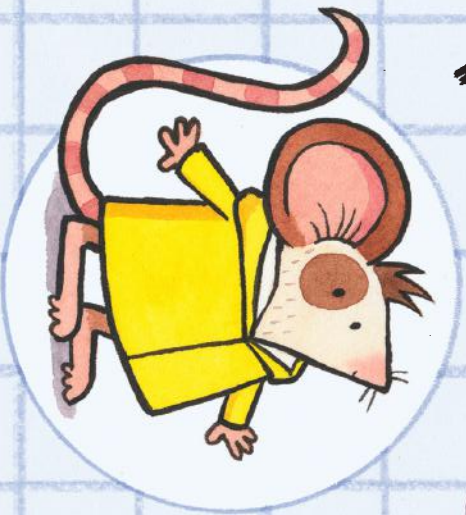
BOSUN



FEDERMAUS



PEDRO



SKIPPER



There is a lot of tiny text on this page and the Adventuremice were wondering if you would read it. If you have read it: congratulations!

You have keen eyes and would make an excellent member of our Adventuremice team. You can find out more about what we get up to on our website: Adventuremice.com

FOR AUNT ELIZABETH WITH LOTS OF LOVE

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is a
DAVID FICKLING BOOK

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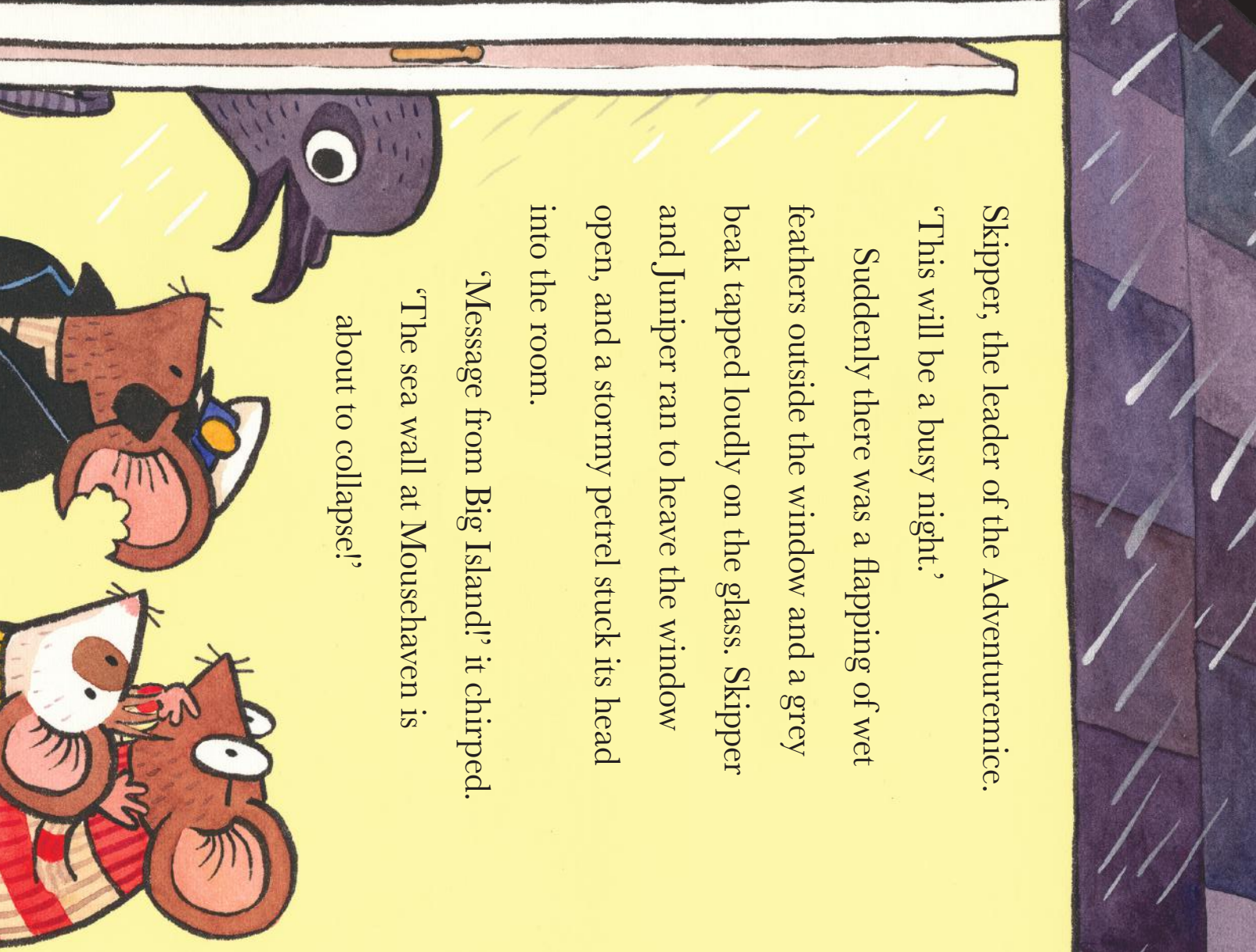
A wild west wind was howling over the Mouse Islands. Big white waves burst against the shores. Rain rattled on the windows of the Mousebase, where the brave Adventurenice were waiting, ready to go out and rescue anyone who was in danger from the storm.



Pedro, the youngest and newest Adventuremouse, looked out at the booming waves in wonder. The storm was scary, but it was beautiful too.

‘A storm at sea is one of the things I was hoping to see when I came looking for adventures,’ he said. ‘It’s wonderful!’

‘It won’t look so wonderful when we’re out in it, saving shipwrecked mice,’ said



Skipper, the leader of the Adventuremice. ‘This will be a busy night.’

Suddenly there was a flapping of wet feathers outside the window and a grey beak tapped loudly on the glass. Skipper and Juniper ran to heave the window open, and a stormy petrel stuck its head into the room.

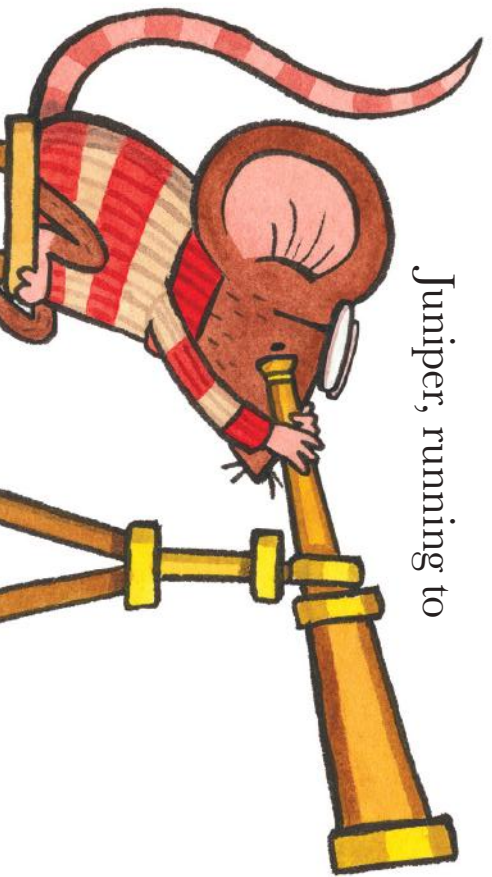
‘Message from Big Island!’ it chirped. ‘The sea wall at Mousehaven is about to collapse!’

'Action stations!' shouted Skipper. 'Ivy, Bosun, you come with me on the *Daring Dormouse*. Make sure there are plenty of sandbags aboard to repair that sea wall!'

Ivy and Bosun scurried off downstairs to start loading the ship. A moment later, a far-off flare burst like a beautiful pink flower in the dark sky. It startled the messenger bird, who gave a squawk and flapped off into the storm.

'That was a distress signal!' said

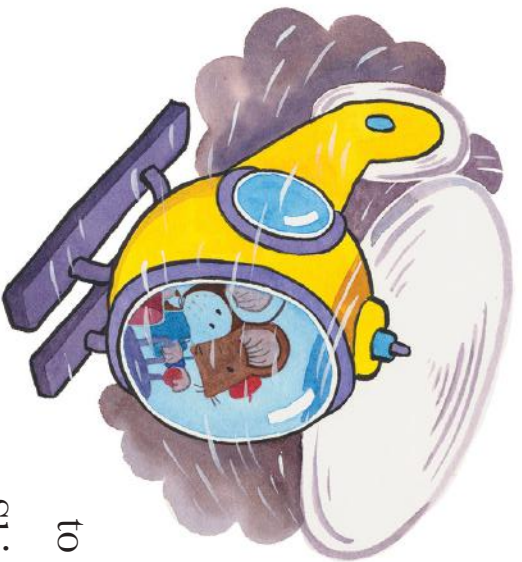
Juniper, running to



the telescope
and peering
through it. 'Oh
my whiskers! A cheese
ship has run aground on the rocks at West
Wainscoting!'

'That sounds like a job for you, Millie and Fledermaus,' said Skipper, fastening the toggles of his sailor coat. 'Take the helicopter over there and rescue the crew – and the cheese, if you can!'

Millie and Fledermaus grabbed their wet-weather gear and hurried off to the helipad.



‘What shall I do?’ asked Pedro, who wanted to help.

Skipper patted him on the shoulder before he followed Ivy and Bosun downstairs. ‘You stay here with Juniper, in case any more distress calls come in while we’re gone,’ he said.

The helicopter took off, with Millie at the controls and Fledermaus waving from the open door. Soon afterwards, the *Daring Dormouse* set off into the storm too, ploughing her way through the steep

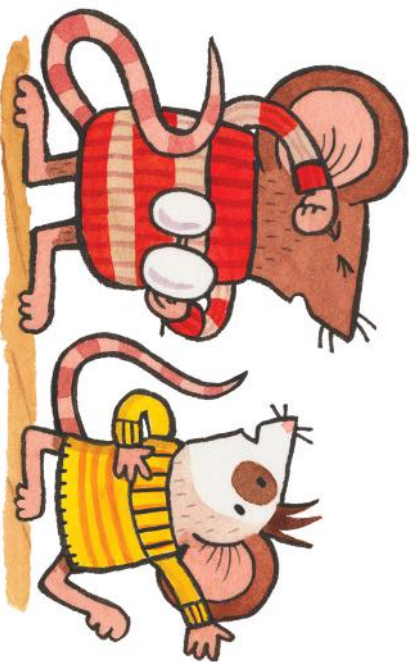
waves in the direction of Big Island. Juniper and Pedro were left all alone in the Mousebase, waiting for another flare, or another bird bearing bad news.

But no more birds arrived, and no more flares lit up the sky. The storm



roared on for a while, but it seemed to be getting tired. The wind grew quieter, and the rain stopped hammering quite so loudly against the windows.

Juniper was getting tired too. She yawned a big yawn.



‘You should go to bed,’ said Pedro.

‘I can keep watch.’

‘Well, if you’re sure,’ said Juniper. ‘I think the worst of the storm is over. But be sure to wake me if anything happens.’

Pedro promised he would, and Juniper went off to her nest. Pedro was left alone.

He felt very important, but also a bit nervous. What if some new emergency struck the Mouse Islands and he didn’t notice? It was a big responsibility. He stood in Skipper’s place by the big window and struck important-looking poses. He peeked through the telescope, looking out into the blackness of the night for any sign of more flares or signals. But he didn’t see any, and

slowly the night turned from black to grey and a new morning broke over the islands, with the sky full of hurrying, torn-up clouds.

Pedro realized he had been awake all night, which made him feel even more important. He didn't feel tired yet, just hungry, so he went quickly to the kitchen and poured some mouse-sized cornflakes into a bowl. (They were made from human-sized cornflakes, which had been smashed into little bits by mice with mallets at the East Wainscoting Cornflake Factory.) Then he stepped

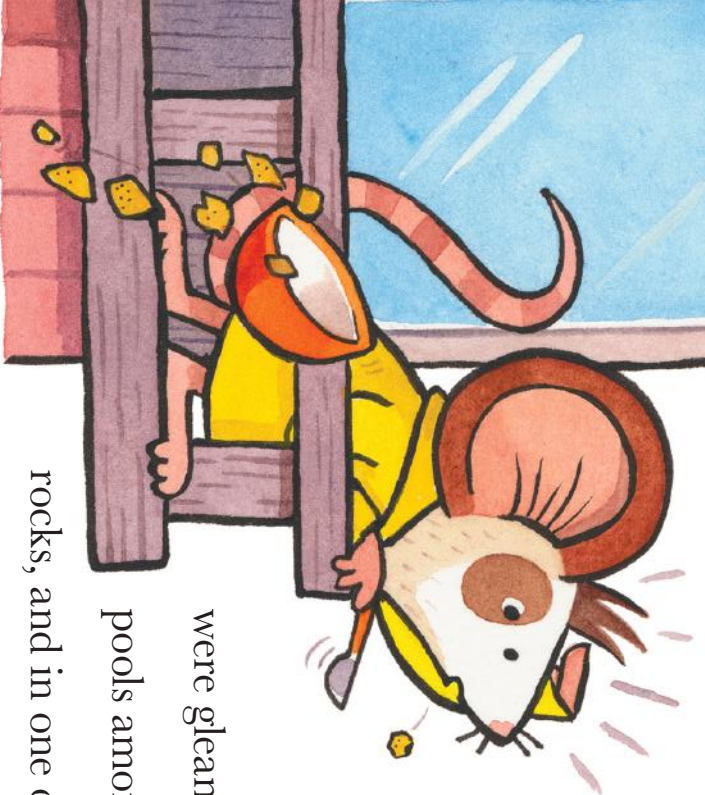


outside onto the balcony to eat them.

And that was when he saw something.

'Oh!' he said.

The sea, which had been so high and fierce last night, was very quiet and calm this morning, and the first light of the new day shone on rocks and patches of sand which the tide had bared. There



were gleaming
pools among the
rocks, and in one of them,
just for a moment, Pedro
thought he saw a little mouse struggling.

'A shipwrecked sailor!' said Pedro to
himself. But he could not be quite sure,
because the mouse had ducked down out
of sight behind a rock. It had looked too
small to be a sailor, though. Perhaps it
was just a mouselet, washed out of its nest

by the storm! Or perhaps he had only
imagined it?

Pedro didn't want to wake Juniper
without a good reason, so he went running
downstairs to make sure it really was a
mouse he'd seen.

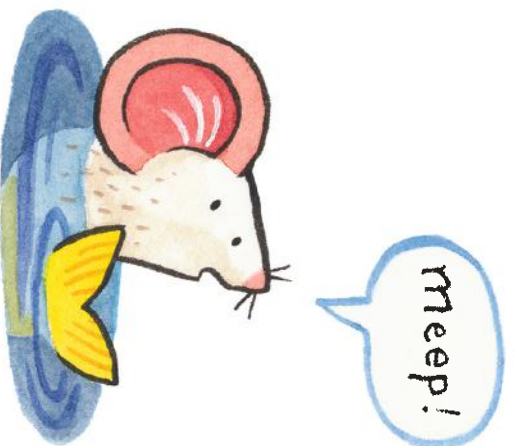
'Hello!' he shouted, as he scrambled
across the seaweed-slitheery rocks outside
the base. 'Get off!' he added, as his tail
trailed through a rockpool and a sea
anemone grabbed him with its sticky little
tentacles.



He tugged himself free, clambered over a washed-up shampoo bottle, and there was the stranded mouse, sitting in a pool just in front of him.

Only it wasn't a mouse. It was very small, and instead of back legs it had a tail, just like a little fish.

It was a mermouse.



'Meep!' said the mermouse.

Pedro tugged on his whiskers three times to make sure he wasn't dreaming. Mermice were another of the things he had been hoping to see when he came to the Mouse Islands, but Skipper and the other Adventuremice had laughed when

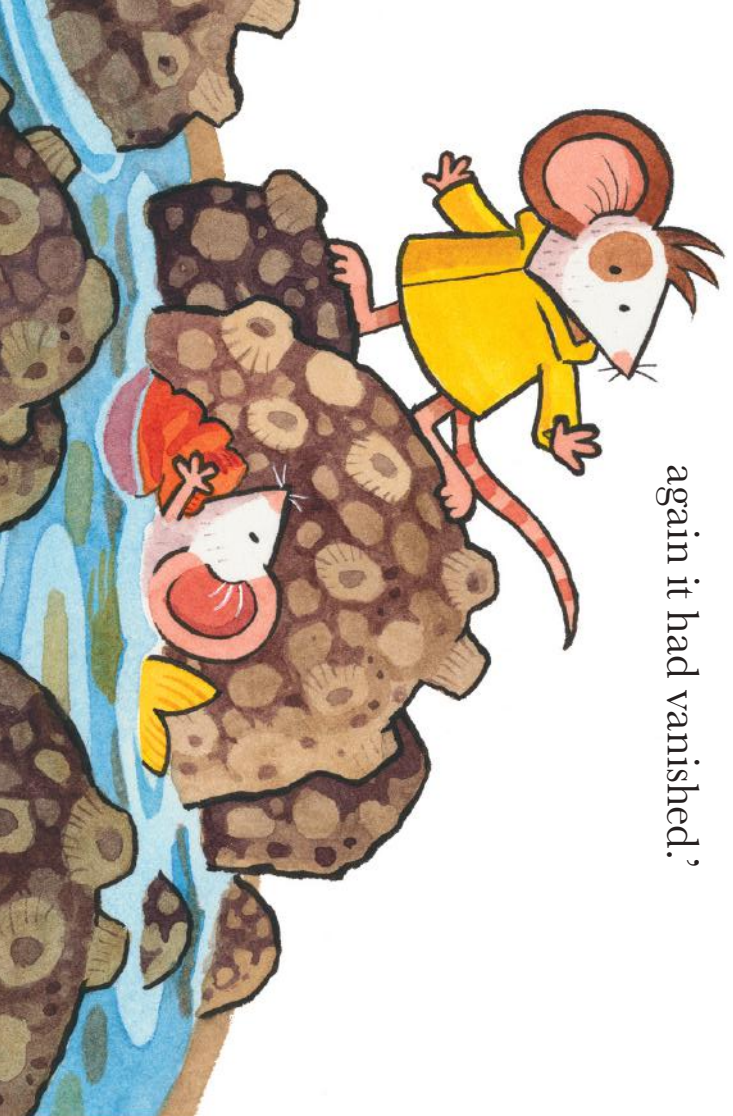
he asked about them.

‘Mermice?’ they had said. ‘There’s no such thing!’

‘They’re just tall tales mouse sailors tell,’ Skipper had explained.

‘I thought I saw a mermouse once,’

Bosun had said, ‘but it was just a trick of the light, and when I looked again it had vanished.’



But here was a real, live, little mermouse boy, and he showed no sign of vanishing. His tail was covered in shiny yellow scales, just like a goldfish, and he was clutching a soggy red woollen thing in his tiny pink paws.

‘Where have you come from?’ Pedro asked.

‘Meep!’ said the mermouse sadly. Pedro wondered what to do. He looked all around, but there was no sign of any other mermice on the shore, and the sea was making grumbly noises as if it was thinking about coming back and covering

the rocks again. Pedro made a decision.

‘Come with me, little mermouse,’ he said, scooping him out of the rockpool. Juniper will know what to do with you.’

‘Meep!’ said the mermouse.

A big white wave came rushing over the rocks. Pedro turned and ran, with the mermouse in his arms, all the way back to the Mousebase.

‘Juniper!’ he shouted, running up the stairs. ‘Juniper, help! I’ve found a mermouse, and it isn’t a dream or a tall tale or a trick of the light, and it goes *meep!*’

‘Meep!’ said the mermouse.

There were

a lot of stairs in the Mousebase.

Pedro stopped to catch his breath half

way up, and

Juniper ran down to meet him, still in her pyjamas.

