

Translated excerpt

Torben Kuhlmann

Armstrong. Die abenteuerliche Reise einer Maus zum Mond

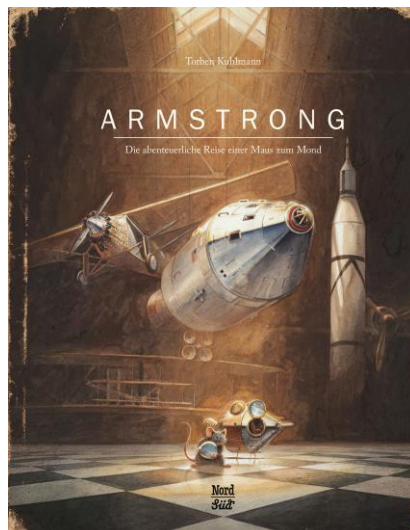
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Armstrong. The Adventurous Journey of a Mouse to the Moon

Translated by David Henry Wilson





The Stargazer

A small paw turned the little wheel of a gigantic telescope, and a tiny bundle of gray fur peered through the iron tube full of glass lenses. Now the picture of the starry sky was perfectly clear.

“Incredible!” murmured the little mouse.

Every night the mouse observed the night sky. He was particularly fascinated by the moon. At first it hung in the sky, fat and round. But then it became thinner and thinner, until there was nothing to be seen except a narrow crescent. The following night, it had disappeared completely.

The little mouse recorded every detail of his observations.



All the mice in the town met regularly at a secret place. There were boxes and cartons piled right up to the ceiling, and their contents made this place into an absolute paradise for mice. The little mouse set off to meet his fellow mice there.



AM

PECORINO



BEST BEFORE
OCT 1955

He proudly showed the others everything he had discovered through his telescope.

“The moon is a giant ball of stone!”

With shining eyes and a voice that trembled with excitement, he told them all he knew.

“The light from the sun is what makes the moon shine and . . .”

The little mouse broke off in midsentence. He could see that nobody was listening. The other mice did not want to hear any more, because they believed something quite different. . . .







The Tale of the Big Cheese

For mice there is nothing more wonderful than cheese. Spicy or mild, creamy or hard with holes in it. Cheese runs a mouse's life. And so for the mice everything was crystal clear: the moon was made of cheese. How else could one explain it? The moon is a round ball and has holes in it. Sometimes it is as yellow as Gouda, then as white as Camembert, or even as reddish orange as Leicester. And now all of a sudden the moon is supposed to be a ball of stone?

The little mouse tried again and again to convince the other mice, and every day he reported his findings, but it was all in vain.

One night, the little mouse sat sadly on a box of Parmesan. He was all alone. The other mice had long since gone home. Pale moonlight shone through a small basement window, and it fell on his notes. And in the dim light he found something: somebody had sent him a letter. Not a big letter, such as humans would write. It was a mouse-sized letter. Quickly he opened it. Inside the envelope was an entrance ticket: "*Smithsonian?!*"

The mouse could not decipher anything else. But under this printed word was a paw-written message:

"You are right! Come and see me."





Trains to
WASHINGTON D.C.
UNION STATION



A Journey into the Past

“Nothing is too difficult for a clever mouse!” said the little mouse with a smile. He had soon found out where the mysterious letter had come from, and now he was on his way to see his unknown pen pal. For a mouse that knew his way around the world of humans, even long journeys were no problem. He had decided to take the train. In his luggage he had packed some cheese and his notes.

When no one was looking, he climbed onto a pile of suitcases and jumped into a carriage. The guard blew his whistle, and the train rumbled on its way.

“I wonder what I’ll find there . . .,” murmured the four-legged passenger.





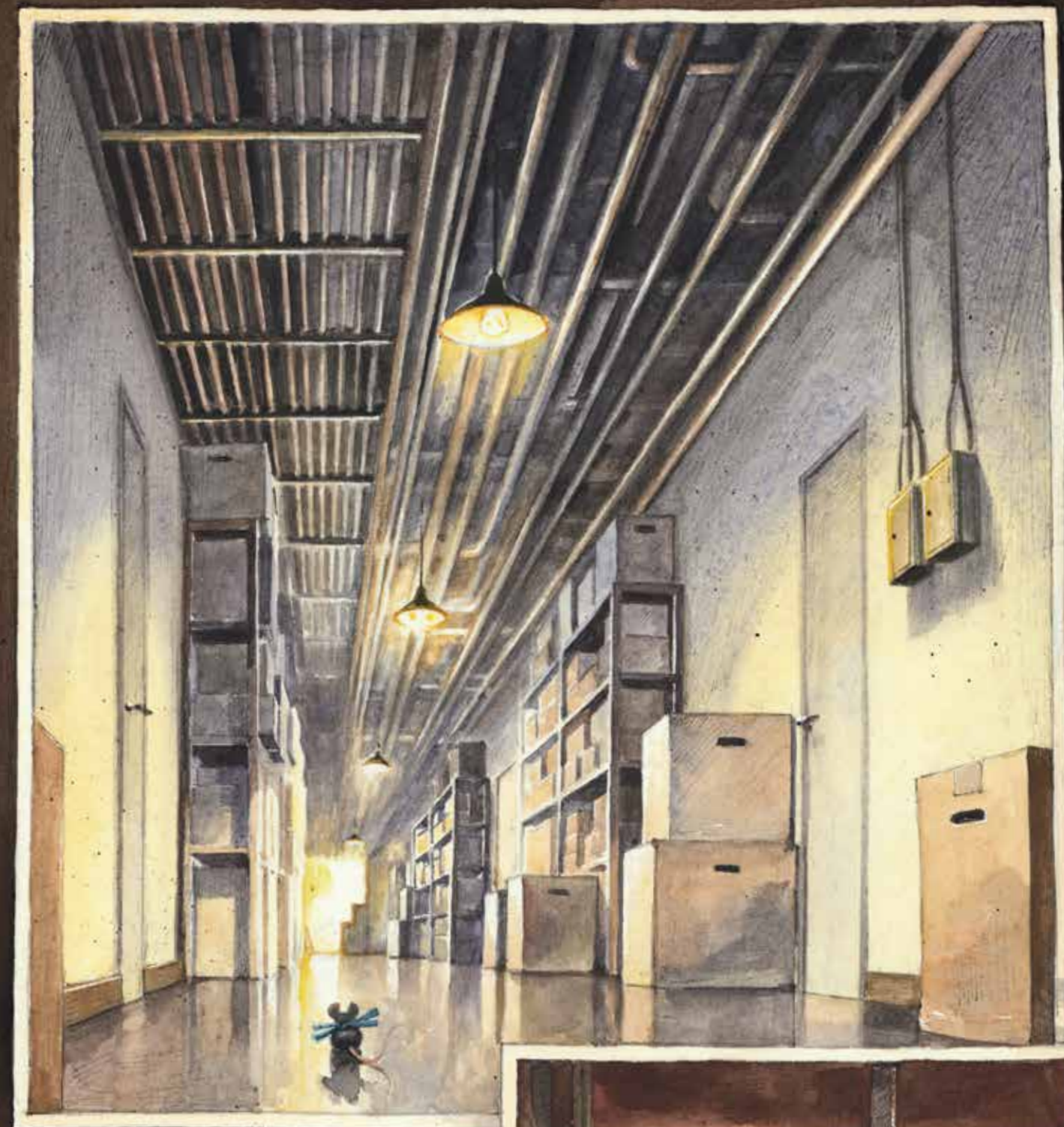


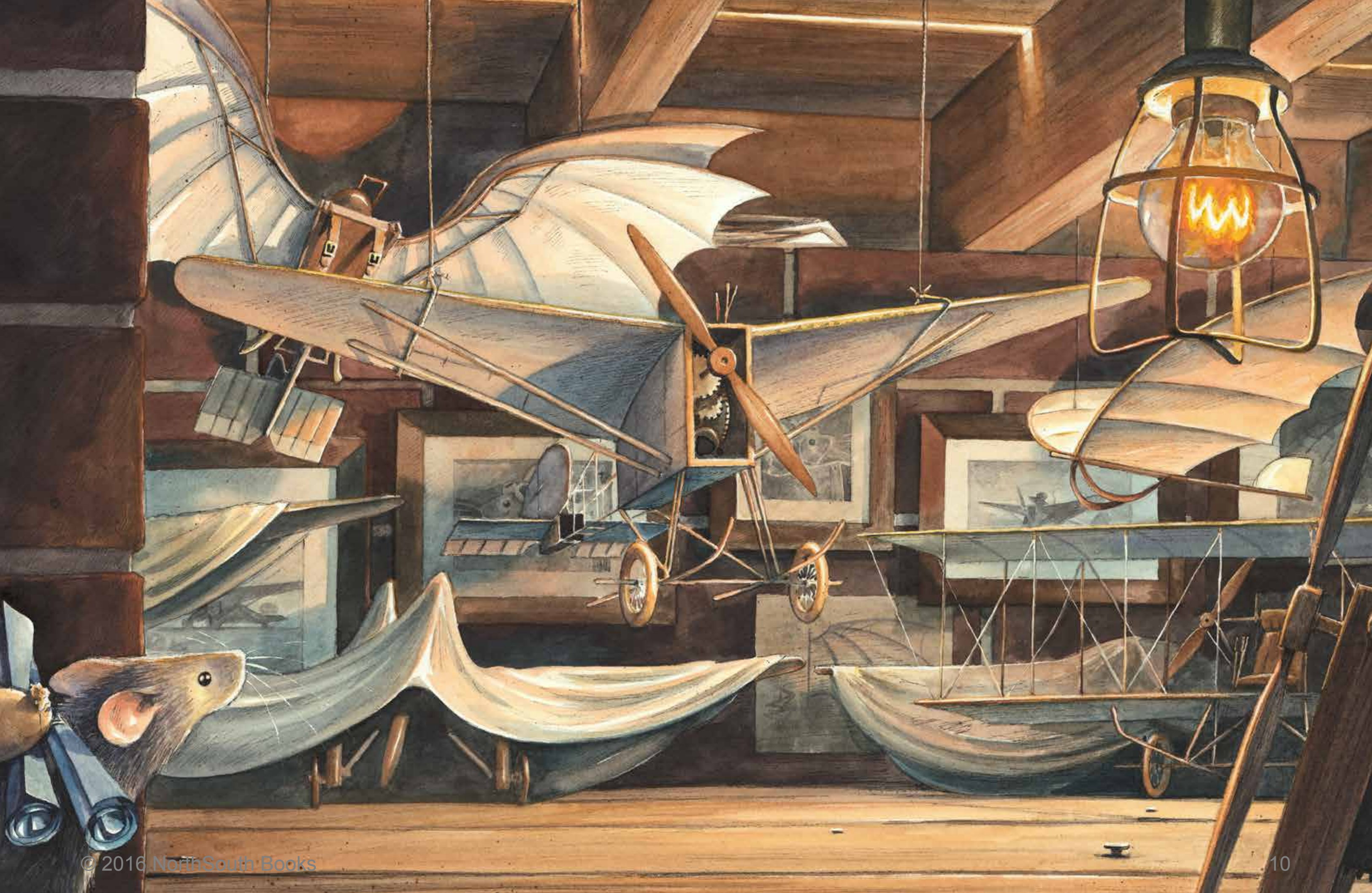
“Wow!” cried the little mouse. His squeaky voice echoed through the cavernous rooms.

“A museum, full of human inventions!”

The little explorer trotted reverently through the hallway toward a staircase that led down to the basement. The rooms below were dusty and dark, and packed with relics from past times.

“Oh, look!” he squeaked to himself. Someone had done a chalk drawing on the wall portraying a little winged mouse. Below it was an arrow. The mouse followed the sign, and found himself standing in front of a mouse hole.







Flying Mice and Fantastic Adventures

The mouse hole led straight into a large room with a low ceiling. And what the little mouse saw there took his breath away. Flying machines, hang gliders, and all sorts of weird and wonderful apparatus hung from the ceiling or stood on the floor. It looked just like the human museum above. But these were mouse-flying machines.

“What *is* this place?” whispered the little mouse in awe.

“Here you can see the history of mouse aviation!” said a voice that echoed through the room. “How wonderful that you’ve come! So you got my message.”

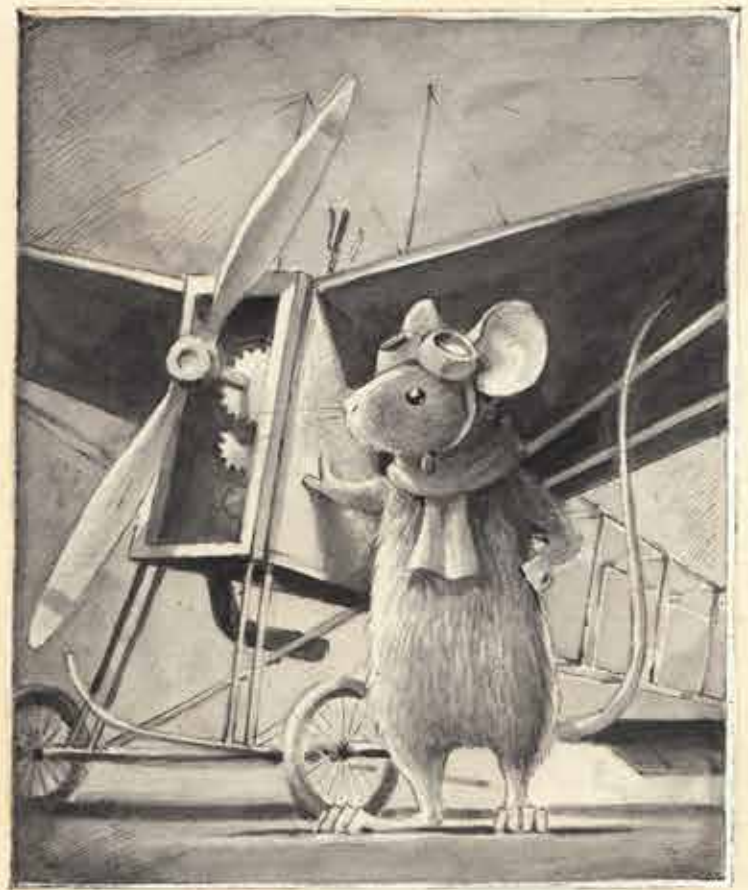
Out of the shadow of a large flying machine stepped an old gray mouse. He smoothed his stubbly whiskers, straightened his glasses, and very formally stretched out a paw to greet the little mouse. With his other front paw he leaned on a walking stick.

“I heard about your discoveries, and I thought this place might be of interest to you. You see, there was once a time when nothing was impossible for us mice. We traveled the world, and even learned how to fly. But at some time or another, mice became interested in other things. And gradually they forgot all about their flying ancestors.”

The little mouse listened in amazement to the old mouse’s tales.

He was fascinated. So there had been flying mice in the old days! And if a mouse could learn to fly then, maybe it was possible for a mouse to fly to the moon now.

“I shall be the first mouse on the moon!” he cried.



Flying Mouse
1912

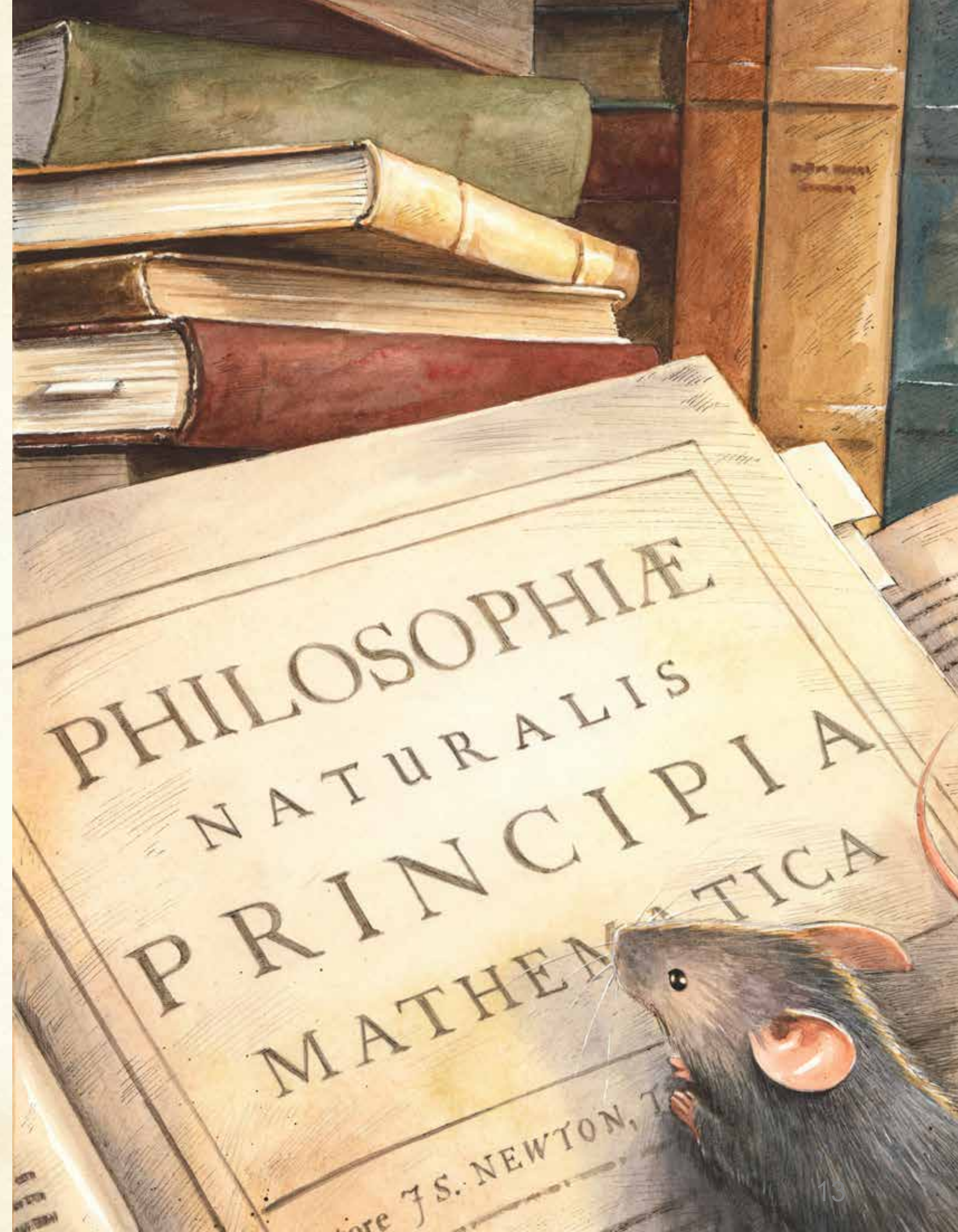




The next day, the little mouse traveled back to his hometown. His head was full of ideas and ambitious plans. The old mouse in the museum had given him lots of helpful advice.

“Study human knowledge. Some humans are really clever.”

And so the mouse spent the next few weeks in the municipal libraries, and sometimes he even slipped into the university.



But he soon found out that the moon was a lot farther away than he had thought. And nothing and nobody had ever flown so high before. Higher than the clouds, higher even than the air one breathes. The moon circled in the icy, airless nothingness of space.

