



A Day with Mousse

Claire Lebourg

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A mouse's simple yet magical adventures are brought to life in Claire Lebourg's cozy, charming children's book *A Day with Mousse*.

Mousse is content to while his days away enjoying the outdoors around his beachfront home and collecting shells. His idyllic existence is upended when Mr. Barnacle, a roly-poly walrus, shows up uninvited. Though their relationship is rocky—Mr. Barnacle doesn't take the hint that Mousse wishes for him to leave, and the later arrival of Mr. Barnacle's family introduces further chaos—the pair form an unlikely friendship that serves as a lesson about tolerance and generosity. Indeed, the story makes the case for accommodating and helping others: when Barnacle falls ill, Mousse nurses him back to health. Their time together shows the benefits of companionship, highlighted by an endearing passage in which Barnacle paints the shells that Mousse finds.

A Day with Mousse is a crystalline ode to uncomplicated delights. Celebrating the joy of being in the moment above all, its delicate watercolor illustrations revel in everyday activities: the warmth of sunshine through morning windows, making coffee, choosing socks to wear. Whimsy is found in deadpan moments, as with the sight of Mousse happily asleep in his easy chair while the sea washes through his living room. The interplay between the text and images also generates humor: at one point, Mousse settles in for the night, happy to be alone again, only for the accompanying illustration to reveal that Mr. Barnacle is just out of sight, soaking in Mousse's tub. And while the story concludes with the promise of more unexpected (even unwelcome) surprises for Mousse, its gentle presentation and delightful imagery suggests that the unexpected can be a welcome boon to one's daily existence.

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