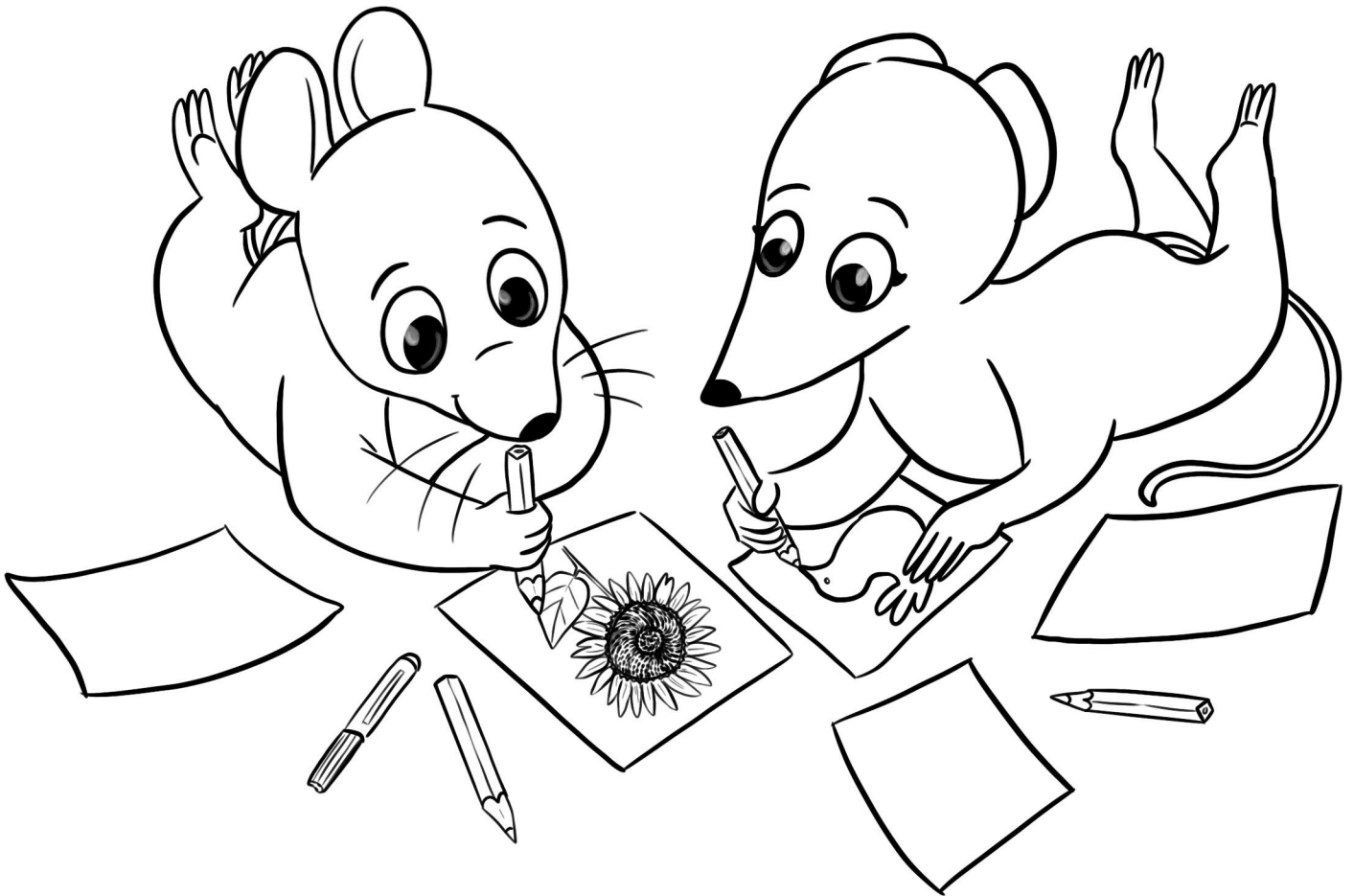


# Heroes cry too

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The weather was beautiful; spring was coming. Birds were collecting branches to build nests for their chicks. The trees danced to the beat of the warm wind.

Boom! Suddenly, a terrible noise rang through the forest. Little Mouse cuddled up inside her mother's warm fur.

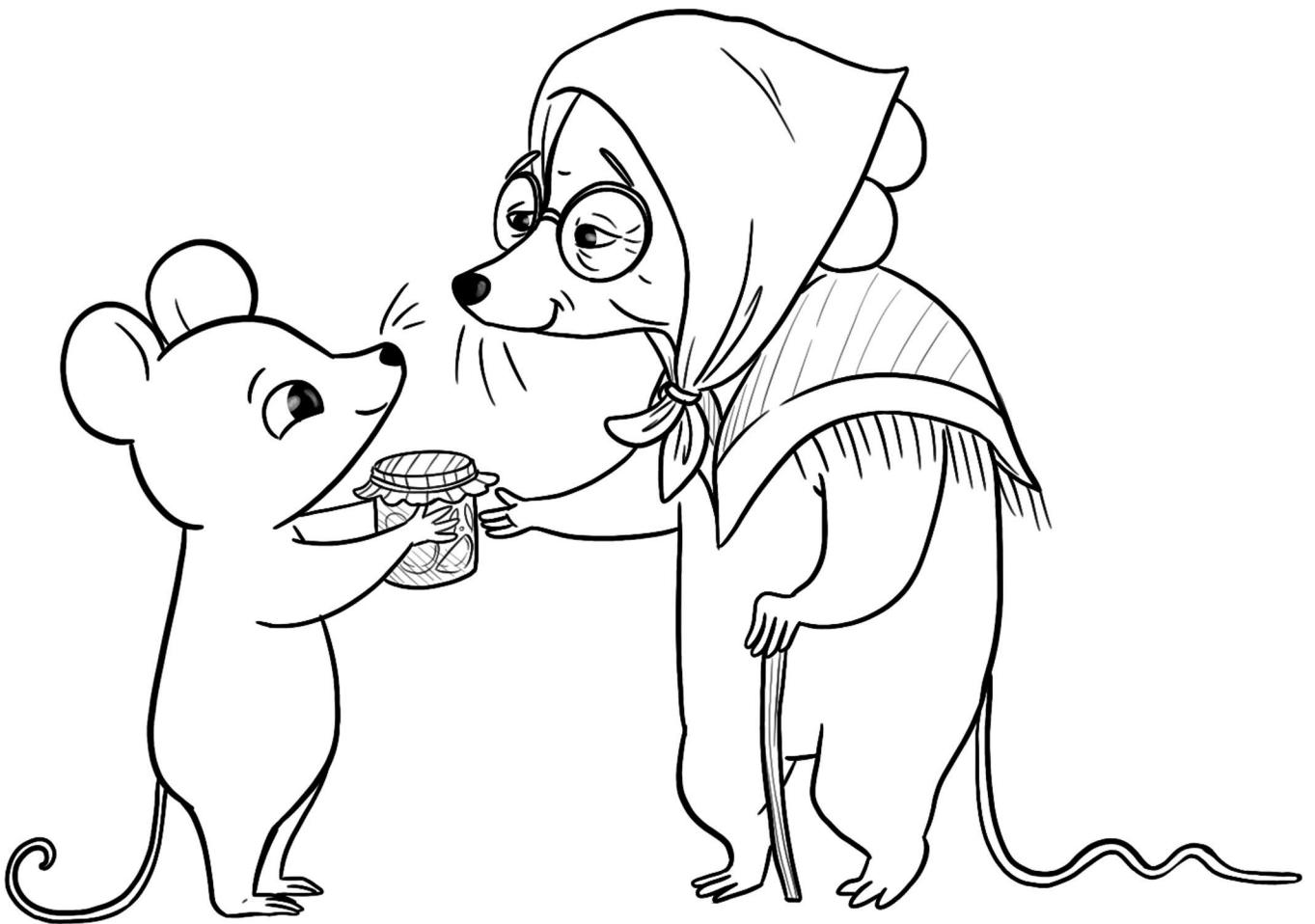
"I'm scared," she squeaked.

"Me too," answered Mum, "but look what soft fur we have and how nice it is to cuddle. It gets better right away."

Little Mouse wiped her tears and hugged her mother tighter.

“Let's cook borscht,” announced Mum. - “We can't control everything that happens around us, so let's take care of the things that we can control.”

Little Mouse helped Mum peel the vegetables. She cut the carrots into slices as evenly as she could. It was great to cook with Mum - it was as if the roaring forest had ceased to exist. And then Mum poured the hot borscht into jars and together they took it to their neighbours who were also afraid of the ominous sounds. Everyone felt better with the warm borscht in their bellies.



“Honey, pack your things, we have to find a safer home,” said Mum.

“I don't want to, Mum, I want to stay in my room” Little Mouse squeaked miserably.

“I know, sweetheart,” said Mum, “but sometimes we have to do things we don't feel like doing.”

Little Mouse started crying. She had to leave behind all of her favourite toys and books. She only took her beloved bunny. Mum gripped her hand tightly.

“Those are just things, honey,” she said warmly.

“Everything can be bought and replaced, the important thing is that we have each other.”





“Why isn't Dad coming with us?” Little Mouse worried.

“Dad is a hero,” said Mum. “He must defend our forest so that we have somewhere to return. He is strong and wise, and he will be with us in our thoughts.”

“But I want him to come with us!” Little Mouse cried.

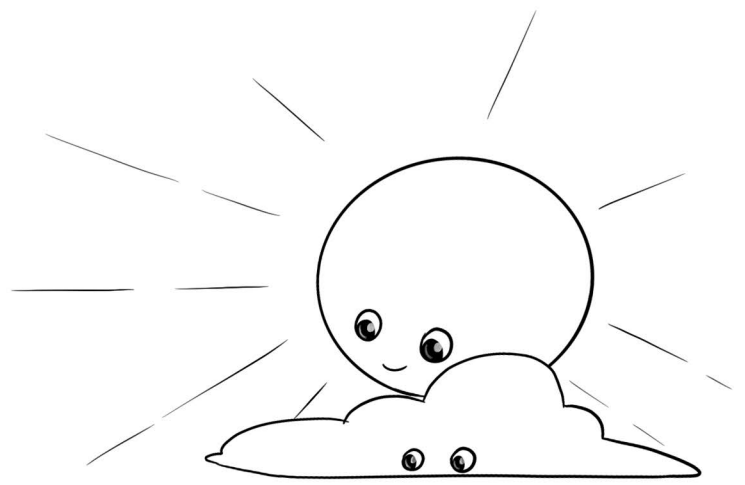
“Me too, but some things are worth fighting for, even if you have to give up the things that you treasure. This is called courage - when you do something that you are afraid of or don't want to do at all. The heroes are very brave because they still act in spite of fear.”

“I'm a hero too. Even though I'm scared, I'll go with you” - squeaked Little Mouse and threw a bundle on her back, and then helped Mum with her backpack.

“That's right!” Mum smiled. “You have more strength and courage than you think! But remember, heroes feel too, so when you feel like crying, cry, and when you want to laugh - laugh out loud!”

Mum and Little Mouse went on their way. There was a strong wind and sometimes it was hard to walk, but on the way they met other friendly mice who helped them carry a backpack, or offered them tea. It gave them strength; they felt that they were not alone.





“Mum, where are we going to live?” Asked Little Mouse.

“I don't know, darling,” said Mum. “But we can handle it together. There is a lot of good in the world, and after every storm comes the sun, remember that.”

Although the road was difficult and tiring, the mice finally reached the clearing. Here, the sun was shining, and you could no longer hear the rumbling forest.

Suddenly, strange long snouts appeared from behind the surrounding grasses and bushes. Little Mouse hid behind her Mother.

“Mum, who is this?” She asked, frightened. - “Why do they look that way, and what are they saying?”

“They're shrews, Little Mouse,” Mum reassured her.

“They are mice that live in fields and meadows.

They are different from us, but let's try to communicate with them.”





The shrews looked at Mum and Little Mouse with curious eyes, and scattered off to bring them various seeds, grains, and other food that Little Mouse had never seen before.

“Try it” said Mum, as she handed Little Mouse a strange seed.

At first, Little Mouse didn't want to eat it, but she remembered Dad, and how heroes sometimes do things they don't want to do.

“This is pretty good!” she squealed to Mum as she took a bite of a small piece. - “Different from the ones in our forest, but I like it.”



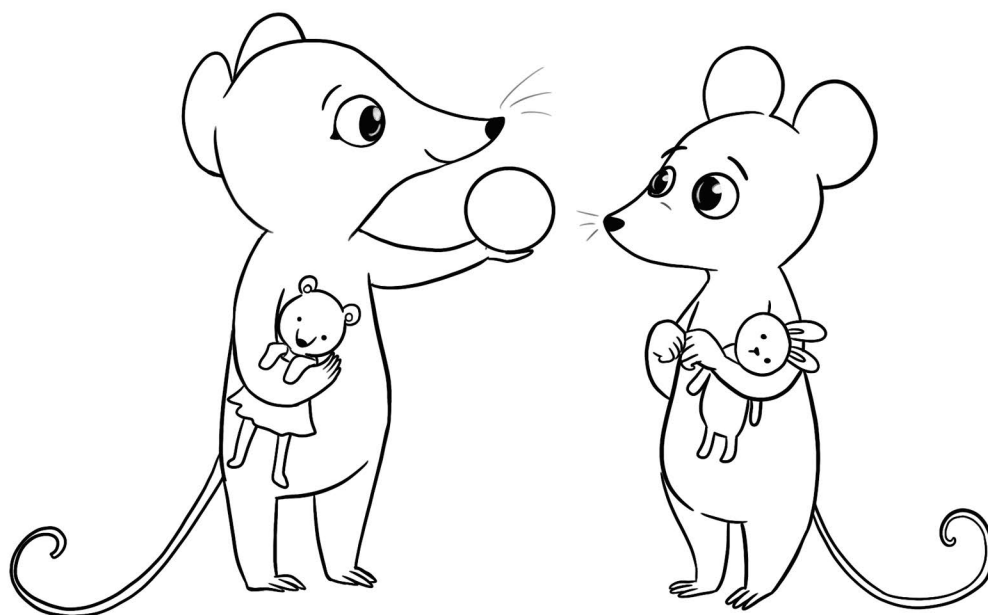
The Shrews invited the Mice to their home. They had a small burrow and only one bed, but Little Mouse could be close to her Mother all the time.

“I prefer our house” - squealed Little Mouse, hugging her Mum.

“Me too” Mum sighed. - “I love our house very much and I am not sure if it’s still there. But look, thanks to our trip we got to know the lovable Shrews and we tried all these new things.”

Little Mouse knew Mum was right, but she was sad inside. She missed home and Dad. But heroes can be sad sometimes too!

Mum and Little Mouse made themselves comfortable at the Shrews’ house. Young Shrew shared her clothes and toys with Little Mouse. The whole family was very helpful. Little Mouse felt uncomfortable playing with the Shrew's toys and their clothes.



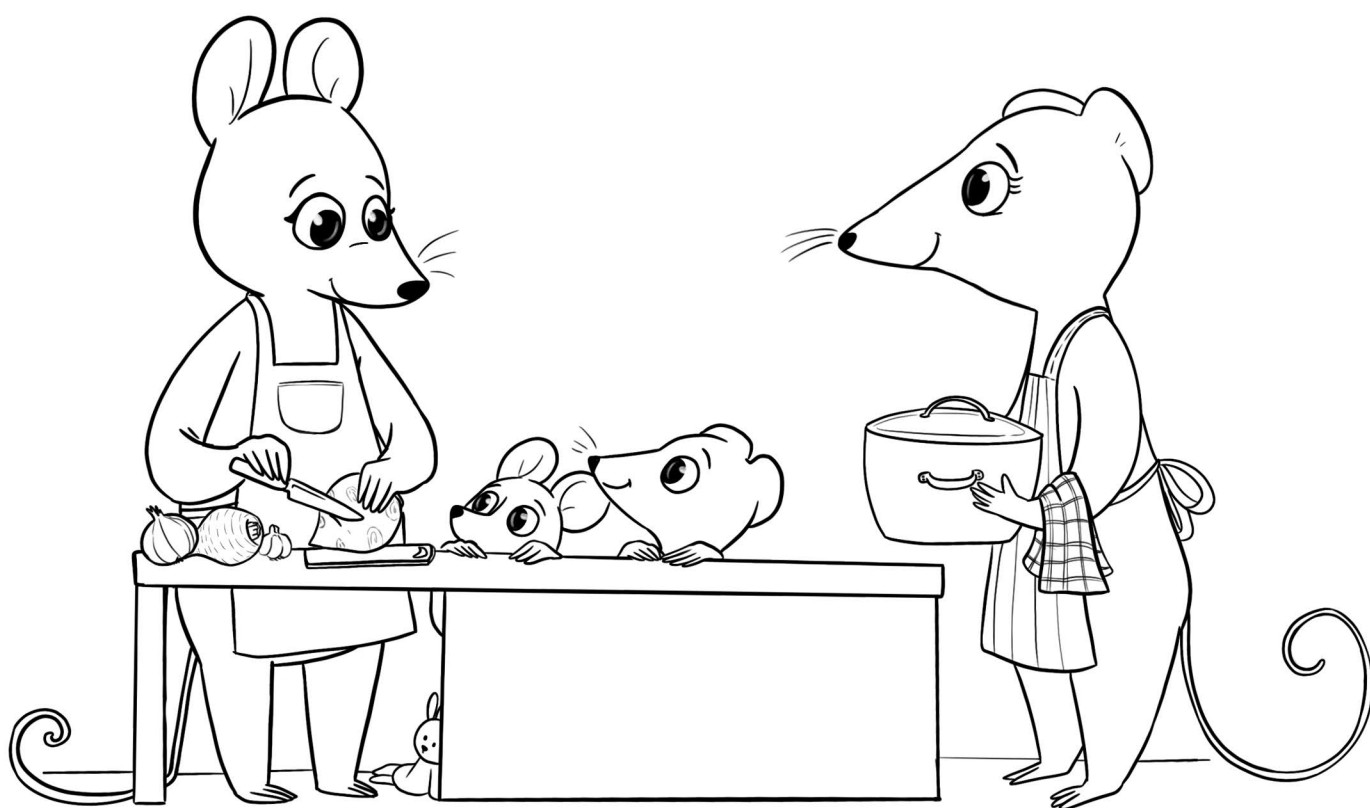
“I know it's hard for you,” said Mum when Little Mouse confided her sorrows to her. - “Sometimes things get tough and we can’t do anything about it. I would also like to be at my own house with Dad and our own things.”



Little Mouse noticed that tears were streaming down Mum's cheeks. She took a picture of Dad from her pocket, which she always carried with her.

“Mum!” She squealed. - “You're a hero too! Let's do what we can and not think about things that we can’t control. Let's cook borscht for the Shrews!”

And so they did. And when the borscht started to bubble over the fire and its smell spread over the entire burrow, the Young Shrew ran into the kitchen, followed by her mother. And everyone's mood brightened right away.





“When it's all over, we'll help you rebuild the Forest.” Said the Young Shrew. - “We have a lot of seeds, they will grow beautiful trees. They will sway in the wind again, and the birds will build new nests.”

Although Little Mouse hadn't always understood what the Shrew was saying, this time she could easily understand the meaning of her words.