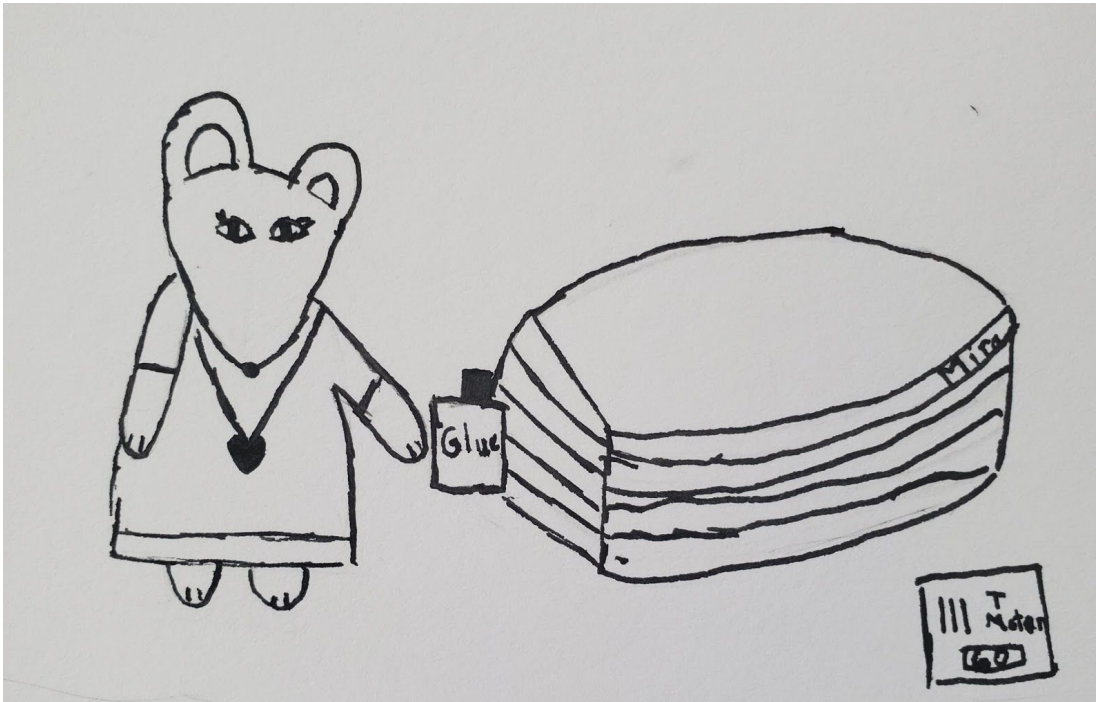


Marshmallow II: The Fantastic Voyage

By Margot Tsu

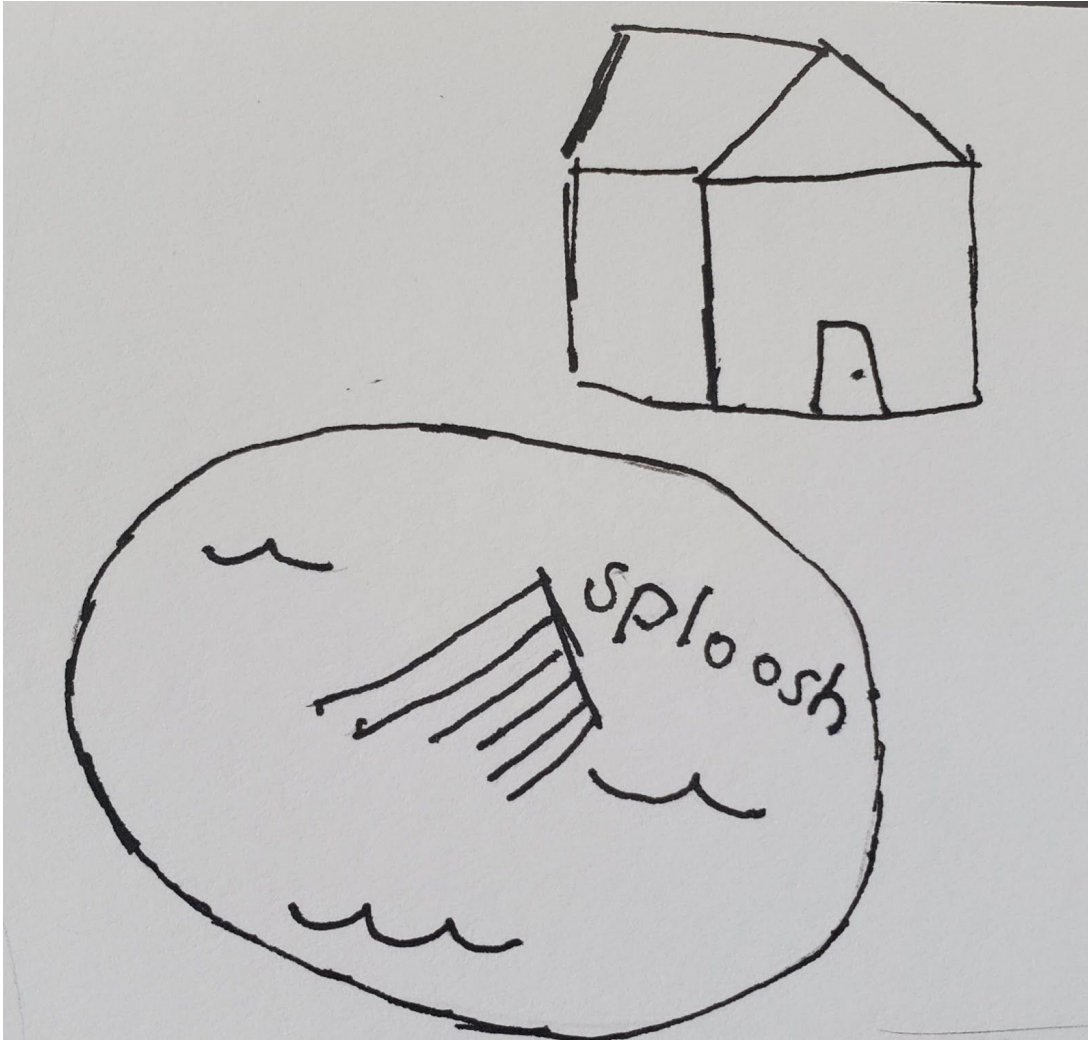
Marshmallow walked down the empty streets of her village. The Mousevirus was the reason for the empty streets. The virus could infect mice between ages three and fifty, and could even be deadly. After a few days the governor shut everything down to prevent the spread of the Mousevirus. The tree hollow houses and shops no longer seemed warm and cheerful, just cold and dark. She absentmindedly walked into the river. "Oh," she cried, but not because her paws touched the water, she was used to that. It was what her paws bumped into, the bottom of an old sunken boat, ridden with moss. That's it, she thought to herself. She pulled her sopping lavender slip ons out of the water. I'm going to have to write a story about the outcomes of this idea, she thought.

Marshmallow was a fantastic writer and she excelled at adventure stories. Her husband Jorge, and her slightly mischievous son Samuel were at home probably wondering about her next story. She ran home, as fast as her paws could go. "Jorge"! "Samuel"! she hollered. "What is it Mommy, you're going to give me an earache!" Samuel said. "Well," said Marshmallow "I knocked into a boat when I was wading in the river." "So what?" Samuel said. "I think I know what you're thinking Marshmallow," Jorge said with a wink. "We are still allowed to go boating," said Jorge. "Yes," said Marshmallow. "What will we build the boat out of?" asked Jorge. "I know!" said Marshmallow. She hurried off. A moment later Marshmallow was back, with some water-proof glue and a motor, but most surprisingly, she was hauling their old canoe. "What in the world did you get that for?!" said Jorge, who was in disbelief. "We can glue the motor to the canoe," explained Marshmallow patiently.



"Okay," said Jorge "When can we start?" he added. "Now!" cried Samuel. For the next few hours, they worked busily to make the canoe.

"It's a beauty" sighed Marshmallow, hours later. "Can we try it in the pond?" asked Jorge. "Sure," said Marshmallow. They lugged the boat over and pressed the "GO" button. The boat floated for a heartbeat but then....they watched in horror as the boat they had worked so hard on sank down into the pond.



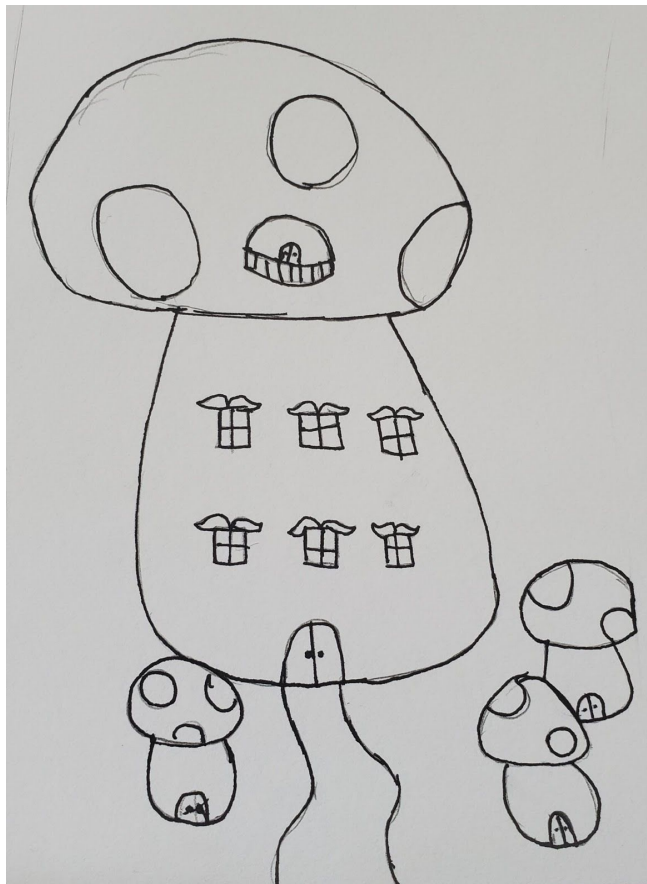
Samuel immediately burst into tears as the pond claimed the boat as his. "Wah, Wah, Wah!" he cried. "It must have been too heavy," Marshmallow said sadly. The family went to bed.

The next morning, Marshmallow with replenished hope, said "Why don't we head to Snailville, they always have the best boat parts. We can still build a boat even if our last one failed. "That's a good idea," remarked Jorge "Yeah!," said Samuel. Marshmallow grabbed the mouse phone immediately and dialed the following number: 671-531-451(the mayor of Snailville's snail phone number). The mayor answered and Marshmallow requested three large riding snails to ride on as a source of transportation to Snailville. An hour later, three riding snails arrived. Marshmallow, Jorge and Samuel walked outside, but then Samuel said, "How do we get up?" "Look," said Marshmallow suddenly. "What Mama?" Samuel asked. "The notches act as a ladder," she said. Indeed there were three notches in the shiny shell of each snail.



“Oh,” said Jorge, beginning to climb his snail shell. Marshmallow and Samuel did the same. And just like that they were off to Snailville.

There were wonderful things to see, so none of them were the least bit bored. There were glistening lakes full of crystal clear water and forests dotted the way along with small settlements. However, that was just the beginning of their adventure. Soon the ride was over, and they had arrived at their destination. “Wow,” said Marshmallow, in awe. Toadstools of every shape, size and color were in rows on the sides of the street. Most amazingly of all though, at the end of the boulevard there was an enormous gold toad stool palace.



A small turquoise snail came out. On her head she wore a gold cap, and two silver snail bodyguards stood at her side. "I'm Mayor Rosie Round, I heard you needed parts." She said this all very rapidly. "Yes, we do." said Marshmallow. We are building a boat," said Samuel. "Very well," said Rosie. "We have a motor but nothing else." Inside the palace everything was soft gold, and sealed with wax so the mushroom flesh would not rot. Marshmallow oohed and awed at everything. Finally, they came to a room with a splendid motor.

Marshmallow loaded the motor onto the summer dog sled, built for dirt, not snow, that the mayor of Dogville sent over. After she finished this, she hurried into the cabin of the dog sled. Marshmallow, Samuel and Jorge all yelled "GO" and they rocketed off. Trees and lakes flew past. The sled dog cried over the wind "FUN RIGHT!!" "Yeah!!" was the answer he got. Finally they were there!

The village was gargantuan, it stretched as far as the eye could see. White, red, gold, light blue and yellow-roofed dog houses were in neat rows. The huge dog palace soared above their heads. The village was bustling, filled with dogs of all shapes and sizes, but then the bustle stopped abruptly. A large white carriage carrying a golden retriever wearing a blue cap that read in gold: ALPHA had parted the crowd. "Mayor Fondue," said the mayor to Marshmallow and her family. Her voice was soft and silky, like fondue. Her blue eyes were kind, but powerful. "I heard you needed a boat," said Mayor Fondue. "Yes," said Marshmallow. "Follow me then," said Mayor Fondue. They followed her into the palace. Jorge, Samuel and Marshmallow were amazed by the luxurious white and gold walls, bright blue doors and more. "Amazing, right?" said Mayor Fondue. "Yes," breathed Marshmallow. A little while later, they stopped at a door labeled: BOAT ROOM. Mayor Fondue opened the door. What they saw inside made them gasp. A huge boat painted brown was in the middle of the room. "It's made of cork so it will float," said Mayor Fondue. "Cork has air bubbles inside it so it is one of the only woods that can float," said Marshmallow, remembering a bit of information she'd read in a book. "Our personal Walking Talking Encyclopedia," said Jorge "What would we do without you?"

"We're finally home," said Jorge. They had traveled 20 miles to get from Mouseville to Snailville, and 30 miles from Snailville to Dogville and then 50 miles back home. Even though they were tired, they excitedly scurried into the kitchen. Marshmallow picked up the canoe once they were inside and instructed Samuel to bring the hot glue gun and put some on the rear end of the boat. Carefully following his mother's instructions, Samuel managed to accomplish the job. Once Samuel stepped away, Jorge put the heavy motor on and Marshmallow put the boat down. Seeing that the boat was rather ugly Marshmallow went and got some white and gold paint. Then she painted the boat and motor white and completed the boat with a gold trim. Once the paint was dry they hoisted the boat onto their shoulders and brought it to the river. They clamored in and Marshmallow and Samuel gave Jorge the honor of pushing the GO button. There was a hiss..... and VICTORY! The boat shot forward as if pushed by a giant invisible paw. Marshmallow didn't even try to think, she just sat back and flew.