



# PESTS

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HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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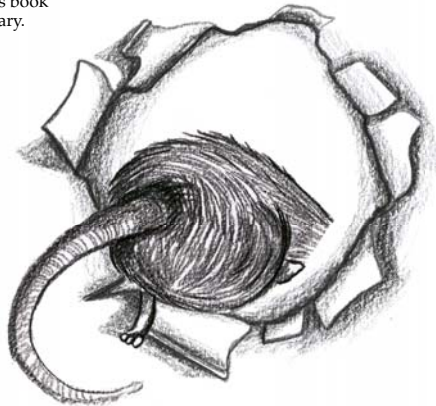
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# The PESTS Test

Answer these simple questions  
to find out how pesty you are...

1. You accidentally poop in the middle of the floor.  
Do you:  
A) Cry  
B) Run away  
C) Hide it
2. You find an expensive cashmere jumper do you:  
A) Stroke it  
B) Wear it  
C) Eat it
3. It's most dangerous to go out in:  
A) The middle of the night  
B) Your underpants  
C) Daylight
4. You are spotted by a mans, do you:  
A) Run  
B) Wave  
C) Play dead
5. What are you most afraid of:  
A) The dark  
B) Monsters under your bed  
C) Nuke-A-Pest

Go to the next page  
to see what the  
results mean

If you answered all A's  
and B's STOP READING this  
book immediately.  
You will never be a PEST.

If you answered all C's  
congratulations, read on,  
you are just the kind  
of creature  
**P.E.S.T.S.**  
is looking for.

# ME!

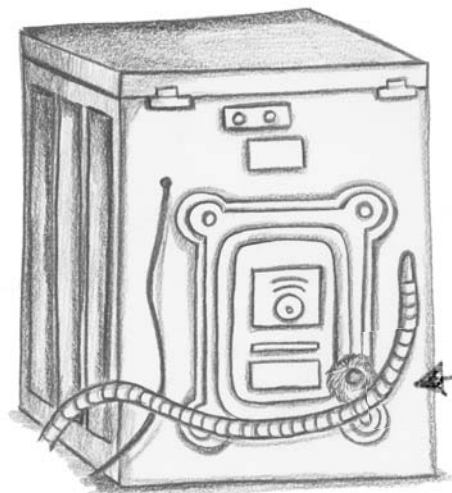
This is me, Stix. I'm almost the height of an eggcup  
(I've measured myself against lots of objects and this  
is the thing that's the closest to my size).

I live in a nest hidden away behind the washing machine,  
in the kitchen of Flat 3, Peewit Mansions. I know the exact  
address because it's written on the envelopes  
we sometimes shred up to make our home.



Stix





**Our nest.  
I live here  
with my  
grandma.**

Grandma is VERY OLD. But we're not allowed to talk about exactly how ancient, because she says a lady mouse never lets on her age.

I did once, before I can remember, have parents. But we don't talk about them either. Whenever I ask what happened - how they died -



Grandma just shakes her head and says, 'You're not ready for that kind of information yet.'

I used to have a grandpa too. I can just about remember his face. It was old like Grandma's, only with a lot more whiskers. He died soon after my parents. Grandma said it was from a broken heart. But I don't think that's actually possible - whoever heard of a heart breaking!

Another thing Grandma says is that as a mouse you have to be smart.

A smart mouse, she says, gets to do as it pleases, gets to go where it likes and eat what it wants. A smart mouse knows how to go undetected. On the other paw, a silly mouse doesn't cover its tracks. A silly mouse gets seen. And as Grandma likes to say (often): 'a seen mouse is a dead mouse'. She also says:

**A slow mouse is a dead mouse.**

**A greedy mouse is a dead mouse.**

**A noisy mouse is a dead mouse.**

**A stupid mouse is a dead mouse.**

Sometimes I wonder how me and Grandma are still here. It seems staying alive is a hard thing for a mouse to do.

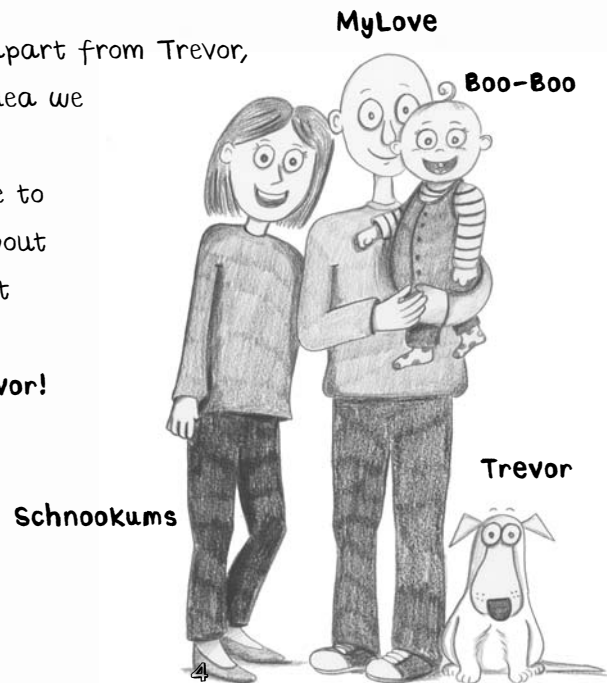
# MY HOME

We share Flat 3 with a family of mans (that's our word for these funny-looking creatures) and their odd-shaped dog, **Trevor**.

Of course, apart from Trevor, they have no idea we live with them.

I know he'd love to tell them all about us, but he can't speak mans.

**Bad luck, Trevor!**



4

'There are mice living behind the washing machine.'



'I think he's trying to tell us that he wants a walk.'

To be fair, none of us creatures can speak mans, but at least we can understand it, and we can all understand each other. We're smart like that – much cleverer than those stupid mans who can only talk to each other!

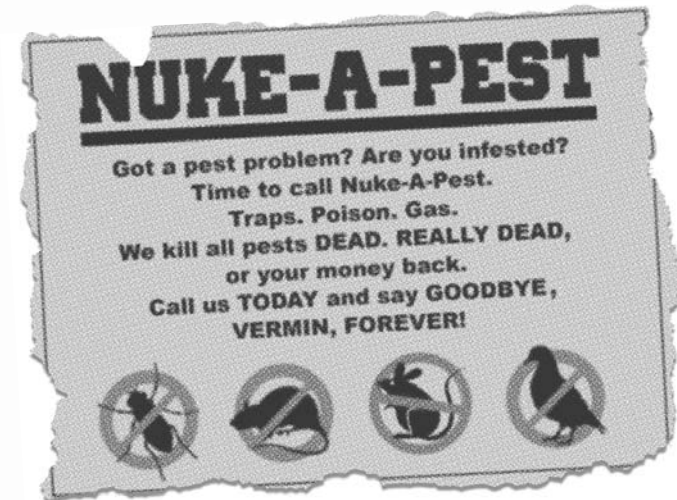
The lady mans is called **Schnookums** and the man mans is called **MyLove**. They have a baby mans who makes **A LOT** of noise. Her name is **Boo-Boo**.

5

Grandma says there are good mans and bad mans. She says we're lucky, as we have very good ones. Apparently, some mice have terrible mans that clean all the time so there are no scraps to eat, or that never sleep so you can never sneak out at night undetected. But ours aren't like that. They:

1. Only clean once a week - which makes the chances of finding food much higher.
2. Don't have a cat - Trevor is annoying, but he's never going to try to eat us.
3. Go to bed early - which gives us plenty of time to forage.
4. Have never called Nuke-A-Pest.

The last point is VERY important. Nuke-A-Pest is the worst thing that could happen to us. Worse than the mans cleaning up every day. Worse even than a cat. Nuke-A-Pest is **BAD, BAD NEWS**. They know every possible way to kill us: traps, poison, gas. Grandma says, 'When they come, we go.' And by 'go' she means 'die'.



Though our mans have never called Nuke-A-Pest, they do have one of their ads stuck on their fridge. Grandma makes me read it every night so I always remember to be **EXTREMELY** careful.

Whenever we're looking for food, we always follow one **VERY IMPORTANT RULE** - Grandma is very strict about this. We never, ever leave any sign of what we've been up to. Grandma has another saying: 'Leave a trace, die in a trap'. By this she means if the mans get even the faintest whiff we're here they'll call the dreaded Nuke-A-Pest.

She says we must ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS 'Keep It Tidy'.

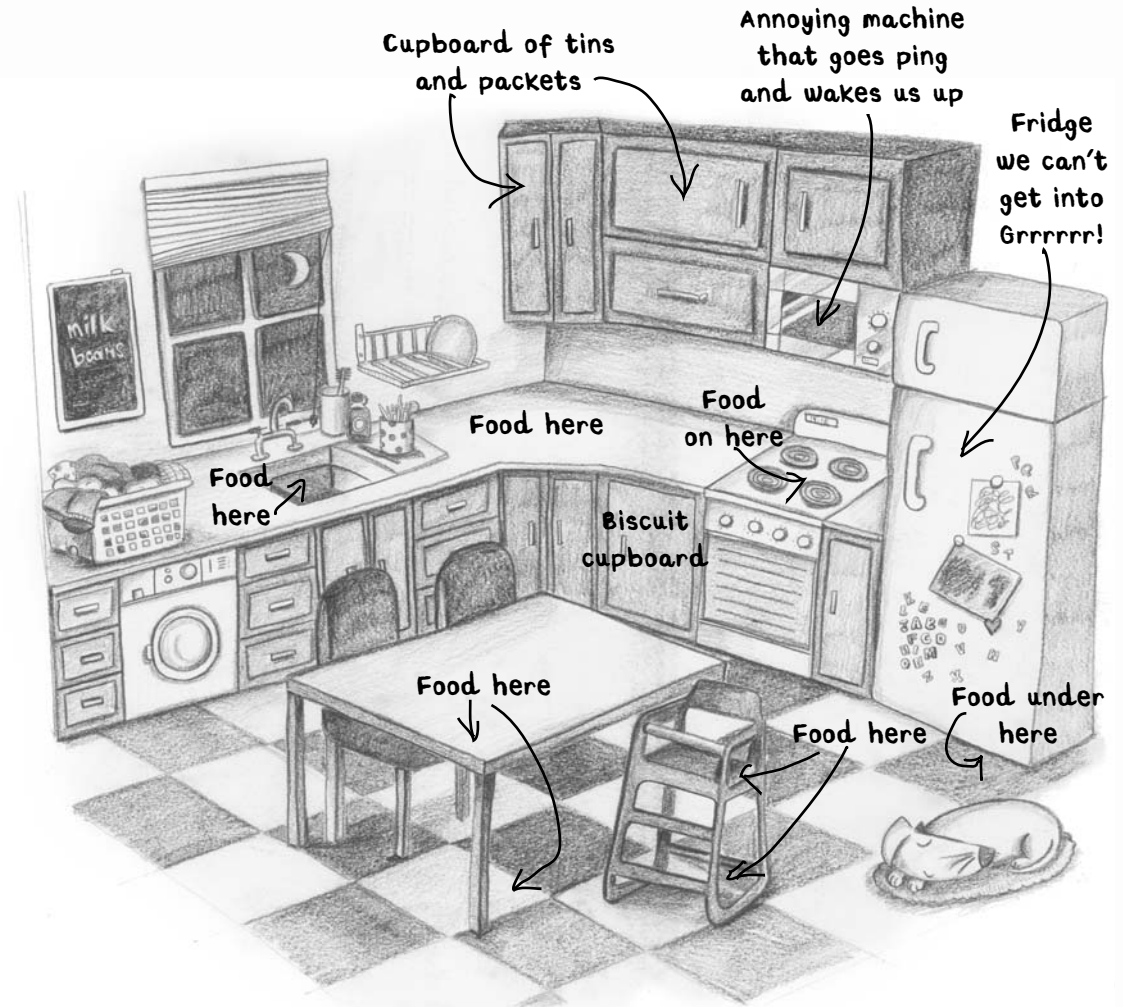
### The Four Rules of Keeping It Tidy:

1. Never tear open packets.
2. Never chew holes in cardboard or plastic containers.
3. Never poop in places mans will see.
4. Never let your nails grow so long they scratch on the floor.

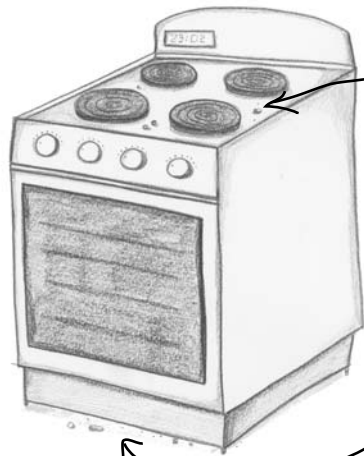
I've had these drummed into me every day since I can remember.

So, all day we hide and sleep, tucked away in our little nest. Then, when night falls - once we're sure the coast is clear and the mans are fast asleep - we creep out of bed and down the back of the washing machine and out into ... the kitchen!

My grandma chose the washing machine to live behind because it's warm and it's safe (no mans ever look behind their washing machine) and, most importantly, it's near food.



The kitchen is where we find most of what we eat. We call it Zone 1. The mans we live with are rather messy (Grandma says they used to be tidier, but then Boo-Boo came along and made them too tired to clean), which means there's always yummy stuff to be found. You just have to know where to look.



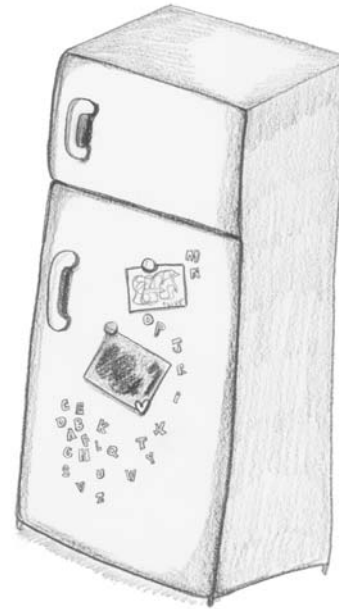
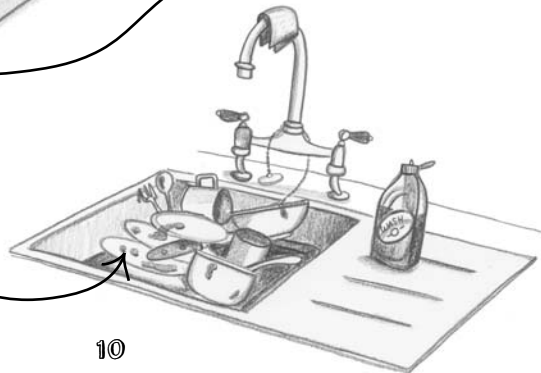
### THE COOKER

Lumps of dried vegetables, grains of rice and odd bits of pasta.

Dried peas, sweetcorn or a chip if you're very lucky.

### THE SINK

Smears of sauce, mashed potato, gravy, sometimes leftover cereal.



### THE FRIDGE

Whatever has been brushed underneath, e.g. breadcrumbs, peas, cubed carrot, sweetcorn.

### THE BABY MANS' CHAIR (our favourite)



Lumps of rice cake, crumbs of rusk, hunks of breadstick, bits of cheese, chunks of sausage, balls of mashed potato ...



There's also a chance of food in **Zone 2 - the living room**. When the mans watch TV in the evening they like to

eat biscuits. There are always crumbs to be found. Schnookums likes Custard Creams. MyLove likes Bourbons. Grandma likes the Custard Cream crumbs,



but I prefer the Bourbon ones, especially if they still have a bit of the chocolatey middle stuck to them.



**Zone 3 is the bathroom**. This is the most boring room in the whole flat. There's never any food in here. It's also the strangest room. When Grandma told me what a toilet was and how mans sit on it when they poop, I laughed so much I gave myself a stitch.

There's also this thing called a bath. Mans fill it up with water and then lie in it. Grandma says this is how they clean themselves. It seems like the most stupid thing ever. Mans' tongues are HUGE - why don't they just lick themselves all over like a normal animal?

**Zone 4 is the bedrooms**, which are upstairs. MyLove and Schnookums share one and Boo-Boo has the other. There's no food in here either. Well, unless the mans have had something called 'BREAKFAST IN BED'. But they have never done this in my lifetime. Grandma says they haven't done it since they had Boo-Boo.

**Zone 5 is the hallway**. This is where the mans keep their coats, shoes, MyLove's shiny green bicycle and Boo-Boo's pushchair (Grandma finds it very funny that mans need something like this to move their children around). We often find crumbs of food around its seat and in the bag that hangs underneath it. Sometimes we even find half-eaten snack bars.

At the end of the hallway is The Frontier Door. This is much bigger than the other doors in the flat, and on the other side of it lies ... The Beyond. I am expressly forbidden from ever going further than The Frontier Door. The Beyond is strictly out of bounds. Grandma says we have absolutely no need to go there, that we have all we need to survive right where we are.

Sometimes I wonder what it's like out there in The Beyond

– are there other little mice just like me? – but apparently only a greedy or a stupid mouse would go out into The Beyond, and we all know what happens to them!

And anyway, tonight is my **FAVOURITE** night of the week, the one I **REALLY** look forward to. Tonight it's **PIZZA NIGHT**. The mans always leave their pizza boxes stacked up by the rubbish bin. Whichever mans designed the pizza box is a **GENIUS!** They put a perfect mouse-sized hole in every one!



All we have to do is climb through the hole and, **BINGO**, we're in a world of soft, doughy crusts smeared with tomato sauce – and if we're lucky, a bit of cheese.

When we've finished eating, Grandma goes back to bed. She says her old bones need rest. But my bones don't feel old in the slightest. In fact, when night-time comes, I usually feel I could literally burst with energy.

So some nights ...

Like tonight ...

(Well, OK, most nights ...)

After

she's

gone

to

sleep ...



... I sneak out of bed.

I mean, if I'm careful and follow all Grandma's rules, it's not like anything bad is going to happen to me, is it?