

RADOSTINA NIKOLOVA

THE ADVENTURES OF THE MOTTs

PART II

MUX STRIKES BACK



ILLUSTRATED BY MELINA-ELINA BONDOKOVA

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the Motts

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FOREWORD

„... *A* nd there was a modd peeping through the crack in the laundry basket. Poor motts - that was a pretty kettle of fish...their tiresome cousins were to find their way into the motts' colourful idyllic everyday life!”

What, come again? How horrible! It is true that we didn't mention them at all last time. But frankly speaking, even I thought that modds were extinct and only existed in stories to scare little naughty motts with. Where shall I begin... Let us go back to the very beginning and to where we left our little friends Mux and Pagu after “Brand-New Day” plan was successfully executed. Modds will have to wait.

Eighty-seven days had passed since “Brand-New Day”, and life in Mottland was very nice and calm. Mux was mottled in purple, as always, and

Pagu was gleaming pinker and pinker.

Besides, the two of them were almost inseparable. Goula kept teasing them, telling them that there was something fishy about their “friendship”, and that it was about time they had a mott wedding and stopped pretending there was “nothing between them”. They blushed at the thought, farted nervously and avoided the topic. Shy motts! It was obvious that they liked each other, but nobody wanted to admit it first.

Bobo and the rest of the children were bursting with energy. They became closer and closer to their fluffy friends from the wardrobes. And Dodie was happy that his little grandson got to learn his most valuable life lesson early in life: under no



circumstances can technology be more important than human contact, the beauty of nature, or daily adventures. He often told him the stories he remembered, his childhood memories of Mux. Mux himself used to listen to Dodie's memories and the three of them would laugh their heads off, after which Bobo and Mux would fall asleep cuddled. Bobo hugged Mux, and Mux hugged his favourite orange handkerchief. (He had taken it out of the dustcloths, and since it was coloured and soft, he decided to officially turn it into his blanket. He asked Dodie to wash it first, of course. Motts, you know, are fussy about hygiene. But why am I telling you all this... well, mott stuff).

And so it went until one day THEY came to be spoken of...

Chapter 1

DODIE TALKS ABOUT THE MODDS

„Once upon a time...”
“Grandpaaaa, that’s how fairy tales start, and you promised to tell me about the motts!” Bobo interrupted.

“Yes, Dodie, we are not all made-up, so you can’t talk about us as if in a fairy tale!” Mux interrupted too.

“Get away with you! Some stories start like this too!” Dodie was quick to find an excuse. “Besides, I know this story from Mux’s father, and it might be a complete fabrication. Now, would you like to hear it or not?”

“From my father!” shouted Mux. “Of course we do!”

“Alright then. So... once upon a time there was

a town veeeeeeery far away from here... well, not very far – about 2 hours on foot on the highway... or 3 hours if you go by the old road.”

“Dodie, you stray from the story again!”

“Oh, I’m sorry, Mux. So in a town not so far away from here lived modds...”

“Not modds, grandpa, but motts!” Bobo couldn’t help the remark and interrupted while it was obvious that Mux’s hackles rose at the word he had heard.

“No, my boy. MoDDs. They are distant cousins of our dear well-known moTTs, but unlike them, they are not as nice and fluffy. Our favourite motts love the cozy wardrobe where they cuddle up against clean and fragrant clothes, while modds love dark and damp rooms. This is why they live in the laundry room and to be more exact, in the dirty laundry basket! That is because these little creatures’ favourite smell is the smell of dirty socks. Do you know that even their battle flag is a dirty sock? The smellier it is, the better: even if the opposition does not fear the way modds look, then they will surely run away because of the smell.

“Oh, Dodie, that’s terrible. Why did you have to talk of them now!” Mux stammered.

“And what do modds look like?” Bobo asked a little bit scared, wrapping up in the blanket, feeling that those little creatures would turn out to

be frightening, maybe even horrifying.

“Well, they are little, just like the motts, but they are somehow rough. They have awful big teeth. When they are angry, they don’t fart delicately like our dear Mux, but they hiss.”

“They hiss?” Bobo jumped up.

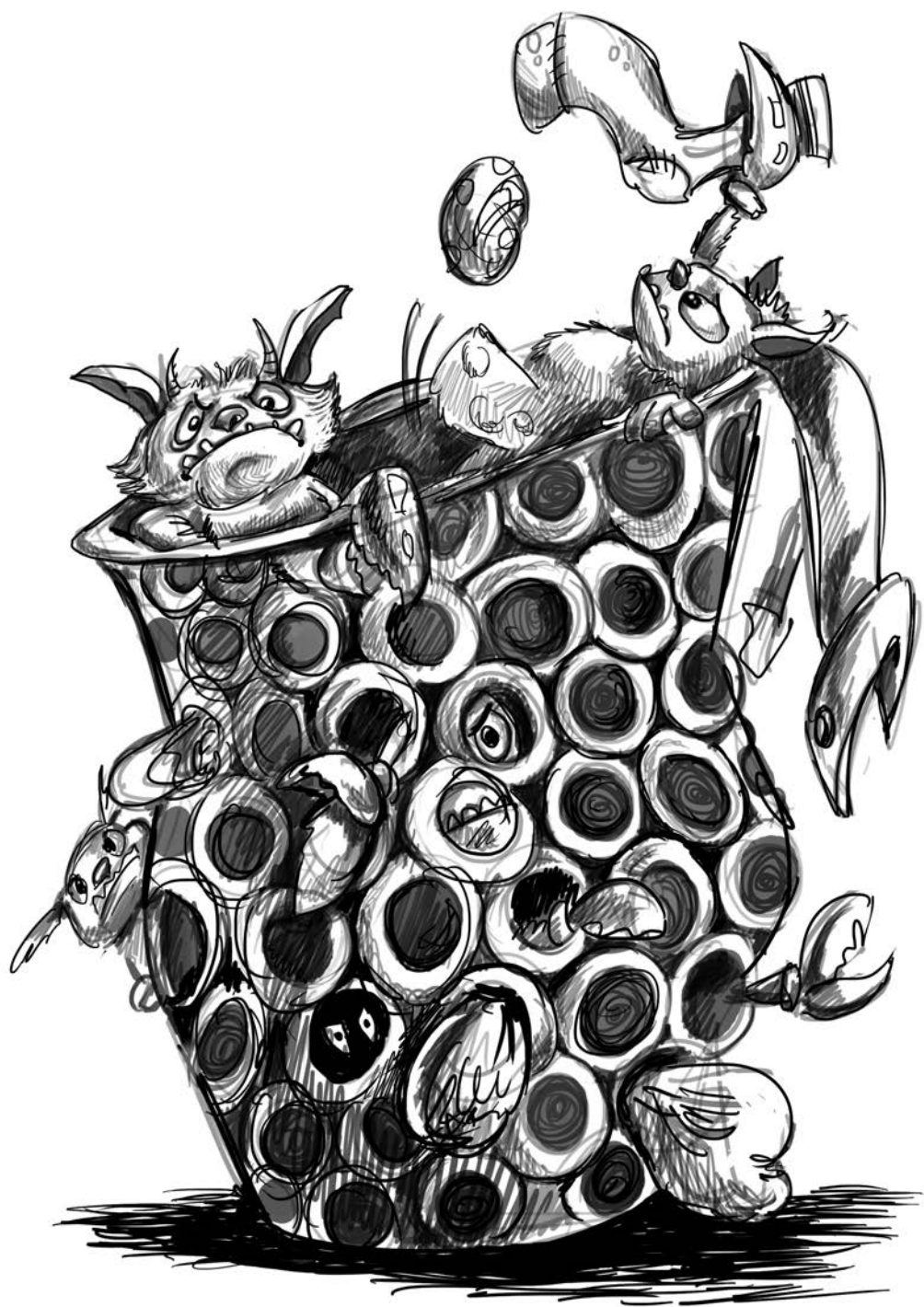
“Yes, they hiss!” Mux interrupted and snuggled up to Bobo, after which he continued in a subdued voice. “They hiss like the geese in you grandma’s garden, and their claw is bigger and stronger than ours, and when they want to frighten someone, they start rattling their claws. “

“And this rattle... “ Dodie went on, but felt that it would not be easy to continue.

He took off his steamy glasses and started to wipe them with the lower part of his sweater. Bobo lay curled beneath the blanket, wide-eyed and waiting for the rest of the story.

“As I was saying, the rattle of the claw is similar to the rattle of a rattlesnake’s tail! It’s a very unpleasant and frightening sound. It makes one’s hair stand on end!”

Bobo and Mux both shuddered. Bobo remembered that he had seen a broadcast about animals, and that was the first time he had heard that sound – the rattlesnake’s rattling sound. “They must be horrible creatures, these modds,” he thought.



“And do you know what modds hate most? Or at least my father used to frighten me with that when I was little.” Mux interrupted.

“I don’t know, Mux, but I don’t think I want to meet them.” Bobo said, cutting him short.

Mux stood up: “I’ve heard old motts say that modds do not like bright and gay colours. They do not like mornings because they are sun-tinted; they don’t like flowers because they smell good; they don’t like music; they don’t like childrens’ laughter; they don’t like it when people smile! That is why mom and dad used to teach me to be all smiles and always clean and tidy – so as not to be taken away by the modds. I used to be really scared of them back then.”

“Do they live in people’s houses too? Bobo asked looking one second at me, next at Mux.

“Yes, dear.” Dodie explained. “But they like darkness, nasty smells, humidity, and most of all frowning people. This is because grumpy people do not listen to music, dance, play with their children, and they wear dark glasses and sombre clothes – modds’ favourite colours. But all of these are only scary stories, right Mux? You’ve never met your nasty cousins.”

“Oh, no! They are just like dragons. You know they once existed, but no-one has either seen them or heard them for ages. And we are better off that

way, aren't we Bobo!"

"Definitely, Mux!" Bobo said and hugged the little mott and his orange handkerchief.

"It is late, dear boy, and tomorrow is a big day for you – you've got a math test." Dodie reminded his grandson. "It's time to go to sleep."

Bobo didn't feel like sleeping at all, but he knew that when his granddad told him it was time to sleep, it really was.

"Good night, grandpa."

"Good night, Bobo! Good night, Mux." Dodie said and gently kissed his little grandson on the forehead. He then headed to the door, slowly and quietly.

What none of them noticed in the dark, though, was a little figure, hidden in the corner of the room. There he was, with his big claw and scary teeth, hiding and spying on them ... a MODD!

Chapter 2

**MODDS IN
PREPARATION FOR
ATTACK**

It was a night of stifling heat. At one end of the city, on an abandoned farm, in the dark damp hall, there was an army of modds. They were so many, that the room could hardly hold them. All eyes were fixed on one corner where the army's leader was standing proudly. The strong and merciless Grumpy! He had a reputation for being the worst, smelliest, and most cunning of all modds.

“It's time!” Grumpy's hoarse voice pierced the silence. “It's time we conquered Mottland! It's been in the hands of our hateful cousins, the motts, for too long! Children's laughter has been out on the streets, and music has been playing in



parks and playgrounds for too long. People have enjoyed fragrant flowers for long enough! It's time for some dullness, for the smell of old socks. It's time for stink!"

"Stink! Stink! Stink!" all modds shouted together.

Yes, stink is favourite to modds. This is why they don't take baths, they hate clean clothes.





They wear their fur greasy, and they never wash their teeth.

“Stink! Stink! Stink!” all modds shouted again.

“That’s right – stink. Reek and filth must spread all over Mottland!” Grumpy went on. “Our spies came back from the city. According to them, motts haven’t got the slightest idea about our plan. Now’s the right time. Only two days from now, the night before Friday, when there is no moon and darkness embraces the city - this is when we’ll attack!

“Stink! Stink! Stink!” they all chanted once more.

“Silence!” Grumpy’s voice was heard again. He hated to be interrupted.

“Everybody knows what the plan is and what they have to do. We’ll attack from both sides of the city – from the east near the park, and from the west near the old storehouse. Be merciless, tear every flower on your way, paint everything in black: every coloured bench, every climbing frame, every bus stop, everything you can. Next, we’ll break into people’s homes while they are still sleeping. We will cut all their colourful clothes, we will throw away their laundry detergent, their perfumes, and most importantly their soap!”

“And what shall we do with the motts?” someone asked.

“The motts must be captured – all of them. They are smaller and weaker than us. It won’t be difficult. We’ll capture and lock them up. The end of the motts is near.”

There was hissing in the room followed by the rattle of claws. If a man had then passed by the farm, he would have thought that there were at least 200 rattlesnakes in there.

Having received instructions from their leader Grumpy, the modds separated in two armies, and while it was still dark, everyone headed towards the places where their attack would start. As for our dear motts, they had no clue what was about to happen.

Chapter 3

MUX LEARNS ABOUT THE ATTACK

„*M*ux, Muxieeeeeee!” Pinky rushed into the wardrobe.
“What’s the matter?” Mux flinched.

“Mux, I must tell you something very important, important and dreadful.” Pinky could barely speak, evidently out of breath and worried.

“Calm down, my friend. Take a deep breath and tell me what’s wrong.”

“Well, yesterday I was eating jam at home when I suddenly remembered that I hadn’t eaten my favourite strawberry pie for a long time. And as I was thinking about that pie, ...aaa, Mux, do you by any chance have anything to eat here – it seems I got hungry after all the hurry...

Mux smiled and pointed to a packet of biscuits. Pinky didn't wait for an invitation and gobbled two biscuits. He crunched them quickly and went on:

“So... the strawberry pie. The recipe is very easy. Take a kilo of flour...”

“Pinkyyyy! The news! The dreadful news – what is it?” Mux cut him short.

“Ah, yes, the news.”

Pinky took a deep breath, crunched another biscuit quickly, and went on in a whisper:

“So I decided to go to the woods at the edge of the city. I know there are wild strawberries there. The pie turns out best with wild strawberries, you know. So I found the strawberries and decided to taste them – you know, to see if they were delicious. As I kept trying them, it turned dark. So I... well, since there were more strawberries to taste, I decided to sleep on the old farm near the woods, so that I could try more strawberries for breakfast in the morning.

“Pinky, this strawberry story is getting too long, so make the long story short, will you - before





you eat my biscuits.” Mux grumbled, seeing his favourite biscuits speedily disappear in his friend’s mouth.

“Well, I went into the farm, and I found a corner – a clean and cozy one. I curled up, and I must have fallen asleep. Suddenly, I woke up feeling a

strange smell...”

Pinky started shifting his little paws – it seemed that what he wanted to say worried him.

“So I woke up,” he continued hesitantly. “And what do you think I should see? At the other end of the room there was a hall. In the hall there had gathered an army of... modds!”

When he heard about the modds, Mux jumped, farted discretely out of vexation and kept his eyes wide open.

“Modds? Are you sure, Pinky? Nobody has seen modds around here for ages!”

“Yes, Mux, they were modds. I am sure of it, I have seen them in our history students’ book. I recognized them at once, the smell too... ughhh.”

Mux shuddered. Modds - here, in Mottland! This is impossible. But how and why?!

“We must warn the princess at once. Come on, Pinky, to the palace! This is very important news...”

“Uhh, yes, I knew it...” Pinky muttered. “Let me just ask you: have you got anything else to eat? You know, there is a long way to the palace...”

“Pinkyyyy! Enough with the food, let’s go now! “Mux scolded and pushed him towards the door.

There was one question that kept gnawing at Mux on the way to the palace. What do the modds want from Mottland, and why are they here?

Chapter 4

IN THE PALACE WITH PRINCESS PAGU

*A*fter running around the city for 20 minutes, Mux and Pinky were in front of princess Pagu's palace. Panting, Mux rushed in where the princess was. Pinky, on the other hand, had decided to drop into the kitchen first. Poor him - he could barely stand on his feet and his tummy was rumbling with hunger.

"Princess! I must tell you something very important," Mux bowed all breathless. Then he took some breath and waited for the princess's reply.

"Tell me, Mux. What brings you here?" the princess smiled and approached him slowly.

"Well," Mux continued in an awkward manner, looking about for Pinky, who had just turned up

and was munching with delight; he had obviously managed to reach the kitchen. “Well... well, Pinky slept on the old farm near the woods last night... and he woke up feeling an unpleasant smell during the night. He went there to look for pie... no, for strawberries... Pinky, you’d better tell!” Mux poked his friend.

Pinky felt something stuck in his throat, he didn’t feel like telling this story again at all, but



after all, he was with the princess. So once again he started talking about the strawberries and the pie recipe until he got to the part with the modds.

“Modds! Pinky, this is impossible, modds are extinct. At least everybody says so.” Pagu was worried. “Are you sure the strawberries weren’t spoiled?!”

“Oh, the strawberries were quite alright, they were delicious.” Pinky started justifying himself. “I thought that modds were extinct too, but those were quite real. Big, ugly, smelly. If they had scented me, I would have been in big trouble.

“Modds!” repeated the princess still unbelieving what she had heard. “Tell me more!” she prompted Pinky. “Were they many? Did you overhear anything? What were they talking about?”

“Oh, I don’t know how to say this...” Pinky was clearly uneasy. “They, the modds, I think are about to attack the city!”

Mux and Pagu started, one of them even farted uneasily.

“Attack the city? Attack Mottland?” the princess shouted. “Speak, Pinky, speak!”

“I heard that they were about to attack from the east and the west in two days, at night, in the darkest hour. I heard that all motts, to the last one, must be captured, and all people’s colourful clothes – destroyed. At least that is what their



leader said, I think they called him Grumpy.”

“Grumpy?!” The princess had heard the name before...

Many years ago the motts and the modds lived together. They used to get along and help each other. But as time went by, things changed. The modds became lazier and lazier, they didn't feel like studying, they didn't feel like working. They would only lie about all day long and watch the motts labour. The modds were so lazy that they stopped washing their teeth, and not long after that they even stopped bathing. Their clothes became dirtier and dirtier, and their fur became greasier



and greasier. An unpleasant smell hung in the air in the city, the food was no longer enough because the modds, though lazy, had a healthy appetite. Thus, a rebellion was about to break out. Princess Pagu's grandfather (Pagu was very young at the time), the great king Ben I, gathered everyone in the city square and announced that from the next day on everyone who was dirty and smelly would be banished from the city. The modds didn't like that in the least.

Then the strongest of them all, called Stinky decided to conquer the palace and make the motts obey him. So the same night he organized an attack on the palace along with one hundred more modds. However, the great Ben I was great for a reason – he was extremely clever. He expected that move and he was prepared. On entering the palace, the modds found themselves in a trap, and even though they were bigger than the motts, they had to surrender. In short, the motts won. When the news spread around the kingdom in the morning, the modds, ashamed and insulted, decided to leave the city. Motts and modds had lived separately ever since. Although a long, long time had passed since then, the modds had not forgotten their banishment. Today Stinky's grandson, the bad and strong Grumpy, decided to take revenge.

Chapter 5

MUX AND PAGU COME UP WITH A RESCUE PLAN

” *W* hat are we going to do now?” Pinky asked uneasily. The room was quiet, so quiet that one could hear his tummy rumble. Apparently, the breakfast he had snatched from the kitchen was insufficient.

“Let’s think... There must be a solution, there always is a solution!” princess Pagu tried to encourage her friends. “Well, yes, we’ll talk to them and we’ll welcome them back. They might have changed after so many years, they might not be so lazy and... they might be cleaner.”

“Cleaner?!” Pinky started. “Excuse me, princess, but, alas, not only are the modds not clean, but they are quite, quite dirty... and smelly, I’d say!



And they didn't have the slightest intention of talking to us. They'd rather lock us up and take our cozy homes. The children will not like them either. Apart from being filthy, the modds don't like to play.



“So conversations will not do...” the princess grew pensive.

“We must organize the city’s defense. We will fight if we have to, but we will not let the modds conquer Mottland!” Mux was panting, but he continued. “We have been building our relationship with people for so many years, we have won their trust so hard. The children have finally got used to us, and now what... who will they play with, they will most probably be stuck to



their computers again and they will forget the cheerful games on the lawn in front of the block of flats. “

Princess, we must not let the modds into the city!” Pinky cried out. He was so attached to Zdravko that he didn’t even want to think about separating from his friend. Besides, Zdravko’s mother made the most delicious sandwiches in the world!”

Yes, a difficult task, Pinky thought. There was silence again.

“What are the modds most afraid of, what do they hate... what could drive them away?!” Mux was thinking out loud. It was then that a very clever thought was born into his little head. Well yes – the modds hate cleanliness, they hate nice scents. And what is it that is clean and smells nice?!”

“A washed strawberry!” shouted Pinky, then he pondered, scratched his little head, and added

“Wash an apple and it will do as well... it’s clean, it smells delicious...”

“No, Pinky! Laundry! Clean and with the scent of spring, it can drive any modd away.” Pagu smiled and continued: “We can add some more nice scents: people have so many perfumes.”

“Oh, yes, perfumes and clean laundry – this is a combination that no modd can resist!” Mux smiled proudly. “Pinky, where did you say they were going to attack from?”

“Well, from the west and the east. At least that’s what Grumpy said.” Pinky mumbled. He was thinking about washed and nice-scented strawberries....apples... and strawberries again...

“We must gather all motts in the palace and make a plan for the defense of the city! Mux, go to the west part, and you, Pinky, to the east. Let everyone come as fast as they can!” Pagu was worried but she was trying not to let it show.

Mux and Pinky turned around at the command and they rushed outside. There was no time at all, all motts had to be informed.

Chapter 6

THE PLAN IN ACTION

Only two hours later princess Pagu's palace was full of hundreds of excited motts. The news of the upcoming attack had spread like wildfire around the city. Everyone, little or big, old and young, had gathered.

"Silence!" Mux shouted. Let us hear what the princess has to announce!

"My dear compatriots!" princess Pagu was trying to quiet the gathered crowd with her soft voice. "The evil modds want to attack our kingdom and take our place in the people's homes. But we cannot let that happen! Not now when the children have finally started getting used to us, playing with us. We are responsible for them. If we let the lazy modds take over our wardrobes, the children will most probably come to resemble them. They will first stop wearing their colourful



clothes, then they will stop washing their teeth; they will probably even stop cleaning their rooms, and finally, they will stop bathing... Imagine what they will be like when they grow up. Lazy and dirty! NO! We cannot let that happen!" The room was quiet, everyone was silent and they were looking forward to the princess's further words. "We might be weaker than the modds, but we

are cleverer and more united. Therefore, without further ado... Mux, please, tell us the plan for defense of the city.

Mux cleared his throat. Not that he felt like coughing, but he wanted to draw everybody's attention to himself. After he had made sure that nobody was distracted and after he had scolded Pinky for eating, Mux slowly and carefully started explaining what the plan was. And the plan was simple. All children in the city, led by Bobo, were to gather and take clean clothes to the suburbs. Bright, colourful, with a fresh early morning scent. Then the motts, led by Mux of course, were to use the clothes to surround the city and that wouldn't allow the intruders to enter people's homes. The motts were to pile perfumes to contribute to a stronger effect. The children were to make sure they could bring as many perfumes as possible. Goula was to lead the defense on the west side and Mux – on the east. Everything looked well thought over and calculated, or at least it seemed so. Now they had to talk to the children. The plan could not be gone ahead with without their help.

And so, everyone hurried to carry out their tasks.

Chapter 7

**NO SOONER SAID
THAN DONE**

*W*hen Bobo heard from Mux about the upcoming attack, he at once went ahead with his part of the plan to save the city. He gathered all his friends on the street outside and gave them instructions. On Friday evening at 8 p.m. sharp they were to gather at the same place and take off to the suburbs with the clean clothes.

At the same time Mux was in the east end of the city. He was walking around looking for the most appropriate places to put the piles of clothes. It was important that people didn't see them because that could hinder the plan. And the scent of newly-washed clothes was to envelop the city and build an invisible wall in front of the awful modds.



Gould was in the west end of the city. Princess Pagu had her own part as well. She, along with a few more motts, had to gather as many perfumes as possible from people's homes and take them to Goula and Mux. Yes, Pagu, though she was a princess, was the most diligent of all. Those were her subjects after all and it was her duty to protect them.

The appointed time came and Bobo was waiting for the children on his street at 8 p.m. sharp.

"Is everyone here?" he asked one of the boys.





“We are waiting only for Zdravko.” the boy replied.

“Great! I can see that we have gathered a lot of clothes.” Bobo smiled, and his eyes fell upon a wonderful colourfully striped shawl. That was exactly what they needed.

20 minutes later the children were in the east end of the city where Mux was waiting for them impatiently.

“You are late!” Mux shouted to Bobo.

“I am sorry, Muxie, but we had to wait for Zdravko. You know that he is always late. He said he had to finish a sandwich...”

“There’s no time!” the little mott interrupted him. “We must arrange the clothes before it gets dark or it will be too late then!”

Bobo didn’t wait for another word, but he waved to the children. Under his command, everyone started piling the clothes. Mux was running about, showing the children where to put the clothes they were carrying.

“And how is Goula doing?” Bobo asked.

Goula must be at the other end of the city where the children from his street must be piling clean clothes.” Mux replied. However, it was not Goula that Mux was worried about, but Pagu. The princess was supposed to be there by now and bring the precious perfumes.

“Not there, Zdravko!” Bobo shouted. Not only was Zdravko late, but he kept putting his clothes in the wrong places. Oh, Zdravko, Zdravko, Bobo thought and ran to help him.

“I should have eaten one more sandwich,” Zdravko was muttering. He was famous for his appetite in the city. One day he had taken it into his head to eat all pastries in the confectioner’s. Well, he didn’t manage to eat them all, but he handled an impressive 13! He had a stomach-ache the next few days. That’s what Zdravko was like. It was not by coincidence that Pinky lived in his wardrobe.

And Pagu was still not there. Mux was absorbed in the organization of the defense, but he didn’t stop thinking about her for a second. “I hope she gets here soon.” he thought. The sun was setting tiredly beyond the near mountain, and the day was leaving with it. Once it was dark, the modds were going to come out of their hiding and attack.

Chapter 8

WAITING FOR PAGU

It was past 10 p.m., the sun had set, and darkness crept over the city. The children had gone home a long time ago. The defense was ready. But Mux stood near a pile of clothes, he was worried. He had something on his mind. Pagu hadn't come. A little mott had come to leave two perfumes and had told him that Goula was ready with his task too.

"And the princess? Where is the princess?" Mux kept asking him.

"The princess left a few perfumes with Goula and was on her way here. Hasn't she come here?" replied the little mott. Mux's heart sank, something had happened to Pagu. Oh, how he wanted to go and look for her, but he had to be at his post. The city's defense was very important. She must have got lost or she might have forgotten something

and gone back to the palace. Mux thought as he peered into the darkness hoping that she would show up any minute now. Alas, nobody came. Or maybe there was someone in the darkness after all, someone with a big ugly claw. Someone who had a clever plan to slip by the brave motts unnoticed...



Chapter 9

THE DEFEAT

It was very quiet, quiet and dark. Even the Moon didn't dare to shine, as if it felt that something bad was about to happen that night. In the darkness, without anyone's notice, high up above the piles of scented clothes, far from the perfumes, the colourful scarves and the flowery handkerchiefs, there were flying ravens. Ugly, black ravens with modds on their wings. That's right – modds! They had united with the ravens and using their wings, they managed to fly above the motts' defense. The attack had begun. And Mux and the rest didn't have the slightest idea that the battle was lost. It was only in the morning that it became clear they had been outsmarted.

When the sun warmed the city with its rays, Mux noticed there was something wrong. At first, he didn't understand what, but then he



saw it. One of Mux's favourite spots was just at the end of the city: the park with the water lilies. A bright and colourful park with many swings and slides for the children, and a little pond in the middle. The pond was full of water lilies. At least that had been the case before, while that day the park looked different... gray somehow. Mux shuddered, he inspected the swings – all to the last one were painted in dark colours, even the benches were black. And the lilies – they were torn and flung beside the pond. Mux knew that the plan had failed. He didn't know how, but he was sure the modds were already in the city. Mux hurriedly gathered all the motts from the defense and gave them an order: back to princess Pagu's palace. There they had to decide what to do to drive the intruders away. Leaving the clothes, the motts headed for the palace. Mux, however, did not go with them. He knew that something had happened to the princess and instead of heading for the palace, he started for the other end of the city. That was where Goula was, that was where Pagu had last been seen. The princess had disappeared somewhere on her way.

Chapter 10

BOBO LEARNS ABOUT THE FAILURE

It was a warm morning. The first sunrays were on Bobo's face, gently urging him to get up for school. He opened one eye, then the other, and when he made sure it was really time to get up, he jumped out of bed with ease and rushed to the kitchen. Bobo was hoping that his mother had made his favourite pancakes. But when he opened his bedroom door, he felt something strange... he couldn't understand what it was, but there was something different that morning! He walked on through the passageway to the kitchen and just as he was passing by the bathroom where the dirty laundry was, something hit his nose. That was a horrible smell; a smell which he had only heard about, and now he felt for the first time. It

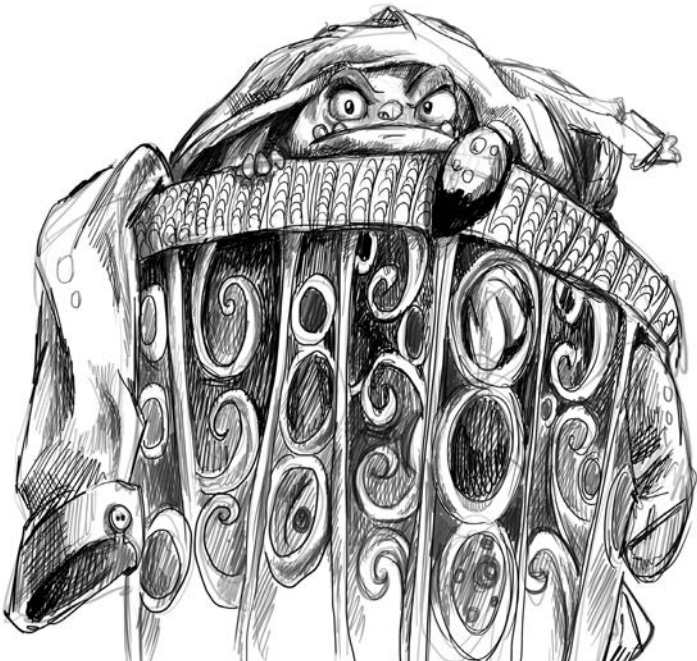
was the smell of a MODD!

Bobo froze where he was, he didn't dare to move. Could it be possible? he thought. Was it possible that the modds had somehow managed to break through the defense of the brave motts in the dead of night and they had conquered Mottland??

Bobo's heart sank, he turned and ran back to his bedroom hoping to find Mux there.

"Muxie, Muxie," Bobo shouted and opened the wardrobe door panting. There was nobody there.

At the same time, the motts in the suburbs realized that they had lost the battle. The modds were already in the people's homes, and it was going to be very difficult to drive them away from there.



Chapter 11

MUX AND BOBO MEET

*M*ux had left the defense of clean clothes at the end of the city after that night's attack and he was trying to find the princess. However, moving about the streets was not safe. Ravens hovered in the sky and when they noticed motts, they quickly flew towards them, grabbed them with their beaks and took them God knows where. Motts were invisible to people, but all birds and animals could see them. That's why Mux walked along the streets slowly and carefully, looking about in search of Pagu. Oh, how he wished to see her, to hear her voice again... Suddenly Mux bumped into Bobo. Yes, Bobo, why hadn't he thought of his friend sooner. It was Bobo who could help the motts so much.

"Mux, what happened?" Bobo asked with alarm when he had finally managed to find his favourite

mott in the little street behind their block of flats.

“They defeated us, Bobo!” Mux replied and a tear rolled down his cheek. “They defeated us!” he repeated as if he didn’t believe it had happened.

“How? What happened? I thought everything was alright! The clean laundry, the colourful clothes and the smiles were supposed to protect us, right?”

“Yes, but the modds outwitted us. They made a union with the ravens and that night, climbing on their wings, they managed to fly over the clean well-scented clothes that protected Mottland. And while all of us, motts, were at our posts at the edge of the city, the modds sneaked into the people’s wardrobes and cut all their colourful clothes with their strong claws. They only left the gray and black ones untouched!”

“Muxie, this is terrible!” Bobo could hardly speak, and it was only then that he looked around. He had been so busy looking for his friend, that he had not noticed the gray people on the streets. “What are we to do now?”

Mux didn’t say a thing, and how could he – when he himself didn’t know what to do.

“Grandpa!” Bobo shouted. “Only grandpa can help us.”

“Dodie!” Mux murmured too. “Yes, he would know what to do! Let’s go and see him!”

Bobo didn't think twice, both of them rushed to Dodie.

... People didn't have the slightest idea what had happened. In the morning they found out that their clothes were cut but they decided that their children had done it. That was a bad day for all kids – how could they tell their parents that it was not them who did mischief, but the modds. And so, people, with sullen faces and black clothes, were heading hurriedly for their workplaces. Their smiles were gone, the flowers in the gardens



were gone (torn by the modds during the night), and even the colourful swings in the park were painted gray. The whole town was conquered by the modds. Oh, the smell... it was getting stronger and stronger, it shrouded the city like a fog.

A thick, heavy smell...



Chapter 12

DODIE INTERVENES

” *G*randpa!” Bobo hurried into the room with Mux panting after him. “What’s the matter, my boy!” Dodie asked excitedly.

“You don’t know yet?! The modds have conquered the city!” Bobo answered sobbing.

“What are we going to do now, how are we to save Mottland?!” Mux shouted - he couldn’t help himself.

Dodie pondered. He himself was surprised. He didn’t believe that the modds would manage to creep into the city.

“Let me make you a cup of tea.” he said calmly. “It is very useful. Every child should drink tea.” Dodie rose from his chair and slowly headed for the kitchen.

“But grandpa, there’s no time for this now, we must do something!” Bobo and Mux shouted

simultaneously.

“Calm down, children, wise people say “The more haste, the less speed.” Let me think, I am sure there is a way to drive these smelly pests out of our city.” Dodie replied confidently.

10 minutes later Bobo and Mux had calmed down a little thanks to the tea or Dodie’s presence.

“So,” Dodie sighed and slowly continued. “How should we handle the little intruders?!”

“I don’t know, Dodie. They have torn all people’s bright and colourful clothes, and everything that made them smile!” Bobo replied sadly.

“You are wrong, my dear! It’s not the clothes that make people smile; it’s neither the new TV set in the sitting-room, nor the new car.” Dodie answered calmly, taking a sip of his tea. “When I was young, a loooooong, long time ago I mean, when people didn’t have so many clothes, they didn’t have computers, TV sets were rare, it was then that we smiled even more than we do now.”

“But how come, Dodie? What made you happy?” Muxie asked timidly.

“Dancing!” Dodie said. “Songs and dancing! All young boys and girls from the city used to get together in the city square every Saturday, and we used to start singing - singing and dancing. Back then it didn’t matter what your clothes were, whether they were new or old, colourful or not,

expensive or cheap. It didn't matter – anyone could come and dance in the city square. That's why there used to be a lot of dancing on Saturday evenings, we used to sing the best songs, people were smiling, they were happy. We used to go home late at night and we could hardly wait for next Saturday when we would get together again. Do you know, Bobo, I met your grandmother on a night like this, but this is another story...



“But how can we make people sing and dance?!” Bobo and Mux shouted simultaneously.

“It’s not so difficult.” Dodie replied calmly. “We must provide some amusement for them.”

“Will this do?” Bobo asked and looked at the little mott. “Muxie, you can tell me, you know modds the best.”

Mux jumped up, it was his turn to help.

“Well, modds hate songs and dances, but this will hardly be enough. We need something more

, it must be colorful, veeeeery bright, with a lot of smiling faces about...”

“Hmm,” Bobo scratched his nose, then started talking to himself. “Bright, colourful, music, dancing...”

“I got it!” Mux called out roguishly. “Why didn’t I think of this earlier – A FAIR!”

“A fair??” Dodie muttered. Yes, this is a good idea.

“That’s right! A fair! With a lot of music, dancing, bright and colourful merry-go-rounds, with cotton candy and a lot of toys. There is no way that someone might be gray and somber at the sight of this, at the smell of cinnamon cookies, at the view of all the colourful balloons in the sky. Your feet cannot help dancing when you hear your favourite song, when you see the smile on your child’s face when he or she is enjoying another ride on the merry-go-round. There is no way that modds will survive all that happiness. We will drive them away with smiles, songs and dancing.” Mux could hardly control his excitement.

This will definitely do! Bobo thought and his little head started making plans about how they can organize a fair in the city.

But the organization of a fair was not an easy task; modds were cunning and mean creatures. Once having conquered Mottland, they started



looking for motts and taking them to an abandoned storehouse at the edge of the city – it turned into a prison for our favourite creatures. Yes, that is where the ravens took the motts, in the storehouse, far from all children! Alas, the modds had bigger and stronger claws, and our pleasant little motts, though tough and brave, didn't stand a chance against them. All the mischief that the modds were doing in the people's homes pointed at the children, and so their parents got angry – they didn't feel like a fair at all; they didn't feel like dancing or anything of the kind. The situation was everything but pleasant. It smelled like defeat.

That, however, didn't stop Bobo and Mux from considering the new plan. How could they make the city bright and colourful again, and the people – happy? Bobo undertook the task of talking to the children on his street and asking them for help while Mux headed for the princess's palace. Our favourite mott was secretly hoping that Pagu might be there. She must be there. Where else would she be?! Mux was trying to calm himself. But in his heart he was still worried, something bothered him...

Chapter 13

LOOKING FOR THE PRINCESS

*M*ux's journey to Pagu's Palace turned out quite long and trying. The ravens kept hovering in the air and the ground was not a safe place at all. All sorts of thoughts kept racing through Mux's mind. However, the memories of the warm summer days of the past summer spent in Pagu's company made him smile and go ahead confidently. So he got to the palace slowly but surely. But it was unusually quiet inside. The guards were not at the entrance, the hallway was deserted as well. Only at the bottom where the princess's room was could voices be heard. Pagu's here! the little mott thought and he broke into a run. It was just before Mux entered the room when he felt an unpleasant

smell, strong and stinky. The smell of modds! Mux froze where he was, his heart started racing. The voices could still be heard from inside the room. After he took some breath, Mux approached the door, he set it ajar and peeped inside. Two big and quite ugly modds were talking in there.

“There is no one here, I already told you! I checked everywhere!”

“Grumpy told us to check again, he wants to be sure that everyone from the palace is captured.”

“But why does he need everyone? We’ve got the princess, right?”

“Don’t think, silly! If Grumpy said so, so he said so...ummm, ooor...was it if Grumpy said so, so he must have said so....no, that wasn’t it either...”

“You are silly! If Grumpy has said so, that’s what we must do! That’s the law!”

“Ah, that was it! If Grumpy has... well anyway, we must do it!”

“Do what?”

“What Grumpy said!”

“Yes! Let’s go on with the search.”

“Oh, how stupid you are! We’ve already searched, so it’s time to go home. That’s what Grumpy told us.”

“Yes, that’s right. Well, if there’s no one else here, then let’s go back to the old storehouse. I hate to be outside when it is so bright; and it’s so

bright and colourful here...”

“It is. And there’s this clean smell around! Nasty!”

“There’s not a single dirty sock in this room for a change... or to add some colour and some stench.”

“I miss the smell of dirty socks! Let’s go back. There is such a nice smell of garbage in the storehouse... Besides, I feel sleepy, ughhh... damn sun! Can’t there be eternal darkness?”

The two modds then headed for the door. Mux didn’t wait for an invitation and instantly rushed back down the hallway; he hid in the nearby



kitchen. There the little mott waited for the stinky modds to leave the palace. After he peeped through the door and he made sure there was no one out there, Mux rushed out. He stopped when he got to the gate. Pagu had been captured! The thought of that didn't give him peace of mind. Now what? What should he do next, where should he go? Should he go back to Bobo or should he stay and wait for someone to come? Where could all other motts be – those who had been with him during the night? Maybe, they had been captured by the modds when they had come back to the palace. He heard the modds say they had already been there. Goula! What had happened to him? No, Mux couldn't just sit and wait, he had to do something. He would go west where Goula was supposed to be.

Chapter 14

MUX AND GOULA AGAINST GRUMPY

It was three hours later when Mux reached the west end of the city where Goula was supposed to be. And, fortunately, his friend was there.

“Goula, I am so happy to see you!”

“Mux, I thought they had captured you.”

They hugged. There is nothing better than meeting a friend when you’re going through rough times.

“What happened, Goula?” Mux looked around and was surprised to see part of the motts he had spent the night with.

“Mux, they outwitted us. It was only in the morning that we realized what had happened. We started for the palace at once. There we got

together with the motts from the east end of the city. It was just then that the modd army came. The evil Grumpy was leading them. We tried to resist them, but they were very strong and they were more than us. I gave our motts an order to retreat and those who managed to save themselves, came back here – where the clean clothes and perfumes are. This still is the safest place for us. At least until the night comes.“

“What about the princess?”

“She was not there, neither were her guards. She was here yesterday evening, she left a few perfumes and she went to you.”

“But she didn’t show up!” Mux murmured and continued. “She must have come across modds on her way and they must have captured her.”

“Oh, I hope she is alright!” Goula started shifting his little paws with worry.

“I come from the palace. There were two modds there who were talking to each other.”

“Did you manage to hear anything?”

“Yes, Grumpy has ordered that all of us should be captured. Alas, our princess is already in his paws! From what I heard, she is in the old storehouse.“

“The old storehouse? The one that has been abandoned for years?”

“Yes, that must be it, near the landfill, the place where there’s a lot of garbage and the smell is



horrible - the perfect hiding place for the modds.

“At least now we know where she is! Mux, do you think that Grumpy will do her any harm?”

“Relax, Goula. Grumpy is evil but he will not dare harm her. I think he wants all motts to work for him, so that his fellow-modds and he himself can lie idle as much as they wish to. And when they want to, they can torment people’s children.”

“The children! Mux, do you think they will help us in this battle?”

“Of course, Goula! I have already spoken with Dodie and Bobo. Together we came up with a new plan for saving Mottland. The children will help us, you’ll see. But now we must release the princess.”

“This won’t be easy at all. Grumpy is very strong; besides, his whole army is there.”

“So we will outsmart him. He won the first battle last night, but he still hasn’t won the war. Goula, gather everyone. It’s time for a new plan.”

Chapter 15

MUX COMES TO THE RESCUE

*T*he storehouse near the landfill! That was the new target. After all, the princess was there. Besides, who could lead the battle against the tiresome modds better than the princess? So, armed with forks and spoons that were left after the skirmish at Pagu's palace, a little squad of brave motts led by Mux and Goula started for the storehouse. The group wasn't big because it was less visible that way and it was going to move about the city more easily. The rest of the motts remained at the defense in the west end of the city, under the protection of the clean laundry and the perfumes. The children from the city who had understood from Bobo what had happened during the night, has brought new clean clothes and more scents. The defense

started looking like a fortress.

It was late afternoon when the rescue squad arrived at the storehouse. The smell was terrible. Pinky, who was part of the group too, didn't feel like eating for the first time. How could it be otherwise with that stench around. Garbage and the smell of modds – that was a nightmare for every sensitive nose.

Anyway, a nice strawberry pie is always a good idea. Pinky thought and started daydreaming again.

“Alright! There's the storehouse!” Mux pointed at the building not far off.

“How are we going to make our way in there inconspicuously?” Goula wondered.

Coming here was the easy part. Now what? They didn't have much time, only a few hours from now the sun would hide behind the mountain and darkness would embrace the city. Yes, the sunrays were allies of the motts because their lazy distant cousins liked to take a nap during the day. But Grumpy was not stupid, he had surely placed guards who can't be sleeping.

“We must take a closer look. Goula, I will go alone. I will take a quick look and I will come back so as to discuss the attack.”

“But Mux, it is dangerous. You can't go on your own!”

“That’s better – they won’t notice me if I am alone.”

Goula agreed unwillingly. After all, a fast and clever mott like Mux had a good chance to slip in unnoticed. So after they gave each other a high claw-five for luck, Mux headed for the storehouse.

Each step further made his heart beat faster, not out of fear, but excitement that Pagu was in there. Had Grumpy by any chance harmed her? Oh, this horrible modd, Mux thought, I will show him! When I lay my paws on him, I will soap him all over and I will give him a good bath, and then we’ll see if he is still so smelly. So, running as fast as his feet could carry him, hiding behind every big stone, every bit of garbage that was on his way, Mux finally got to a crevice in the storehouse wall. The crevice was not big, but our dear mott was not a big one either, so with a little effort he managed to get inside. Thank God that Pinky didn’t come with me, he was sure to be stuck in here with his big belly and all. Mux thought and smiled.

It was dark and damp in the storehouse. No wonder why the modds had chosen that particular building. After his eyes got used to the darkness, Mux started looking around. And here’s what he saw: hundreds of modds were lying one above the other in one corner of the room. That was Grumpy’s army who was lazying about waiting for





the night. In another corner of the room there was something like a storeroom. The door was slightly open and Mux saw an enormous cage there. The cage was full of motts. Sad and low-spirited, those were his friends and relatives. There was Pagu as well. The beautiful princess. Mux had to save them at once. But it was not going to be easy at all. At the entrance of the storeroom, right next to a big metal door, there were the two big modds that Mux had seen in the palace. Sillyhead and Dunderhead – those were the names he had given them. They both were really huge, with very big scary claws. Should he go back to Goula so that the two of them can attack together? After all, though quite brave, Mux was tiny in comparison with those modds. However, while he was hesitating what to do, Sillyhead and Dunderhead started to fight.

“It’s so not true! The sea is bigger than the ocean but smaller than the lake.”

“That’s not true, the sea is the biggest, then comes the mountain, the ocean comes last.”

“What mountain? We’re talking about the sea. I am telling you that my grandfather once swam through three seas and two oceans, and only then stopped to rest.”

“My grandfather swam through three lakes, three seas, four mountains and only THEN took

some breath, stupid!

“But you cannot swim through mountains!”

“Are you calling me a liar?”

“Are you calling me stupid?”

The two modds started pushing each other until they crossed their claws. It started as a duel: not with swords, but with claws.

Now's the right moment, Mux thought. The little mott held the fork he had with him as tight as he could, like a spear, and he rushed to the storeroom. Oh, please don't see me, please don't see me, he kept saying to himself while he was running to the door.

“Hey, who are you?!” Dunderhead shouted and





once he resisted Sillyhead's attack, he jumped to the storeroom door.

Mux never stopped for a second, he kept on running, squeezing the fork. There was no way back; if only he could get inside. Then he could push the metal door and lock it, and the modds would remain outside. Mux put all his strength into it and went on. Sillyhead and Dunderhead, however, didn't have the slightest intention of letting him go just like that. One of them, I think it was Sillyhead, stood at the doorway a second before Mux reached it. Instead of halting, the brave little mott flung himself to the floor, on his belly.



He had gained such speed that he slid between Sillyhead's legs as on a slide and flew inside.

"You, little mott! Wait until we lay our paws on you!" the two modds' voices were audible.

Mux jumped to his feet, turned, and pushed the door; he slammed it in Sillyhead's face. The latch was heard on the inside. The door was already locked and Mux could pause for breath. For a second there was complete silence. One could hear only Mux's heart beating wildly. Sillyhead and Dunderhead started arguing again.

"It's your fault! Grumpy told us not to get distracted and to be on the watch so that no one

can come out of the storeroom.” one of them mumbled.

“No, it’s your fault!”

“No, it’s you and your story of your grandfather!”

“Wait! Let’s think. Grumpy said...”

“Yes, I know. If Grumpy said so, so he said so...”

“No, not that! Grumpy told us that he would punish us if somebody left the room. But nobody left, actually somebody went inside...”

“Hmmm... that’s right. So, if somebody went inside and nobody left, then Grumpy will even praise us.”

“That’s right.”

Sillyhead and Dunderhead were pleased. Apparently, they had done a good job again. After they made sure the door was carefully locked, they praised each other for the way they had tricked the little mott. So the argument between them about who had a greater grandfather continued.

“So, my grandfather used to parachute back then.”

“Parachute? There were no parachutes back then!”

“Well, he made himself a parachute. He used a handkerchief, he tied its four ends to a shoelace, and jumped off the edge of the biggest precipice.”

“Yeah, yeah, right, a handkerchief. If your grandfather was as fat as you, he must have needed

a sheet to jump...”

There was Mux, inside the storeroom, he had calmed down. He took a deep breath, grabbed the fork from the floor and turned his steps to the cage. Voices were heard from there.

“Mux! This is Mux!” the voices multiplied.

There was excitement in the cage, everyone had jumped to their feet waiting for Mux to release them. He only had to unlock the padlock at the door of the cage.

“Mux! He will save us! Princess, look, that’s him!” a little mott kept pulling Pagu’s claw and pointing at Mux.

The princess smiled, her beloved had come to save her. Yes, it was for the very first time that Pagu thought that she could start a wonderful family with Mux (with a lot of happy little motts of their own).

Chapter 16

THE CLASH

*M*ux ran to the cage, but it was locked with a huge padlock. The claw of the strongest mott could not possibly break that padlock.

“Mux, you came!” he heard Pagu’s gentle voice.

“Of course, princess!” Mux smiled and gave a little bow. After all, that was Mottland’s princess.

“How are you going to unlock the padlock? Did you see where the key was?” the excited voices of the motts were saying.

“No, I didn’t see a key anywhere. But this is a storeroom, there must be some tools that can help us break the padlock.” Mux answered and started looking around.

It was then that a hoarse voice was heard from a dark corner:

“Is this what you are looking for?” That was the scary Grumpy who was holding a little key on a string around his neck.

Everyone was silent, and the little motts hurried to their parents to hide. Mux froze. The strongest of all modds, the huge evil Grumpy was facing him. He was famous for the strongest claw of all, they compared it to crocodile bite. But standing there, opposite the little mott, Grumpy looked even stronger and more terrifying. He smiled and his claw rattled twice. The sound made everyone in the storehouse shudder.

“Back off!” Mux screamed and pointed his fork at the modd. “I said back off, I am not afraid of you!”

“Hahahaaa! You, little mott, what are you going to do with that tiny fork? Are you going to have a bite or what?” Mux heard a click and saw how Grumpy’s claw cut his spear-fork in two with ease.

Everyone in the cage held their breath, the little ones weren’t even looking, it was so frightening.

“Hahaha! What are we to do now, little mott, have you got a spoon or maybe a toothpick... hahaha!” Grumpy’s laughter echoed in the room.

There was movement outside as well. Sillyhead and Dunderhead recognized their evil leader’s voice and renewed their attempts to enter the storeroom. The door, however, was tightly shut.







“Let’s push the door together, it must yield. “ Sillyhead shouted. He was apparently worried that they were so slow to go in. There was chaos, the whole modd army must have woken up and now everyone was pushing the door – it was a joint effort. Though the door was metal, it could hardly keep much longer. Things were getting worse and worse for the brave little mott now that he was left without his spear-fork.

“Hahahaha! Come on, little mott, do something.” Grumpy smiled, obviously happy with the situation.



Mux was standing still. Poor Mux, he had no idea how to deal with this situation.

“The screwdriver!” he heard the princess’s voice. “Mux, take the screwdriver, it’s over there!”

Mux looked at Pagu, then followed her pointing paws with his eyes and saw a big solid screwdriver. Without wasting time, he jumped over to it and grabbed it from the floor. Good for him! Grumpy didn’t waste time either. He followed the little mott close behind. When he got to the screwdriver, Mux turned it into a sword and resisted Grumpy’s attacks. The screwdriver was more solid than the

fork, so it couldn't break as easily.

"I will crunch you like a pretzel stick, you little mott!" Grumpy was shouting and he didn't stop waving his huge claw for a second. "Hey you, come here!" but Mux was quite quick and besides, the screwdriver was doing a wonderful job.

"We are coming, boss!" Dunderhead's voice came from the outside. "Come on, push, we must open the door!" he was giving orders.

The duel in the storeroom was still on, but the little mott's strength was failing. Every blow that he resisted made him weaker. Finally, there was a strong wave of Grumpy's claw, Mux found himself lying on the ground, and the screwdriver slid on the floor.

"Hahaha! I got you!" Grumpy's ugly voice echoed in the room one more time.

He approached Mux, who was lying on the floor and was hardly breathing with agitation. Then he lifted his claw and waved in Mux's direction. Pagu turned away, she could not bear the sight. Mux simply closed his eyes and clenched his teeth. Was that to be the end of our favourite mott?!

"Yippee!" a voice came from above.

Grumpy was stunned, he turned towards the direction of the voice and it was then that something swooped on him. The evil modd rolled over three times and found himself in the opposite



corner of the storeroom.

“Goula, I am glad to see you, my friend!” Mux barely murmured, his eyes filled with tears.

“I can simply not let you fight this battle alone! Come on, Mux, there’s a modd to beat up!”

Goula had come in through the window high up on the ceiling. He had climbed up the drainpipe on the wall outside and that’s how he had made his way into the storeroom. Having seen the duel down there, he resolutely threw himself upon Grumpy and hit him like a genuine shell.

That’s what I call a true friend! Mux thought and jumped to his feet. Goula had already picked up the screwdriver from the floor and he headed towards Grumpy who was very confused and was trying to stand up. Using these few seconds, Mux looked

around and saw a little teakettle lid. That was the perfect shield. He grabbed it and followed Goula, who was already thrashing Grumpy. Grumpy was still confused. Alas, the big modd got up after all and started hitting back. Things were now different, though. While Goula was aiming blows at Grumpy, Mux was protecting both of them with the teakettle lid (later called the kettleshield in all stories told about this adventure).

“Hahaha! The two of you cannot handle me! Hahaha! Once I capture you, I will make you my servants! One of you will prepare tea for me in the morning, and the other will do my dirty laundry.” Grumpy threatened them.

“Do you actually do your laundry... ever??” A voice came from the cage.

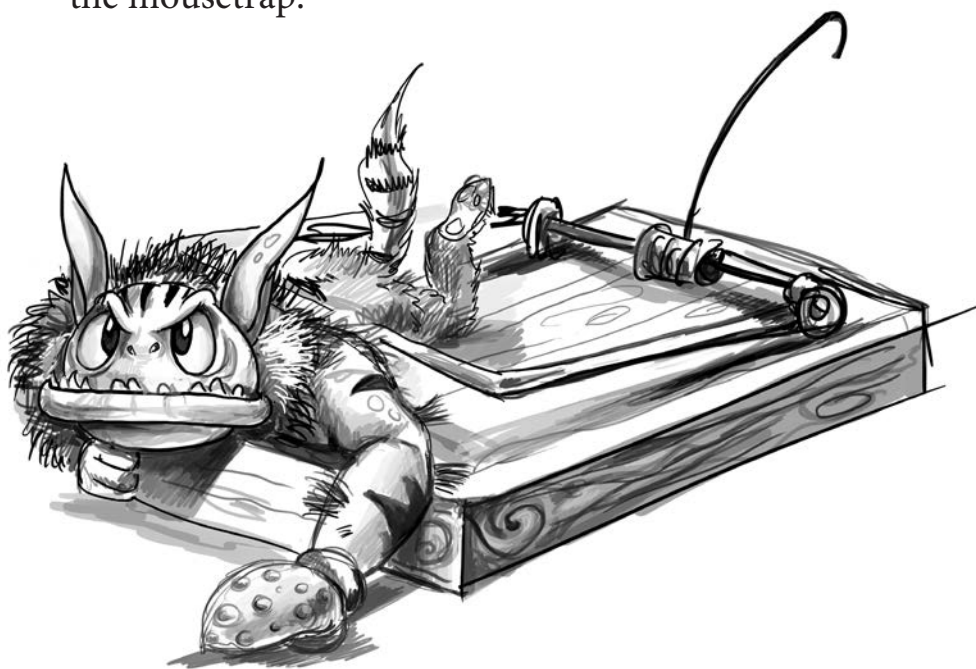
The modds were pushing hard outside. The door started yielding, it was about to open any second now.

Grumpy stopped to take some breath, he was very strong, but the motts were so fast that he only aimed his claw at them, and nearly always missed them. Mux and Goula looked at each other, they both knew that if the army came from the outside, the battle would soon be over. Then something attracted Mux’s attention. There was a trap right behind Grumpy’s back. Yes, a mousetrap! If they could only push the smelly modd into its direction,

then he would fall into the trap. Mux smiled. His friend had also noticed the mousetrap and had guessed what Mux had on his mind.

“Let’s push him towards the trap together, and I will pull the key from his neck with the screwdriver.” Goula whispered to Mux.

They nodded to each other and the attack began. Grumpy was not pleased, he was a bit tired and clumsy, it was not at all easy for him to resist the brave motts. Standing together behind the kettleshield, both of them started pushing Grumpy backwards, straight to the trap. The next minute, they heard a loud crack, the leader of the modds was on the floor, and his claw was stuck in the mousetrap.



“Hurraaaaay!” all motts in the cage started cheering.

Goula took advantage of the situation and quickly pulled the rope from Grumpy’s neck. The cage key was on the rope.

“Yes! Give me a claw!” Goula smiled contentedly.

“You little mott! Wait and see what’ll happen to you once I release myself. You will do my army’s laundry from dusk till dawn.” Grumpy was screaming. No one paid attention to him because there was no time to lose. The door was going to open any minute now and hundreds of modds were going to rush in.

Goula threw the key towards the cage where his friend was already standing. Mux caught it with ease, put it in the padlock, and only a second later the cage door was finally open.

“Everyone, to the skylight!” Mux’s voice echoed in the room.

“But how are we to climb there?” a little mott faltered.

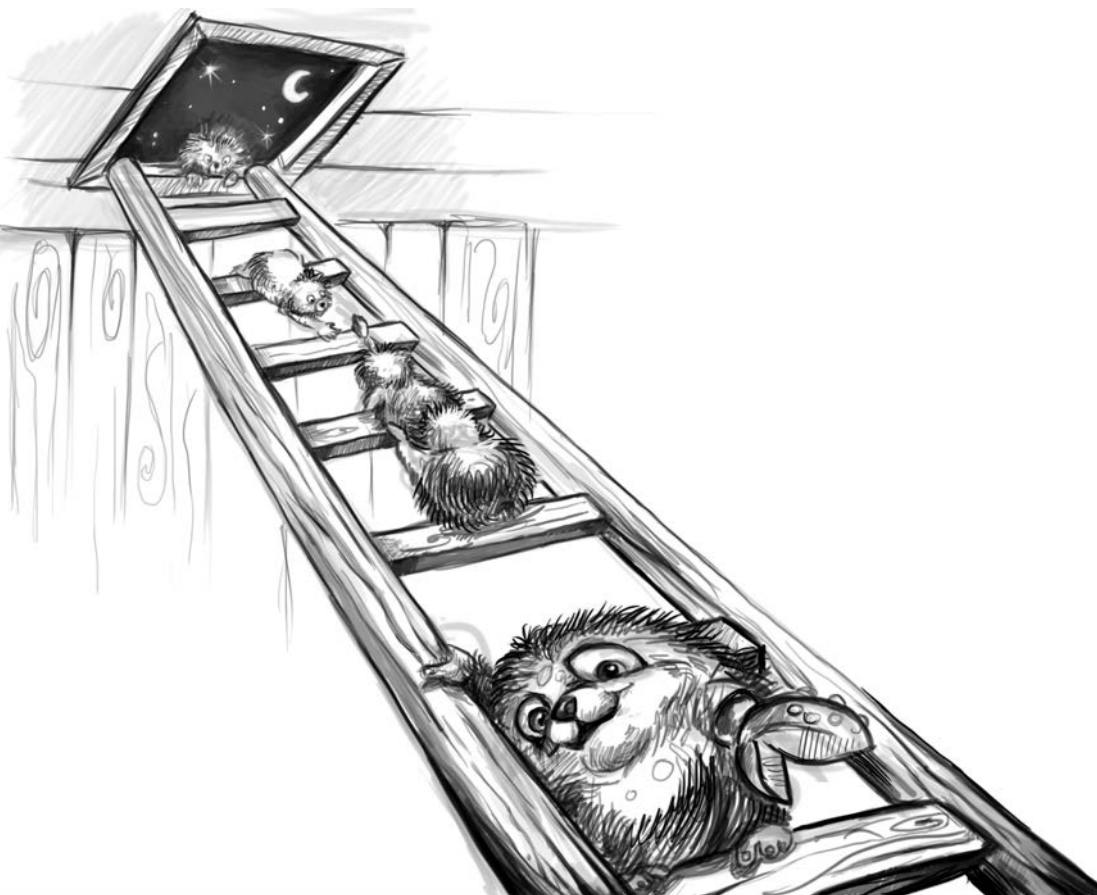
“We will use that ladder. There it is, it can reach the skylight.” Mux had already inspected the wall and having seen the ladder, he started directing everyone to it.

It was going to be quite difficult but not impossible. After all, the motts were extremely nimble and they could climb well. So, in less than

two minutes, everyone was near the skylight, on their way out. They used the drainpipe outside to climb down to the ground.

“You wicked creatures, I will get hold of you!” Grumpy was still screaming. His claw was tightly caught in the trap and hard as he tried, there was no chance to get out.

It was then that the door yielded and the army of modds finally found their way in. But it was too late. Only a second earlier had Mux left the storeroom following the rest of the motts.



Chapter 17

FAIR PREPARATION

It was past 10 p.m.. The sun was slowly hiding behind the mountain, the light was fading with it. All motts, released from the old storehouse, had just arrived at the defense in the west end of the city. It had been an exciting and exhausting day. Now the motts could finally take some breath and rest. The children had brought more clean clothes from the city, so the place was safe. It was like a fortress, a fortress that smelled like lilac and fresh early morning. That was the most revolting smell for all modds.

“Thank you, Goula! You saved me!” Mux uttered and hugged his friend.

“Come on, Mux, you know that I would never miss the chance of beating up a modd.”

“But how come you were there – you were to stay with the rest, right?”

“I did stay there, but then I decided to have a closer look at the storehouse. That’s how I reached the storeroom wall, I saw the skylight, and... you know the rest. How well we handled that smelly Grumpy!” There was a beaming smile on Goula’s face.

“Yes, we did, but the modds are still in the city...” Mux became thoughtful, the battle had not yet ended.

They heard some steps and a few children, led by Bobo, approached the fortress.

“Bobo!” Mux jumped to his feet and went towards him.

“Muxieeee! How glad am I to see you! What happened? I see that everyone’s here.”

“We found them all! The princess was there as well. Goula and I managed to release the motts, but there’s no time to lose. Night is almost here. Tell me how your plan for the fair preparation is going.”

“Well, Mux, it’s a nasty piece of work.” Bobo scratched himself, he was not sure where to begin. “The thing is,” he continued hesitantly. “I mean to say that no-



one has any idea how to organize a fair. It's been so long since anyone held anything of the kind in the city, that most people don't even remember what that is... except for Dodie, but he can't help us either."

"That's bad. It seemed like such a good plan..." Mux felt sad. The motts couldn't live in the fortress for a long time; besides, they were attached to the children...

"Mux, it's so boring without you at home. The wardrobe is so empty and gray."

"I know, Bobo, I miss the cozy wardrobe and your fluffy colourful sweaters too."

"Maybe we will come up with a new plan, right? There must be another solution!"

There was silence. Everyone was concentrated, everyone was trying to come up with a new plan for the liberation of Mottland. It was not going to be easy. The idea for the fair was so good...

Munch, munch, chomp, chomp, munch... Mux looked up, where was that munching coming from? And who could possibly think about food at such a time?! His eyes fell on Pinky. The fluffy mott was holding a big piece of paper and was taking bites of it.

"Pinky! What are you eating again?" Mux scolded his friend who was always hungry.

"Well, I, I...ummm, Mux, you know I get

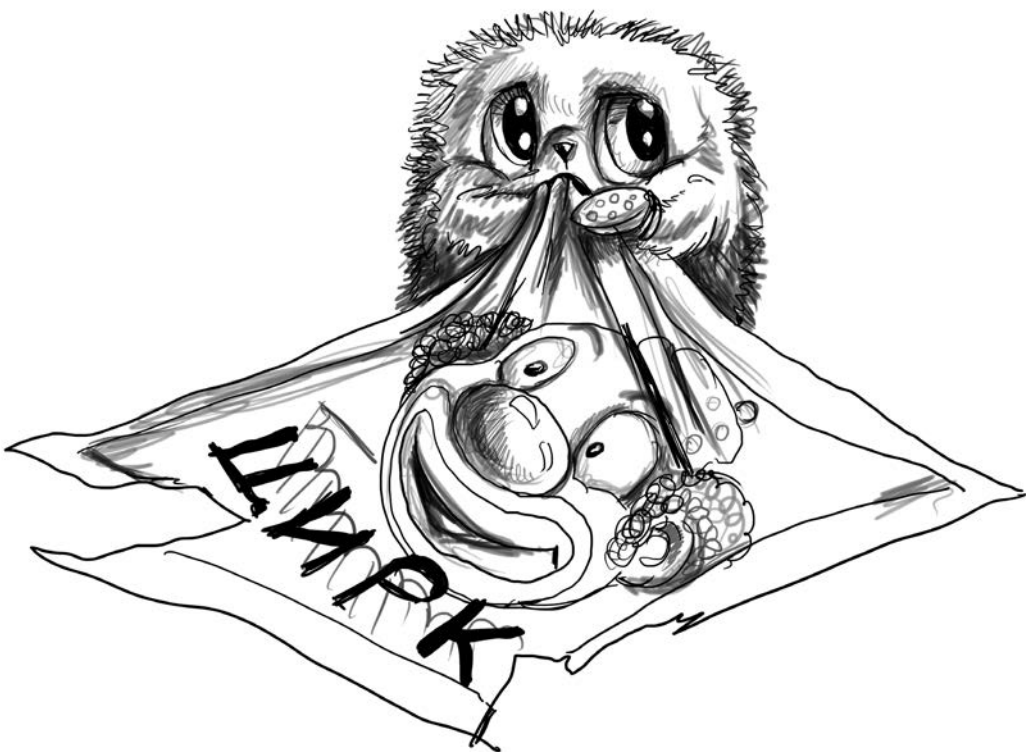
hungry after so much action and tension... “

“And why are you chewing this piece of paper? Where did you find it?”

“Well, it was here... the wind blew it from somewhere. It’s not my fault that there are only clothes in this fortress. True, they are clean and well-scented but believe me, they’re no good for food... I’ve already tried.”

Bobo got up and went towards Pinky. That piece of paper drew his attention.

“Pinky, can you give it to me for a second?” he



asked politely.

“Of course, it’s quite big. There’ll be enough for both of us, but you should know it’s quite tough and difficult to swallow.

Bobo picked the piece of paper up and started.

“A poster, that’s a poster! Yes!” Bobo’s face lit up like a morning in May.

“A poster? What’s that?” Pinky scratched his head.

“The poster usually says something important.” Mux started an explanation. “It can be an advertisement or some information.”

“I see!” Pinky was still scratching his head; apparently, he hadn’t understood a thing.

“This is not just a poster!” Bobo shouted. “There is something very important written on this one!”

“Tell us, Bobo, what does it say?” some voices asked.

Bobo stood proudly in front of them all, cleared his throat twice, and when he made sure that he had attracted every mott’s attention, he continued:

“The poster says that there will be a circus show in the square in the city center tomorrow evening!”

“A circus!” Pinky jumped first; he had dreamt about going to the circus ever since he was a child.

“That’s right – a circus!” Bobo was beaming, and Mux quickly understood what his friend’s idea was.

“Well, yes! If we can’t have a fair, the circus will do as well!” Mux shouted.

“The poster says that the circus will perform under the open sky and all people are invited to watch.”

“This is wonderful, Bobo!” Mux could hardly hide his excitement. “There’ll be a lot of music there; there may be swings...”

“I am sure there will be cotton candy as well...” Pinky got excited too.



“Yes, cotton candy. It will be fun, it will be colourful and bright. As we all know, that’s what modds hate the most.”

“But will it be enough?” Mux wondered.

“Don’t worry, my friend.” Bobo reassured him. “We, the children from the city, will make sure that it’s noisy enough and entertaining, bright and colourful, and all smiles! Let’s see if the modds can bear so much of children’s laughter.

“That’s right, Bobo. Your parents will enjoy themselves and they will laugh along with you. Some of them might even dance there, in the square, while they are waiting for the show to begin.”

“Oh, yes! That will work, Mux, you’ll see!”

All children started discussing how long it was since they had last been to the circus and how much they would enjoy that.

That will work, I am sure! Mux thought. The modds will not bear so many colourful lights and nice music. They love darkness and monotony so much that if something can make them leave the city, this will undoubtedly be the circus!

Chapter 18

WAITING FOR THE SHOW

*T*he night was long. Hardly anyone could sleep in the fortress of clean clothes. Even though the motts were surrounded by well-scented laundry, and Mux and Goula kept perfuming, they could still feel the suffocating smell of modds. The modds kept walking around the fortress, rattling their claws menacingly but they couldn't attack. The scent of clean laundry kept even the cruelest modd at a distance. The sun came up, finally. At the break of day, the modds retreated to their dark and damp storehouse near the city landfill.

"We saved the fortress this time, but we will hardly manage tomorrow." Goula was worried.

"That's right. Grumpy is cunning and deceitful. He will probably come up with a way to slip

through our defense. We won't manage another night!" Mux was worried as well. "The circus plan must work, as early as today before sundown. This is our only chance to drive the modds away from the city."

The day passed quietly and quickly. Protected by the sunrays, the motts managed to get some rest and gather strength for the exciting evening. The circus was supposed to perform in the city square that evening.

All motts had left the fortress and had hidden themselves at the back of the circus at the appointed hour, they were awaiting the beginning impatiently. The kids, led by Bobo, were also there.



“Why are they taking so long? Why haven’t they started?” Pagu was wondering.

“I have no idea, princess. The poster said that the performance would start at 8 p.m. sharp.” Bobo was sure about the hour, he had checked it three times. It was almost 8:30 p.m., and they had not yet begun.

“This is not good.” The princess was still worried. “The sun is setting and if the performance doesn’t start soon, the modds will attack, shielded by darkness.”

“Who knows what damage they might do!” Pinky was chewing something again, he looked quite anxious. He remembered the horrible Grumpy and his fur shuddered.”

“That’s right. The modds can do a lot of harm. They can break the swings at the entrance to the circus, they can push the popcorn machine over, they can scare the circus animals.” Mux said and continued. “For example, even elephants run away from modds in Africa. Our cousins are so wicked, and they have such a tight pinch of their claws that even a large animal like the elephant doesn’t want to have anything to do with them.

“Oh, Bobo, will you and the kids check what’s going on?” Pagu was nervous, she could see the sun relentlessly hiding behind the horizon.

“Of course, princess!” Bobo gathered the

children quickly and they headed for the circus announcer. He was supposed to know why they were taking so long.

Darkness was already finding its way into the city. The Sun was going to sleep and the Moon was striving to take its place.

“Look, look!” A little mott was pointing at the nearby forest.

All eyes turned in that direction. And what do you expect: a few ugly old torn socks were waving there. Those were the modds’ battle flags. Yes, there were nearing, ready to attack. They were waiting for the last sunrays to hide so that they could attack. The motts were in a trap. There were no clean clothes there to protect them, and all the perfumes had been used up the previous night. The battle was not going to be fair.

It was then that Bobo and the children came back.

“Bad news, my friends. The circus people told us that they were taking some more time because there was not enough audience. Apparently, most people are not interested in the show. Everyone has gone shopping or they are already home in front of the TV.

“That’s terrible!” the motts were worried; what was to happen next...

In the meantime the rattle of modd claws was



getting louder. Were Mux and the other motts to be captured?! Goula imagined how he would make tea for Grumpy early in the morning, and then he would break his back over Grumpy's dirty laundry all day long. What a smell! Thought he.

The way the motts kept farting and shifting their paws betrayed their anxiety. That's why Bobo, Zdravko and the other children were sad and gloomy.

Something had to be done, but what?!

Bobo had a sudden idea. He approached Zdravko and whispered something in his ear. Zdravko smiled and nodded. Then the two of them headed for the circus entrance. Mux knew that something was going on, but he didn't dare to ask what. Everyone was looking at Bobo expectantly; he was already talking to the circus announcer. Only a second later his voice sounded on the PA system:

"Dear citizens, you are welcome to see for the very first time, here and now, the most amazing record of all time. It is unbelievable, even fantastic."

People in the street slowed down a bit, some of them even stopped in expectation of hearing about the incredible record. Bobo continued:

"For the first time in our city, a boy will eat 10, I repeat: 10 packs of popcorn for only 5 minutes. Amazing! Don't miss the show!"

“10 packs of popcorn? This is impossible!” Passers-by said.

“For only 5 minutes!” Bobo continued and his voice was echoing in the entire square.

10 packs of popcorn are quite many, so a lot of people decided to stop by for a second and see how exactly that would happen. Naturally, arguments arose: will the boy manage or not. Zdravko was already at the popcorn machine where the 10 packs were awaiting him.



Thus, a curious crowd had gathered at the circus entrance only in a few minutes' time. Zdravko felt that his time had come and after the circus announcer said: "Start!", he started gulping the popcorn down. After all, he had only 5 minutes at his disposal to finish up all the 10 packs.

"Zdravko! Zdravko! Zdravko!" The other children had gathered around him and they were cheering loudly.

"Come on, Zdravko, you can do it! Come on, my friend, I'm with you!" Pinky had hidden nearby, right behind the cotton candy machine, he was looking at his friends' struggle with the popcorn. "He is doing all this for us – the motts!" he thought.

Zdravko was getting ahead with the popcorn, he had eaten 6 packs for 3 minutes.

"That boy has a talent!" People were saying. The audience was getting bigger and bigger. Some of the people started clapping their hands, so as to show their support for Zdravko.

"Zdravko! Zdravko! Zdravko!" The children kept shouting.

Zdravko was sweating a bit, 8 entire packs had found their way into his mouth.

"Come on, boy, don't give up!" Voices were coming from the audience.

All that bustle: cheering and applause, made

more and more people stop in front of the circus. Curious people started approaching from the nearby houses.

The 10th pack turned out to be the most difficult one. Zdravko was swollen, all sweaty and red in the face.

“60 seconds!” The circus announcer’s voice said. “Come on, boy, you’re almost done with it!”

Zdravko farted once, burped twice, sneezed, and after he took a deep breath, he attacked the remaining popcorn.

“30 seconds! Come on, Zdravko!” The announcer encouraged the boy. “10 seconds!”

The time was running out, but Zdravko swallowed the final handful of popcorn at the last minute.

“Hurraaaaaay!” The children’s voices sounded in the square.

“You did it, Zdravko!” The circus announcer was shouting in the microphone.

The people in the audience were clapping hands, some were even whistling. It was very cheerful and noisy. A lot of people had gathered. The ones at the back didn’t see very well, so the ones at the front explained all about the boy who had eaten 10 packs of popcorn in only 5 minutes!

The circus announcer took the opportunity and shouted:





“Dear audience, that was only the beginning of our amazing performance. Please, take your seats and enjoy our wonderful show.

The children took the people around by the hand and led them to their seats around the stage. The seats were quickly taken and the circus was to begin after all.

The motts breathed a sigh of relief. The children’s laughter and the smiling faces kept the smelly modds far away. Even the rattle of their claws was weakening. Here was the beginning of the show.

The first to appear on stage were the horses that could jump obstacles with ease, then a few goats head butted. There were clowns who made the audience laugh; and, of course, the big African elephant appeared as well. Finally, a few lions jumped through burning hoops. All was accompanied by continuous applause, a lot of music and laughter. The air was filled with the scent of freshly popped popcorn and wonderful cotton candy. The motts were so much taken with the show that they completely forgot about the upcoming attack. And an attack never happened anyway. The show went on until late; after that everyone had fun with the swings and the bumper cars. The city was glowing with bright lights, music, colourful balloons. Nobody felt the night come.

Little by little, the people started going home. The motts also went back to their wardrobes. For the first time in a few days, they were going to sleep in their cozy homes. Everyone was happy.

Only Zdravko felt a bit ill: he had a stomach ache for two long days! But he would do anything for his friends. Pinky, in gratitude for Zdravko, didn't eat his favourite cookies for a whole week. That was a real achievement for Pinky! Well, he ate quite many strawberries and apples, but that's the way Pinky is.

Chapter 19

**THE MODDS
RUN AWAY**

It was a warm sunny morning. Bobo woke up and remembered the show the previous night. A smile shone on his face. He quickly jumped out of bed and headed for the wardrobe, opened it, and saw Mux inside. The little mott was hugging his favourite colourful dustcloth and was sleeping tight.

We did it! Bobo thought and closed the door quietly. He didn't want to wake his beloved friend.

Bobo came out to the balcony. The air outside was fresh and clean. A light wind was blowing and an old sock was rolling down the street. Was that one of the modds' flags?

A man was standing in front of a bench at the bus stop and was painting it orange. Bobo looked

around and saw that some other benches had already been painted – red, pink, even yellow. The modds had torn all the flowers in the area, but a few women were now planting new ones in the small garden next to their apartment building. The city was coming to life again!

“Bobo, dear, the pancakes are ready. Come, your breakfast is waiting for you.” His mother’s voice came from inside.

Bobo smiled; pancakes really were his favourite breakfast. He rushed to the kitchen...

There was no trace of the modds. They disappeared during the night as quickly as they had appeared earlier. Nobody knew where they had come from, nobody knew where they had gone.

Once again there was peace and quiet in Mottland. The children were playing with their favourite motts, the gardens were filled with flowers again, the people in the streets looked bright and colourful once more.

Chapter 20

EPILOGUE

*M*ux was running as fast as he could to the palace and his heart was beating wildly. When he reached the princess's room, he entered with a bang and a fart. Especially with a "fart" because the thing he wanted to tell the princess hadn't let his mind rest ever since he woke up in the morning. He rushed into the room without even a knock at the door. Such attitude of her majesty's subjects was generally unacceptable, but Mux and Pagu were close friends now.

"Pagu, we did it! I told you we would! I told you so!" Mux was shouting and jumping around Pagu who was still sleepy. That was her first realization of the fact that they had really managed to defeat the modds.

She gave the mirror a quick look, just to make sure that she looked as she should. She gave Mux a big smile.

“Yes, you did it, Mux! Oh, and how bravely you saved me from Grumpy...” She lowered her eyes a bit embarrassed and Mux decided to stifle his emotions, so he sat down at the edge of a purple pillowcase. He held a piece of it and his claw started playing with it.

“You see, Pagu, actually, I wanted to say that when I woke up this morning, I first thought of you and if you were alright.” He gazed at the pillowcase intently and then started unravelling it



with even more concentration. It was as if Pagu's reaction to what he had said depended on that particular pillowcase. "Oh, well, that's all, I think that you really, well, ummm, I think..."

"Oh, come on, Mux, stop beating about the bush!" Pinky came out from under the bed. "I will starve if I have to wait for you to admit that you have fallen for the princess!"

"What!? How long have you been here? Why..." Mux started.

"Pinky came to guard me after last night's events." Pagu said in a gentle tone after which she whispered to Mux: "Actually, he was very hungry and he knew that he would find the most abundant menu here."

"Don't get distracted!" Pinky scolded them. He cleared his throat; he saw a peanut on the ground, held out his hand to pick it up, and instantly put it in his mouth. He went on while he was munching: "So, you, Mux, have come here to us to admit to Pagu that you want to share your food with her happily ever after. You, Pagu, would you be so kind and willing to share with Mux your love for custard and walnut cookies, and... ripe apples, juicy oranges..."

"Pinky, where are you going with this..." Mux interrupted him.

"Oh, I'm sorry, it's very easy for a hungry mott

to get distracted. So, are you, Pagu, willing to love Mux back?”

Pagu and Mux only looked at each other and smiled.

“Pinky, I think that it’s time for you to go.” Pagu smiled. “We’ll take over from here.” She turned and looked at Mux.

“That’s right, hungry friend. You can go pick the crumbs of the biscuit cake that Dodie is making at home. Hurry up before he has cleaned them up!” Mux hastened to drive him away, but Pinky had disappeared before Mux finished his sentence.

“Well...” Mux turned to Pagu and she gave him a shy smile.

They lightly brushed each other’s claws and their noses touched softly. That was the gentlest mott kiss – worthy of a real royal person.

THE END!





Hey, and what happened with the modds?

“It was all your fault, Sillyhead! Now we must do Grumpy’s dirty laundry!” Dunderhead poked his friend while the repulsive modds were going back to Moddland.

“That’s not true! You were fooling me with nonsense about your whole family, stupid!

“You are stupid! You will do the laundry!”

“You are stupid yourself! I will do the laundry. We wash it in mud, remember?”

“Yes, but it’s summer now, so we’ll have to use water from the toilet!”

“Ughhh, indeed! You will do the laundry then!”

“No, you will!”

“You!”

“You!”

“Sillyhead!”

“Dunderhead!”

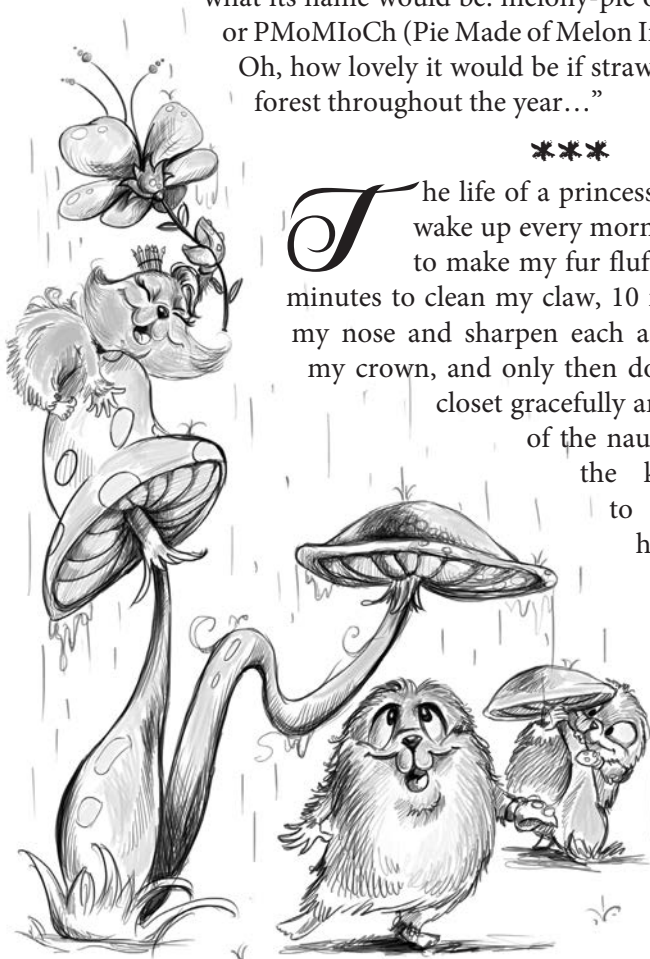


Mott Wisdom

Pinky was thinking: "How lovely it would be if strawberries grew in the forest throughout the year. I would eat them all the time. But, on the other hand," he kept thinking, I'd be full and I'd miss on all the cherries and apples. And I love cherries very much, and apples too. Hmmm, next comes the watermelon and grapes season. To tell you the truth, I love grapes and watermelons, pears too ... don't forget melons...even though I've never heard of melon pie. I wonder what its name would be: melony-pie or pie-like melon... or PMoMIOCh (Pie Made of Melon Instead of Cherries). Oh, how lovely it would be if strawberries grew in the forest throughout the year..."

The life of a princess is hard... When I wake up every morning I need an hour to make my fur fluffy, I need about 15 minutes to clean my claw, 10 minutes to powder my nose and sharpen each and every pencil in my crown, and only then do I walk out of my closet gracefully and solemnly. If one of the naughty little motts in the kingdom happens to startle me and I happen to ruffle even one hair of my fur, I have to start all over again.

*Excerpt from
Pagu's Daily
Routine*



Into the closet Goula jumped.
He looked around a little stumped.
He curled up into a jacket
And fell asleep just like a little packet.

He didn't want his mott friends to discover
That his favourite thing where he was under cover
was a jacket such as crocus colour.

Our dear Goula didn't want to show
How emotional and colourful his smile could glow.
To Mux, however, it was always clear:
His best friend is such a lovely dear.



A Poem by Mux

A DAY OF MUX'S LIFE



He wakes up before 7 in the morning,
stretches 4-5 times, and energetically
jumps out of Bobo's purple stripy
blouse. Still purplish after the 8-hour sleep,
he gets down to breakfast which consists
of fruit, tea, and a lump of cheese. Then he
carefully licks his fur clean, cuts one or two
naughty hairs with his claw, brushes his teeth,
and he is ready for adventures. Next, he visits
his friends Goula and Pinky. At

Goula's they drink juice of fresh fruit, and both of
them together walk to Pinky's place. Pinky likes
to sleep late. They usually find him bent over
a pile of food, deep in thought, simply staring
at the delicious food. Pinky half-heartedly
suggests that they eat lunch together (He doesn't
especially like to share his food!) Goula and
Mux usually have a few bites of cheese and some



strawberry pie for dessert under the strict eye of Pinky who almost counts their bites out loud while he himself puts big pieces of pie in his mouth. Then the three of them lie down for a nap, and later wake up refreshed. They go home because the children they live with await them: to play with them, to talk about their day, and to get help with their homework. The three friends get together



again in the evening but this time at Mux's so as to discuss how life in Mottland is going, if there is any information about their evil cousins; what lovely surprise they can come up with that will make people happy. Dinner is next, and curling up in one's favourite going-to-bed-sweater. Mux's favourite bedtime occupation is devoted to thoughts about his beloved princess, who is probably closing her tired eyes gracefully just now, somewhere over there, in her faraway closet.

Ah, lovely Pagu...



Goula loved to go to the nearby forest early in the morning. He would always start from the main path, and then he would suddenly turn into the smaller, rarely used paths. That's the way Goula was; he would always look for new adventures. He would often tell his friends about how he had fought a bear or chased a big wolf to the foot of the mountain. But we knew that more often than not it would go like that: he would get tired by noon and lie down in some big tree trunk.

Curled up in the leaves he would have a nap and dream about chasing bears and wolves...



Pinky loved to sit in front of the mirror very much – just sit and smile. One day Mux and Goula rushed into his room and they were surprised by his occupation. “What are you doing, Pinky? Why are you grinning in front of the mirror?!” Goula wondered. “Well, why not?” Pinky started. “I just love to see a smiling face in front of me. “Pinky is right!” Mux thought. “It’s very nice when someone is smiling back at you.”



Mux and Pagu often went to some of the suburban parts of the city secretly. They held hands there, closed their eyes, played Eenie, Meenie, Minie, Mo and chose a direction. Then they just started walking with no particular purpose. They both loved to “get lost” in the city and find new colourful places, happy bakeries, smiling people.



They were the happiest when they found a new bakery. The smell of freshly-baked croissants and pretzels floated in the whole street. “If only Pinky were with us now,” The two of them were thinking, and because they really loved their friend, they always bought a croissant or a muffin for him. “How nice it is to have such friends!” Pinky rejoiced every time, talking while eating the goodie they had brought to him.

Modd Nonsense

- T*he true modd:
- never brushes his teeth because bad breath repels the enemy.
 - doesn't clean his fur because there are much more important things to do, like lying about all day long.
 - doesn't like to love because he prefers to hate.
 - is not nice or affectionate because he thinks that's silly.
 - never helps anyone because there always is something important to do: usually just to lie about.
 - has a great appetite and is always ready for a bite, especially if someone else has done the cooking.
 - And now the most important modd rule: If something takes effort, you'd better not do it. Sit back and relax in the hope of someone else doing it instead of you.

GRUMPY'S RULES:

*W*hen Grumpy's talking, everyone has to listen to him because Grumpy says only important things.

- The important things Grumpy says are usually very wise as well.
- The wise things Grumpy says are so wise that they are used as laws.
- The laws pronounced by Grumpy have to be adhered to because the punishment consists of: soaping and washing with clean warm water in public.
- However, if Grumpy says something which is not important, start reading the rules all over again.





A DAY IN GRUMPY'S LIFE

*W*ake-up time: about 2 in the afternoon.
Morning toilet: washing eyes and teeth – always skip that.

Breakfast: everything works, as long as it is cold and really fatty. Grumpy drinks a jug of ice cold water so that his voice turns hoarse and scary. Nap time is obligatory in the afternoon until 8 in the evening. After all, breakfast is something exhausting . Next - rounds! All soldiers must be in a line, shaggy and messy. If someone is, by chance, not smelly enough, he comes out of the line and a pale of swamp water is poured all over him. If that doesn't help, that is if the soldier is not stinky enough, they put filthy, old socks around him and let him stay the whole night like that. That always does the trick! Once having checked the army, Grumpy heads towards his study where he makes evil plans. Fortunately, most times nothing comes to his mind, but other times he comes up with some mischief or a plan to attack the nearby kingdom. Dinner's next: something slimy or fatty-yucky.

Fruit and vegetables are forbidden unless they've rotten. Before going to bed, Grumpy takes a muddy bath – after all, he has to be the smelliest of all his army. As a final touch he puts a bit of skunk perfume on. Now he's up for a sound sleep and a good snore. If anyone snores louder than Grumpy, the guard wakes them up and punishes them. Apart from being the smelliest, the strongest, he has the hoarsest voice, and must snore the loudest! It's not easy to be Grumpy!



*S*illyhead thought: "How nice it would be if I could be in Grumpy's shoes. It must be great to have a whole army that obeys you. The first order I will give will allow all soldiers to lie down, even sleep all day long instead of standing and guarding. I would also send Dunderhead to hell! I would come up with some task for him, for example to find new territories to conquer... at the North Pole! Ha-ha-ha, how clever am I. Dunderhead has no idea where the North Pole is, so he'll probably get lost forever..."

Short stories about Sillyhead and Dunderhead

Sillyhead and Dunderhead got into a fight:
“My grandfather is the first modd to land on the Moon!”
Dunderhead started.

“Yeah, right!” Sillyhead snapped. “How come?”

“Well, yes! While your grandpa was fooling about, mine made a slingshot. It was not just an ordinary little slingshot, but a biiiiig slingshot.”

“How big was that slingshot?” Sillyhead asked nervously.

“Well, very big. Grandpa took the suspenders of the fattest man in the city, he tied them for two trees, and that’s how he made the biggest slingshot in the whole kingdom. 100 modds pulled the slingshot tight. My grandfather put a walnut shell on his head.”

“Why the walnut shell?” Sillyhead interrupted.

“You are a silly thing! It was a helmet of course. He had to fly all the way to the Moon!” Dunderhead scolded him and continued: “So when he put his helmet on, he went to the middle of the slingshot and shouted “Shoooooot!””

“SHOOT sounds stupid to me.” Sillyhead thought out loud. “Why didn’t he shout something like “Ole”, “Goooo”, or even “Charge!”?”



“Charge my foot!” Dunderhead got angry. “Stop interrupting me! So he said “Shoot” and the hundred modds let the suspenders go, my grandpa flew into the sky, into space, and all the way to the Moon!”
“Wow, did he travel long to the Moon?”

“Dunderhead pondered, he was not prepared for that question. He got a grip

quickly and said: "It took a whole year to get there."

"What did he eat all that time?" Sillyhead kept asking questions.

"He ate question marks!" Dunderhead snapped.

"Question marks?"

"Yes, question marks because your grandfather asked so many questions that my grandpa collected them and ate them all the way to the Moon! Did you get it now??" Dunderhead rejoiced. He hoped that Sillyhead would now stop asking inappropriate questions.



"My grandfather is so lazy..." Sillyhead said.
"A bit lazy?" Dunderhead asked.

"Very lazy! One summer while he was walking in the forest, he saw a lovely apple tree. He spotted the most beautiful delicious red apple, it was on the highest branch. The moment he saw it, his mouth filled with saliva. But how could he possibly reach it high up on the tree. That was not so much of a problem for grandpa, who was very good at climbing trees. Instead of climbing, however, he sat down and waited.

"What did he wait for?" Dunderhead asked with curiosity.

"You are quite a silly thing! He waited for the apple to fall down, of course!"

"Why didn't he climb and take the apple?" Dunderhead asked, a bit embarrassed.

"Because he was very lazy, that's why!"

"Ok. Did the apple fall?"

"Oh, you and your questions... It fell, of course! He waited for two days and the apple finally fell down to him."

"So he ate it?"

"Not exactly. The apple fell one step further away from grandpa, and he was very lazy, so he didn't want to move one bit. That's why

he decided to wait for the wind to blow the apple, and then it would come to him on its own.

“So did the wind blow?”

“It did, it’s what winds do, isn’t it? That’s its job. Oh, Dunderhead, you’re not all that clever at times. So the wind blew, but after 5 whole days. So when the apple reached my grandpa, it had already rotten.”

“Did your grandfather eat it?”

“Well, he ate it, though it was rotten. It’s true that it wasn’t delicious, but the important thing is that he didn’t move for a week and the apple still came to him.”

“Well, it came, but it had rotten!”

“Though rotten, it came, didn’t it!”

“It did, but all rotten!”

“Rotten it may have been, but it still came to him.”

“It came, but it was rotten!”

“Rotten, but... wait... what were we talking about?!” Sillyhead pondered.

“Was it about poetry? Dunderhead answered and the two of them had a good laugh.

“Hahaha! Poetry! Dunderhead, you are killing me!”



“Eating spoilt raspberry jam on Tuesday brings bad luck.” Sillyhead said.

“Why?” Asked Dunderhead.

“Because your stomach aches for two days after that!”

“Hmm, so eating raspberry jam on Thursday brings bad luck too.”

“Why?”

“Well, because I last ate it then and I had a stomachache for three days!”

“Hmmm.”

“What?”

“I think that if we pour salt over the spoilt jam, we might change the bad luck from Tuesday and Thursday.”

“Oh, really?”

“I don’t know. It just occurred to me. But it’s worth the try. If it

works, they will write about us in the Ancient Modd Book.”

“Yes, and if it doesn’t work, we’ll get a stomach-ache for two or three days more at its worst.”

*S*illyhead and Dunderhead had been on guard for a long time. Apparently, they were really bored but they weren’t talking because they were sick and tired of telling each other untruthful stories about their grandfathers. At one point Sillyhead scratched his right ear. That was not left unnoticed by Dunderhead, so he decided to scratch his left ear. Sillyhead decided to scratch his chin. Dunderhead scratched his neck. Sillyhead scratched his claw. Dunderhead scratched his left leg. In other words, there was a whole lot of scratching going on. About an hour later it was Sillyhead’s turn. He thought: “My, oh my, I’m out of places to scratch.” While he was thinking about that, he involuntarily scratched his right ear.

“Hey, you’re cheating!” Dunderhead protested. “You’ve already scratched there.”

“You’re cheating! I haven’t scratched there! Besides, it’s your turn!” Sillyhead snapped at him.

“It’s your turn!”

“No! It’s yours!”

“You’re lying!”

“No, you are!”





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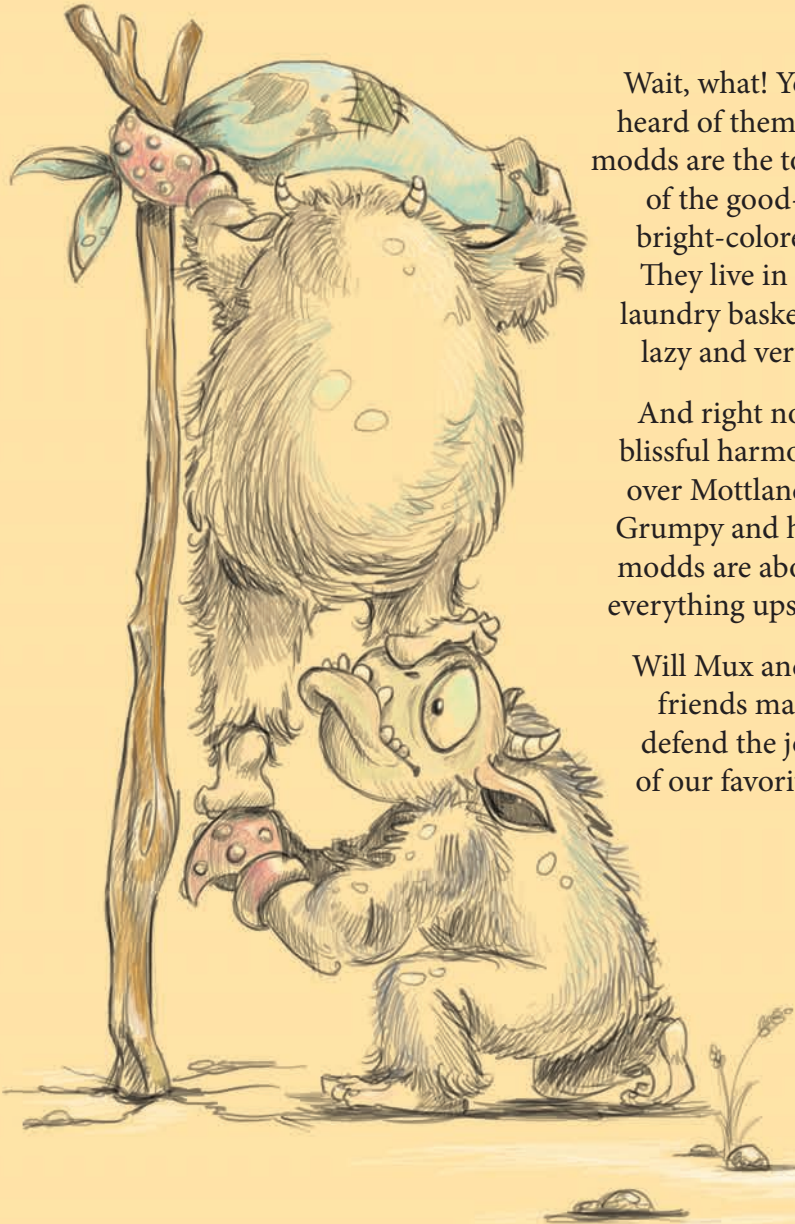
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"...And there was a modd peeping through the crack in the laundry basket. Poor motts - that was a pretty kettle of fish... their tiresome cousins were to find their way into the motts' colourful idyllic everyday life!"



Wait, what! You haven't heard of them? Well, the modds are the total opposite of the good-hearted bright-colored motts. They live in the dirty laundry basket, they are lazy and very stinky!

And right now, when blissful harmony has set over Mottland, the bad Grumpy and his army of modds are about to turn everything upside down...

Will Mux and his true friends manage to defend the joyful life of our favorite motts?