

# Mr. Big Game Hunter takes on two tiny mice (10, 11, 12)

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I'm writing a novel about a recent experience in our house that involved two tiny mice. The shift in weather a few weeks back inspired these creatures to abandon the joy and splendour of outdoor Ontario life. A shame because the autumn leaves were beautiful, and for an animal, even a mouse to abandon stunning vistas for the tired trappings on our walls is quite a dismal fate despite the Van Gogh print that graces our rec room.



I kinda like the title, "Of Two Mice and Men." I hope it doesn't get confused with "Of Mice and Men" by Nobel Prize-winning author John Steinbeck, published in 1937, the tragic story of George Milton and Lennie Small who move from place to place in search of new job opportunities during the Great Depression in California.

Steinbeck borrowed his title from Robert Burns' poem "To a Mouse." It seems that there is already abundant material out there in the literary world about mice, but that does not discourage me.

Burns wrote that "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men / Gang aft agley." Translated into English, it means that the best laid schemes of mice and men often go awry. This too will be my theme, because the two little mice that insisted on a house invasion did not come to a happy end.

I just hope that my novel does not get targeted like Steinbeck's for vulgarity and what some consider offensive language. Of course, I intend to tell it like it is, so there may be some trouble.

I hope also that when my work is published, that I do not become associated with some repugnant foodstuff such as haggis as with poet Robbie Burns. Peanut butter will be okay, I suppose, as I love it as much as Burns loved haggis.

My story begins with Miriam finding, shall we say, little deposits in our kitchen drawer. Then there's the tear in the plastic wrap bread container with crumbs left in the immediate area. Miriam watched enough Columbo TV episodes in the past to immediately put together these tell-tale clues. Peter Falk would be proud of her indeed.

"We have mice," she declared.

"So," I replied.

"So, Mr. Big Game Hunter, do something about it."

My only other previous encounter with these nasty creatures was many years ago in a Haliburton cottage when our children were wee creatures themselves. The culprit then was a deer mouse who had ears the same size of that of an elephant, I kid you not. I recall that this brazen intruder appeared in daylight and encouraged me to chase it and lash out at it violently with a broomstick such that the devastation that occurred in that cottage was akin to what transpired with Katrina. In the end, I believe that I created so much destruction that the mouse realized it was dealing with a lunatic and never came back. My family was impressed. That's when the appellation, Mr. Big Game Hunter, took effect.

"Okay Miriam, I'll get some poison," I said.

"No you won't," she replied. "No poison in this house," she firmly protested.

Have you ever seen the amazing scope of myriad devices stocked in today's hardware stores enlisted for the extermination of mice? It's mind-boggling. I was there for a full hour trying to decide on what technique might be appropriate for both Miriam and the mice.

I decided on four plastic traps. You place a small amount of my favourite foodstuff, peanut butter, on a tiny tray and set the trap. When the mouse tries to sample the peanut butter, SNAP! It's quick and effective and in my case, resulted in two swift executions.

Some people hang trophy fish or big game heads on their walls to impress their friends. My novel starts like this: "He was



seeking an experienced taxidermist, so skilled and adept as to be able to handle an almost impossible task.” Watch for it soon at your local hardware store!