

# The Twins and the Tiny Town in the Trees

Written and Illustrated by Ghazal Qadir  
for Conservation Optimism



Autumn was just around the corner and the leaves were starting to change colour.

Two young boys had been spending their days in the woods collecting supplies for their treehouse. They would bring back branches big and small, and large leaves in beautiful colours. They would then proudly present them to their father who was helping them build their little hideaway.

"These will do very well indeed!" their father would tell the twins, and they would all get to work on the treehouse together.

One day, on one of their trips into the woods, the twins heard a strange sound coming from some bushes by a large tree. They carefully approached it, helping each other climb over the large tree roots and tangled vines that covered the forest floor.

"Watch your step there!" called Aasim.

"Oh, careful when you jump down here," said Aazil.





Soon enough, the two had reached the large tree but couldn't see where the sound was coming from. They began to chatter about what it might have been when they were interrupted by a squeaking, much closer than before.

"There it is again!" Aazil whispered.

"I think it's coming from inside the tree!" said Aasim, climbing up to peer into the hollow in the trunk. "Oh! Aazil! Come look at this," he called down to his brother.

Aazil followed, trying to see what his twin had found. "It's a mouse!" he exclaimed. "It looks stuck!"

Sure enough, a mouse larger than any they had seen before with a bushy tail just as big lay in the hollow of the tree under lots of twigs and branches.

The pair quickly picked them up off the mouse, and before they could do much else, the mouse picked up the rest and scurried off deeper into the woods.

"Wait, little mouse!"

"Don't you need the rest of these?"

The two exchanged a look and nodded at each other before jumping off the tree and chasing after the mysterious little creature.





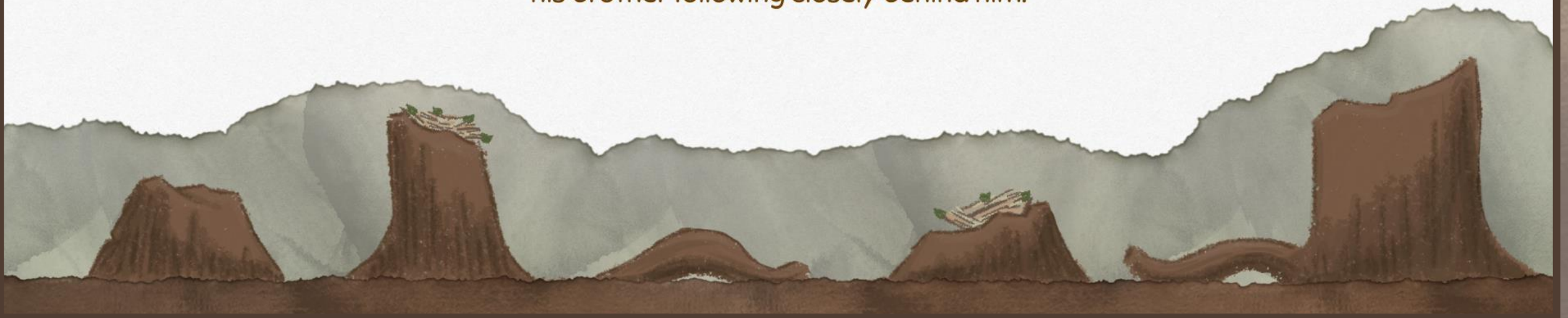
Following the trail of leaves and twigs left by the mouse, the twins soon found themselves in a clearing in the woods. Tree trunks had been chopped, large roots pulled out, shrubs and bushes cut, and amongst it all were little nests made of twigs, grass, and leaves. A few still sat in the hollows of the trees but they looked damaged, while others had fallen to the ground.

"What happened here..." Aasim whispered, coming to a stop.

"Look at all these little homes. Whoever lives in them must be so sad and scared," said Aazil, placing a hand on his brother's shoulder.

"They look like they're made from the same materials the little mouse was carrying," Aasim thought out loud.

"You're right," Aazil agreed. "Look, there it goes now!" he exclaimed, and he took off running after the mouse again, his brother following closely behind him.





The mouse had run into the cover of trees, and climbed up to the hollow of one. There it began placing the twigs and leaves it had collected before scurrying about anxiously. The twins saw this and realised it had run out of supplies so they slowly approached it, placing the materials they had picked up by the base of the tree.

"Here you go, little one, " said one.

"We brought these over for you when you dropped them, " said the other.

"We're sorry your old home got destroyed."

"But we'll help you build a new one before you know it."

"A new tiny town in the trees!" they said together.

The little mouse squealed, skittering about excitedly.

"It's getting late now, but we'll be back with supplies tomorrow, okay?"

"Yeah, we need to do a little research first, then we'll come help tomorrow." With that, the brothers set off home, buzzing with determination.





Later that night, the twins were still awake learning about the little mice that lived in the trees, talking, and passing books and notebooks up and down their bunk bed. They discovered that the mice in the woods were known as forest dormice, and that they made their homes in the nooks and crannies of the woods with twigs and branches, and grass and leaves. They also learned that dormice needed to stay warm and rest in the colder weather, and the days of autumn had already started to grow colder.

## BALUCHISTAN FOREST DORMOUSE

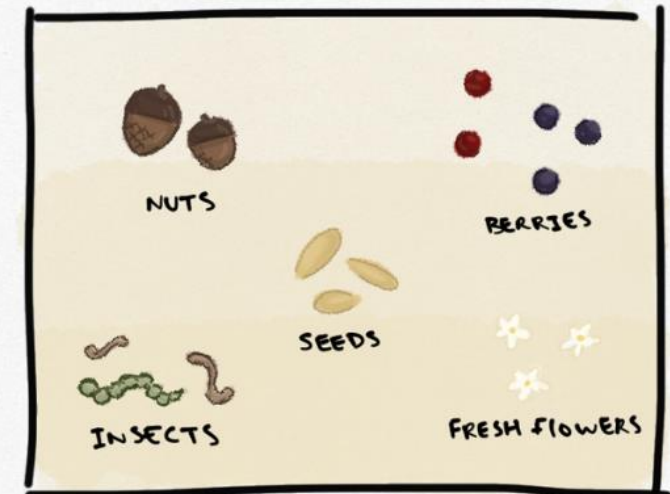
NESTS



MATERIALS



FOOD







"They don't have much time till they need to hibernate." Aasim worried.

"Their homes won't be ready in time for the cold at this rate," his brother agreed.

"The treehouse!" they shouted together.

"Sleep time voices, boys!" their father chided from the other room.

"Sorry!" they called back before returning to their conversation in hushed voices.

"The supplies from the treehouse, we can share them with the dormice," Aazil whispered.

"Exactly! That way they might be able to get the tiny town done in time for the cold," Aasim added.

"Is the list ready?"

"Ready, Sir Aasim!"

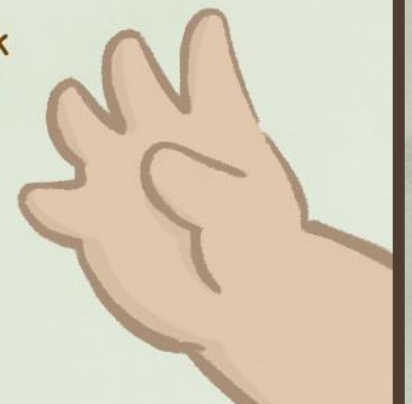
"Sir?" his brother asked.

"Yeah! Like a knight! We're the Knights of the Forest!" Aasim cheered.

"Right! Guardians of Tiny Town! Sir Aasim and Sir Aazil!" cried Aazil, reaching over the top bunk to grab his brother in a knight's handshake. His brother grabbed his arm tightly in response and the two nodded seriously before grinning widely at each other.

"Goodnight, Sir Aazil."

"Goodnight, Sir Aasim."





The next day, the two little knights of the forest woke up bright and early, notebook and supplies in hand and ready to get to work another day in Tiny Town. Before heading outside, they grabbed some small red blankets and tied them around each other like fluffy little red capes. Then, they stopped by their treehouse to grab as many materials as they could carry, checking them off their checklist, and they were on their way. When they arrived at the new site, there were more dormice skittering about, building their little homes. The twins quickly went to work, dividing the materials they brought and placing them by the bases of the trees.

They were busy helping when Aasim felt a tap on his shoe. He looked down to see the dormouse from the previous day tapping at his foot before he made his way to Aazil, who looked down to see it brushing its bushy tail over his shoes. After grabbing their attention, the little mouse led the twins to a hollowed tree. The twins peered inside to see two even tinier dormice asleep and snuggled up together in a pile of grass and leaves. They smiled at the sight, and then at each other before grabbing a large leaf each and gently placing it on top of them like little blankets.









They had just got back to work when moments later, there came a squealing from within the hollow behind them. They saw the little mouse pacing up and down the tree anxiously again.

“What’s wrong?” asked Aazil.

“Why are your babies crying?” asked Aasim.

The dormouse turned to them and made a nibbling gesture before scurrying off into the forest.

“They’re hungry!” the twins realised. They grabbed each other’s arms again in their knight’s handshake and cheered, “Guardians of Tiny Town!” before racing after the dormouse.

The three of them spent all morning collecting nuts and berries before setting off back to Tiny Town. The twins looked over to see the little dormouse carrying a large acorn in one hand, a berry branch in the other, with all it’s might. A large leaf had even caught on his fur, fluttering behind him like a little green cape.

“Aasim, doesn’t it...” started Aazil.

“Look like a knight?” his brother finished. The two grinned at each other.

“Little mouse!” Aasim called. The dormouse turned to look at him. “We dub thee Sir Chotu!”

“It means ‘tiny!’” Aazil added. “Sir Chotu, Grand Knight of Tiny Town!” he cheered.

Sir Chotu squeaked happily, and the three of them made their way back with their spirits high.





With the help of the twins, Sir Chotu and the dormice were able to feed the young, and start to store some food for the cold months ahead. The tiny town in the trees was coming along well but there was still more work to be done before the hibernating season. So, day after day the little knights of the forest returned to help their little neighbours while slowly working on their own treehouse with their father, careful not to use materials that the dormice might need.

A few days later, when their treehouse was finally done and the twins went to check on it, they noticed a small trinket made of acorn and spun grass waiting for them on a nearby tree branch that looked like it could only be made by the amazing dormice. They exchanged a sweet smile and hung it on the entrance to their treehouse when they heard a familiar squeaking. They raced over to the window of their treehouse to see Sir Chotu waiting for them.







“Sir Chotu! It’s so nice to see you,” Aasim greeted.



“Thank you for the gift you made for us,” Aazil added politely, his brother nodding in agreement beside him.

The little dormouse waved its bushy tail about happily.



“Shouldn’t you be getting ready to hibernate?” Aasim asked.



“Maybe Sir Chotu came to say goodbye,” Aazil wondered out loud.



Sir Chotu jumped into their treehouse and affectionately nuzzled their legs before climbing back up to the windowsill.




“Just because Tiny Town is complete, doesn’t mean we won’t still protect you,” Aasim said.




“That’s right. If you ever need us, we’ll always be there for you. We’re your knights after all,” Aazil assured.

“So this isn’t goodbye, we’ll see you in the spring, Sir Chotu!” his brother said.



“And we’ll take care of the forest for you until then, Grand Knight,” said the other twin.



The twins grabbed each other in another knight’s special handshake, and Sir Chotu hopped on with a mighty squeak, and the three of them cheered.



"To the Guardians of Tiny Town!"





End.

