

The Mouse at the Mall

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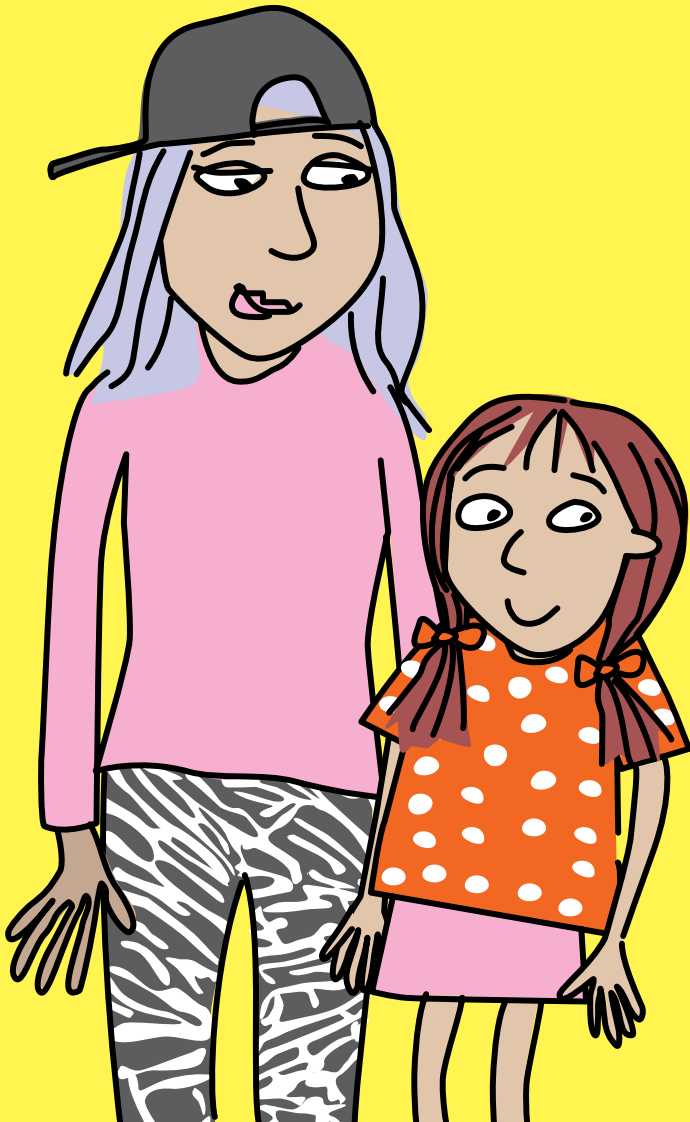
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Chapter 1

Mum decided to get fit again so we went to the mall. She wanted new running shoes to match the colour of her hair. That was why she was in the shoe shop.

But why was she standing on the counter and screaming?

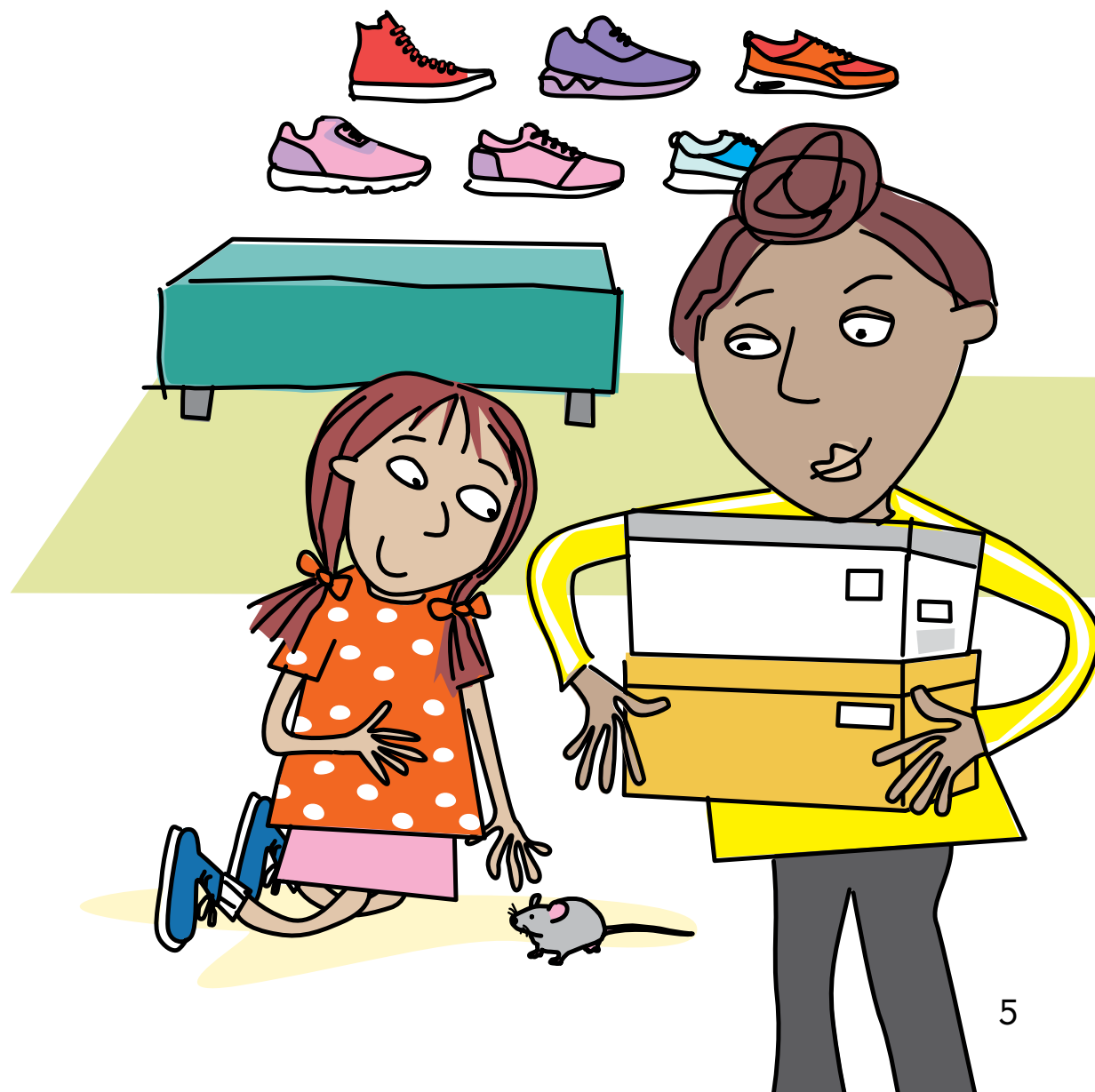


The reason was a mouse. But why was the mouse in the shoe shop?

I found out later that it had gnawed its way out of a cardboard box that someone had left in the mall. The box had the word “FREE” on it. The reason for that was a mystery.



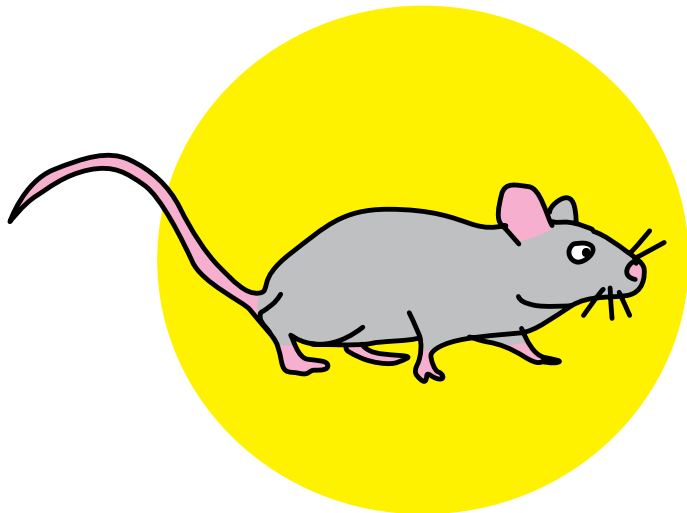
I picked up the mouse before it could scuttle away. It was scared, but not as scared as Mum.



I held the mouse in my hands while Mum climbed down from the counter. I love animals, but our house is too small for me to have one.

The shop assistant looked at the mouse.

“He’s quite tame. He’s been someone’s pet,” she said. “He must have been left in the mall by someone who didn’t want him anymore.”



“How do you know he’s a boy?” I asked.

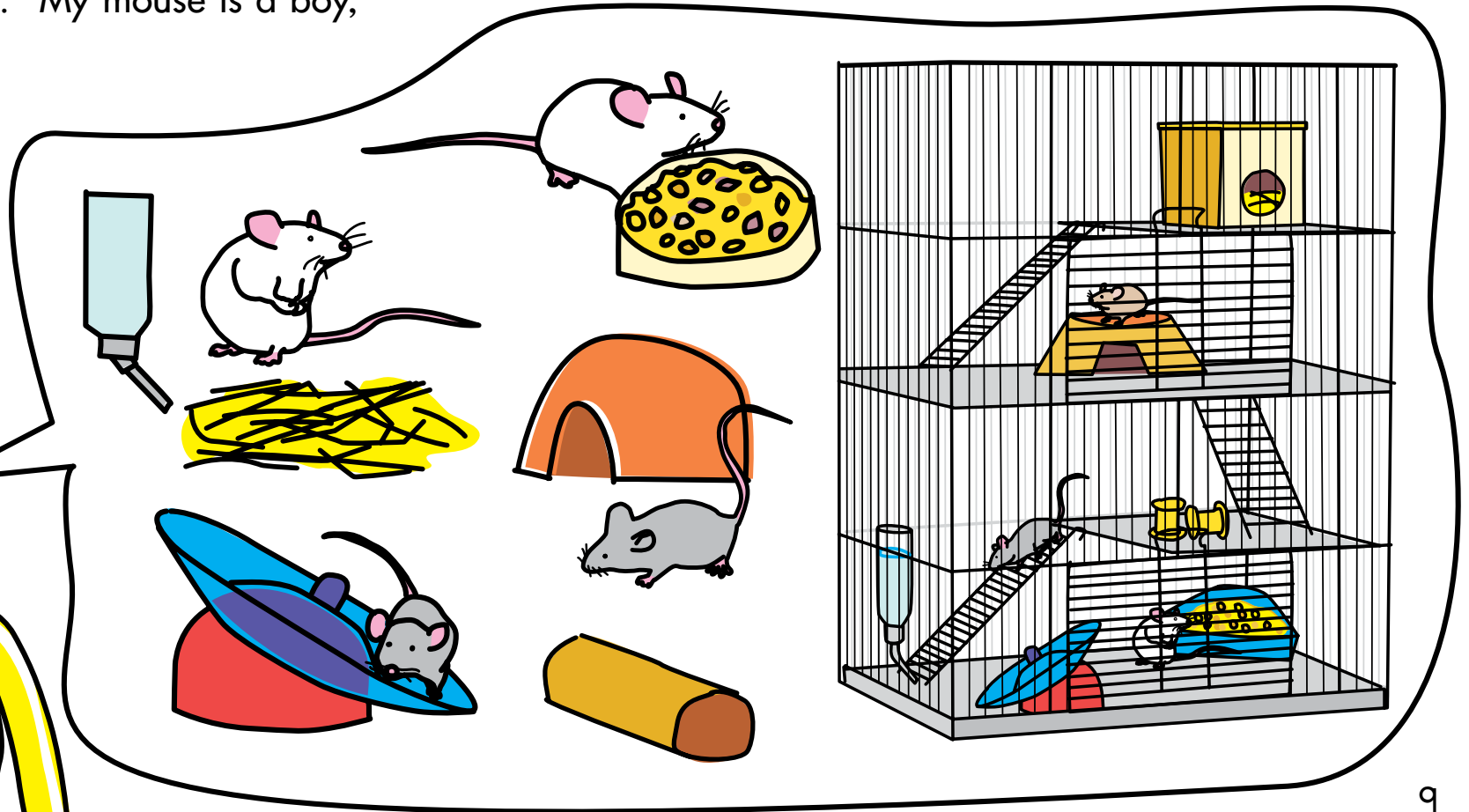
“I have a pet mouse at home,” she said.
“I can tell.”

“Maybe you could take him home,” I said.

“I don’t think so,” she said. “My mouse is a boy,
too. They’ll fight.”

“Maybe he can be my pet,” I said.

“No way!” said Mum. “I’m scared of mice.
There are lots of things to think about before
you have a pet. Let’s get that mouse to the SPCA
straight away!”



“Good idea,” said the shop assistant. She gave me a shoebox to put the mouse in with some tissues and a toilet roll tube.

“Mice like to rip up tissues to make a bed,” she said. “The toilet roll tube will make a fun toy for him.”



Mum laughed as we left the shop.

“When we came here I wanted to leave with a shoebox but not one with a mouse and a toilet roll inside,” she said.



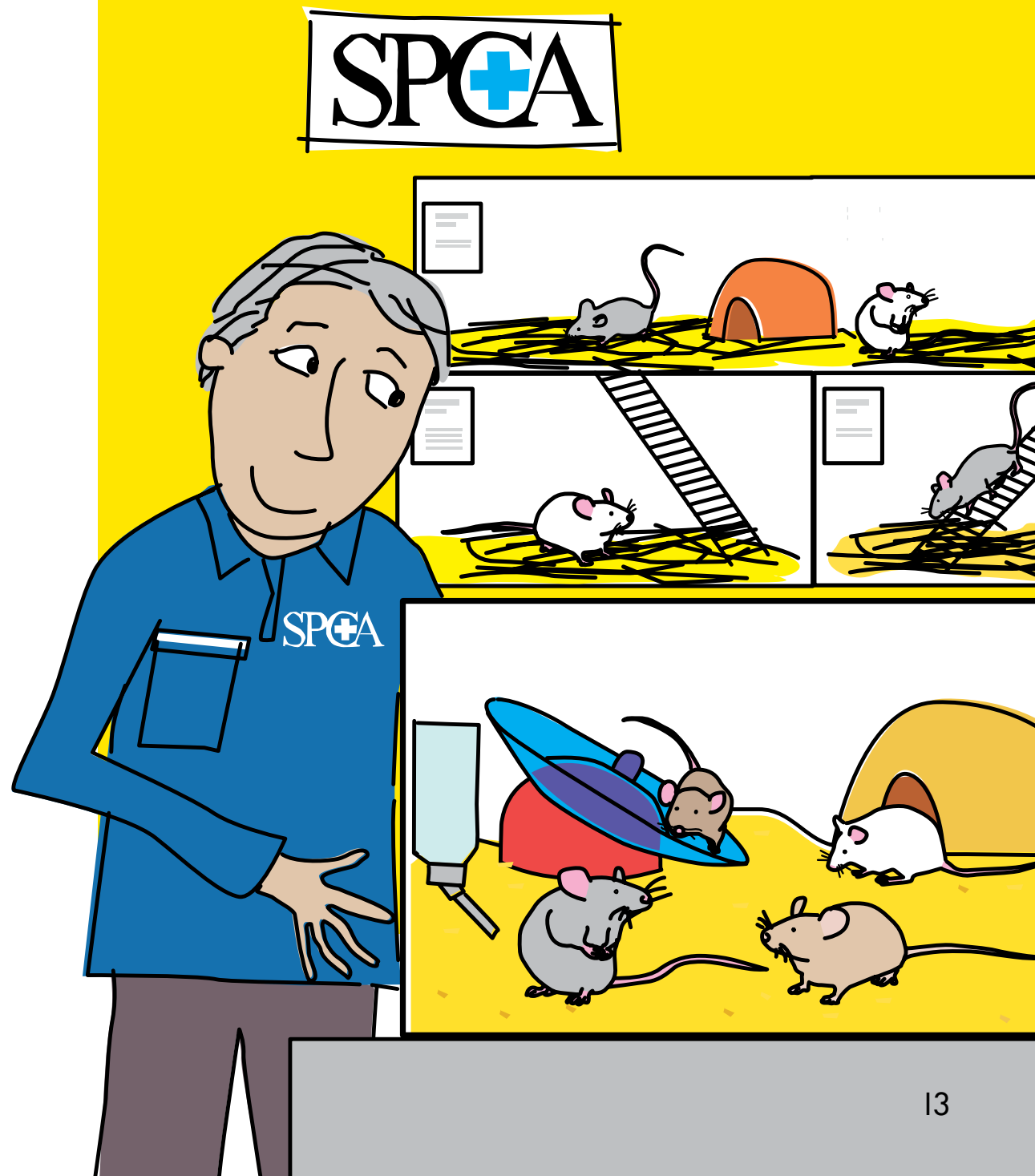
Chapter 2

By the time we got to the SPCA, I had named the mouse Rolly because he was enjoying his new toilet roll toy.

The man at the SPCA put Rolly in a proper mouse enclosure with food and fresh water to drink. He said they'd check Rolly out to see if he was fit and healthy. They would keep him for a few days in case his owners came in to get him.

I asked the man if I could have Rolly if he wasn't picked up. I'd have to get Mum to agree.

The man said "yes" and gave me a flyer about how to care for pet mice.



Chapter 3

That night Mum and I read the flyer. We also went online to see what we had to do to look after a mouse.

“It’s not all fun having a pet,” said Mum. “It can be a lot of work and I’m not going to do it. I’m scared of mice.”

Mum made a list of things with a box beside each one.

“If you can tick every box, then you can keep Rolly,” she said.

I read the list and started ticking.



Will you give your mouse healthy mouse food and fresh water every day?



Will you clean your mouse’s food and water bowls every day?



Will you make sure your mouse’s enclosure is clean with dry bedding and nesting material?



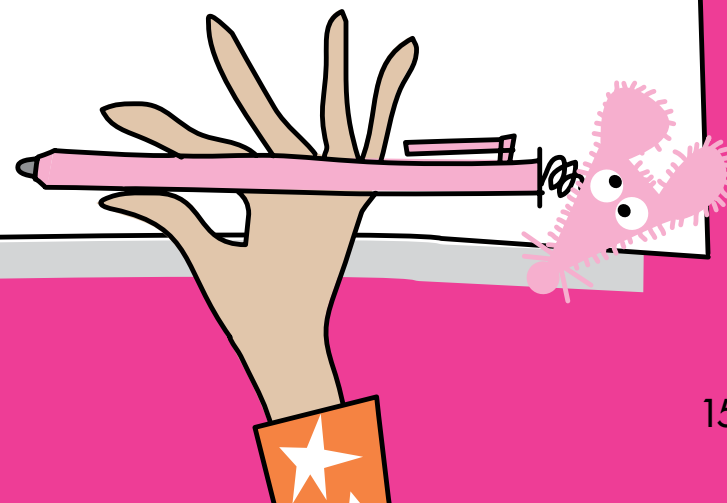
Will you play with your mouse and give him safe toys so he won’t get bored?



Will you make sure your mouse’s enclosure is in a warm and dry place?



Have you got a proper mouse enclosure where your mouse can hide, play, sleep and eat?

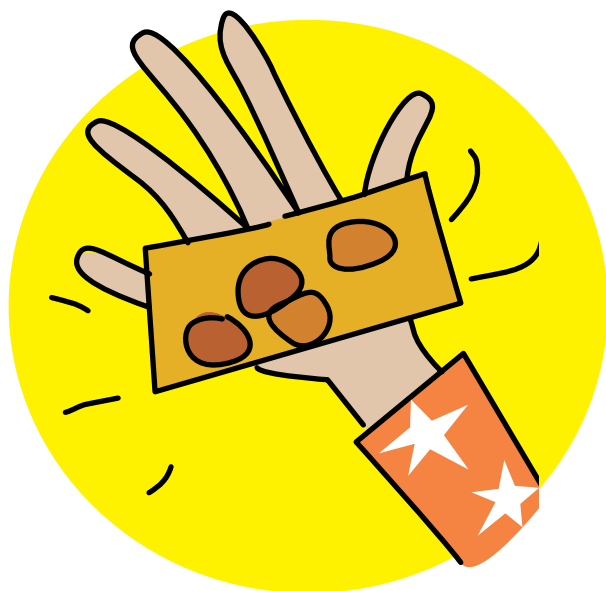


Chapter 4

I was very excited. I ticked every box on the page until I got to the last one. Oh, no!

“You need a proper mouse enclosure where your mouse can hide, play, sleep and eat.”

That was a problem. I could use my pocket money to pay for Rolly’s food, but I didn’t have a mouse enclosure or enough money to buy one.



I asked Mum if she would buy me a mouse enclosure but she said “no”.

“I need the money to buy running shoes,” she said.
“I told you, I’m scared of mice.”

That night I was sad. I already had two toilet roll tubes for Rolly but what was the use of them without a mouse enclosure?

Chapter 5

Next morning we went to the mall early.
Mum bought some purple trainers and was in
a good mood.

The shop assistant was in a good mood, too.
She asked me about Rolly and I told her
what had happened.

“Don’t be sad!” she said. “I’ve got a spare
mouse enclosure at home. You can have it.
I’ll bring it in tomorrow!”

Yay! Now I was happy!
Not sure about Mum though.



Chapter 6

I set Rolly's enclosure up while Mum rang the SPCA. Rolly was still there! So we took the mouse enclosure with us and picked Rolly up.

I loved having a pet of my own. I did everything on the list to make Rolly feel at home. Sometimes I took him out of his enclosure and let him walk on the floor.

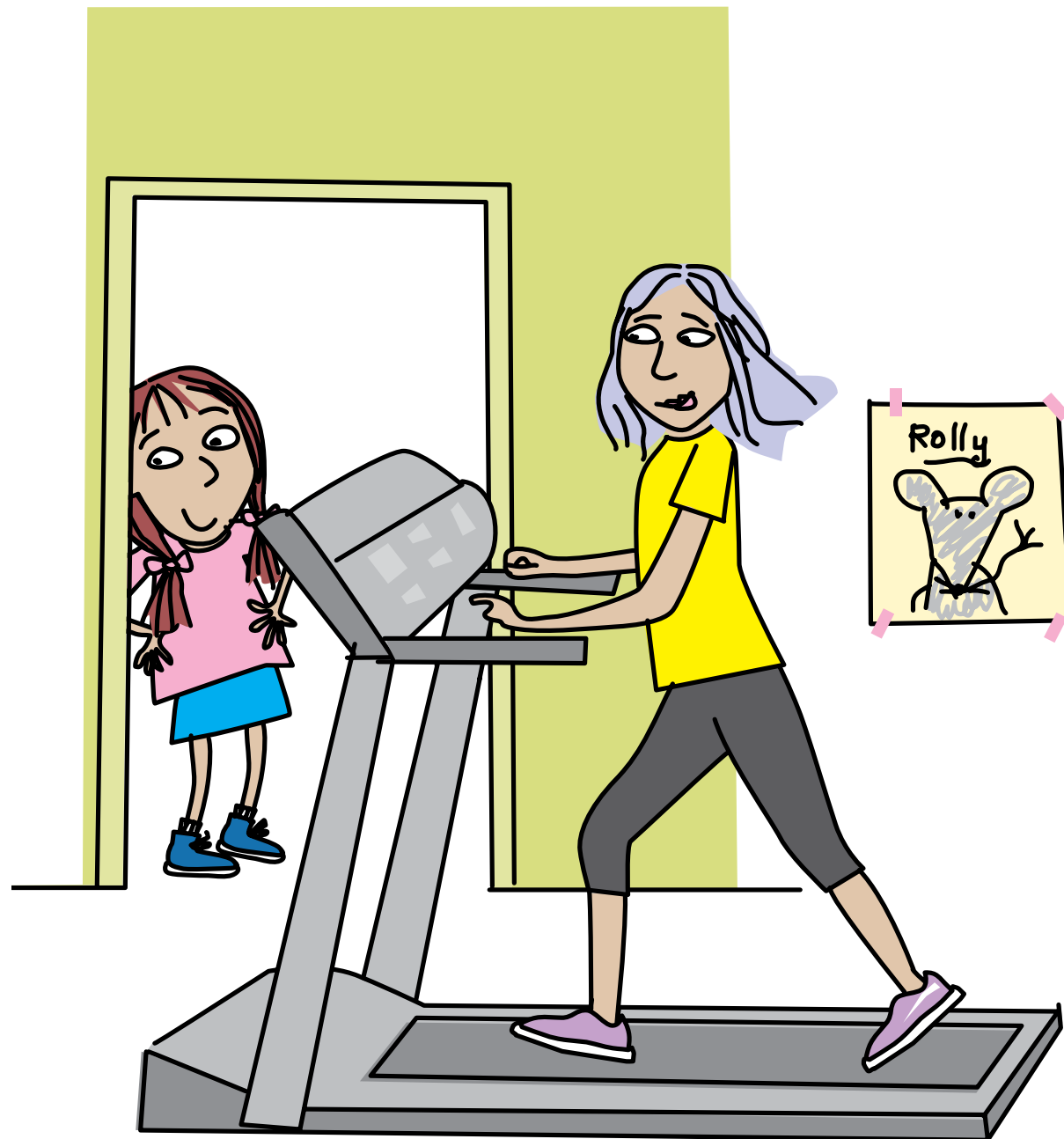
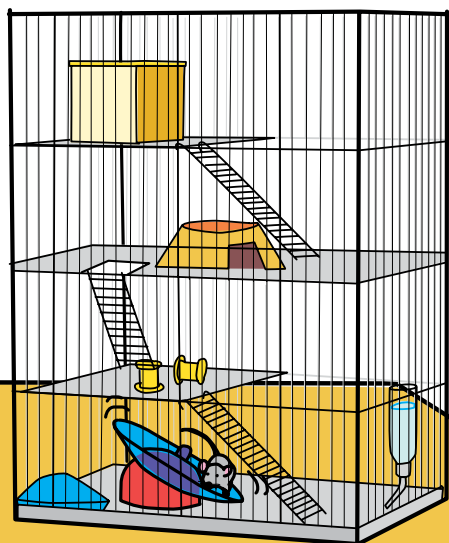


I knew Mum was starting to like Rolly, too. One day, when I came home from school, I could hear Mum laughing. Rolly was running on his exercise saucer while Mum was on the treadmill.

“You two look like you’re having fun,” I said.

“I think I’m winning!” said Mum.

“You should be,” I laughed. “Rolly doesn’t have running shoes that match the colour of his hair.”



Happy Mouse Hints



- Mice make good pets.
- Mice need to be warm so do not keep them outside.
- Mouse enclosures must be kept clean and dry, or they will start to smell and your mice could become sick.
- Mice like to have things to play with in their enclosures. Cardboard rolls to use as tunnels and paper to rip up are fun for mice.
- Mice like exercise – empty cotton reels, ferris wheels and ladders all help mice to exercise.
- All mouse enclosures need a dark space where the mouse can go when he wants to, otherwise he will become stressed.
- Mice are very social animals. They can get lonely if they are left by themselves, especially at night when their human family are asleep. Ideally mice should be in all female or all male small groups or pairs.
- Mice have teeth that never stop growing. They need safe chew toys, such as rawhide chews, wood (be sure it is safe, with no treatments applied) and branches from fruit bearing trees. This stops their teeth from growing too long.
- When handling a mouse, pick up your mouse using the cupped hand technique – scoop them on one or both hands. You can teach your mouse to hop into your cupped hand by training it with a treat.

Visit kids.spscaeducation.org.nz to learn more about caring for mice