

Tillie and the Wall

The wall had been there ever since the mice could remember. They never paid attention to it or asked themselves what was on the other side. Nor, for that matter, if there was another side at all. Only Tillie, the youngest, wondered about the other side.

At night, while the others were asleep, she would lie in her bed of straw, wide awake, imagining beyond the wall a beautiful, fantastic world inhabited by strange animals and plants. “We must see the other side,” she told her friends. They tried, but as they climbed, the wall seemed higher and higher.

With a long, rusty nail they tried to make a hole to peep through. “It is only a question of patience!” said Tillie. But after working an entire morning they gave up, exhausted, without having made even a dent in the hard stone.

But one day, not far from the wall, Tillie saw a worm digging itself into the black earth. How could she not have thought of that before? Full of excitement, Tillie began to dig. She dug and she dug until suddenly, almost blinded by the bright sunlight, she was on the other side of the wall! She couldn’t believe her eyes: before her were mice, regular mice.

The mice gave Tillie a great welcome party. They made speeches in her honor and waved flags. They even decided to go through Tillie’s tunnel to see for themselves what the other side was like. One by one they followed Tillie. And when the mice on Tillie’s side of the wall saw what Tillie had discovered, there was another party!

Everyone shouted “TIL-LIE, TIL-LIE, TIL-LIE!” and they carried Tillie high in the air. Since that day the mice go freely from one side of the wall to the other, and they always remember that it was Tillie who first showed them the way.