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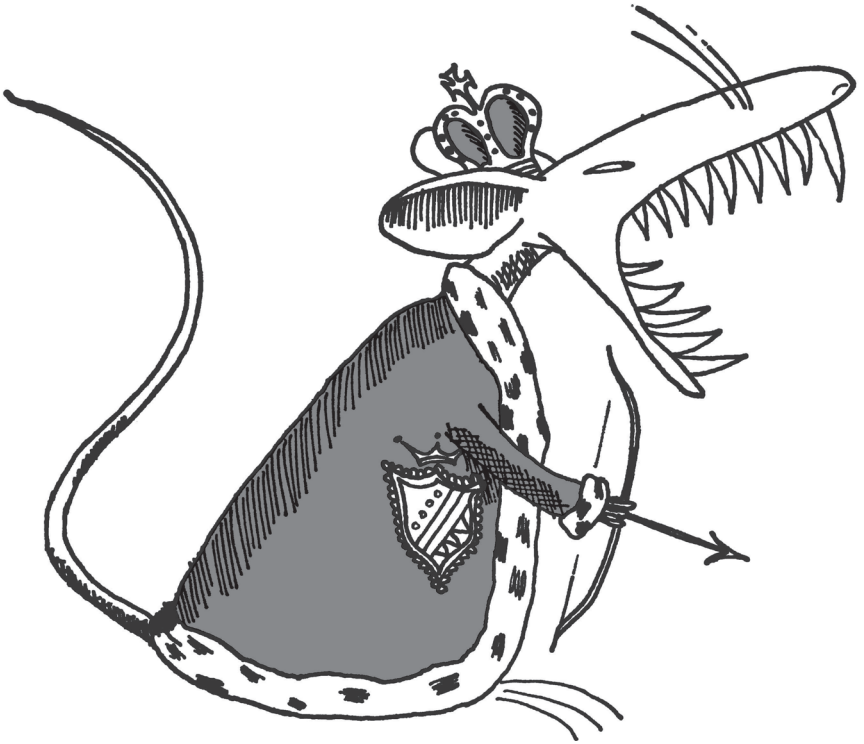
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THE MOUSE THAT  
**ROARED**



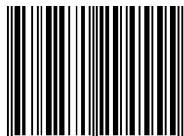
**THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY**

# The Mouse That Roared

**Comedy. Adapted by Christopher Sergel. Based on the book by Leonard Wibberley.**

**Cast: 14m., 16w., extras if desired (doubling possible).** "Hilarious, rib-tickling comedy," wrote one leading critic, adding that he considers it "the funniest on record." The wonderful audience response to this show has been shared in the enthusiastic reaction of the critics who admire not only its sharp wit but also its wisdom. A pretty girl of 22 happens to be the present Duchess Gloriana, sovereign of a microscopic country in the Alps founded centuries ago by a roving band of English bowmen. Gloriana's unique solution to the near bankruptcy of her tiny domain is to declare war on the United States! There's some method to her madness, however, for her study of recent history suggests that the surest way to wealth today is to lose a war with the U.S., for that country's odd reaction is to pour aid, relief and rehabilitation on the vanquished. When her "declaration" is considered a prank, Gloriana decides to escalate! Tully Bascomb, presently in charge of the bowmen, is to launch an attack so they can surrender and reap the rewards. Serious-minded Tully, however, upsets all calculations when he and his bowmen do the last thing expected—they win! You'll find comment in the comedy crescendo that follows including some pointed kind words for America. This rare comedy uses the magic of the theatre to invite your audience to enjoy the delight of the "impossible." *Area staging.*

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A FULL-LENGTH COMEDY

# The Mouse That Roared

adapted by  
CHRISTOPHER SERGEL

from the book by  
LEONARD WIBBERLEY



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(THE MOUSE THAT ROARED)

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## THE MOUSE THAT ROARED

*A Comedy in Two Acts*

For thirteen men, sixteen women. Smaller with doubling. Extras as desired.

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### CHARACTERS

Female:

GLORIANA THE TWELFTH. *twenty-two-year-old sovereign of Grand Fenwick*  
MARY, JANE, FRAN, PAM. . . . . *attractive American tourists*  
ANN. . . . . *peasant girl of Grand Fenwick, who treads on grapes*  
NORMA and HELEN. . . *two girls of Grand Fenwick*  
PAGE. . . . . *a young girl who is Court Page*  
MISS JOHNSON. . . . *secretary to Secretary of State of the United States*  
MISS WILKINS. . . . . *secretary to the President of the United States*  
MRS. REINER. *housekeeper for Professor Kokintz*  
JILL, DEBBIE. . . . *two Army officers, daughters of General Snippet*  
MRS. BASCOM. . . . . *Tully Bascom's mother*  
PROFESSOR SMITH. . . . *a young female professor at Columbia University*  
GIRL SIGHT-SEER . . . . . *extra*

Male:

TULLY BASCOM. . . . *a forest ranger and, later, High Constable of Grand Fenwick*

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COUNT MOUNTJOY. . . *an aristocrat, and leader of  
Grand Fenwick's Anti-Dilutionist Party*  
DAVID BENTER. . . . . *a Man-of-People leader of  
Grand Fenwick's Dilutionist Party*  
MR. BESTON. . . . . *Secretary of State of the  
United States*  
PROFESSOR KOKINTZ. . . . . *a brilliant nuclear  
physicist*  
ASSISTANT. . . . . *to Professor Kokintz*  
PRESIDENT. . . *chief executive of the United States*  
GENERAL SNIPPET. . . . . *in charge of Security,  
First Army District*  
WILL TATUM. . . . . *standard-bearer for  
Grand Fenwick*  
FOUR SOLDIERS. . . . . *men of Grand Fenwick*  
STUDENTS, SIGHT-SEER. . . . . *extras*

Extra soldiers and citizens of Grand Fenwick may be added at director's option, as desired, along with some optional "students."

NOTE: Radio voices may be spoken by any off-stage actors.

A number of roles may be doubled and the cast thereby reduced.

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# ACT ONE

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THE HOUSELIGHTS DIM, and after the house is dark, there are about five seconds of silence. Then suddenly there is a tremendous roaring for several seconds. As the roaring subsides, the lights come up immediately in front of the curtain, and at the same time a few gentle bird calls are heard.)

(TULLY BASCOM, a very pleasant mild-mannered young man, comes on L. He appears to be looking down [with disapproval] at a very small animal that is presumably scurrying away to R from him.)

TULLY (following, as he addresses the imaginary creature). Shameful little mouse--you scared those ladies! (Reproving.) The first visitors to our National Forest this month! (Grimly.) Some day you'll meet a cat who's lost her hearing, and that'll be the end of you.

(Four camera and kit-bag laden American girl tourists--JANE, MARY, FRAN and PAM--are coming on L.)

JANE (meanwhile speaking to the other girls). What was the big roar?

MARY. Someone gunning the engine of a truck.

FRAN (nervously). Otherwise there's a lion on the



loose!

PAM. Don't be crazy--we're in Europe. (Concerned.) Somewhere.

TULLY (aside to mouse). Keep it quiet, you loud mouth rodent!

JANE (approaching TULLY, hesitantly). Sir--  
*monsieur--nous sommes avec American Express, mais--mais----*

PAM. *Mais nous sommes perdus.*

FRAN (as TULLY looks puzzled). I bet we crossed into Italy. *Signor, cerco la via.* (TULLY shakes his head, bewildered.)

MARY. Could be Switzerland. *Ich weis nicht wo ist der Amerikanischer Express Haus? Wo ist----*

TULLY (cutting in, pleasantly). I speak English. (There is a general sigh of relief.)

JANE (admiring). You Europeans speak so many languages.

TULLY. I'm afraid I speak only English.

JANE. You're a tourist, too?

TULLY. No, no--I live here.

PAM. But this is----

TULLY. Fenwick. (With pride.) The Duchy of Grand Fenwick. Our sovereign is the Duchess Gloriana--the Twelfth.

FRAN. We're really lost! We rented a car this morning in Nice--which is in France.

MARY. We left the car to do a little birdwatching--but----

TULLY. You've come to the right place. I've written a book about our birds. (Hopefully.) Perhaps you've heard of it--"Migratory Birds of Grand Fenwick"?

JANE. I've never heard of Fenwick.

TULLY. You're in Grand Fenwick. (Indicating.) This is our National Forest. I'm the chief ranger--(Presenting himself.) Tully Bascom.

PAM. Please--which way is the road?

TULLY. But wouldn't you like to see our forest?

It has a variety of trees, a waterfall twenty feet high, and a haunted oak where a mad huntsman is supposed to have hanged himself.

MARY. So does the park in Peoria, Illinois.

FRAN (politely). We've hardly time for the major sights.

TULLY. I could take you on a quick tour. (Almost a plea.) Don't pass up a country just because it's small.

PAM. How small?

TULLY. Five miles long by three miles wide.

MARY. I suppose it's one of these tax haven places.

TULLY (stung). Grand Fenwick was founded by a roving band of English bowmen before the discovery of America.

JANE. That's very interesting, but----

TULLY (wound up). The father of our country, Sir Roger Fenwick, came to France with Edward the Third, and he stayed on to form a free company of his own, with which he won his duchy. Our flag was first raised in the year 1370!

PAM (suspiciously). What does your flag look like?

TULLY. A double-headed eagle. From one beak the eagle is saying--"yea." And from the other--"Nay."

FRAN. But why would the king of France----

TULLY. Charles the Wise.

FRAN. Why would he let Fenwick get away with it?

TULLY. Twice Charles sent expeditions, and twice they were repulsed--thanks to the power of the English longbow.

MARY. But after that?

TULLY. Sir Roger had the good fortune to establish this duchy in an extraordinary location, and as a result----

PAM (cutting in). What's so extraordinary about it?

TULLY. No coal, no iron, no oil, no precious metals. No harbors or waterways.

FRAN. No wonder you're left alone.

TULLY (still hopeful). It wouldn't take me long to point out some of our native birds.

PAM. How can a nation five miles by three claim native birds?

TULLY. How can your village of Baltimore claim an oriole? The only being who could really pass on the nationality of a bird--is the bird.

JANE. Okay, you've got birds. Anything else?

TULLY. An excellent wine with an unusual bouquet. It's our only export. Pinot Grand Fenwick.

MARY (to TULLY). We must get back to the road.

JANE. Yea or Nay?

TULLY (gesturing back L). That way--just walk straight.

PAM. I'm sorry we can't take time for your country, too. (The girls are going L.)

TULLY (after them). We also have an unusual variety of field mouse, and it's tiny--like our country, but----

JANE. Good-by.

MARY. If you're ever in Peoria----(They complete exit L. TULLY turns quickly DC.)

TULLY (encouraging the mouse). Go ahead! Give them a scare! (From off R someone calls.)

VOICE. Tully! Tully Bascom!

TULLY (calling back R). Yes--here! (Back to the mouse, disgusted.) The one time I ask you!

(ANN, a barefoot peasant girl, comes on R.)

ANN. Tully----

TULLY. What is it?

ANN. You're wanted at the castle.

TULLY (surprised). Me?

ANN. There's an emergency meeting of the Privy Council--called by Gloriana!

TULLY. But why would they want me?

ANN (shrugging). It really must be an emergency!

TULLY. When your sovereign is a twenty-two-year-old girl, you never know what to expect! (Remembering, wryly.) I used to see her a lot. Now it takes an emergency.

ANN. Tully--if the meeting should be about wine production, could you put in a word for modern methods? This tramping on grapes----(Holds up a grape-stained foot.) It's so hard to get off, I go around with purple feet! (There is a trumpet fanfare in the distance.)

TULLY (looking R, impressed). Say--it is an emergency. (Starting R.) Come on. (As they go off R, there is another fanfare, this one much closer.)

SCENE: The curtain rises to reveal a nearly bare stage that is divided into three sections. At R there is a platform approximately a foot and a half high that extends in from the right side to about one-quarter of the way across the stage. A similar platform extends in a similar distance from the left. [NOTE: If the platforms are not practical for your stage, some sort of neutral room-divider, or a low section of screen, can be set up approximately one-quarter of the distance in from each side. The important thing is to suggest the separation of these three stage areas from each other.] The only furniture on stage at rise of curtain is in the center section. UC is a high-backed chair that should be as splendid as possible, for it is the throne of Grand Fenwick. Near the throne

is a small table with a bowl of fruit on it. The throne is flanked by two small stools. A bit downstage and to the side of the center group are two more modest chairs, one facing in from the right and one from the left. If desired, a colorful touch can be added by making a large flag of Grand Fenwick, which should have the double-headed eagle with one beak saying "Yea" and the other "Nay" as described by Tully Bascom. If used, the flag should be hanging above and behind the throne.)

**AT RISE OF CURTAIN:** **COUNT MOUNTJOY** strides on L, and crosses to the right chair, in which he seats himself. His clothes suggest the aristocracy. At the same time, **DAVID BENTER** comes on R, and crosses to the left chair, in which he seats himself. He is obviously a "man of the people," and he wears a rumpled suit. The two men glare across at each other.)

**BENTER.** Our people expect us to do something.

**MOUNTJOY.** Our people should leave these questions to their hereditary leaders.

**BENTER.** You're finding the constitution inconvenient again?

**MOUNTJOY** (sighing). I just say it's too bad the twelfth Count of Mountjoy has to debate policy with Mister Benter, descendant of a simple yeoman.

**BENTER.** A yeoman who accompanied Sir Roger Fenwick when he stormed the castle in which you're now standing.

(**A PAGE**, a petite girl, wearing a page-boy outfit, has entered L and is crossing to throne. There

is another fanfare.)

**MOUNTJOY.** Your family has managed to mention that fact at every parliamentary election since the Fifteenth Century.

**PAGE.** The Duchess Gloriana the Twelfth. (**BENTER** and **MOUNTJOY** come to attention.)

(**GLORIANA**, a stunning girl, comes on. **PAGE** exits.)

**GLORIANA.** Pray be seated. (As they seat themselves.) We have called this emergency meeting to allow both leaders to speak before we reach our decision.

**MOUNTJOY.** Yes, your Highness.

**GLORIANA** (noticing fruit bowl and taking piece as she seats herself). Before we became your duchess, we were limited to one pomegranate at Christmas. If neither party can solve the financial crisis, we may have to go back to that--perhaps give them up entirely.

**MOUNTJOY** (amused). But, my lady----

**GLORIANA** (continuing, artlessly). We'll also have to devalue the Fenwick florin, lower wages and cancel all benefits--(She smiles.)--along with pomegranates.

**BENTER.** Never!

**GLORIANA.** We appreciate your concern. (She sits back.) Since the market for our wine has been stolen by a cheap imitation being manufactured now in California, we no longer have enough foreign exchange to pay for the import of necessities. We recognize David Benter, Esquire.

**BENTER.** I say, add a little water to the fermentation vats, lower our prices, and try to compete with the imitation.

MOUNTJOY. Dilutionist! (Urbanely.) My lady, those who would add water to Pinot Grand Fenwick would debase any work of art. They'd put the DaVinci portrait of Gloriana the Sixth on a postage stamp and use the words of our immortal bard, Horace Bentshield, to sell truffles. No, no--there's a better way to raise funds.

GLORIANA. Which is?

MOUNTJOY. What every country does--Get it from America.

BENTER. America won't even answer our protests.

MOUNTJOY. Instead of demanding justice, let's try asking for money.

GLORIANA (doubtfully). I don't think it's so easy getting money from America any more.

MOUNTJOY. Wait till you hear my scheme.

GLORIANA. It's not enough these days just to say you're threatened by subversives.

MOUNTJOY (at the same time). We'll say we're threatened by subversives.

GLORIANA (pained). Uncle.

MOUNTJOY. Maoists? Right Wing extremists? Students?

BENTER (nervously). Students!

GLORIANA. That's your plan?

MOUNTJOY (indignantly defensive). We'll set up a real party, stage demonstrations, appeal publicly to China--or Rhodesia!

BENTER. I don't like it. Suppose, by some wild chance, they do take over.

MOUNTJOY. I've solved that, too. For the leader of this temporary movement, I've picked a simple-minded non-political backwoodsman.

(PAGE enters.)

GLORIANA. You're sure he'd be safe?

MOUNTJOY. I've already sent for him, and you can judge for yourself.

PAGE. Your Highness, Tully Bascom is outside claiming he'd been summoned to this meeting.

GLORIANA. Tully Bascom?

MOUNTJOY. That's our man. His main interest is birds.

GLORIANA. I know. (Answering their surprise.) When my father was still alive, I used to climb trees in the National Forest. I even built a birdhouse for some swallows.

MOUNTJOY. If you don't think he's the right man for the job----

GLORIANA. Oh, he's the right man.

(TULLY enters.)

PAGE (as TULLY enters). Tully Bascom. (TULLY and GLORIANA regard each other. The PAGE exits.)

TULLY. Hello, Glory. (Remembering.) Your Highness.

GLORIANA. We--we haven't seen you in some time.

TULLY (lightly). Not since you started calling yourself "we."

BENTER. Be respectful, sir.

GLORIANA. We--I--I only do it sometimes.

TULLY. You've always known where to find me. The National Forest needs constant attention. (Proudly.) We had four visitors today!

MOUNTJOY (irked). Her Highness has more to do these days than build bird houses.

GLORIANA. I don't suppose it's still around?

TULLY. There's a colony of Scissor-Tail Swallows from Sicily in it now. I've kept it repaired.



GLORIANA (feeling she'd better get to business).

The reason you were called--could you take time from your work to form a new political party--of Communists?

TULLY. I'd rather not, thank you. Their philosophy doesn't seem to work out very well--especially in agricultural regions.

MOUNTJOY. We wouldn't want the party to be successful, just appear successful.

BENTER. So the Americans will loan us some money.

TULLY. To save us from the Communists? (They nod. He shakes his head.) It's a trick, and even if the trick were successful, we wouldn't be saved. We'd have sold our honor. We'd have deliberately defrauded another nation.

GLORIANA. Your principles are magnificent.

Meanwhile, I've got to save the Duchy.

TULLY. Save it from what?

GLORIANA. Bankruptcy.

TULLY. If you can't do it honorably, it isn't worth saving.

MOUNTJOY. Oh, no!

GLORIANA. Tully--what am I to do?

TULLY. Why don't we just raise the price of Pinot Grand Fenwick? There's a big demand for it.

BENTER. Not any more. An American vintner in a place called California is using our label, the picture of our castle, and selling at half our price.

MOUNTJOY. They call it Pinot Grand Enwick. They've ruined our economy.

GLORIANA. What's the honorable course now?

TULLY (indignant). An official letter demanding an end to this fraud and prompt reparations.

GLORIANA. We've sent such letters. They're

ignored.

TULLY. In that case--our demands being just--we'll have to enforce them.

GLORIANA. How?

TULLY. We can't let them ruin us. If they won't respond to our protests, we'll have to declare war.

BENTER. What?

MOUNTJOY. A declaration----

TULLY (nodding). I don't hold with surprise attacks.

GLORIANA. Against the United States of America!

TULLY. And to make certain there's no misunderstanding, send it registered mail, return receipt requested.

GLORIANA (incredulous). Tully--we've no weapons, no factories, no resources--and only six thousand people.

TULLY. But we're in the right.

GLORIANA. Stop being so simple-minded and consider the consequences.

TULLY. If they won't negotiate honorably, we'll have to fight regardless of the consequences.

GLORIANA. Which are that we'd lose. If you'd study recent history, you'd realize that the consequences of losing a war to the United States would mean----(Struck by a new thought, she hesitates.) History shows----(Stops herself. Thoughtfully.) This has to be considered.

MOUNTJOY. Considered! What are you----

GLORIANA (stopping him by offering bowl). Pomegranate, Uncle? (He takes a bit of fruit.)

TULLY. If there's anything to heredity, you'll reach the right decision--and I offer myself as the first volunteer.

GLORIANA (filled with a new thought). You may have solved our problem, Tully. You really