

Speedy's Adventure

by

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Acknowledgement

I thank my youngest son Henry Evans as it was his mischievous mouse who gave me the inspiration for this story.

A very special mention goes to Kayla Robins who provided the illustrations.

With her amazing talent I feel that she will go far as an illustrator or graphic artist in the future.

Thank you very much, Kayla!

Speedy was a unique mouse. She had ambitions, she wanted to get away and see the world. She wasn't as intelligent as her sister Splodge who helped "her girl" on the computer. She didn't need to stay and look after her sisters, like her oldest sister Valley. She had guts and was very brave unlike her other sister Adventure, who wasn't really adventurous at all.

She had made up her mind and was determined that no one was going to make her change it. She packed up all her worldly possessions in a rucksack, along with a small parcel of food and was prepared for the right opportunity. She knew that saying goodbye to her sisters would make them feel sad.

Speedy was a lovely sandy colour with a yellow stomach. She was never really content to be stuck in her cage with her sisters. If there was a big enough gap in the bars she would try to get out of it. Once she managed to get out of the gap in the door and on to the roof. Luckily, but not for her, her boy found her, put her back in to the cage and clipped a peg into the gap to prevent her from escaping again. Her boy was a clever human as humans go. He

was kind and gentle. He trained her to stay on a special towel on the floor. She would tease him by running off the towel. He would click his fingers and say “Get back, Speedy” and she would go back instantly. This made her boy feel proud that he had managed to train his mouse to stay on the towel, but little did he know...

Even though Speedy wasn't very intelligent, she did have a rather good memory. When doing her training session on the floor she would look around and work out where things were. She knew that her cage was on a shelf above the settee and she knew that the food was through the lounge door in the kitchen cupboard. Unfortunately, that was all she knew.

Whenever her boy had cleaned the cage out and put fresh bedding in, it was her job to re-arrange it. Speedy was a particular little mouse. She had to have everything just so, not a piece of shredded paper out of place. She noticed that her boy had not put the peg back on the door and there was a big enough gap for her to squeeze through.

Whilst scurrying around arranging paper, she was carefully planning her escape. She knew this was the last time that she was going to arrange the bedding before her adventure so she was even more particular.

Once she had finished, her sisters were amazed. It was the best nest they had ever seen. They were so pleased that they praised Speedy as they danced around their cage joyfully. Inside, Speedy was both sad and excited. She couldn't wait to go on her big adventure.

It was lunch-time and the house was quiet. All the humans were out. Speedy's sisters were all having an afternoon nap and were sound asleep. "*This is it!*" she thought. "*Time to go!*"

She forced her rucksack through the bars of the cage so that it dropped onto the settee below. Then she started her ascent. She climbed up the side of cage and then clung onto the bars of the roof. She carefully manoeuvred over to the door. "*Oops!*" she thought, as her back feet lost grip of the bars. "*I don't want to wake my sisters*".

She regained her grip and moved to a position where she could just about get her head through the gap. She eased her head through, then one front leg at a time, and hauled herself to freedom. *“Now for the descent”*, she thought. It was a very long way down to the settee for a small mouse. *“It is now or never. One, two, three!”* She threw herself off the edge of the cage and landed on a soft cushion. *“That wasn’t too bad”*, she thought to herself.

She climbed down the throw that she had often played on when her boy had got her out. She could smell the scent of her sisters. She looked up at the cage. It seemed like miles above her head. *“Right, off to the kitchen now. Let’s investigate the food cupboard”*.

Speedy’s boy usually came home from school about 4 o’clock. He would do his homework and then get Speedy out. He stood on the settee and peered into the mouse cage. *“SPEEDY? SPEEDY!”* he called. He looked around the cage. *“Where is my SPEEDY!?”* he exclaimed. *“She’s gone!”* He lifted the cage down. She was nowhere to be seen. Speedy’s boy was devastated. His favourite friend

in all the world was gone. He had noticed that the peg had not been put on the door. Desperately, he got out the training towel and called Speedy's name as he clicked his fingers.

“Oh, she's not coming,” he said disappointedly. He looked under the settee. “She could be anywhere,” he cried. He looked under the table, behind the cupboard and behind the television. She was still nowhere to be seen.

Speedy's boy was so upset he was going to cry. “NO”, he thought, “*I won't cry. She'll turn up.*” Speedy was one of the best pets he'd ever had. She would sit in his pocket and go for rides around the house. He had trained her. She was the first pet he had ever trained. “*Where could she be?*” he thought. “*I hope she is okay.*”

That night Speedy's boy went to bed hoping and praying that she would come back to him. “Good night, Speedy,” he said, “wherever you are.” Speedy took advantage of the quiet darkness. She didn't know where she was or where she was going. All she knew was that she was on a great adventure. Her little heart was pounding faster

than ever. She scurried across the lino on the kitchen floor. It was slippery and that made it hard for her little claws to grip.

She walked along the front of the kitchen cupboards and slipped down the side next to the washing machine. She jumped on to the washing machine hose, and carefully followed it through a hole in the side of the cupboard. She had to be careful not to get her rucksack caught. She looked around. "*Ahh, this is the right place*", she thought. "*I can smell food. Yum!*"

There were two levels in the cupboard: the top and the bottom. Speedy decided to climb up high and get into the top level. "*The food smells stronger up here*", she thought. "*This smells promising.*" She carefully hauled herself up onto the top shelf.

There were bags of mouse food, Bonio, peanuts and sunflower seeds. She nibbled through the side of the bag of mouse food. Firstly, she topped up her rucksack and then it was time to fill her grumbling stomach. She sorted through the food, finding her favourite seed. She ate and

ate and ate until she was full up. "*I feel thoroughly stuffed*", she yawned. "*I think it's time to have a quick nap.*" She washed behind her ears with both paws and cleaned her whiskers, curled up on a bag of mouse bedding and went to sleep.

Speedy woke refreshed, unlike her boy who was still sick with worry. She climbed down and out through the hole where she had entered and peered into the kitchen. She could see her boy in his pyjamas, still half asleep and eating his breakfast.

A lump came to Speedy's throat. "*My boy looks so sad*", she thought. "*He must really be missing me.*" Speedy quickly put that to the back of her mind because she had more important things to think about. She dashed across the kitchen and hid behind the bin. Her boy saw her. "Look, there she is," he said as quietly as possible. "She's alive!" The boy and his mother stood either side of the bin hoping to catch Speedy, but Speedy had a better idea. She scampered between her boy's legs, scrambled across the lino and disappeared around the corner into the play room.

They called it the play room, but it was the room that had initially been set up as a guest room. More recently it had become a place where all sorts of stuff had been dumped including boxes of old toys and suitcases. Worst of all, it had a beige carpet which was ideal for a little sandy-coloured mouse to run across without being noticed.

“Oh no,” Speedy’s boy said. “We’ll never find her in there, it is the junk hole!”

“Speedy certainly lives up to her name,” said the boy’s Mother. “Go on, go and get ready.” He had to go and get dressed for school. His sadness was covered by the excitement of telling his friends about his mouse that had escaped.

Speedy looked with glee at all the nooks and crannies she could investigate in the play room. She ran from box to bag to box, sniffing them and occasionally stopping to wash her whiskers. Her whiskers were very important to her. They helped her to gauge whether a gap was big enough for her to go into. She had to keep them in

pristine condition because she didn't want to get stuck anywhere. That would be a disaster! She would be caught, and her adventure would soon be over.

When he got home from school, Speedy's boy decided he was going to sleep on the bed in the guest room so he could at least be in the same room as his mouse and try to catch her.

He finished his homework and started to prepare for the night. He got the sleeping bag from the cupboard under the stairs. There was evidence that Speedy had been there too: there were mouse droppings and chewed cardboard. He missed her terribly but he was glad that she was still alive. "Oh, Speedy, I love you," he muttered. "Why won't you come back to me? I'll look after you better, give you more treats. I'll do anything for you if you come back!"

Speedy heard her boy. It wasn't that he had treated her badly. In fact, he was the best human a mouse could ever have. It was just that she had other plans. She wanted to see new things and go to new places. She sat and

wondered what her sisters were doing. *“They were happy just to stay in their cage and play with their humans. Why do I have to be different? Why can't I just be happy like my sisters?”*, she thought.

They say that most pets are like their owners, or in this case, most owners are like their pets. Speedy's boy was always busy. He enjoyed painting and making models, and especially loved engines and motors. He wanted to build his own go-kart and, just like Speedy, wanted to go off and see the world. He probably would when he was older, but at the moment he was content with the loving companionship of a good mouse.

Speedy's boy was finally ready. He had cleared the junk off the bed and prepared a couple of traps. He had placed an empty fish tank on the floor and put a bowl of food in it. He had found the old hamster ladder and taped it to the side of the tank. He was hoping that Speedy would be so hungry that she would smell the food, climb up the ladder, get the food and would not be able to climb out again. He had also put food in an up-turned mouse carry-cage in the hope she would climb into it and not be

able to climb out. *"This was it, it was boy against mouse, and may the best creature win!"*

Speedy's boy snuggled down inside his sleeping bag in anticipation of the night's activities. Everything was dark and quiet in the play room.

Little did Speedy's boy know that she was raiding the food cupboard in the kitchen. She didn't know what most foods were, but she was determined to find something good to eat. She took a nibble here and a nibble there. She tried a packet of pasta and that was too hard. Then she tried a box of corn flour and that was too powdery. She had a quick wash to clean the flour off her whiskers and then decided to go back to the play room to see what her boy was doing.

Once she was in the playroom, she quietly scurried along, trying not to walk on anything that would make a noise. She sneaked around the fish tank, ignoring the food in the bowl. *"What does he think I am?"* she thought. *"I'm not stupid enough to fall for that."*

She flicked her tail and ran over towards the bed. On her way she smelt an empty crisp bag and she put her head into it to investigate. *Crunch!* went the bag. She had accidentally trodden on the edge with her front paw.

Her boy stirred. He had heard the noise but was too tired to move. He thought that if the mouse was in any of the traps he would find her in the morning and quickly fell back into a deep sleep.

Speedy stood up on her hind legs and looked up at her boy. "*Oh, my human*", she thought. "*How I miss going on trips in your pockets and all those treats you gave me.*" She was finding her adventure quite hard. She was tired and thirsty, and she missed being able to snuggle up in a safe nest with her sisters. She crawled under the bed, had a quick wash, curled up and went to sleep knowing that her human was resting safely above her.

Speedy's boy woke up early hoping to find Speedy in one of the traps. He yawned and rubbed his eyes. "Speedy! are you there, Speedy?" he called, as he jumped out of bed. He could remember hearing a noise during the

night. He checked the carry cage. It was empty. Then he went over to the fish tank. "Blast!" he exclaimed.

He stormed out of the room and up the stairs. "Speedy is still out!" he shouted, waking the rest of the household. He jumped into his bed and sobbed into his pillow.

After a while, he had an idea. He was going on a shopping trip with his family later. He pondered. "I wonder if it will work? Speedy must be missing her sisters!" There was no time to lose. He got washed, dressed and prepared for, what he hoped would be, the final trap.

Speedy had investigated everywhere in the play room. She had eaten all her food from the rucksack and was getting tired of having to search for more food. She thought about her sisters snuggled up in their perfect nest, with food and water provided regularly. She thought of her sisters playing with their humans. For a small mouse, it seemed that she had been away from her family for months. The smaller you are, it seems, the faster time flies. Speedy noticed that the house was quiet. She scurried out of the play room, into the kitchen

and round into the lounge. As she went, she thought about her sisters up in their safe cage. A tear welled up in her eye.

When she got into the lounge she noticed that her cage was on the floor. She ran over to it and peered in. "*There they are*", she thought. The three sisters were snuggled comfortably in the warm soft nest. She climbed up into the cage as quietly as she could, eased herself back through the gap and gently climbed down to the floor. Her sisters were sound asleep. Speedy gently curled up beside them. "*Home at last*", she yawned, and fell asleep.

"She's back, she's back!" Speedy's boy cried. "She's come back, while we were out shopping." The mice woke. "What has happened?" asked Valley, Adventure and Splodge. They looked round and saw that Speedy had come home. They bundled over to her, licking and grooming each other as they went.

"*Speedy, where have you been?*" asked Valley.

"*We all missed you,*" added Splodge.

Suddenly the cage door opened. Speedy's boy looked in. He put his hand in to get Speedy out, and brought her close to him. Stroking her, he said "Speedy, I thought you'd never come back. I thought I'd lost you."

He tickled her under the chin and danced around the room with her. He stopped and as he looked into her eyes he said "Next time you want an adventure, we will go together, is that a deal?" Speedy sat in his cupped hands, washed her whiskers and gave her boy a little wink, as if to say, *it's a deal!*

The End

Sara Shebear is passionate about empowering children and writing children's books that have a moral or give an important message. She is currently working with a colleague Felicia Banks, on a series of books about teddy bears with crystal hearts. Each crystal heart gives the bear, and therefore it's child, a particular power.

In each book the reader will find out how a child's life is turned around by having the special teddy bear in their life.

Look out for the first of these books, "*Gary and Carl, The Carnelian Bear*", will be available early 2019.

Sara Shebear also runs wellbeing activities for children. Her ultimate dream is to set up learning centres throughout the UK and the whole world where children come and learn their numeracy and literacy doing a series of projects they are passionate about. These projects, will give them the skills and experience to create a specific career for themselves.

Further information about Sara and her activities can be

found on her website at www.sarashebear.com