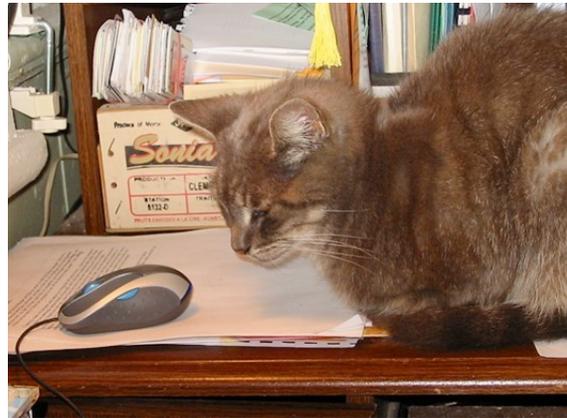


## Stormy's Mouse

Written by Donna Mann

Stormy, the cat, sat quietly on the computer desk, staring at the mouse. This mouse had her puzzled. It wasn't like any of the mice or rabbits, flies or frog friends she played with outside. It didn't even move unless Stormy moved it. Most of the time, it just ignored her.



Stormy noticed that sometimes the mouse flashed like it wanted her attention, but nothing more happened. Stormy wondered what the mouse was waiting for.

Stormy also noticed that sometimes the mouse made a little noise like it wanted to talk to her, but it didn't talk. Stormy wondered if the mouse even knew how to talk.

Stormy had decided a long time ago that this was definitely a mouse, but to be truthful, she knew it wasn't. Even though, one day she heard someone say, "Where did the mouse go?"

Stormy looked around. A mouse? If there was a mouse, Stormy, too, wanted to know where it went!

This was not like any of the mice or rabbits or flies or frogs that Stormy played with in the yard. They were a lot more fun. They'd run and Stormy would chase them. They'd hide in the bushes and behind the picnic table and Stormy would play hide-and-seek with them. They'd even let her catch them sometimes. She thought they were a lot more fun than this . . . this mouse.

Sometimes when Stormy watched this mouse very closely, she thought it shivered a little. Maybe it was cold just sitting on the desk all day long. Stormy had tried to cuddle close to it one day, but she couldn't decide if the mouse liked it or not.

Sometimes Stormy noticed when she jumped up on the desk that the mouse was in a different place than when she last saw it. That made Stormy think that when the lights went out, or when nobody was in the office, the mouse must come alive.

Maybe if she waited long enough, Stormy would actually see how the mouse moved and then she'd figure out what caused the move.

One night, Stormy stayed in the office until morning, waiting for the mouse to move, or talk, or do something. But, it just sat on the desk the whole time –quiet and still.

Well, except for the time the computer stayed on all night. That night, the mouse seemed quite alive. Its little red light came on a few times. It made a faint noise, as if taking a breath. Stormy waited, thinking for sure that this was the time she'd been waiting for –but the mouse didn't move or talk.

One day when everybody was away, the mouse provided entertainment for Stormy. The computer was on and Stormy jumped up on the desk to watch the mouse very closely.

She thought she'd push it a little with her paw. Then she shoved it more and more, then a little more until it fell off the desk. And then the mouse did the craziest thing. It began to flash its red light in a pattern of on and off, on and off.

Stormy jumped off the desk and sat on the floor and looked up at the mouse. It seemed to Stormy that the mouse was going to fly. Stormy got very excited and hoped the mouse would take her on a space ride or something. That would be a lot more fun than even running in the yard or playing hide and seek around the picnic table. Stormy thought about flying through a dark night with flashing lights guiding the two of them around the stars. Maybe they'd even go over the rainbow. Oh, that would be such fun!

Stormy waited and waited for the mouse to ask her to come along on this great journey. But, the mouse just hung there and swayed very slowly back and forth as if it were thinking about a great journey, too. Then it stopped . . . and so did its red lights.

Well, except for when the furnace started, and the warm air blew up. Then the mouse would move slightly and flash its light. If it wasn't going to change into a space ship, then it must be going to do something else. Maybe it was practicing some kind of fancy dance. Stormy thought that was funny, because

she didn't think the mouse would dance all alone. But, who else was around?

If it wasn't that—what was it? Stormy wondered if the mouse had decided to send something a signal. She looked around to see if there was any response from the other mouse lying on a Laptop behind them. But, that mouse just lay there, totally disinterested—like it wasn't even alive. In fact Stormy had never seen it do any of the antics that the desk mouse did. At least this one was interesting to watch, even though Stormy couldn't figure out why it did some of the things it did.

Then Stormy wondered if her mouse was giving her a code with its flashing lights. Maybe Stormy was supposed to understand what it meant. Maybe it did talk after all and she just had to learn how to understand it. She didn't know about this, as she'd never had a mouse talk to her before.

She watched the mouse all day and it just hung there at the end of its cord, flashing signals. Even if Stormy learned to understand what it was saying, she didn't think that the mouse would be very friendly. And she was sure the mouse wouldn't

play with her like the mice and rabbits do out on the lawn. And they wouldn't run around the picnic table, while playing hide-and-seek.

Stormy was very sure that she'd never want to eat this mouse. No! She decided this mouse was just for the desk. But, if Stormy ever finds some way to get the mouse to play with her . . . she'll be sure to tell me...and then I'll tell YOU!

#### THINKING TIME:

I'm really glad you listened to this story. Isn't it fun to wonder what our animal friends think about when they look at something? Can you draw a picture of an animal and pretend it's talking to another furry friend? Why, you could make up a whole story just like Donna did! And be sure to share your story with someone special, like I just did!