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Country Mouse and the Missing Lunch Mystery

Commissioned by Springfield Little Theatre
and funded by Kraft Foods Corporation Inc.

CHARACTERS

COUNTRY MOUSE

CITY MOUSE

FIRST LITTLE KITTEN

SECOND LITTLE KITTEN

THIRD LITTLE KITTEN

BUS DRIVER

MOUSE PATROL

BUS RIDERS and DEPUTY MICE (optional)

Note: BUS DRIVER and MOUSE PATROL may be doublecast for a cast of 6 actors, or MOUSE PATROL may be played by more than one actor—a MOUSE CHIEF and extras as DEPUTY MICE. If extras are used, they may also be seen as additional riders on the bus. These extras may be chosen ahead of time from the audience, in which case two groups of children will be assigned roles as either bus riders or deputies. While female and male here, characters may be of either gender, with pronouns changed accordingly. KITTENS are larger than MICE, but should still be fun, not frightening.

TIME: Just before lunch...

SETTING: COUNTRY MOUSE's kitchen is R. CITY MOUSE's kitchen is L. Each has a small table or counter with a telephone on it, and perhaps a stove or refrigerator. They "share" a long table and chairs at C, with tablecloths and chairs showing their different styles on either side of an imaginary line down the center of the table. At times, downstage serves as a country road and a city street. A signpost indicates CITY to the left; COUNTRY, to the right.

PLAYING TIME: about 30 minutes

Country Mouse and the Missing Lunch Mystery

AT RISE: *A plate of cheese sits on COUNTRY MOUSE's side of the table. Meows, giggles and "shushings" are heard offstage L. MUSIC plays. THREE LITTLE KITTENS sneak onto stage from UL, motion audience to "hush," tiptoe over to COUNTRY MOUSE's side of table. ALL wiggle their noses, searching for food. MUSIC fades under dialogue.*

FIRST KITTEN. He's gone for now!

SECOND KITTEN. Hurry!

THIRD KITTEN. Hush!

SECOND KITTEN. Quick! Before he hears us!

FIRST KITTEN. Shhhhhhhh! (*Follows nose to cheese.*)
There it is!

THIRD KITTEN (*also zeroing in on cheese*). A plate of cheese!

SECOND KITTEN. Cheese! My favorite!

THIRD KITTEN. Meow-meow-meee-yummy!

COUNTRY MOUSE (*offstage R, singing*). Old MacDonald
had a farm, E-I-E-I-O...

FIRST KITTEN. He's coming back!

SECOND KITTEN. Hurry!

THIRD KITTEN. Sshhhhhhhhhh!

(*KITTENS grab cheese, leaving empty plate, and dash off UL. COUNTRY MOUSE enters DR with two baskets,*

*one filled with eggs, the other with fruit and vegetables.
Still singing:)*

COUNTRY MOUSE. And on that farm he had some eggs, E-I-E-I-O. With a— *(He looks around, puzzled.)* SQUEEEK! Something's not right here. *(He puts down baskets, gets himself more and more worked up as he tries to calm himself down.)* It must be me. I'm just too nervous, that's all. I've got to calm down. Just because my cousin City Mouse is coming for lunch is no reason to get myself in a tizzy. Just because my cousin City Mouse is a gourmet cook and the fussiest eater in the entire mouse world is no reason to get myself all in a dither. Just because my cousin City Mouse has never once entirely approved of anything I've served her to eat is no reason to get myself turned inside out and upside down! *(In a tizzy, in a dither, and totally turned.)* SQUEEEEEEEK! Squeak-squeak-squeaksqueaksqueak!

(CITY MOUSE appears, L, a figment of his overheated imagination, much more stiff and formal than she will appear in real life. COUNTRY MOUSE mimes fetching and offering food, but to audience, not directly to her. She reacts with very formal politeness, but to audience, not directly to him.)

COUNTRY MOUSE. The first time she came to visit, I offered her cheese, and she said—

CITY MOUSE *(pleasant, well-mannered, but confused by the lack of variety).* Cheese! *(Mimes tasting a bit.)* Very nice. But is this all?

COUNTRY MOUSE. What more do we need?

CITY MOUSE. A slice of bread, perhaps?

COUNTRY MOUSE. So the next time she came to visit—
(*CITY MOUSE spins in place, “arrives” again*) I offered her bread, and she said—

CITY MOUSE. Bread! (*Mimes tasting, as before.*) Very nice. But is this all?

COUNTRY MOUSE. What more do we need?

CITY MOUSE. An egg, perhaps?

COUNTRY MOUSE. So the next time she came to visit—
(*CITY MOUSE “reenters” as above*) I offered her a dozen eggs, and she said—

CITY MOUSE. A dozen eggs. Very...generous. (*Mimes tasting, as above.*) But is this all?

COUNTRY MOUSE. *What more do we need?*

CITY MOUSE. Veggies, perhaps? A piece of fruit?

COUNTRY MOUSE. So the next time she came to visit—
(*CITY MOUSE “reenters” as above*) I offered her a whole basketful of apples, and she wanted—

COUNTRY MOUSE & CITY MOUSE (*he’s exasperated; she’s matter-of-fact*). CHEESE!

COUNTRY MOUSE (*as CITY MOUSE moves away and begins fussing, realistically now, around the kitchen on her side of stage*). I didn’t realize until I finally ventured into the city and had lunch at *her* house that she meant she enjoyed a little of everything, all at once, instead of one treat at a time! Why didn’t she just *say* so? Too polite, I suppose. Well, I’ve got it all straight this time. (*Checks baskets, breadbox.*) Eggs and fruit and vegetables and bread and cheese and— (*Checks table.*) Oh, no! Where is my cheese? There *was* cheese! On a plate. On this table. A moment ago. I know I had cheese! SQUEEEK!

(He dashes off R, squeaking. MUSIC. KITTENS tiptoe in L, sniffing for treats.)

FIRST KITTEN. Look! A basket of eggs.

SECOND KITTEN. Eggs! My *best* favorite!

THIRD KITTEN. Meow-meow-meeee-yummy!

(KITTENS pass eggs to one another, then exit, leaving empty basket as COUNTRY MOUSE reenters, in a tizzy. MUSIC ends.)

COUNTRY MOUSE. SQUEEEK! Squeak-squeak-squeak-squeaksqueak! No cheese, anywhere! What am I to do? My cousin City Mouse will be so disappointed. I better call her and let her know ahead of time so she can prepare herself to be disappointed...again. *(He dials; phone rings in CITY MOUSE's kitchen.)*

CITY MOUSE *(answers phone)*. City Mouse here.

COUNTRY MOUSE. Oh, Cousin City Mouse, I have terrible news for you.

CITY MOUSE *(always calm and somewhat formal, but not cold)*. Terrible news?

COUNTRY MOUSE. Yes. It seems that all my cheese—has disappeared.

CITY MOUSE. Disappeared, you say?

COUNTRY MOUSE. Vanished. Evaporated. Poof! All gone.

CITY MOUSE. That is very strange.

COUNTRY MOUSE. Isn't it though? *(Begins to sniffle.)*

And I did so want to serve you *all* of your favorites, all at once, just the way you like them.

CITY MOUSE (*genuinely kind, far kinder than he expected*). Never mind, Cousin Country Mouse. I've plenty of cheese here. I'll bring some along for our luncheon.

COUNTRY MOUSE. Oh, will you? Oh, that's wonderful! Oh, thank you, Cousin City Mouse!

CITY MOUSE. No trouble at all. See you soon! (*She hangs up; goes to prepare cheese and place it in a small basket.*)

COUNTRY MOUSE (*hangs up*). Well, isn't she a dear! Even if she is a fussy eater! (*Bustling about kitchen.*) So, we'll have some nice cheese after all. And bread. And fruit and veggies. And eggs and... (*Looks in egg basket.*) Where are the eggs? What's going on here? First the cheese disappears, now the eggs are gone! Could the chickens have taken them back? SQUEAK! Squeak-squeak-squeaksqueaksqueak!

(*He runs off. MUSIC. KITTENS reenter, find fruit and vegetables, as before.*)

FIRST KITTEN. Look! Fruit and veggies!

SECOND KITTEN. Fruit and veggies! My *super-duper* best favorites!

THIRD KITTEN. Meow-meow-me-double-yummy-wow!

(*KITTENS pass out fruit and vegetables until COUNTRY MOUSE enters and they run off. MUSIC ends.*)

COUNTRY MOUSE (*quietly desperate now*). No luck. No eggs. Nowhere. (*Goes to phone and dials.*) Wait 'til my Cousin City Mouse hears about this!

(PHONE rings in CITY MOUSE's kitchen.)

CITY MOUSE *(answers phone)*. City Mouse here.

COUNTRY MOUSE. Hello. It's me again.

CITY MOUSE. Oh, hello. I've got the cheese all packed. I was just about to leave—

COUNTRY MOUSE. There's something I need to tell you first.

CITY MOUSE. Yes?

COUNTRY MOUSE. It's about the eggs.

CITY MOUSE. Yes? What about the eggs?

COUNTRY MOUSE *(with great difficulty, great regret)*. They're...all...oh...nothing.

CITY MOUSE. You've called to tell me nothing about the eggs?

COUNTRY MOUSE. No. I've called to tell you the eggs are nothing. No way. No how. No where.

CITY MOUSE. You mean—the eggs are gone? As is the cheese?

COUNTRY MOUSE. I'm afraid so. *(Begins to sob now, more and more loudly.)*

CITY MOUSE. My goodness!

COUNTRY MOUSE *(blows his nose)*. Oh, I knew you'd be upset. And I so wanted to serve you all your favorites, all at once, just the way you like them.

CITY MOUSE. Now-now, this is only a minor setback. I've plenty of eggs. I'll just pack them in with the cheese and be on my way.

COUNTRY MOUSE. Oh, thank you, Cousin City Mouse.

CITY MOUSE. Think nothing of it. *(She hangs up the phone; takes the cheese out of the small basket and repacks it in a larger basket, with eggs.)*

COUNTRY MOUSE (*hanging up the phone*). What a nice mouse! (*Checks on his goods.*) SO—we shall have eggs and cheese after all. And bread and fruit and— (*Realizes basket of fruit and vegetables is gone.*) SQUEEEEEEEK! My beautiful fruit and veggies are gone! Who is doing this? And *why*? Oh, there's no time to worry about that now. I must gather more food!

(*He runs off. MUSIC. KITTENS enter, as before.*)

FIRST KITTEN. Look! Freshly baked bread!

SECOND KITTEN. Bread! My *other* super-duper best favorite!

THIRD KITTEN. Meow-meow-me-triple-yummy-wow!

(*They load up with bread and run off as COUNTRY MOUSE reenters and MUSIC ends.*)

COUNTRY MOUSE (*angry now*). Too late! It's market day. Everything ripe has been picked clean off the vine, clear off the tree. There's not a bean left to boil! (*Dials phone.*) How can I tell my cousin City Mouse? (*As phone rings in CITY MOUSE's kitchen.*) What will she think? What will she say? What will she do?

CITY MOUSE (*answering phone*). City Mouse here. (*COUNTRY MOUSE tries to speak, but all that comes out is a series of inarticulate SQUEAKS.*) Hello? Is anyone there? Cousin Country Mouse, is that you? (*She SQUEAKS and nods, trying to say, "Yes, it's me."*) Have you lost something else? (*He SQUEAKS something like, "Yes, the fruit and the veggies and there's nothing left to pick and I don't know what to do..." but*

CITY MOUSE can't really understand him. She takes a guess.) The fruit, perhaps? (He nods vigorously, whimpering and squeaking in fury. As he squeaks, CITY MOUSE gets out an even bigger basket and transfers the cheese and eggs.) And the vegetables? (More nods and whimpering. An even bigger basket, but before she begins to fill it, CITY MOUSE pauses to ask:.) And the bread? (COUNTRY MOUSE whimpers "no," then glances around, notices bread is missing and squeaks a frantic affirmative.) Now-now, Cousin Country Mouse, calm down. I have cheese. I have eggs. I have fruit. I have vegetables. I have bread. (COUNTRY MOUSE is still inarticulate, but calming down.) The only problem is, I can't carry them all. (COUNTRY MOUSE's happier squeaks falter and fall.) So why don't you just pull yourself together, get on the bus, and come here for lunch? After all, this is where lunch seems to be.

COUNTRY MOUSE (pulling himself together). Oh, Cousin City Mouse, you are so kind!

CITY MOUSE. Think nothing of it. Hurry along!

(She hangs up and gets to work unpacking basket, creating a sumptuous feast, setting the table, etc. COUNTRY MOUSE gathers his things: hat, scarf, gloves. KITTENS watch him from UL.)

COUNTRY MOUSE. Lunch in the city is always such a treat. This day is already taking a turn for the better. Oops, here comes the bus. Better hurry.

(He exits R. MUSIC plays as KITTENS enter fully, putting on their hats, scarves and mittens.)

FIRST KITTEN. Lunch in the city!

SECOND KITTEN. My *all-time, super-duper-whooper* best favorite!

THIRD KITTEN. Meeeeeeeeeeeeeeee— (*pauses, out of breath and possibilities*) too!

(*KITTENS hurry off R. MUSIC segues into TRAVEL MUSIC as BUS DRIVER chugs and shuffles on from L, driving “bus” and making all relevant sounds: brakes, horn, etc. If extras are used, they play RIDERS and may assist in making the appropriate travel sounds. COUNTRY MOUSE hurries on. BUS DRIVER stops bus for him. TRAVEL MUSIC stops.*)

BUS DRIVER. Cow-to-Concrete Connections. All aboard. COUNTRY MOUSE (*boards “bus” and pays fare*). One for the city, please.

BUS DRIVER (*taking his fare*). One for the city. Thank you very much.

(*COUNTRY MOUSE “takes a seat” in bus. If there are other RIDERS, each says “Good morning” in a unique voice as he passes down the aisle to a “seat” in the back, and he nods in response to each. KITTENS rush on from R and repeat his actions.*)

FIRST KITTEN. Three for the city, please.

BUS DRIVER. Three for the city. Thank you very much. (*KITTENS “take their seats” on bus, to the same series of “Good mornings.”*) Everybody ready? (*ALL ad lib “Yes! SQUEAK! Ready! MEOW!” etc.*) Thank you very much. Here we go! (*TRAVEL MUSIC. ALL shuffle be-*

hind BUS DRIVER as bus circles stage and ends up DL. TRAVEL MUSIC ends.) Four for the city, this is your stop. Watch your step, please. We appreciate your choosing Cow-to-Concrete Connections and look forward to serving you again soon. *(As COUNTRY MOUSE moves up the aisle toward the BUS DRIVER, extra RIDERS ad lib "Good day" in their various voices. COUNTRY MOUSE nods as he goes and ad libs "Thank you, goodbye," to BUS DRIVER, and gets off of bus. A beat, and then KITTENS do the same, exiting the bus soon after him.)* Cow-to-Concrete Connections. All aboard.

(TRAVEL MUSIC. BUS DRIVER and extra RIDERS circle stage, chugging, honking, etc., and exit, as COUNTRY MOUSE and KITTENS watch and wave. TRAVEL MUSIC ends.)

COUNTRY MOUSE *(to audience)*. What a pleasant bus driver! *(KITTENS meow in agreement. COUNTRY MOUSE goes about his business, unaware that KITTENS are following him. He finds CITY MOUSE's house and knocks on "door.")* Seven-oh-three Grand Avenue. Ah, here it is. Cousin City Mouse? It's me! Squeak-squeak-squeak.

CITY MOUSE. Oh, Cousin Country Mouse, I am glad to see you. Come in, come in. Lunch is almost ready. *(Gathering food from here and there and setting it all on table.)* See? I've made you a lovely soufflé.

COUNTRY MOUSE *(puzzled)*. A Sue Fly?

CITY MOUSE. *Soufflé*. Eggs and cheese, baked to perfection.

COUNTRY MOUSE (*rubbing his tummy in anticipation*).

Ooooh, squeaksqueaksqueaksqueaksqueak!

CITY MOUSE. And here, we have a fine ratatouille.

COUNTRY MOUSE (*shocked*). Rat-a-tooey?

CITY MOUSE. Ratatouille. Veggies. Lots of veggies.

Nothing but veggies, I assure you.

COUNTRY MOUSE (*sniffs at the dish, shows his approval*). Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh, squeaksqueaksqueaksqueaksqueak!

CITY MOUSE. Then we have our freshly baked croissants.

COUNTRY MOUSE. You've baked our cross aunts?

CITY MOUSE. Croissants. Rolls. Bread. See?

COUNTRY MOUSE. Oooooooooooooo, squeeksqueek-squeeksqueeksqueek!

CITY MOUSE. And for dessert, berries and cream.

COUNTRY MOUSE (*he knows this one*). Ah, berries and cream! (*Looks around expectantly*.) Where?

CITY MOUSE. In the refrigerator. We'll leave them there while we wash up.

COUNTRY MOUSE (*following him off L*). Good idea. I've had a long trip.

CITY MOUSE. Right this way.

(They exit. MUSIC plays as KITTENS creep on and descend upon food. Completely overwhelmed, they try to taste everything at once—first with their mittens on, then they fling their mittens aside. MUSIC grows louder and faster.)

FIRST KITTEN. Soufflé! Ratatouille! Croissants!

SECOND KITTEN. My all-new, all-time, super-duper-whooper best favorites!

THIRD KITTEN. Mee-yum, mee-yum, mee-yip-yip-yip-yip-yip-yip-yow!

FIRST KITTEN (*as they gobble with one hand and pack up more with the other*). Here.

SECOND KITTEN. There.

THIRD KITTEN. What?

SECOND KITTEN. Where?

FIRST KITTEN. Take this.

THIRD KITTEN. Hold that.

SECOND KITTEN. Take that.

THIRD KITTEN. Hold this.

FIRST KITTEN. Hurry!

SECOND KITTEN. Hush!

THIRD KITTEN. They'll hear us!

FIRST KITTEN. They'll see us!

SECOND KITTEN. That's it!

THIRD KITTEN. We've got it!

SECOND KITTEN (*at refrigerator*). There's more!

THIRD KITTEN. That's enough!

SECOND KITTEN. Just one?

FIRST KITTEN. Maybe two—

THIRD KITTEN. Let's go!

(Stuffing their faces as they exit, they carry all the food off, except the berries and cream, as COUNTRY MOUSE and CITY MOUSE enter. MUSIC fades.)

CITY MOUSE (*to COUNTRY MOUSE, as they enter*).

Well, *someone* is obviously taking all your food. But *who* could it be?

COUNTRY MOUSE. Someone very hungry, I suppose.

CITY MOUSE. As soon as you get home, you must call your sheriff and report the problem.

COUNTRY MOUSE. I will. I would have done it before I left, but I didn't want to miss the bus—or lunch.

CITY MOUSE. Ah, yes. Shall we dine—? (*BOTH see food is missing.*)

CITY MOUSE & COUNTRY MOUSE. Ahhhhhhhhhh!
SQUEAKsqueaksqueaksqueaksqueak!

CITY MOUSE. It's gone. Our entire meal is gone!

COUNTRY MOUSE. I must have brought my bad luck with me.

CITY MOUSE (*dialing phone*). Luck has nothing to do with it.

(*Phone rings offstage.*)

MOUSE PATROL (*enters R, answering phone*). Mouse Patrol here.

CITY MOUSE. City Mouse here. I want to report a great deal of missing food.

MOUSE PATROL. What sort of missing food?

CITY MOUSE. Well, let's see, we had a lovely soufflé.

MOUSE PATROL. A Sue Fly?

CITY MOUSE. No, a *soufflé*. Oh, what difference does it make? It's not here anymore!

MOUSE PATROL. I'll be right over.

CITY MOUSE. Good. We'll be waiting for you.

(*PATROL MUSIC as MOUSE PATROL, with or without extra DEPUTIES, crosses stage in "police car," making appropriate noises: siren, etc. He arrives at CITY MOUSE's house and "knocks" at "door." CITY MOUSE*

hangs up phone, nods at COUNTRY MOUSE confidently, and answers door: MUSIC fades. MOUSE PATROL lines may be divided among DEPUTY MICE if a larger cast is used.)

MOUSE PATROL. Mouse Patrol, at your service. What seems to be the trouble here?

COUNTRY MOUSE. It's our food.

MOUSE PATROL. You're having trouble with your food?

CITY MOUSE. No. We're having trouble *without* our food.

MOUSE PATROL. I beg your pardon?

COUNTRY MOUSE. It's all gone.

MOUSE PATROL. Your food is gone?

COUNTRY MOUSE. Yes! Every bit!

MOUSE PATROL. Have you eaten it?

CITY MOUSE. No!

MOUSE PATROL. Have you lost it, then?

COUNTRY MOUSE. Not exactly.

MOUSE PATROL. Someone took it?

CITY MOUSE & COUNTRY MOUSE. Yes!

MOUSE PATROL. Ah! We must search for clues.

CITY MOUSE. Clues?

COUNTRY MOUSE. Clues?

CITY MOUSE. Where?

COUNTRY MOUSE. How?

MOUSE PATROL. We must *search* for them. (*Whips out a magnifying glass and demonstrates.*)

CITY MOUSE & COUNTRY MOUSE. Oh! (*Look at one another, shrug, plunge in willingly.*) Clues!

(MUSIC plays as ALL begin to search, exiting in different directions, possibly through audience. In a ballet of entrances and exits—KITTEN MUSIC and PATROL MUSIC might alternate—COUNTRY MOUSE, CITY MOUSE and MOUSE PATROL each discover one pair of mittens, exclaim “Ah, ha!” and hurry off, just missing KITTENS, who stagger on and off stage one at a time, stuffed to bursting, and moaning in pain. After last KITTEN exits, MICE and MOUSE PATROL finally bump into each other at C. EACH holds up a pair of mittens.)

COUNTRY MOUSE. Clues!

CITY MOUSE. Clues!

MOUSE PATROL. And more clues!

(As each pair of mittens is examined, sniffed and tasted, a corresponding KITTEN enters, reaches toward mittens, moans, and collapses, clutching his or her aching tummy.)

CITY MOUSE. Soufflé!

FIRST KITTEN. Ooooooh!

COUNTRY MOUSE. Ratatouille!

SECOND KITTEN. Ahhhhhhhh!

MOUSE PATROL. Croissants!

THIRD KITTEN. Uhhhhhhhhh!

COUNTRY MOUSE *(noticing sick KITTENS)*. My goodness!

CITY MOUSE. Could these be the culprits!

MOUSE PATROL *(rounding up KITTENS and bringing them C)*. Quite possibly! Returning to the scene of the crime!

FIRST KITTEN. We ate too fast!

SECOND KITTEN. We ate too many!

THIRD KITTEN. We ate too much!

(KITTENS continue to mew sadly, then become more and more distraught as dialogue continues until they are weeping and wailing up a storm.)

MOUSE PATROL *(to MICE)*. Do you know these kittens?

COUNTRY MOUSE & CITY MOUSE. No, we don't.

MOUSE PATROL. Hmmmm. *(To KITTENS.)* Do you know these mittens?

KITTENS. Yes, we do.

MOUSE PATROL. Ah, ha! Case solved.

FIRST KITTEN. Are you going to give back our mittens?

CITY MOUSE. Are you going to give back our food?

SECOND KITTEN. We can't!

CITY MOUSE. Then we can't give back your mittens.

THIRD KITTEN. But we mustn't go home without them!

FIRST KITTEN. Mama will say we're soooooo naughty!

CITY MOUSE. You *are* naughty!

COUNTRY MOUSE. You took our lunch—twice!

SECOND KITTEN. We didn't mean any harm.

THIRD KITTEN. We were just hungry.

FIRST KITTEN. And it was just...*there*.

SECOND KITTEN *(very sadly)*. All my favorites!

FIRST KITTEN. It seemed like a game.

THIRD KITTEN. Hide and seek.

SECOND KITTEN. With refreshments! *(Their weeping breaks the others' hearts.)*

COUNTRY MOUSE. Oh, well, what could be hungrier than a growing kitten?

CITY MOUSE. *Three* growing kittens, I suppose.

MOUSE PATROL. Care to press charges?

(KITTENS mew in alarm. COUNTRY MOUSE and CITY MOUSE exchange a glance.)

CITY MOUSE. No. We'll handle this ourselves. *(KITTENS rub up against him, purring gratefully, nearly knocking him over.)* Oh! Sit! SIT! SIT! *(They don't.)*

COUNTRY MOUSE. Very well, then, I'll just take them back to the country with me and let their mother know what they've been up to. *(KITTENS quickly sit.)* Unless, of course, they're willing to help me gather more eggs— *(KITTENS mew and nod enthusiastically.)* And pick fruit and veggies— *(KITTENS mew, less enthusiastically.)* And make cheese— *(KITTENS nod, even less enthusiastically.)* And bake bread— *(Mews and nods give way to moans of exhaustion.)* So I can serve a proper lunch to my cousin City Mouse very soon.

MOUSE PATROL *(to KITTENS)*. Agreed? *(KITTENS nod and mew, wearily.)* Better wash and dry your mittens, too, before your mother gets a look at them. *(KITTENS mew and collapse to the floor, sound asleep against one another and snoring gently. OTHERS place mittens gently beside them.)* Guess my work is finished here. I'll be on my way.

CITY MOUSE. No, wait! We still have berries and cream. Won't you have some with us?

MOUSE PATROL. Mmmmmm. Don't mind if I do!

(MOUSE PATROL follows CITY MOUSE to table. CITY MOUSE serves berries and cream. COUNTRY MOUSE speaks to KITTENS.)

COUNTRY MOUSE. Kittens? Would you like to join us?

(KITTENS snore loudly.) Perhaps not just now.

MOUSE PATROL. Hurry!

CITY MOUSE. Hush!

COUNTRY MOUSE. Quick! Before they hear us!

ALL *(to audience)*. Shhhhhhh!

(MUSIC. COUNTRY MOUSE scampers to table. Curtain. End of play.)